

**PLANNING COMMISSION  
RULES OF PROCEDURE AND ETHICS  
OF THE  
TOWN OF EAST MONTPELIER, VERMONT**

**Article 1. Governing Rules**

- 1.1 **Source of Authority:** The Planning Commission of the Town of East Montpelier shall be governed by the provisions of all applicable state statutes, municipal bylaws, and these Rules in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4461(a) and 1 V.S.A. §312(e), (f), and (h).
- 1.2 **Establishment of the Planning Commission:** As used in the rules, the term “Commission” shall mean the Planning Commission duly created by the legislative body of the Town of East Montpelier, under the authority of 24 V.S.A. §4321, and the voters of East Montpelier, under 24 V.S.A. §4323(c).
- 1.3 **Purpose:** To perform acts and functions, as the Commission deems necessary or appropriate, to fulfill the duties and obligations imposed by Chapter 117 of Title 24 V.S.A., as the same now provides or may hereafter be amended; to ensure consistent and fair treatment of participants, orderly and reasonably efficient public proceedings, and compliance with state and federal law; and to ensure that no commission member will gain a personal or financial advantage from his or her work for the Commission, so that the public trust in municipal government will be preserved.
- 1.4 **Responsibilities:** The Commission shall have the following specific responsibilities: create and update periodically the Town Plan, Land Use Development Regulations, and other related regulations; and may perform other duties as set forth in 24 V.S.A. §4325.

**Article 2. Membership**

- 2.1 **Election:** The Planning Commission shall consist of nine voting members, elected by the Town at its annual Town Meeting, for a term of three years, or as otherwise designated under the provisions of 24 V.S.A. §§4322 and 4323 (c). Terms of members shall be staggered so that three members will be elected each year.
- 2.2 **Resignation, Vacancies:** Resignations shall be given in writing to the Chairperson, who shall then notify the Select Board and request that an appointment be made to fill the vacancy until the next meeting of the municipality, at which time the voters shall elect a commissioner to fill the unexpired term. The Select Board shall fill all vacancies as soon as possible.
- 2.3 **Orientation:** The Commission Chairperson shall ensure that newly elected Commission members receive an orientation to the responsibilities of the Commission and to the laws and regulations under which it functions within three months of their election or appointment. The entire Commission shall review, and amend as necessary, these Rules annually in the month of April.

### **Article 3. Officers and Duties**

- 3.1 **Election of Officers:** The Commission shall elect by majority vote a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary, annually in the month of April. These officers shall perform the duties prescribed by state law, municipal bylaws, and these Rules.
- 3.2 **Duties of the Chairperson:** The Chairperson shall ensure that those who have a right to participate realize that right, and to allow for those in attendance to be heard; preside at all meetings, hearings, and deliberations of the Commission; decide all questions of order and procedure subject to these Rules; have all other usual powers of supervision and management as may pertain to the Office of Chairperson for the efficient conduct of commission business; and perform such other duties as directed by the Commission. The Chairperson shall be the official spokesperson on behalf of the Planning Commission. The Chairperson's signature shall be the official signature of the Commission. The Chairperson has the right to vote, the right to make and second motions, and the right to question participants, just as any other member of the board.
- 3.3 **Duties of the Vice Chairperson:** The Vice Chairperson shall assume the duties and powers of the Chairperson in his or her absence, or at the Chairperson's request.
- 3.4 **Acting Chairperson:** If both the Chairperson and Vice-chairperson are absent from a meeting at which there is a quorum present, the members present shall elect an acting chairperson who shall assume the duties of the chairperson for the meeting at which he or she is elected. The acting chairperson's office shall terminate upon return of the Chairperson or Vice-chairperson.
- 3.5 **Duties of the Secretary:** The Secretary or designated alternate shall conduct all official correspondence of the Commission, subject to these Rules and the direction of the Commission, and perform such other duties as the Chairperson and the Commission may designate.
- 3.6 **Recording Clerk:** The Zoning Administrator shall be the Recording Clerk, unless the Commission designates otherwise. The Clerk shall keep minutes of all meetings, hearings, and proceedings of the Commission, subject to these Rules and the direction of the Commission. The Clerk shall also record the names of all who participate orally and in writing at Commission meetings and hearings in the meeting minutes; and perform such other duties as the Chairperson and the Commission may designate. The Clerk shall be paid at a rate determined by the Selectboard.
- 3.7 **Vacancies of Officers:** Any vacancy among the officers of the Commission shall be filled by election, for the unexpired term, at the next regular meeting of the Commission.

