



Open Meetings Act and Ethics Laws

Brittany Steele Sendi, *Assistant Legal Counsel*

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What We Will Cover



Open Meetings
Act



Ohio Ethics
Laws



Open Meetings: Why Do We Care?

Good government

Visible and important to public and media

Transparency



Open Meetings Act

Who is subject to the Open Meetings Act and when?

What are the meeting requirements?

Consequences and penalties for failing to comply?



Who is Subject and When?

Public Body

A group, or similar decision making body that is created by law and any committees or sub-committees that group creates

Meeting

A pre-arranged gathering of a majority of members of a public body for the purpose of discussing and conducting business



Meeting Requirements

- **Prearranged:** Proper notice depending on type of meeting.
- **Majority of members:** Must have a quorum and members must be present, in person. Note that the majority requirement is for the whole public body and committees.
- **Discussing and Conducting Business:** Act of weighing and examining reasons for or against a choice.



Three Obligations

Give appropriate **NOTICE**

Take action and deliberate in **OPEN**

Take and file **MINUTES**



Notice

1

Regular Meetings: Held at prescheduled intervals

Special Meetings: Any meeting other than a regular meeting



Open

2

Meetings must be held in public forum, including work sessions and committee meetings.

Discussions and deliberations must occur in the open, except as otherwise provided by law.



Minutes

3

Minutes of meetings shall be promptly prepared, filed and maintained and shall be open to the public.

Must accurately reflect the actions taken at the meeting.



Public Records

- Minutes and handouts are public records.
- Personal notes are not a public record IF created for the member's convenience ***and*** only reviewed by the individual who drafted the notes.



Consequences/Penalties

- Fines
- Injunctions
- Court Costs
- Attorney Fees
- Action Invalidated
- Removal from Office



Ohio Ethics Laws



Sources of conflict of interest

Financial

Familial

Professional

Personal



Prohibitions

Using
authority or
influence to
secure
something of
value

Soliciting or
accepting
something of
value

Being paid for
personal
services
rendered on
matters before,
or sell goods
or services to,
your board or
commission

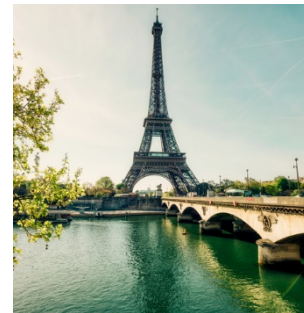


“To accept or not to accept; that is the question...”

No biggie...



Bad idea...



When a Conflict Arises

- Notify Council Chair in advance of meeting;
and
- Abstain/Recuse, which includes:

Voting	Deciding
Discussing	Deliberating
Recommending	Reviewing
Inspecting	Investigating



Questions?

Contact: Ohio Ethics Commission

www.ethics.ohio.gov

(614) 466-7090



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