

Chapter 42.30 RCW
OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

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Drug reimbursement policy recommendations: RCW 74.09.653.

RCW 42.30.010 Legislative declaration. The legislature finds and declares that all public commissions, boards, councils, committees, subcommittees, departments, divisions, offices, and all other public agencies of this state and subdivisions thereof exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business. It is the intent of this chapter that their actions be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted openly.

The people of this state do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed and informing the people's public servants of their views so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created. For these reasons, even when not required by law, public agencies are encouraged to incorporate and accept public comment during their decision-making process. [2022 c 115 § 2; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 1.]

Reviser's note: Throughout this chapter, the phrases "this act" and "this 1971 amendatory act" have been changed to "this chapter." "This act" [1971 ex.s. c 250] consists of this chapter, the amendment to RCW 34.04.025, and the repeal of RCW 42.32.010 and 42.32.020.

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

RCW 42.30.020 Definitions. As used in this chapter unless the context indicates otherwise:

(1) "Public agency" means:

(a) Any state board, commission, committee, department, educational institution, or other state agency which is created by or pursuant to statute, other than courts and the legislature. This does not include a comprehensive cancer center participating in a collaborative arrangement as defined in RCW 28B.10.930 that is operated in conformance with RCW 28B.10.930;

(b) Any county, city, school district, special purpose district, or other municipal corporation or political subdivision of the state of Washington;

(c) Any subagency of a public agency which is created by or pursuant to statute, ordinance, or other legislative act, including but not limited to planning commissions, library or park boards, commissions, and agencies;

(d) Any policy group whose membership includes representatives of publicly owned utilities formed by or pursuant to the laws of this state when meeting together as or on behalf of participants who have contracted for the output of generating plants being planned or built by an operating agency.

(2) "Governing body" means the multimember board, commission, committee, council, or other policy or rule-making body of a public agency, or any committee thereof when the committee acts on behalf of the governing body, conducts hearings, or takes testimony or public comment.

(3) "Action" means the transaction of the official business of a public agency by a governing body including but not limited to receipt of public testimony, deliberations, discussions, considerations, reviews, evaluations, and final actions. "Final action" means a collective positive or negative decision, or an actual vote by a majority of the members of a governing body when sitting as a body or entity, upon a motion, proposal, resolution, order, or ordinance.

(4) "Meeting" means meetings at which action is taken. [2022 c 71 § 11; 1985 c 366 § 1; 1983 c 155 § 1; 1982 1st ex.s. c 43 § 10; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 2.]

Findings—Intent—2022 c 71: See note following RCW 28B.10.930.

Severability—Savings—1982 1st ex.s. c 43: See notes following RCW 43.52.374.

RCW 42.30.030 Meetings declared open and public. (1) All meetings of the governing body of a public agency shall be open and public and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting of the governing body of a public agency, except as otherwise provided in this chapter.

(2) Public agencies are encouraged to provide for the increased ability of the public to observe and participate in the meetings of governing bodies through real-time telephonic, electronic, internet, or other readily available means of remote access that do not require an additional cost to access the meeting. [2022 c 115 § 3; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 3.]

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

RCW 42.30.035 Minutes. (Effective until June 30, 2024.) The minutes of all regular and special meetings except executive sessions of such boards, commissions, agencies or authorities shall be promptly recorded and such records shall be open to public inspection. [1953 c 216 § 3. Formerly RCW 42.32.030.]

RCW 42.30.035 Minutes—Recording of school district board of directors meetings. (Effective June 30, 2024.) (1) The minutes of all regular and special meetings except executive sessions of such boards, commissions, agencies or authorities shall be promptly recorded and such records shall be open to public inspection.

(2) Except in the case of an emergency as provided for in RCW 42.30.070, and excluding executive sessions, all regular and special meetings of school district boards of directors at which a final action is taken or formal public testimony is accepted shall be audio recorded and such recordings shall be maintained for at least one year. The recording shall include the comments of the directors and the comments of members of the public, if any formal testimony was accepted from the public during the meeting. Subject to the limitations on identifiable records in RCW 42.56.080(1), such recordings must be provided electronically to the public upon request. It is not a violation of this chapter if a school board attempts to record a meeting in good faith and, due to technological issues, a recording is not made or if any or all of a recording is unintelligible. Whenever possible, school districts are encouraged to make the content of school board of directors meetings, or a summary thereof, available in formats accessible to individuals who need communication assistance and in languages other than English. [2023 c 67 § 3; 1953 c 216 § 3. Formerly RCW 42.32.030.]

