

Town of Woodstock, Connecticut



**KNOW YOUR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT**

www.woodstockCT.gov

January 2011

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TOWN GOVERNMENT

Structure

Woodstock's Town Government structure is the traditional New England Selectmen-Board of Finance-Town Meeting format. This means the electors and/or Property owners of the Town decide on issues that affect the Town, elect Town Officials and vote on the fiscal budget.

The Town of Woodstock's operations are subject to the Connecticut General Statutes, Town Special Acts & Ordinances, Planning & Zoning Regulations, Inland Wetland Regulations, Subdivision Regulations and Water Pollution Control Authority Policies and Procedures. All applicable regulations and policies are on file in the Town Clerk's office for public inspection. You may also purchase copies of these regulations and policies at the Town Hall.

The Special Acts and Ordinance book contains copies of the ordinances that the Town of Woodstock has adopted at Special Town Meetings.

The Town's Zoning Regulations took effect January 1, 1992 following a five year transition period from Land Use Regulations. The purpose of the regulations is to regulate the overall use of land including the construction, erection, re-construction, alteration, and use of buildings and structures and the use of land; the height, number of stories and size of buildings and other structures; the percentage of the area of a lot that may be occupied; the size of yards, courts and buildings, structures and land for business, industry, residence or other purposes, including water-dependent uses, and the height, size and location of advertising signs and billboards, and regulations concerning driveways and new roads. Many uses are permitted through an administrative position, the Zoning Enforcement Officer and more complicated uses require approval by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

The Town's Inland Wetland & Watercourse Agency regulations became effective by the adoption of Town Ordinance on January 11, 1974. The purpose of these regulations is to protect the citizens of the town by making provisions for the protection, preservation, maintenance and use of the inland wetlands and watercourses by minimizing their disturbance and pollution; maintaining and improving water quality in accordance with the highest standards set by federal, state or local authority; with the need to protect the environment and ecology in order to forever guarantee to the people of the State, the safety of such natural resources for their benefit and enjoyment and for future generations.

The Town's subdivision regulations took effect in August 1965 and were completely revised in 2005. These regulations are administered by the Planning & Zoning Commission. It is the policy of the Woodstock Planning & Zoning Commission that subdivisions within the Town can be carried out in a thoughtful and responsible manner in order to protect the character of the Town and welfare of its citizens. The Zoning and Subdivision Regulations are meant to be philosophically derived from the Town of Woodstock Plan of Conservation and Development.

The Town's Water Pollution Control Authority was established in March 1989 by Town Ordinance. WPCA governs the public sanitary sewage systems located within the Town of Woodstock, as well as all the equipment related to its operation. It is not part of the Town Budget.

Minority Representation, CGS 9-167a

The structures on board membership prescribed by Connecticut General Statutes require that the maximum number of members of any board, commission, committee or similar body, whether elected or appointed, who may be members of the same political party shall be specified according to the following table:

Total Membership of Board	Maximum from One Party
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	4
7	5
8	5
9	6
More than 9	2/3rds of total membership

Elected Officials

Woodstock's major elected bodies are the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Board of Education and the Planning & Zoning Commission. All are governed by the Connecticut General Statutes.

Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen consists of three elected members serving concurrent two-year terms. The Board of Selectmen is the executive branch of the government. The Board appoints electors to boards and commissions. The First Selectman, who is a member of the Board of Selectmen, is the Chief elected and administrative officer of the Town and presides over meetings of the Board of Selectmen.

Board of Finance

The Board of Finance consists of a six member elected board, with three alternates, each having six-year terms. The Board formulates and recommends the Town's financial policies. It reviews budgetary requests from both the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen. The budgets of all other town boards and commissions are incorporated into the Selectmen's budget. The Board is responsible for the financial and taxation matters and for establishing the tax rate.

Board of Education

The local Board of Education is an elected nine member board each with a six-year term. It is the policy-making body for all public education, grades pre-k through eighth. Two members of the local Board of Education are appointed by the Board to serve as members of the 17 member Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees for the Woodstock Academy.

Planning & Zoning Commission

The commission is an elected nine member board with three alternates serving four-year terms. P & Z has the authority to adopt a Town Plan and to legislate zoning and subdivision regulations. It is independent of other bodies in town government in performing its legislative and executive functions. It has the authority to hire a Planning & Zoning Enforcement Agent who is responsible to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is elected to a two-year term to fulfill the duties of the Town Clerk that are prescribed in Connecticut General Statutes. The Town Clerk is custodian of all Town Records including deeds, mortgages and

other land record transactions, vital records; issues licenses and permits; registers vital statistics, filing of official meeting schedules; filing of all minutes; and acts as the Clerk for all Town Meetings. The Town Clerk is responsible to the Connecticut Secretary of the State for the execution of all elections. This office also issues the transfer station permits.

