

Community Engagement through Inclusive & Accessible Board Meetings



A CELEBRATION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
VSBA/VSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 24 & 25, 2024

Panelists

Gaston Bathalon, Board Member, Troy School District & North Country Supervisory Union

Mohamed Diop, Director of Multilingual Learner Programs, Winooski School District

Mark Kaufman, Board Member, Twinfield Unified School District & Caledonia Central Supervisory Union

Stirling Peebles, Green Mountain Self-Advocates

Karen Topper, Administrative Director, Green Mountain Self-Advocates

Facilitator: Debbie Singiser, Director of Board Services, VSBA

Workshop Outline

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Setting the Context
 - a) Terminology
 - b) Act 133 (use of hybrid meetings and recordings)
- 3) Panel of Experts
 - a) Stirling & Karen: Cognitive and mobility
 - b) Mohamed: English language
 - c) Mark: Visual
 - d) Gaston: Tips and tricks
- 4) Workshop

What is something you will do to make your “meetings” more accessible and inclusive in the future?

Act 133 (S.55)



No. 133. An act relating to updating Vermont's Open Meeting Law. (S.55)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

It is the intent of the General Assembly that regardless of the form and format of a meeting, whether in-person, remote, or a hybrid fashion, that:

(1) meetings of public bodies be **fully accessible** to members of the public who would like to attend and participate, as well as to members of those public bodies who have been appointed or elected to serve their communities;

(2) subject to any exceptions in the Open Meeting Law, the deliberations and decisions of public bodies be transparent to members of the public; and

(3) the meetings of public bodies be conducted using standard rules and best practices for both meeting format and method of delivery.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2024/Docs/ACTS/ACT133/ACT133%20As%20Enacted.pdf>

Act 133 (S.55)

	Notice	Minutes	Record and Post ^{4.}	In-Person option
Regular Board Meeting	✓	✓	✓	If requested ^{5.}
Emergency Board Meeting ^{1.}	X	✓	✓	X
Subcommittee Meeting ^{2.}	✓ This is corrected information from what was presented on 10/25	✓	X	X
Retreat/Training ^{3.}	See 3 below.			

[Joint Guidance on 2024 Updates to Open Meeting Law \(ACT 133\) and Frequently Asked](#)

Footnotes

1. Emergency meetings may be held only when necessary to respond to an unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention by the public body.
2. If the subcommittee is entirely advisory, i.e. without supervision, control, or jurisdiction over legislative, quasi-judicial, tax, or budgetary matters
3. If it for the whole board, the safe choice is to treat it like a Regular Board Meeting. However, 1 V.S.A. § 310 (3)(D) provides that trainings and retreats are not considered a “meeting” if the board does not discuss specific business of the board that it expects to take up at a later time.
4. Audio or video recordings should be posted in designated electronic location for a minimum of 30 days following the approval and posting of the official minutes of the meeting which was recorded if the body has a website.
5. Unless it will cause an undue hardship.

What does accessibility mean?

“The quality of being easily reached, entered, or used by people who have a disability.”

What does inclusivity mean?

“The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised”

Workshop

Event



Strategy



What is a strategy you will use for making a board sponsored event more inclusive and accessible?