

Refresher Training

Boards and Commissions
2021

Texas Open Meetings Act

Meetings of governmental bodies must be open to public

- Agendas posted at least 72 hours prior to meeting & include: date, time, place & subject of each item
- Quorum present to convene
- Meetings required to be audio recorded (unless ATXN records)
 - Recordings are posted online & kept indefinitely



**All boards
must comply
with the
Texas Open
Meetings Act
(TOMA)**

Agendas

Properly publishing agendas is a critical part of the City's duty to provide transparency to the public

Agendas must be written so any reasonable person may understand what is intended to be discussed

- Include all issues to be considered and any action or vote scheduled
- Example: "Possible discussion and action of..."

Agendas

- Agendas are compiled by staff liaison with input from executive liaison, members, and staff
- Chair approves final agenda, but does not have discretionary authority to remove
 - items may be postponed or accelerated due to agenda length, council deadlines, allotted time, etc.

Members may include an item on an agenda when:

Sponsorship is received from 2 or more members (5 days before meeting)

OR

Requested during a meeting under New Business/Future Items from 2 or more members

Agendas

Agendas are required to allow public comment

- Citizen Communication
 - Speaker may address any topic that is not an agenda item
 - Number of people may be limited
- Speaker sign-up
 - Must be allowed for any agenda item **except** item posted as a **briefing**
 - No limit on number of people

Board Bylaws

Each board has, at least, a standard set of bylaws which include:

- the board's mission;
- procedures for selecting the officers;
- outline duties of each officer;
- requirements for establishing committees & working groups;
- guidelines for posting meetings;
- and using Robert's Rules of Order

Current bylaws are posted on each board's webpage

Bylaw Amendment Process

1. Bylaw amendments approved by the board
2. Board submits proposed changes to the City Clerk's Office (OCC)
3. OCC submits proposed changes to Audit & Finance Council Committee (AFC)
 - Board Chairs are invited to speak to the changes
 - AFC makes recommendation to full Council
4. Proposed changes are then presented to full Council for final approval

Committees and Working Groups

Committees

- | |
|--|
| Permanent bodies added to bylaw |
| Meet quarterly |
| Present annual report to full board |
| Comply with TOMA |
| Only board members may be appointed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least 3, but less than quorum |
| Dissolves after approval by Audit & Finance Committee (AFC) |
| Ideal for long term matters |
| Requires approval by AFC <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name and duties listed in bylaws |

Working Groups

- | |
|---|
| Temporary bodies |
| No meeting requirements |
| Makes no final decisions and reports back to full board |
| Does not comply with TOMA |
| May appoint stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Less than board quorum appointed |
| Automatically dissolves after recommendation reported to full board |
| Ideal for specific, short-term assignments |
| No staff assigned |



Board Recommendations

For items/topics currently on a Council agenda or Council Committee agenda

- Used to express support or lack of support for item discussed by Council or Council Committee
 - Provide details, explanations and rationale for a decision on specific issue
- Must be approved during board meeting (agenda item)
- Liaisons upload recommendation which generates an email automatically notifying Mayor & Council

Council Committee Agenda Request

Submit a new item for Council or Council Committee (not currently or previously discussed)

- Item assigned to Council Committee prior to moving forward to full Council
- Must be approved during board meeting (agenda item)
- Once uploaded by liaison, automatically generates an email to Mayor & Council
- Mayor will review and may refer it to the appropriate Council Committee or Committees

Board Member Duties

Board members are expected to:

- Come prepared to all meetings
- Perform their own research for the board
- Provide copies of any backup material
 - Only staff liaisons may forward material to all board members (blind copy only)
- Write their own board Recommendations
 - Staff may compile notes, but board members are expected to generate Recommendations