Effective date—2023 c 67: "This act takes effect June 30, 2024." [2023 c 67 § 5.]

RCW 42.30.040 Conditions to attendance not to be required. A member of the public shall not be required, as a condition to attendance at a meeting of a governing body, to register his or her name and other information, to complete a questionnaire, or otherwise to fulfill any condition precedent to his or her attendance. This section does not prohibit any generally applicable conditions determined by the governing body to be reasonably necessary to protect the public health or safety, or to protect against interruption of the meeting, including a meeting at which the physical attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a declared emergency. [2022 c 115 § 6; 2012 c 117 § 124; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 4.]

Effective date—2022 c 115 §§ 5-11: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

RCW 42.30.050 Interruptions—Procedure. In the event that any meeting is interrupted by a group or groups of persons so as to render the orderly conduct of such meeting unfeasible and order cannot be restored by the removal of individuals who are interrupting the meeting, the members of the governing body conducting the meeting may order the meeting room cleared and continue in session or may adjourn the meeting and reconvene at another location selected by majority vote of the members. In such a session, final disposition may be taken only on matters appearing on the agenda. Representatives of the press or other news media, except those participating in the disturbance, shall be allowed to attend any session held pursuant to this section. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the governing body from establishing a procedure for readmitting an individual or individuals not responsible for disturbing the orderly conduct of the meeting. Nothing in this section prohibits the governing body from stopping people from speaking to the governing body when not recognized by the governing body to speak. [2022 c 115 § 7; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 5.]

Effective date—2022 c 115 §§ 5-11: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

RCW 42.30.060 Ordinances, rules, resolutions, regulations, etc., adopted at public meetings—Notice—Secret voting prohibited. (1) No governing body of a public agency shall adopt any ordinance, resolution, rule, regulation, order, or directive, except in a meeting open to the public and then only at a meeting, the date of which is fixed by law or rule, or at a meeting of which notice has been given according to the provisions of this chapter. Any action taken at meetings failing to comply with the provisions of this subsection shall be null and void.

(2) No governing body of a public agency at any meeting required to be open to the public shall vote by secret ballot. Any vote taken in violation of this subsection shall be null and void, and shall be considered an "action" under this chapter. [1989 c 42 § 1; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 6.]

RCW 42.30.070 Times and places for meetings—Emergencies—Exception. The governing body of a public agency shall provide the time for holding regular meetings by ordinance, resolution, bylaws, or by whatever other rule is required for the conduct of business by that body. Unless otherwise provided for in the act under which the public agency was formed, meetings of the governing body need not be held within the boundaries of the territory over which the public agency exercises jurisdiction. If at any time any regular meeting falls on a holiday, such regular meeting shall be held on the next business day. If, by reason of fire, flood, earthquake, or other emergency, there is

a need for expedited action by a governing body to meet the emergency, the presiding officer of the governing body may provide for a meeting site other than the regular meeting site, for a remote meeting without a physical location, or for a meeting at which the physical attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a declared emergency, and the notice requirements of this chapter shall be suspended during such emergency. It shall not be a violation of the requirements of this chapter for a majority of the members of a governing body to travel together or gather for purposes other than a regular meeting or a special meeting as these terms are used in this chapter: PROVIDED, That they take no action as defined in this chapter. [2022 c 115 § 8; 1983 c 155 § 2; 1973 c 66 § 1; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 7.]

Effective date—2022 c 115 §§ 5-11: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

RCW 42.30.075 Schedule of regular meetings—Publication in state register—Notice of change—"Regular" meetings defined. State agencies which hold regular meetings shall file with the code reviser a schedule of the time and place of such meetings on or before January of each year for publication in the Washington state register. Notice of any change from such meeting schedule shall be published in the state register for distribution at least twenty days prior to the rescheduled meeting date.

For the purposes of this section "regular" meetings shall mean recurring meetings held in accordance with a periodic schedule declared by statute or rule. [1977 ex.s. c 240 § 12.]

Effective date—1977 ex.s. c 240: See RCW 34.08.905.

Public meeting notices in state register: RCW 34.08.020.

