Open Meetings of Public Agencies

What is a Meeting?
A meeting means any kind of gathering, including video calls, where public business is discussed. This applies whether the meeting is regular, special, formal, or informal.

What is a Public Agency?
A public agency is any government organization, like a board, commission, or committee, created by local or state laws.

What is a Video Teleconference?
A video teleconference is when people meet virtually and can see and hear each other through video calls.

Are Meetings Open to the Public?
If a public agency meets to discuss business or make decisions, the meeting must be open to the public.

Video Teleconference Meetings

Can Public Agencies Use Video Calls?
Yes, public agencies can hold meetings via video calls, such as through Zoom or Microsoft Teams. These meetings must follow certain rules to make sure they are secure and accessible to the public.

Key Rules for Video Meetings:

- **Publish Meeting Dates**: Regular meeting schedules must be made public.
- **Announce Special Meetings**: Special meetings must be announced 24 hours in advance.
- **Share the Agenda**: Meeting agendas must be posted 24 hours ahead of time.
- **Set Participation Rules**: Specify how members and the public can join and speak.
- **Pause the Meeting for Interruptions**: If there's a technical issue, the meeting should stop until the problem is fixed.

Guidelines for Video Teleconference Meetings

Before the Meeting:

- **Turn on the Waiting Room**: This lets you control who enters the meeting. You can add a title, logo, and meeting guidelines.
- **Use a Random Meeting ID**: Avoid using your personal meeting ID to keep it secure.
- **Require a Passcode**: Make sure only invited people can join.
- **Consider Registration**: Ask attendees to sign up ahead of time.
- **Limit Who Can Join**: Only let trusted or verified users attend.

During the Meeting:

- **Control Screen Sharing**: Decide who can share their screen.
- **Disable Private Chat**: Stop private messages between participants.
- **Turn Off Annotations**: Don't let people draw on shared screens.
- **Mute Participants**: Keep noise down by muting those who aren't speaking.
- **Co-Hosts**: Assign trusted people to help run the meeting.
- **Remove Unwanted Attendees**: Kick out people who shouldn't be there.

After the Meeting:

- **Record Attendees**: Keep track of who attended.
- **Save the Meeting**: Keep the audio or video recording for public viewing.
- **Take Minutes**: Write a summary of what was discussed.

How to Join a Meeting

To join a virtual meeting, members need:

- **A Device with a Camera**: You can use a computer or phone with a camera and internet connection.
- **Internet Access**: You need to be online to join.

Help for New Users
Agencies should offer tech training for members, so they know how to join and participate in meetings.