

# TEMPORARY OPEN MEETINGS LAW RELIEF

*Hodgson Russ Education Alert*  
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Earlier today, the Governor signed legislation that relieves for a time (i.e., until January 15, 2022) any "local public body or public corporation" from the usual Open Meetings Law requirement to meet in person. Practically speaking, this new law applies to any municipal entity, including committees and subcommittees. There are a few important matters to keep in mind while taking advantage of this new law.

- These meetings can be conducted "remotely by conference call or similar service".
- The public, however, must have the ability to view or listen to the proceedings.
- And these meetings must be "recorded and later transcribed".

Reading this new law literally, the usual ability a body has to summarize its meetings by way of minutes has been replaced in this case by the requirement that all of them must first be recorded and then transcribed, presumably verbatim. This transcription requirement will doubtless raise issues for those charged with preparing the transcripts. But, unless this new law is later amended to only require that summary minutes be prepared, the full transcription requirement will govern. At least, by use of the language "later transcribed", it appears that the transcript of a virtual meeting will not be required to be available under the Freedom of Information Law within two weeks from the date of the meeting, as presently required.

All told, while this new law will doubtless prove convenient, that convenience remains consistent with the original legislative declaration requiring that the public's business "be performed in an open and public manner". Our practice group remains ready to answer any questions there may be concerning the application of this new legislation. If you have questions or want more information, please contact [Karl Kristoff](#) (716.848.1410), [Andrew Freedman](#) (716.848.1594), or any member of Hodgson Russ's [Education](#) practice.

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