



## TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

Melissa Cordeiro, Town Clerk

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### M E M O R A N D U M

TO: ALL BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

FROM: Melissa Cordeiro, Town Clerk

RE: Open Meetings/Public Records

Date: October 25, 2024

To ensure a clear understanding of the responsibilities of boards and commissions regarding open meetings, the following processes must be followed:

- As per RIGL § 42-46-6(a), it is mandatory for all public bodies to provide **written notice of their regularly scheduled meetings at the beginning of each calendar year**. This notice should include the dates, times, and locations of all meetings and must be available to the public upon request. Furthermore, this notice must be posted online with the Secretary of State.
  - *Please submit a copy of your 2025 annual meeting schedule to our office no later than December 1st, 2024.*
- In accordance with RIGL § 42-46-6(b), in addition to the annual notice, public bodies must post a supplementary written notice to the public at least forty-eight (48) hours before each scheduled meeting, excluding weekends and State holidays. This notice should include the date of posting, date and time of the meeting, location of the meeting, and a statement specifying the nature of the business to be discussed.
- Please note that while our office preserves the Town Hall posting for the required one-year period, we are **NOT** responsible for posting your meeting agendas. It is the responsibility of the respective boards to ensure that meetings are appropriately posted at Town Hall, the post office, or any other relevant location, and with the Secretary of State through the mandatory web posting.
  - *Please refrain from requesting members of the staff to undertake this responsibility on your behalf. It is imperative that each board ensures the proper posting of meeting agendas at the designated locations.*

- Public bodies are required to make the unofficial minutes of a meeting available at their principal office either within thirty-five (35) days of the meeting or at the next regularly scheduled meeting, as outlined in R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-7(b). Additionally, all public bodies must maintain official/approved minutes of all open meetings and file a copy of these minutes with the Secretary of State within thirty-five (35) days of the meeting.
  - *However, this requirement does not apply to public bodies with advisory responsibilities, as per R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-7(d).*
- Moreover, Town Ordinance (§2-09) mandates that all boards and commissions answerable to the Town Council must provide copies of their minutes to the Council on a monthly basis. It is crucial to note that some bodies have not been complying with this requirement, emphasizing the importance of all bodies adhering to this regulation to ensure transparency and accountability in our processes.
  - *For submission, minutes may be sent via email to [deputyclerk@bristolri.gov](mailto:deputyclerk@bristolri.gov), or dropped off at the Town Clerk's Office. These minutes will be distributed to the Council and will become part of the Council's permanent record.*

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Please feel free to contact me if you should have any questions or concerns.