

Pandemic-Era Open Meeting Law Rules Extended to June of 2027

March 28, 2025

Today, Governor Maura Healey signed into law [H.62](#), as amended by [S.2506](#) (which contains the final form of the bill), entitled “An Act Relative to Extending Certain COVID-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency” (“Act”). Of interest to all governmental public bodies in Massachusetts, the Act extends until June, 2027, the authority for meetings of multiple-member bodies to be held in an entirely remote or hybrid format. The Act also extends two important provisions for towns: (1) allowing a reduction in the quorum for an open or representative town meeting, regardless of any quorum established by charter or bylaw, and, (2) authorization for representative town meetings to be held remotely.

First promulgated as an Executive Order in March, 2020, and later continued through several actions of the General Court, public bodies were authorized to hold fully remote and hybrid meetings under the Open Meeting Law notwithstanding the otherwise applicable provisions of [950 CMR 29.10](#). The referenced regulations, promulgated by the Office of the Attorney General, required a quorum to be physically present at the meeting location in order for any other member to participate remotely. The Executive Order, in contrast, allowed public bodies to hold remote and hybrid meetings without a physical quorum present, provided that the public body provided “adequate, alternative means of public access”. Since originally enacted, and as extended by the General Court several times, public bodies throughout state and local government have held innumerable remote and hybrid board and committee meetings. The extension authorized by the Act will expire on June 30, 2027.

The legislation passed today extends the following pandemic-era provisions:

Hybrid Meetings for Boards & Committees

- All public bodies may hold fully remote or hybrid meetings, without the physical presence of a quorum of the public body, as long as “adequate, alternative means” of public access is also provided.

Quorum Modifications for Town Meetings

- In towns, pursuant to the provisions of Section 15 of [Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022](#), as amended, the Select Board, with the approval of the Town Moderator, may reduce the required quorum for a Town Meeting to no less than 10% of that established by charter or bylaw. The Act provided authority to reduce the quorum for a town meeting through June, 2027, rather than only during the COVID-19 pandemic. Briefly, the follow process is required:
 - The Select Board provides notice of its intention to vote on a quorum reduction not less than 7 days prior to the vote, through one or more of the following methods: posting on its website,

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- posting on a town bulletin board, sending notice through a listserv, publishing in an on-line or printed newspaper, as well as posting in the manner required by the Open Meeting Law; and
- Not less than 10 days after such a vote by the Select Board, the Town Clerk must notify the attorney general of the adjusted quorum requirement.

Remote Representative Town Meetings

- Representative town meetings may be held remotely, consistent with the requirements set forth in Section 26 of [Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022](#), as amended by the Act. The Act made this option available through June, 2027, eliminating the provision permitting remote representative town meetings only during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Briefly, the process for holding a remote town meeting requires: (1) the Moderator to request in writing that the Select Board call for a remote representative town meeting; (2) approval of the Select Board; (3) posting of a warrant including the time, date and place of the remote meeting, meeting access information, and, if desired, the time, date and physical location town meeting will occur if the meeting is held in person; (4) approval of the representative town meeting to hold the meeting remotely, determined as the first item of business for the meeting; and, if approved (5) any roll call votes shall be recorded and kept with the minutes of the meeting. This synopsis provides only a general summary of the applicable detailed procedures for holding a remote Representative Town Meeting, and, therefore, if a town wishes to hold such a meeting remotely, consultation should be had with counsel to ensure that all required procedural steps are properly executed.

Summary

This extension, while widely anticipated, formally allows public bodies to continue to hold fully remote or hybrid meetings without requiring the presence of a physical quorum, as long as public access requirements are met, and reauthorizes other pandemic-era provisions allowing Towns additional flexibility with respect to town meetings. Several other bills are pending before the General Court, including the bill refiled by the Governor entitled, "[An Act Empowering Municipalities and Local Governments](#)", addressing these and other issues of interest to municipalities.

As always, we continue to monitor legislative action impacting municipalities and will provide periodic updates concerning important developments.

If you have any questions concerning the Open Meeting Law in this changing legal environment, please contact Attorneys [Lauren Goldberg](#), [Janelle Austin](#), or your KP Law attorney.

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