RCW 42.30.077 Agendas of regular meetings—Online availability.
(1) Public agencies with governing bodies must make the agenda of each regular meeting of the governing body available online no later than 24 hours in advance of the published start time of the meeting. An agency subject to provisions of this section may share a website with, or have its website hosted by, another public agency to post meeting agendas, minutes, budgets, contact information, and other records, including any resolution or ordinance adopted by the agency establishing where and how the public agency will meet in the event of an emergency. Nothing in this section prohibits subsequent modifications to agendas nor invalidates any otherwise legal action taken at a meeting where the agenda was not posted in accordance with this section. Nothing in this section modifies notice requirements or shall be construed as establishing that a public body or agency's online posting of an agenda as required by this section is sufficient notice to satisfy public notice requirements established under other laws. Failure to post an agenda in accordance with this section shall not provide a basis for awarding attorney fees under RCW 42.30.120 or commencing an action for mandamus or injunction under RCW 42.30.130.

(2) A special purpose district, city, or town subject to the provisions of this section is not required to post an agenda online if the district, city, or town:

(a) Has an aggregate valuation of the property subject to taxation by the district, city, or town of less than \$400,000,000, as placed on the last completed and balanced tax rolls of the county preceding the date of the most recent tax levy;

(b) Has a population within its jurisdiction of under 3,000 persons; and

(c) Provides confirmation to the state auditor at the time it files its annual reports under RCW 43.09.230 that the cost of posting notices on a website of its own, a shared website, or on the website of the county in which the largest portion of the district's, city's, or town's population resides, would exceed one-tenth of one percent of the district's, city's, or town's budget. [2022 c 115 § 9; 2014 c 61 § 2.]

Effective date—2022 c 115 §§ 5-11: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

Intent—Finding—2014 c 61: "The legislature intends to promote transparency in government and strengthen the Washington's open public meetings act. The legislature finds that it is in the best interest of citizens for public agencies with governing bodies to post meeting agendas on websites before meetings. Full public review and inspection of meeting agendas will promote a greater exchange of information so the public can provide meaningful input related to government decisions." [2014 c 61 § 1.]

RCW 42.30.080 Special meetings. (1) A special meeting may be called at any time by the presiding officer of the governing body of a public agency or by a majority of the members of the governing body by delivering written notice personally, by mail, by fax, or by email to each member of the governing body. Written notice shall be deemed waived in the following circumstances:

(a) A member submits a written waiver of notice with the clerk or secretary of the governing body at or prior to the time the meeting convenes. A written waiver may be given by telegram, fax, or email; or

(b) A member is actually present at the time the meeting convenes.

(2) Notice of a special meeting called under subsection (1) of this section shall be:

(a) Delivered to each local newspaper of general circulation and local radio or television station that has on file with the governing body a written request to be notified of such special meeting or of all special meetings;

(b) Posted on the agency's website. An agency is not required to post a special meeting notice on its website if it does not have a website or share a website with another agency. Except in the case of a remote meeting or a meeting at which the physical attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a declared emergency as provided for in this chapter, an agency is not required to post a special meeting notice on its website if it employs no full-time

equivalent employees, or does not employ personnel whose duty, as defined by a job description or existing contract, is to maintain or update the website; and

(c) Prominently displayed at the main entrance of the agency's principal location and the meeting site if it is not held at the agency's principal location and is not held as a remote meeting; except that during a declared emergency which prevents a meeting from being held in-person with reasonable safety an agency that hosts a website or shares a website with another agency may instead post notice of a remote meeting without a physical location on the website hosted or shared by the agency.

Such notice must be delivered or posted, as applicable, at least 24 hours before the time of such meeting as specified in the notice.

(3) The call and notices required under subsections (1) and (2) of this section shall specify the time and place of the special meeting and the business to be transacted. Final disposition shall not be taken on any other matter at such meetings by the governing body.

(4) The notices provided in this section may be dispensed with in the event a special meeting is called to deal with an emergency involving injury or damage to persons or property or the likelihood of such injury or damage, when time requirements of such notice would make notice impractical and increase the likelihood of such injury or damage, or when the required notice cannot be posted or displayed with reasonable safety, including but not limited to declared emergencies in which travel to physically post notice is barred or advised against. [2022 c 115 § 10; 2012 c 188 § 1; 2005 c 273 § 1; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 8.]