## **Article 4. Conduct of Business**

4.1 **Records:** The Commission shall keep a full and accurate record of its business, including minutes of each meeting and attendance; all motions, proposals, and resolutions made, offered, and considered, and what disposition is made of these. Minutes for meetings of the Commission shall be posted on the town website (<https://eastmontpeliervt.org>) and filed with the Town Clerk within five days following the meeting date. For the purpose of this provision, draft minutes may be filed and later replaced by the final approved minutes. It shall be the duty of all members to review the minutes and other official records of Commission meetings and actions, and correct and ratify these when appropriate and necessary. All Commission records shall be maintained by the Recording Clerk in a central file located in the Municipal Office Building and shall be available to the public, in conformance with the Vermont Public Records Act (1 V.S.A. §§315-320) as the same now provides or is hereafter amended.

4.2 **Annual Report:** The Commission shall make an annual report to the Town.

## **Article 5. Meetings and Hearings**

5.1 **Regular Meetings:** The Regular meeting of the Planning Commission shall be held in the Municipal Office Building at 7:00 p.m. on the first and third Thursday of each month, unless there is no business to transact, in which case no meeting shall be held. The Zoning Administrator, at the direction of the Chairperson, or Vice Chairperson in his or her absence, shall give each member of the Commission at least 24 hours prior notice of cancellation of such meeting. Members may participate by telephone, or other available electronic means, as long as the absent member can hear everything that is occurring at the meeting and everyone present at the meeting can hear the board member. There shall be an agenda for each meeting, with time allotted for each item or group of items to be considered. Those who wish to be added to the agenda shall contact the Chairperson to arrange for a convenient time. The Chairperson shall determine the content of the agenda with input from members and shall include a ten-minute period of time reserved for public comment.

5.2 **Special Meetings:** Special meetings of the Commission may be called by the Chairperson, provided that at least twenty-four (24) hours notice of the time, place and business of such meeting shall be given each member of the Commission.

5.3 **Meeting Notice:** Notice of any regular meeting of the Commission shall state the meeting and place. Notice of a special meeting shall be provided to all concerned parties at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to such meeting and shall state the time, place and general nature of business to be discussed. Meeting agendas shall be posted on the town website (<https://eastmontpeliervt.org>) and in three (3) public locations at least 48 hours before a regular Planning Commission meeting and 24 hours before any special, non-emergency Planning Commission meeting.

- 5.4 **Hearing Notice:** Public hearings of the Planning Commission shall be noticed in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4464, and these Rules. Notice of any public hearing shall be posted in at least three public places and in a newspaper of general publication in the town, and shall state the general nature of business to be discussed, and the time and place of the hearing. This notice shall be made no less than 15 days prior to the hearing.

When a public hearing is recessed, its continuance shall not require further public notification as required herein provided that the date, time, and place of the continuance is announced prior to adjournment of the hearing.

Notice for hearings on the adoption, amendment, or repeal of the bylaw and other regulatory tools shall be pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §4444, as amended.

- 5.5 **Open Meetings:** All Commission meetings shall be open to the public and held in conformance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law (1 V.S.A. §§310-314; attached) as the same now provides or may hereafter be amended. All meetings shall be conducted in an open and democratic manner, and questions of meeting conduct shall be resolved according to Robert's Rules of Order (2011 edition).

## **Article 6. Voting**

- 6.1 **Quorum:** For the conduct of a meeting or a hearing and the taking of any action a quorum must be present. A quorum shall be a majority of the members of the Commission with vacancies counted. The Chairperson has the same voting rights as all members and can make motions. For a motion to pass, it must receive the concurrence of a majority of the entire board, regardless of how many are present. [1 V.S.A. §172; 24 V.S.A. §4461(a)]
- 6.2 **Conflicts of Interest:** The Planning Commission and each individual member is bound by the Town of East Montpelier's Conflict of Interest Ordinance, incorporated into this document by reference.

No Commission member shall participate in any hearing or vote on a matter in which he or she has a personal interest; has a direct or indirect financial interest; has exhibited bias or prejudice prior to hearing a case; or has failed to disclose and/or rectify ex parte communications. The disqualified member shall not preside at the hearing or be counted by the Commission establishing the required quorum.

At all hearings, the Chairperson shall request that board members disclose all potential conflicts of interest. When recognized by the Chairperson, any person may request disclosure of potential conflicts of interest. Nonetheless, after disclosing a conflict or perceived conflict, a member who believes that he or she is able to act fairly, objectively, and in the public interest, shall disclose the nature of the potential conflict of interest, and the reason(s) why he or she is able to act in the matter fairly, objectively, and in the public interest. This shall be noted in the minutes of the proceeding.

