

(KEYWORD, SUMMARY, AND DIGEST as amended by Senate committee amendments)

PUBLIC MEETINGS. Provides relative to certain deadlines relative to meetings of public bodies

DIGEST

Present law, the Open Meetings Law, contains several 24-hour minimum time periods, including: the minimum amount of time before the start of the meeting that notice must be given to a person whose character, professional competence, or physical or mental health will be discussed in executive session (R.S. 42:17(A)); the minimum amount of time before which written public notice must be given for any regular, special, or rescheduled meeting (R.S. 42:19(A)(1)(b)(i)); the minimum amount of time to change the agenda before the start of the meeting (R.S. 42:19(A)(1)(b)(ii)); and, the minimum amount of time that the meeting's notice must be posted, physically and electronically.

Present law excludes legal holidays for purposes of calculating any time period under seven days (C.C.P. Art. 5059). "Legal holidays" is defined in present law to include Saturdays, Sundays, all major holidays observed by the state, additional days depending on event or locale, and days of declared emergencies (R.S. 1:55). Proposed law retains present law but specifies that Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays are not part of the 24-hour minimum time periods in the Open Meetings Law.

Present law requires all public bodies to keep written minutes of all their open meetings. The minutes are public records and must be available within a reasonable amount of time after the meeting.

Proposed law retains present law that if the public body has a website, a copy of the minutes shall be posted on the body's website and remain posted for at least three months. If the public body is required to publish its minutes in an official journal, the public body shall post its minutes on its website within ten days after publication in the official journal. If the public body is not required to publish its minutes in an official journal, the public body shall post its minutes on its website within a reasonable time after the meeting.

Proposed law provides that the inability of the public to access the public body's website due to any type of technological failure shall not be a violation of the provisions of proposed law.

(Amends R.S. 42:17(A)(1) and 19(A)(1)(b)(i) and (ii)(aa), (2)(a), and 20(B))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Senate and Governmental Affairs to the engrossed bill

1. Adds provisions for the posting of public body meeting minutes on the website of the public body.