Effective date—2022 c 115 §§ 5-11: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

RCW 42.30.090 Adjournments. The governing body of a public agency may adjourn any regular, adjourned regular, special, or adjourned special meeting to a time and place specified in the order of adjournment. Less than a quorum may so adjourn from time to time. If all members are absent from any regular or adjourned regular meeting the clerk or secretary of the governing body may declare the meeting adjourned to a stated time and place. He or she shall cause a written notice of the adjournment to be given in the same manner as provided in RCW 42.30.080 for special meetings, unless such notice is waived as provided for special meetings. Except in the case of remote meetings without a physical location as provided for in this chapter, whenever any meeting is adjourned a copy of the order or notice of adjournment shall be conspicuously posted immediately after the time of the adjournment on or near the door of the place where the regular, adjourned regular, special, or adjourned special meeting was held. When a regular or adjourned regular meeting is adjourned as provided in this section, the resulting adjourned regular meeting is a regular meeting for all purposes. When an order of adjournment of any meeting fails to state the hour at which the adjourned meeting is to be held, it shall be held at the hour specified for regular meetings by ordinance, resolution, bylaw, or other rule. [2022 c 115 § 11; 2012 c 117 § 125; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 9.]

Effective date—2022 c 115 §§ 5-11: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

RCW 42.30.100 Continuances. Any hearing being held, noticed, or ordered to be held by a governing body at any meeting may by order or notice of continuance be continued or recontinued to any subsequent meeting of the governing body in the same manner and to the same extent set forth in RCW 42.30.090 for the adjournment of meetings. [1971 ex.s. c 250 § 10.]

RCW 42.30.110 Executive sessions. (1) Nothing contained in this chapter may be construed to prevent a governing body from holding an executive session during a regular or special meeting:

(a) (i) To consider matters affecting national security;

(ii) To consider, if in compliance with any required data security breach disclosure under RCW 19.255.010 and 42.56.590, and with legal counsel available, information regarding the infrastructure and security of computer and telecommunications networks, security and service recovery plans, security risk assessments and security test results to the extent that they identify specific system vulnerabilities, and other information that if made public may increase the risk to the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of agency security or to information technology infrastructure or assets;

(b) To consider the selection of a site or the acquisition of real estate by lease or purchase when public knowledge regarding such consideration would cause a likelihood of increased price;

(c) To consider the minimum price at which real estate will be offered for sale or lease when public knowledge regarding such consideration would cause a likelihood of decreased price. However, final action selling or leasing public property shall be taken in a meeting open to the public;

(d) To review negotiations on the performance of publicly bid contracts when public knowledge regarding such consideration would cause a likelihood of increased costs;

(e) To consider, in the case of an export trading company, financial and commercial information supplied by private persons to the export trading company;

(f) To receive and evaluate complaints or charges brought against a public officer or employee. However, upon the request of such officer or employee, a public hearing or a meeting open to the public shall be conducted upon such complaint or charge;

(g) To evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment or to review the performance of a public employee. However, subject to RCW 42.30.140(4), discussion by a governing body of salaries, wages, and other conditions of employment to be generally applied within the agency shall occur in a meeting open to the public, and when a governing body elects to take final action hiring, setting the salary of an individual employee or class of employees, or discharging or disciplining an employee, that action shall be taken in a meeting open to the public;

(h) To evaluate the qualifications of a candidate for appointment to elective office. However, any interview of such candidate and final action appointing a candidate to elective office shall be in a meeting open to the public;

(i) To discuss with legal counsel representing the agency matters relating to agency enforcement actions, or to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency litigation or potential litigation to which the agency, the governing body, or a member acting in an official capacity is, or is likely to become, a party, when public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency.