If the Chairperson is disqualified, the Vice Chairperson shall preside. If the Vice Chairperson is also disqualified, a majority of the remaining Commission members shall designate an Acting Chairperson to preside.

## **Article 7. Hearings**

**7.1 Hearing Procedures:** The Chair shall conduct the hearing in the following manner:

- 7.1.1 Open the hearing by reading the warning of the hearing.
- 7.1.2 Review the order of events, remind all present that the proceeding will be conducted in an orderly manner, and make copies of these Rules available.
- 7.1.3 Request disclosure of conflicts of interest.
- 7.1.4 Accept written information presented to the board.
- 7.1.5 Invite members of the public to present information or opinions regarding the topic of discussion.
- 7.1.6 Invite Commission members to respond to the information presented.
- 7.1.7 Invite more questions or comments from members of the public; invite more questions from members of the board; allow final comments or questions from the public or members of the board.
- 7.1.8 During the meeting or hearing, the presiding officer shall have the power to exclude comments that are immaterial, unduly repetitious, or otherwise unhelpful to the Commission in deciding the issue at hand.
- 7.1.9 Upon motion and majority approval, the Chairperson shall either adjourn the hearing to a time certain, or close the proceedings by stating that this is the final public hearing on the matter.

## **Article 8. Bylaw Amendments**

**8.1 Amendment Procedure:** These Rules may be amended by a majority vote at any meeting having a quorum of members, provided that all Commission members have been presented a written copy of the proposed amendment at least 48 hours before the meeting at which the vote is taken.

Revised and adopted May 5, 2016.

Readopted April 6, 2017; April 5, 2018; April 4, 2019

# **The Vermont Statutes Online**

The statutes were updated in November, 2018, and contain all actions of the 2018 legislative session.

## **Title 1 : General Provisions**

### **Chapter 005 : Common Law; General Rights**

#### **Subchapter 002 : Public Information**

**(Cite as: 1 V.S.A. § 310)**

#### **§ 310. Definitions**

As used in this subchapter:

(1) "Business of the public body" means the public body's governmental functions, including any matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power.

(2) "Deliberations" means weighing, examining, and discussing the reasons for and against an act or decision, but expressly excludes the taking of evidence and the arguments of parties.

(3)(A) "Meeting" means a gathering of a quorum of the members of a public body for the purpose of discussing the business of the public body or for the purpose of taking action.

(B) "Meeting" shall not mean any communication, including in person or through e-mail, telephone, or teleconferencing, between members of a public body for the purpose of scheduling a meeting, organizing an agenda, or distributing materials to discuss at a meeting, provided that:

(i) no other business of the public body is discussed or conducted; and

(ii) such a communication that results in written or recorded information shall be available for inspection and copying under the Public Records Act as set forth in chapter 5, subchapter 3 of this title.

(C) "Meeting" shall not mean occasions when a quorum of a public body attends social gatherings, conventions, conferences, training programs, press conferences, media events, or otherwise gathers, provided that the public body does not discuss specific business of the public body that, at the time of the exchange, the participating members expect to be business of the public body at a later time.

(D) "Meeting" shall not mean a gathering of a quorum of a public body at a duly warned meeting of another public body, provided that the attending public body does not take action on its business.

(4) "Public body" means any board, council, or commission of the State or one or more of its political subdivisions, any board, council, or commission of any agency, authority, or instrumentality of the State or one or more of its political subdivisions, or any committee of any of the foregoing boards, councils, or commissions, except that "public body" does not include councils or similar groups established by the Governor for the sole purpose of advising the Governor with respect to policy.

(5) "Publicly announced" means that notice is given to an editor, publisher, or news director of a newspaper or radio station serving the area of the State in which the public body has jurisdiction, and to any person who has requested under subdivision 312(c)(5) of this title to be notified of special meetings.

