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NEWS RELEASE

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Open Meetings: Electronic Meetings for a Governmental Body

With Iowa cases of novel coronavirus, COVID-19, the Iowa Public Information Board (IPIB) has been asked how a governmental body can hold open meetings and still protect the public from the possible spread of the virus.

Iowa Code section 21.8 outlines the guidelines to hold an electronic meeting when there are valid concerns that an in-person meeting is “**impossible or impractical**”.

To hold an electronic meeting **all** of the following must occur:

1. Public access to the conversation of the meeting must be available.
2. The provisions of section 21.4 (notice) must be followed. (The place of the meeting is the place from which the communication originates or where public access is provided to the conversation.)
3. Minutes must be kept and must include a statement explaining why an in-person meeting was impossible or impractical.

Iowa Code section 21.4 provides the requirements that **must** be followed if an emergency meeting with less than 24 hours notice is held:

1. If 24 hours notice is impossible or impracticable, provide as much notice as reasonably possible.
2. The nature of the good cause for holding the meeting without 24 hours notice must be stated in the minutes of the meeting.

The IPIB recommends that you discuss how and when to hold an electronic meeting with your legal counsel. You may also contact the IPIB to discuss ways to be safe and transparent through the IPIB website (www.ipib.iowa.gov) or by telephone (515-725-1781).

Board Members

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