This subsection (1)(i) does not permit a governing body to hold an executive session solely because an attorney representing the agency is present. For purposes of this subsection (1)(i), "potential litigation" means matters protected by RPC 1.6 or RCW 5.60.060(2)(a) concerning:

(i) Litigation that has been specifically threatened to which the agency, the governing body, or a member acting in an official capacity is, or is likely to become, a party;

(ii) Litigation that the agency reasonably believes may be commenced by or against the agency, the governing body, or a member acting in an official capacity; or

(iii) Litigation or legal risks of a proposed action or current practice that the agency has identified when public discussion of the litigation or legal risks is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency;

(j) To consider, in the case of the state library commission or its advisory bodies, western library network prices, products, equipment, and services, when such discussion would be likely to adversely affect the network's ability to conduct business in a competitive economic climate. However, final action on these matters shall be taken in a meeting open to the public;

(k) To consider, in the case of the state investment board, financial and commercial information when the information relates to the investment of public trust or retirement funds and when public knowledge regarding the discussion would result in loss to such funds or in private loss to the providers of this information;

(l) To consider proprietary or confidential nonpublished information related to the development, acquisition, or implementation of state purchased health care services as provided in RCW 41.05.026;

(m) To consider in the case of the life sciences discovery fund authority, the substance of grant applications and grant awards when public knowledge regarding the discussion would reasonably be expected to result in private loss to the providers of this information;

(n) To consider in the case of a health sciences and services authority, the substance of grant applications and grant awards when public knowledge regarding the discussion would reasonably be expected to result in private loss to the providers of this information;

(o) To consider information regarding staff privileges or quality improvement committees under RCW 70.41.205;

(p) To consider proprietary or confidential data collected or analyzed pursuant to chapter 70.405 RCW.

(2) Before convening in executive session, the presiding officer of a governing body shall publicly announce the purpose for excluding the public from the meeting place, and the time when the executive session will be concluded. The executive session may be extended to a stated later time by announcement of the presiding officer. The

announced purpose of excluding the public must be entered into the minutes of the meeting required by RCW 42.30.035. [2022 c 153 § 13; 2022 c 115 § 12; 2019 c 162 § 2; 2017 c 137 § 1; 2014 c 174 § 4; 2011 1st sp.s. c 14 § 14; 2010 1st sp.s. c 33 § 5; 2005 c 424 § 13; 2003 c 277 § 1; 2001 c 216 § 1; 1989 c 238 § 2; 1987 c 389 § 3; 1986 c 276 § 8; 1985 c 366 § 2; 1983 c 155 § 3; 1979 c 42 § 1; 1973 c 66 § 2; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 11.]

Reviser's note: This section was amended by 2022 c 115 § 12 and by 2022 c 153 § 13, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

Intent—2014 c 174: See note following RCW 28B.50.902.

Severability—Effective date—1987 c 389: See notes following RCW 41.06.070.

RCW 42.30.120 Violations—Personal liability—Civil penalty—Attorneys' fees and costs. (1) Each member of the governing body who attends a meeting of such governing body where action is taken in violation of any provision of this chapter applicable to him or her, with knowledge of the fact that the meeting is in violation thereof, shall be subject to personal liability in the form of a civil penalty in the amount of five hundred dollars for the first violation.

(2) Each member of the governing body who attends a meeting of a governing body where action is taken in violation of any provision of this chapter applicable to him or her, with knowledge of the fact that the meeting is in violation thereof, and who was previously assessed a penalty under subsection (1) of this section in a final court judgment, shall be subject to personal liability in the form of a civil penalty in the amount of one thousand dollars for any subsequent violation.

(3) The civil penalty shall be assessed by a judge of the superior court and an action to enforce this penalty may be brought by any person. A violation of this chapter does not constitute a crime and assessment of the civil penalty by a judge shall not give rise to any disability or legal disadvantage based on conviction of a criminal offense.

(4) Any person who prevails against a public agency in any action in the courts for a violation of this chapter shall be awarded all costs, including reasonable attorneys' fees, incurred in connection with such legal action. Pursuant to RCW 4.84.185, any public agency which prevails in any action in the courts for a violation of this chapter may be awarded reasonable expenses and attorney fees upon final judgment and written findings by the trial judge that the action was frivolous and advanced without reasonable cause. [2016 c 58 § 1; 2012 c 117 § 126; 1985 c 69 § 1; 1973 c 66 § 3; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 12.]

RCW 42.30.130 Violations—Mandamus or injunction. Any person may commence an action either by mandamus or injunction for the

purpose of stopping violations or preventing threatened violations of this chapter by members of a governing body. [1971 ex.s. c 250 § 13.]