(6) "Quasi-judicial proceeding" means a proceeding which is:

(A) a contested case under the Vermont Administrative Procedure Act; or

(B) a case in which the legal rights of one or more persons who are granted party status are adjudicated, which is conducted in such a way that all parties have opportunity to present evidence and to cross-examine witnesses presented by other parties, which results in a written decision, and the result of which is appealable by a party to a higher authority. (Added 1987, No. 256 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; amended 2013, No. 143 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; 2017, No. 166 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)



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## **Title 1 : General Provisions**

### **Chapter 005 : Common Law; General Rights**

#### **Subchapter 002 : Public Information**

**(Cite as: 1 V.S.A. § 311)**

#### **§ 311. Declaration of public policy; short title**

(a) In enacting this subchapter, the legislature finds and declares that public commissions, boards, and councils and other public agencies in this State exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business and are accountable to them pursuant to Chapter I, Article VI of the Vermont Constitution.

(b) This subchapter may be known and cited as the Vermont Open Meeting Law. (Amended 1979, No. 151 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. April 24, 1980.)

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## **Title 1 : General Provisions**

### **Chapter 005 : Common Law; General Rights**

#### **Subchapter 002 : Public Information**

(Cite as: 1 V.S.A. § 312)

#### **§ 312. Right to attend meetings of public agencies**

(a)(1) All meetings of a public body are declared to be open to the public at all times, except as provided in section 313 of this title. No resolution, rule, regulation, appointment, or formal action shall be considered binding except as taken or made at such open meeting, except as provided under subdivision 313(a)(2) of this title. A meeting of a public body is subject to the public accommodation requirements of 9 V.S.A. chapter 139. A public body shall electronically record all public hearings held to provide a forum for public comment on a proposed rule, pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 840. The public shall have access to copies of such electronic recordings as described in section 316 of this title.

(2) Participation in meetings through electronic or other means.

(A) As long as the requirements of this subchapter are met, one or more of the members of a public body may attend a regular, special, or emergency meeting by electronic or other means without being physically present at a designated meeting location.

(B) If one or more members attend a meeting by electronic or other means, such members may fully participate in discussing the business of the public body and voting to take an action, but any

vote of the public body that is not unanimous shall be taken by roll call.

(C) Each member who attends a meeting without being physically present at a designated meeting location shall:

(i) identify himself or herself when the meeting is convened; and

(ii) be able to hear the conduct of the meeting and be heard throughout the meeting.

(D) If a quorum or more of the members of a public body attend a meeting without being physically present at a designated meeting location, the agenda required under subsection (d) of this section shall designate at least one physical location where a member of the public can attend and participate in the meeting. At least one member of the public body, or at least one staff or designee of the public body, shall be physically present at each designated meeting location.

(b)(1) Minutes shall be taken of all meetings of public bodies. The minutes shall cover all topics and motions that arise at the meeting and give a true indication of the business of the meeting. Minutes shall include at least the following minimal information:

(A) all members of the public body present;

(B) all other active participants in the meeting;

(C) all motions, proposals, and resolutions made, offered, and considered, and what disposition is made of same; and

(D) the results of any votes, with a record of the individual vote of each member if a roll call is taken.

(2) Minutes of all public meetings shall be matters of public record, shall be kept by the clerk or secretary of the public body, and shall be available for inspection by any person and for purchase of

copies at cost upon request after five calendar days from the date of any meeting. Meeting minutes shall be posted no later than five calendar days from the date of the meeting to a website, if one exists, that the public body maintains or has designated as the official website of the body. Except for draft minutes that have been substituted with updated minutes, posted minutes shall not be removed from the website sooner than one year from the date of the meeting for which the minutes were taken.

(c)(1) The time and place of all regular meetings subject to this section shall be clearly designated by statute, charter, regulation, ordinance, bylaw, resolution, or other determining authority of the public body, and this information shall be available to any person upon request. The time and place of all public hearings and meetings scheduled by all Executive Branch State agencies, departments, boards, or commissions shall be available to the public as required under 3 V.S.A. § 2222(c).

(2) The time, place, and purpose of a special meeting subject to this section shall be publicly announced at least 24 hours before the meeting. Municipal public bodies shall post notices of special meetings in or near the municipal clerk's office and in at least two other designated public places in the municipality, at least 24 hours before the meeting. In addition, notice shall be given, either orally or in writing, to each member of the public body at least 24 hours before the meeting, except that a member may waive notice of a special meeting.

(3) Emergency meetings may be held without public announcement, without posting of notices, and without 24-hour notice to members, provided some public notice thereof is given as soon as possible before any such meeting. Emergency meetings may be held only when necessary to respond to an unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention by the public body.

(4) Any adjourned meeting shall be considered a new meeting, unless the time and place for the adjourned meeting is announced before the meeting adjourns.

(5) A person may request in writing that a public body notify the person of special meetings of the public body. The request shall apply only to the calendar year in which it is made, unless made in December, in which case it shall apply also to the following year.

