

## Michigan Open Meetings Act (OMA) Public Act 267 of 1976

### What is the Open Meetings Act?

The **Open Meetings Act (OMA)** requires that public bodies conduct business openly so the public can:

- Attend meetings
- Observe discussions and decisions
- Access minutes and public records

**Purpose:** Transparency, accountability, and public trust.

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### Who Must Follow OMA?

OMA applies to **public bodies**, including:

- City Commission / Council
- Planning Commission
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- Committees created by a governing body

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### What Counts as a “Meeting”?

A meeting occurs when:

- A **quorum** is present **and**
- Members discuss, deliberate, or act on public business

### Key Requirements

#### 1. Meetings Must Be Open

All meetings must be open to the public unless a lawful closed session applies.

#### 2. Public Notice Must Be Posted

Notices must include:

Date  
Time  
Location

**\*Special meetings require at least 18 hours’ notice.**

#### 3. Minutes Are Required

- Minutes must be documented:
- Members present/absent
- Motions and votes
- Decisions made

- Draft minutes available within **8 business days.**

### 4. Decisions Must Be Made Publicly

Boards may not make decisions outside open meetings.

- No private votes
- No informal decision-making

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### Closed Sessions (Limited Exceptions)

Closed sessions are allowed only for specific reasons, such as:

- Pending litigation (attorney-client strategy)
- Purchase/sale of real estate
- Labor negotiations
- Certain personnel matters

### Closed sessions require:

- Motion stating legal reasons
- Roll call vote
- Separate minutes kept

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### Common OMA Violations to Avoid

- Email/text discussions involving a quorum
- “Pre-meetings” where decisions are made
- Improper use of closed session
- Failure to post meeting notice correctly

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### Best Practices for Board Members

- Keep deliberations in open session
- Avoid quorum discussions outside meetings
- Use closed sessions sparingly and legally
- When unsure, consult the Clerk

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**OMA ensures the public can witness how decisions are made—not just the final vote.**

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## Minutes

### Required by Law

- Date, time, and location
  - Members present and absent
  - Motions (clearly stated)
  - Decisions made
  - Roll call votes (who voted yes/no/abstained)
  - Purpose for closed session
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### What Minutes Should Be

Accurate • Clear • Concise (not a transcript)

How to Write Good Minutes

- Record full motions with names and details
  - Always include clear vote results
  - Briefly summarize topics discussed
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### What NOT To Do

- Do not write transcripts
  - Do not summarize individual opinions
  - Avoid vague statements like 'discussion was held' or 'motion passed.'
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### Common Mistakes

- Missing roll call votes
  - Vague motions
  - No clear record of decisions
  - Overly detailed minutes
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### Closed Session

- Must be recorded
  - Not public
  - Must state purpose
  - Must be kept securely
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### Simple Rules

- If it was voted on, record it clearly
  - Can someone understand this later?
  - Minutes protect the board
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### Why It Matters

- Protects the board, Legal record
  - Transparency
  - Prevents challenge
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## Board Conduct and Expectations

### Core Responsibilities

- Act in the best interest of the public
- Make decisions in open meetings
- Respect the authority of the board as a whole

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### Durning Meetings

**DO:** Stay on topic, Listen, Address Chair, Ask Clean Questions

**DON'T:** Interrupt, Side Conversations, Dominate, Argue with the public

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### Decision- Making

- Base decisions on facts and policy
- Avoid pre-deciding
- Deliberation happens in the meeting- not before

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**Outside the Meeting:** Do not discuss board business via email, text, social media, or informal gatherings

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### Public Interaction

Be respectful. Do not argue. Stay professional

“Thank you for your comment.”

“The Board will consider that.”

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**Working with Others:** Respect differences. Focus on issues, not people. Support board decisions once made.

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**Role of the Chair:** Maintain order. Ensure participation. Keep the discussion on track. Clarify motions

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**Common Issues** Side conversations: interruptions, outside deliberations, and personal conflicts.

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**Professionalism:** You represent the City, Be respectful, calm, and professional at all times.

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**Key Rules:** If it's not in a meeting, don't discuss it. Respect the process. Your conduct reflects the entire board

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**When in doubt:** Ask the Clerk or Chair before acting.

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