RCW 42.30.140 Chapter controlling—Application. If any provision of this chapter conflicts with the provisions of any other statute, the provisions of this chapter shall control: PROVIDED, That this chapter shall not apply to:

(1) The proceedings concerned with the formal issuance of an order granting, suspending, revoking, or denying any license, permit, or certificate to engage in any business, occupation, or profession or to any disciplinary proceedings involving a member of such business, occupation, or profession, or to receive a license for a sports activity or to operate any mechanical device or motor vehicle where a license or registration is necessary; or

(2) That portion of a meeting of a quasi-judicial body which relates to a quasi-judicial matter between named parties as distinguished from a matter having general effect on the public or on a class or group; or

(3) Matters governed by chapter 34.05 RCW, the Administrative Procedure Act; or

(4) (a) Collective bargaining sessions with employee organizations, including contract negotiations, grievance meetings, and discussions relating to the interpretation or application of a labor agreement; or (b) that portion of a meeting during which the governing body is planning or adopting the strategy or position to be taken by the governing body during the course of any collective bargaining, professional negotiations, or grievance or mediation proceedings, or reviewing the proposals made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress. [1990 c 98 § 1; 1989 c 175 § 94; 1973 c 66 § 4; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 14.]

Effective date—1989 c 175: See note following RCW 34.05.010.

Drug reimbursement policy recommendations: RCW 74.09.653.

Mediation testimony competency: RCW 5.60.070 and 5.60.072.

RCW 42.30.200 Governing body of recognized student association at college or university—Chapter applicability to. The multimember student board which is the governing body of the recognized student association at a given campus of a public institution of higher education is hereby declared to be subject to the provisions of the open public meetings act as contained in this chapter, as now or hereafter amended. For the purposes of this section, "recognized student association" shall mean any body at any of the state's colleges and universities which selects officers through a process approved by the student body and which represents the interests of students. Any such body so selected shall be recognized by and registered with the respective boards of trustees and regents of the state's colleges and universities: PROVIDED, That there be no more than one such association representing undergraduate students, no more than one such association representing graduate students, and no more than one such association representing each group of professional

students so recognized and registered at any of the state's colleges or universities. [1980 c 49 § 1.]

RCW 42.30.205 Training. (1) Every member of the governing body of a public agency must complete training on the requirements of this chapter no later than ninety days after the date the member either:

- (a) Takes the oath of office, if the member is required to take an oath of office to assume his or her duties as a public official; or
- (b) Otherwise assumes his or her duties as a public official.

(2) In addition to the training required under subsection (1) of this section, every member of the governing body of a public agency must complete training at intervals of no more than four years as long as the individual is a member of the governing body or public agency.

(3) Training may be completed remotely with technology including but not limited to internet-based training. [2014 c 66 § 2.]

Findings—Short title—Effective date—2014 c 66: See notes following RCW 42.56.150.

RCW 42.30.210 Assistance by attorney general. The attorney general's office may provide information, technical assistance, and training on the provisions of this chapter. [2001 c 216 § 2.]

RCW 42.30.220 Recording or online streaming by agency encouraged. (1) Public agencies are encouraged to make an audio or video recording of, or to provide an online streaming option for, all regular meetings of its governing body, and to make recordings of these meetings available online for a minimum of six months.

(2) This section does not alter a local government's recordkeeping requirements under chapter 42.56 RCW. [2022 c 115 § 4.]

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

RCW 42.30.230 Declared emergencies—Remote meeting—Limits on physical attendance. (1) If, after the declaration of an emergency by a local or state government or agency, or by the federal government, a public agency determines that it cannot hold a meeting of the governing body with members or public attendance in person with reasonable safety because of the emergency, the public agency may:

- (a) Hold a remote meeting of the governing body without a physical location; or
- (b) Hold a meeting of the governing body at which the physical attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a declared emergency.

(2) During a remote meeting, members of the governing body may appear or attend by phone or by other electronic means that allows real-time verbal communication without being in the same physical location. For a remote meeting or a meeting at which the physical attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a declared emergency, the public agency must provide an option for the public to listen to the proceedings telephonically or by using a readily available alternative in real-time that does not require any

additional cost for participation. Free readily available options include, but are not limited to, broadcast by the public agency on a locally available cable television station that is available throughout the jurisdiction or other electronic, internet, or other means of remote access that does not require any additional cost for access to the program. The public agency may also allow the other electronic means of remote access.

(3) No action may be taken at a remote meeting or a meeting at which the physical attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a declared emergency if the public agency has not provided an option for the public to listen to proceedings pursuant to subsection (2) of this section, except for an executive session as authorized in this chapter.