(d)(1) At least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting, and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting, a meeting agenda shall be:

(A) posted to a website, if one exists, that the public body maintains or designates as the official website of the body; and

(B) in the case of a municipal public body, posted in or near the municipal office and in at least two other designated public places in the municipality.

(2) A meeting agenda shall be made available to a person prior to the meeting upon specific request.

(3)(A) Any addition to or deletion from the agenda shall be made as the first act of business at the meeting.

(B) Any other adjustment to the agenda may be made at any time during the meeting.

(e) Nothing in this section or in section 313 of this title shall be construed as extending to the Judicial Branch of the Government of Vermont or of any part of the same or to the Public Utility Commission; nor shall it extend to the deliberations of any public body in connection with a quasi-judicial proceeding; nor shall anything in this section be construed to require the making public of any proceedings, records, or acts which are specifically made confidential by the laws of the United States of America or of this State.

(f) A written decision issued by a public body in connection with a quasi-judicial proceeding need not be adopted at an open meeting if the decision will be a public record.

(g) The provisions of this subchapter shall not apply to site inspections for the purpose of assessing damage or making tax assessments or abatements, clerical work, or work assignments of staff or other personnel. Routine, day-to-day administrative matters that do not require action by the public body may be conducted outside a duly warned meeting, provided that no money is appropriated, expended, or encumbered.

(h) At an open meeting, the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to express its opinion on matters considered by the public body during the meeting, as long as order is maintained. Public comment shall be subject to reasonable rules established by the chairperson. This subsection shall not apply to quasi-judicial proceedings.

(i) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the Parole Board from meeting at correctional facilities, with attendance at the meeting subject to rules regarding access and security established by the superintendent of the facility. (Amended 1973, No. 78, § 1, eff. April 23, 1973; 1979, No. 151 (Adj. Sess.), § 2; 1987, No. 256 (Adj. Sess.), § 2; 1997, No. 148 (Adj. Sess.), § 64, eff. April 29, 1998; 1999, No. 146 (Adj. Sess.), § 7; 2013, No. 143 (Adj. Sess.), § 2; 2015, No. 129 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. May 24, 2016.)

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## **Title 1 : General Provisions**

### **Chapter 005 : Common Law; General Rights**

#### **Subchapter 002 : Public Information**

**(Cite as: 1 V.S.A. § 313)**

#### **§ 313. Executive sessions**

(a) No public body may hold an executive session from which the public is excluded, except by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of its members present in the case of any public body of State government or of a majority of its members present in the case of any public body of a municipality or other political subdivision. A motion to go into executive session shall indicate the nature of the business of the executive session, and no other matter may be considered in the executive session. Such vote shall be taken in the course of an open meeting and the result of the vote recorded in the minutes. No formal or binding action shall be taken in executive session except for actions relating to the securing of real estate options under subdivision (2) of this subsection. Minutes of an executive session need not be taken, but if they are, the minutes shall, notwithstanding subsection 312(b) of this title, be exempt from public copying and inspection under the Public Records Act. A public body may not hold an executive session except to consider one or more of the following:

(1) after making a specific finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage:

(A) contracts;

(B) labor relations agreements with employees;

(C) arbitration or mediation;

(D) grievances, other than tax grievances;

(E) pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution, to which the public body is or may be a party;

(F) confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body;

(2) the negotiating or securing of real estate purchase or lease options;

(3) the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, provided that the public body shall make a final decision to hire or appoint a public officer or employee in an open meeting and shall explain the reasons for its final decision during the open meeting;

(4) a disciplinary or dismissal action against a public officer or employee; but nothing in this subsection shall be construed to impair the right of such officer or employee to a public hearing if formal charges are brought;

(5) a clear and imminent peril to the public safety;

(6) records exempt from the access to public records provisions of section 316 of this title; provided, however, that discussion of the exempt record shall not itself permit an extension of the executive session to the general subject to which the record pertains;

(7) the academic records or suspension or discipline of students;



(8) testimony from a person in a parole proceeding conducted by the Parole Board if public disclosure of the identity of the person could result in physical or other harm to the person;

(9) information relating to a pharmaceutical rebate or to supplemental rebate agreements, which is protected from disclosure by federal law or the terms and conditions required by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as a condition of rebate authorization under the Medicaid program, considered pursuant to 33 V.S.A. §§ 1998(f)(2) and 2002(c);

(10) security or emergency response measures, the disclosure of which could jeopardize public safety.