Relationship with Staff

Board and staff do not supervise each other

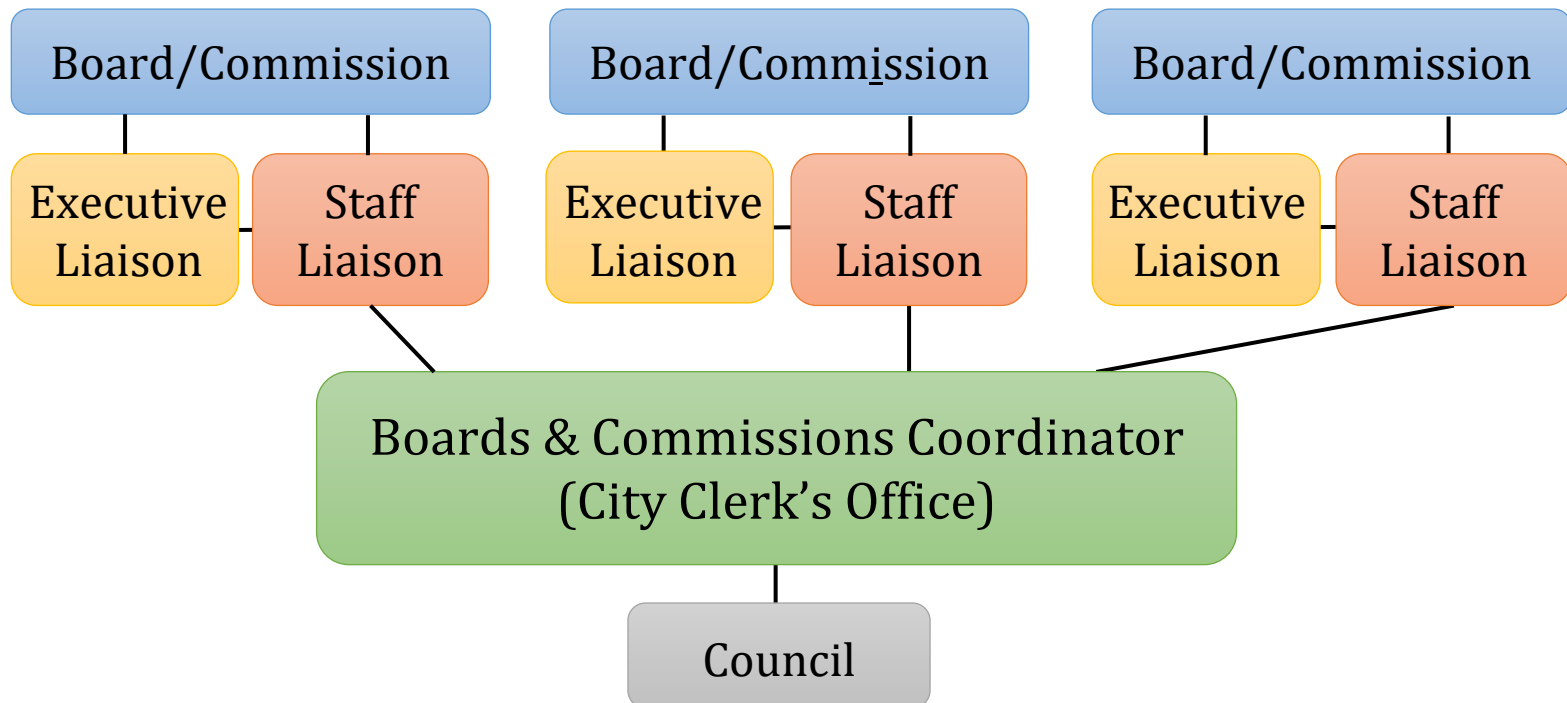
- Members and staff should work together collaboratively
- Staff may not be directed to perform work that has not been codified by Council
- Everyone should be professional, courteous and listen to each other



**Remember: you are a representative
of your appointing Council Member**

Staff and Executive Liaisons

Staff support for each board, commission, and approved committee is designated by City Manager's Office



Staff & Executive Liaison Duties

Staff Liaison

Complete classroom training for the online posting system (BCIC)

Post agendas and all supporting documents in compliance with TOMA

Prepare action minutes and post approved minutes using BCIC in a timely manner

Monitor and submit sign-in sheets, attendance reports, and report violations of the attendance policy to the BC Coordinator

Report changes of officers, meeting schedules, resignations, and if the board fails to meet

Schedule Meetings including making room arrangements and release rooms if cancelled

Executive Liaison

Ensure board complies with deadlines & code provisions

Encourage the board to remain within their mission statement

Ensure compliance with TOMA:

- Only discuss items on the agenda

Assist Chair in preparing the final agenda

Serve as backup, as needed, to the staff liaison for any administrative requirements

Support, advise, provide resources as needed - may be called upon by board for discussion

A Few Other Things...

- City Code prohibits boards/commissions from meeting in closed session without prior approval from city attorney
- An individual board member may not act in an official capacity except through action of a board majority
- A board may not create a joint committee with another board unless directed by a formal action of City Council
- Meetings may not extend beyond 10 p.m., unless majority votes to continue
- Boards may adopt special rules of procedure as required.
 - Special rules of procedure may not conflict with state or federal law, the board's bylaws, or the City Code
 - Rules must be provided to the BC coordinator and posted online
 - Boards cannot have secret rules unavailable to the public

Different Perspectives

- Board/Commission members are passionate and considered experts in their fields
- Different perspectives could provide additional insight
- Consider other points of view and don't immediately dismiss suggestions
- Don't confuse personal agendas with what is best for the City of Austin

Questions?

Contact Information for Boards and Commissions

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