(4) Notice of a remote meeting without a physical location or a meeting at which the physical attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a declared emergency must be provided in accordance with this chapter and must include instructions on how the public may listen live to proceedings and on how the public may access any other electronic means of remote access offered by the public agency.

(5) A remote meeting or a meeting at which the physical attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a declared emergency that is held under the provisions of this section shall be considered open and public in compliance with the requirements of this chapter. Nothing in this section alters the ability of public agencies to take action in response to an emergency as provided for in RCW 42.30.070, or to have members of a governing body participate in a meeting remotely with no declared emergency.

(6) Notwithstanding any other provision in this section, any governing body of a public agency which held some of its regular meetings remotely prior to March 1, 2020, may continue to hold some of its regular meetings remotely with no declared emergency so long as the public agency provides an option for the public to listen to the proceedings pursuant to subsection (2) of this section. [2022 c 115 § 5.]

Effective date—2022 c 115 §§ 5-11: "Sections 5 through 11 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and take effect immediately [March 24, 2022]." [2022 c 115 § 15.]

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: "The legislature finds and declares that, due to technological advances since the 1971 adoption of the open public meetings act, elected officials no longer conduct the public's business solely at in-person meetings, but can and do utilize telephonic and other electronic methods to efficiently conduct the business of state and local government remotely. Further, limitations on public gatherings required as the result of a disaster or emergency, for example, to assist in preventing the spread of infectious diseases, may affirmatively necessitate the use of technology and the avoidance of in-person attendance at public meetings for the conduct of governmental business. It is the policy of the state that a governing body's actions, including deliberations, shall be taken and conducted in the open. When the public cannot observe and participate in person, it may limit participation in

democracy. Therefore, this act shall be construed in favor of ensuring access by the public to observe elected officials when they meet pursuant to this act. It is the intent of this act to modernize and update the open public meetings act emergency procedures to reflect technological advances, while maintaining the act's public policy that governing body's actions and deliberations be taken and conducted openly while balancing public safety in emergency conditions. Governing bodies are encouraged to adopt resolutions or ordinances establishing where and how meetings will be held in the event of an emergency, in order to allow the public to more easily learn about and observe public agency action in an emergent situation.

The legislature further finds people participating in their government, especially through public comment, is an essential part of developing public policy. The legislature finds that there are numerous developing technologies that can be used to facilitate public comment, especially for those with disabilities, underserved communities, and those who face time or distance challenges when traveling to public meetings. Therefore, the legislature intends to encourage public agencies to make use of remote access tools as fully as practicable to encourage public engagement and better serve their communities." [2022 c 115 § 1.]

RCW 42.30.240 Public comment. (1) Except in an emergency situation, the governing body of a public agency shall provide an opportunity at or before every regular meeting at which final action is taken for public comment. The public comment required under this section may be taken orally at a public meeting, or by providing an opportunity for written testimony to be submitted before or at the meeting. If the governing body accepts written testimony, this testimony must be distributed to the governing body. The governing body may set a reasonable deadline for the submission of written testimony before the meeting.

(2) Upon the request of any individual who will have difficulty attending a meeting of the governing body of a public agency by reason of disability, limited mobility, or for any other reason that makes physical attendance at a meeting difficult, the governing body shall, when feasible, provide an opportunity for that individual to provide oral comment at the meeting remotely if oral comment from other members of the public will be accepted at the meeting.

(3) Nothing in this section prevents a governing body from allowing public comment on items not on the meeting agenda.

(4) Nothing in this section diminishes the authority of governing bodies to deal with interruptions under RCW 42.30.050, limits the ability of the governing body to put limitations on the time available for public comment or on how public comment is accepted, or requires a governing body to accept public comment that renders orderly conduct of the meeting unfeasible. [2022 c 115 § 13.]

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

RCW 42.30.900 Short title. This chapter may be known and cited as the Washington state open public meetings act or OPMA. [2022 c 115 § 14; 1971 ex.s. c 250 § 16.]

Findings—Intent—2022 c 115: See note following RCW 42.30.230.

RCW 42.30.910 Construction—1971 ex.s. c 250. The purposes of this chapter are hereby declared remedial and shall be liberally construed. [1971 ex.s. c 250 § 18.]