(b) Attendance in executive session shall be limited to members of the public body, and, in the discretion of the public body, its staff, clerical assistants and legal counsel, and persons who are subjects of the discussion or whose information is needed.

(c) The Senate and House of Representatives, in exercising the power to make their own rules conferred by Chapter II of the Vermont Constitution, shall be governed by the provisions of this section in regulating the admission of the public as provided in Chapter II, § 8 of the Constitution. (Amended 1973, No. 78, § 2, eff. April 23, 1973; 1979, No. 151 (Adj. Sess.), § 3, eff. April 24, 1980; 1987, No. 256 (Adj. Sess.), §§ 3, 4; 1997, No. 148 (Adj. Sess.), § 65, eff. April 29, 1998; 2005, No. 71, § 308a, eff. June 21, 2005; 2011, No. 59, § 7; 2013, No. 143 (Adj. Sess.), § 3; 2015, No. 23, § 1; 2017, No. 95 (Adj. Sess.), § 1, eff. April 11, 2018.)

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### **Chapter 005 : Common Law; General Rights**

#### **Subchapter 002 : Public Information**

**(Cite as: 1 V.S.A. § 314)**

#### **§ 314. Penalty and enforcement**

(a) A person who is a member of a public body and who knowingly and intentionally violates the provisions of this subchapter, a person who knowingly and intentionally violates the provisions of this subchapter on behalf or at the behest of a public body, or a person who knowingly and intentionally participates in the wrongful exclusion of any person or persons from any meeting subject to this subchapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be fined not more than \$500.00.

(b)(1) Prior to instituting an action under subsection (c) of this section, the Attorney General or any person aggrieved by a violation of the provisions of this subchapter shall provide the public body written notice that alleges a specific violation of this subchapter and requests a specific cure of such violation. The public body will not be liable for attorney's fees and litigation costs under subsection (d) of this section if it cures in fact a violation of this subchapter in accordance with the requirements of this subsection.

(2) Upon receipt of the written notice of alleged violation, the public body shall respond publicly to the alleged violation within 10 calendar days by:

(A) acknowledging the violation of this subchapter and stating an intent to cure the violation within 14 calendar days; or

(B) stating that the public body has determined that no violation has occurred and that no cure is necessary.

(3) Failure of a public body to respond to a written notice of alleged violation within 10 calendar days shall be treated as a denial of the violation for purposes of enforcement of the requirements of this subchapter.

(4) Within 14 calendar days after a public body acknowledges a violation under subdivision (2)(A) of this subsection, the public body shall cure the violation at an open meeting by:

(A) either ratifying, or declaring as void, any action taken at or resulting from:

(i) a meeting that was not noticed in accordance with subsection 312(c) of this title; or

(ii) a meeting that a person or the public was wrongfully excluded from attending; or

(iii) an executive session or portion thereof not authorized under subdivisions 313(a)(1)-(10) of this title; and

(B) adopting specific measures that actually prevent future violations.

(c) Following an acknowledgment or denial of a violation and, if applicable, following expiration of the 14-calendar-day cure period for public bodies acknowledging a violation, the Attorney General or any person aggrieved by a violation of the provisions of this subchapter may bring an action in the Civil Division of the Superior Court in the county in which the violation has taken place for appropriate injunctive relief or for a declaratory judgment. An action may be brought under this section no later than one year after the meeting at which the alleged violation occurred or to which the

alleged violation relates. Except as to cases the court considers of greater importance, proceedings before the Civil Division of the Superior Court, as authorized by this section and appeals therefrom, take precedence on the docket over all cases and shall be assigned for hearing and trial or for argument at the earliest practicable date and expedited in every way.

(d) The court shall assess against a public body found to have violated the requirements of this subchapter reasonable attorney's fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in any case under this subchapter in which the complainant has substantially prevailed, unless the court finds that:

(1)(A) the public body had a reasonable basis in fact and law for its position; and

(B) the public body acted in good faith. In determining whether a public body acted in good faith, the court shall consider, among other factors, whether the public body responded to a notice of an alleged violation of this subchapter in a timely manner under subsection (b) of this section; or

(2) the public body cured the violation in accordance with subsection (b) of this section. (Amended 1979, No. 151 (Adj. Sess.), § 4, eff. April 24, 1980; 1987, No. 256 (Adj. Sess.), § 5; 2013, No. 143 (Adj. Sess.), § 4; 2015, No. 129 (Adj. Sess.), § 2, eff. May 24, 2016; 2017, No. 113 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)