

Avoiding a Common but Unintended Violation of Open Meetings Law: A Key Paragraph

Wisconsin Open Meetings Law stipulates that if enough members of any public body to constitute a quorum of that body attend another meeting together, that constitutes a public meeting of that public body. For example, attendance by all Town Board members at a meeting of the Town Planning Committee would constitute a public meeting of the Town Board, which would be illegal unless publicly noticed.

This common but unintended violation of Open Meetings Law can be avoided by adding the paragraph below to the bottom of any public notice of any meeting of the Town Board or any other official body of the Town. Inclusion of this key paragraph makes it possible for a quorum of any official public body to attend a meeting of any other public body *without violating the Public Meetings Law*.

Members of the Town Board or any other Town committee, who are not members of the body whose meeting agenda is published in this notice, are entitled, as any other citizen of the Town of _____, to attend this meeting in an unofficial capacity. It is possible the attendance of one or more non-members may create a quorum of the membership of another body. Such a quorum is unintended and the non-members are not meeting for the purpose of exercising the powers or duties attendant upon their membership on any Town committee or board.