

# A GUIDE TO OPEN MEETINGS



The Federation of Prince Edward Island Municipalities has prepared a toolkit to help municipalities implement practices that reflect principles of open government – accountability, engagement and transparency. Section 118 (1) of the Municipal Government Act requires all Council and council committee meetings be open to the public. This guide has been prepared to help Council members determine whether a gathering or event held by Council should be open to the public.

## WHAT IS A MEETING?

The term 'meeting' is not defined by the Municipal Government Act but is understood to mean scheduled or special Council meetings or meetings of council committees such as the planning committee or the finance committee.

Council must consider whether workshops, strategic planning sessions or retreats are meetings. Use this three-part test to determine whether these Council workshops or events should be open to the public.

### Will all Council members be attending?

Quorum or full participation by Council is an indication that the meeting should be open to the public. The Municipal Government Act requires council committees, which may not require full participation by Council, to be open to the public.

### Is there a formal agenda?

A council member serving as chair, an agenda, rules of order and minutes are all indications that this meeting should be open to the public. Holding a meeting in the Town office or Council Chambers is also suggests that this should be an open meeting.

### Will Council be making a decision?

Any discussion that leads to a decision should be carried out at an open meeting. A vote should be carried out at meeting that is open to the public.

## Should this meeting be open to the public?

- Is a quorum of Council going to be in attendance?
- Will it be held in the Council Chambers?
- Is it a regularly scheduled event?
- Will there be a vote on any item?
- Is there an agenda?
- Will minutes be taken by municipal staff?
- Will a Council member chair the meeting?
- Will rules of order be followed?
- Will Council business be discussed?
- Will Council be making a decision?
- Will Council be voting?
- Will Council be passing a resolution?

**Did you check more than 2 items? If so, this is probably a meeting which should be open to the public.**

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