Tax Collector

The Tax Collector is elected to a two-year term to fulfill the duties of Tax Collector that are prescribed in Connecticut General Statutes. The Tax Collector is responsible for the collection of taxes on real estate, personal property, motor vehicle and has arranged with the WPCA to be their Tax Collector on sewer usage fees as well. The office also collects the fees for all building permits.

Town Treasurer

The Town Treasurer is elected to a two-year term to fulfill the duties of Town Treasurer that are prescribed in Connecticut General Statutes. The Town Treasurer is responsible for the disbursement of Town funds and the investment of Town funds in accordance with the Statutes and local Special Acts and Ordinances. The Town Treasurer also performs routine and specialized financial and bookkeeping functions.

Registrar of Voters

The Registrar of Voters are elected to a two-year term to fulfill the duties of Registrar of Voters that are prescribed in Connecticut General Statutes. There are two registrars, one from each major political party. They register voters from all political parties and are responsible to the State for maintaining current voter registration records. They conduct all referenda, primaries and general elections held within Woodstock as required by Statute.

Judge of Probate

The Judge of Probate is elected to a four-year term to fulfill the duties of Probate Judge as prescribed in Connecticut General Statutes. Those duties include family estate matters, guardianships and legal adoptions.

Other Elected Officials

Board of Assessment Appeals – three member board elected for four-year terms. Governing body for Assessment Appeals.

Economic Development Commission – five member board elected for five-year terms, established by ordinance to promote and develop the economic resources of Woodstock.

Appointed Boards and Commissions Appointed by the Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen has the authority under the Connecticut General Statutes to appoint members and to fill vacancies on the boards and commissions listed below (Recommendations for members usually come from the political parties in town):

Arboretum Committee

A seven member committee dealing with the Palmer Arboretum which was founded in 1914 by Minnie Palmer Dean. The Arboretum is located behind the Historical Society on Route 169 and is open to the public.

Beautification Committee

A nine member committee created through a grant dating back to the 1970's. Originally created to beautify the grounds at the old Town Hall. Currently beautifies the Town Commons.

Camp Nahaco Park Commission

Camp Nahaco Park Commission consists of 8 members and 2 alternate members. The Commission was created when the Towns of Woodstock and Eastford jointly purchased the old boy scout camp that straddles the border of the 2 towns. The commission is charged with overseeing and maintaining the Camp jointly with the neighboring town of Eastford.

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission consists of eleven members and three alternates appointed to five-year terms who shall be electors and reside in Woodstock and who shall hold no salaried town office. The Commission was created by Ordinance in 1968 for the purpose of the development, conservation, supervision and regulation of natural resources, including water resources within the Town of Woodstock.

Green Energy Committee

A five member committee that is charged with

Historic District Commission

A five member commission with three alternates appointed for five-year terms. It was created by Town Ordinance in 1995 to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of buildings, places and districts of the Town which are important for their historical and architectural values.

Historic Properties Commission

A five member commission with three alternate appointed for five-year terms. The Commission was created by Town Ordinance in 1991 for the purpose of preserving and protecting buildings, archaeological sites, landscapes and places of historic and cultural significance and their setting in Woodstock, recognizing them as landmarks in the history of the Town, State and Nation.

Housing Authority

A six member board appointed for five-year terms. The Commission is governed by Connecticut Statutes-Chapter 97 for the purpose of providing adequate and affordable housing for the elderly and disabled in Woodstock.

Recreation Commission

A five member board created by the Board of Selectmen to serve concurrently with the Board of Selectmen. Their purpose is to promote the general welfare of the community by providing recreational activities for the citizens of Woodstock.

Zoning Board of Appeals

A five member board with three alternates appointed for four-year terms. The ZBA has all the powers and duties set forth in Connecticut General Statutes relating to Zoning Appeals. It hears appeals from decisions of the Zoning Enforcement Officer and is empowered to grant variances to the Zoning Regulations.

Camp Nahaco Park Commission

An eight member board with two alternate members appointed for two-year terms. This Commission was established in 2003 after the Towns of Woodstock and Eastford together purchased the former Boy Scout Camp known as Camp Nahaco. The camp straddles the borders of Woodstock and Eastford so the Commission consists of equal representation from electors of the two towns. The duties of the Commission are to oversee the day-to-day operation of Camp Nahaco Park, including activities, usage, facility development, and hiring of personnel to staff any programs that are included in a duly approved Park Budget or supplemental appropriation.

Open Space Land Acquisition and Preservation Committee

This Committee was created by Ordinance in 1999. The Board of Selectmen shall appoint an Open Space Land Acquisition and Preservation Committee to consist of four citizens at large and one member each of the following: Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Planning and Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission, Inland Wetlands Commission, Recreation Commission and Historic District Commission. The persons appointed shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Selectmen. The Open Space Land Acquisition and Preservation Committee shall elect its chairperson and secretary and shall meet periodically, but not less frequently than quarterly. Its charge shall be to identify and prioritize potential acquisitions of land or interests in land for open space or recreational or agricultural purposes, to make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen regarding acquisition of such land and other proper uses of the Land Acquisition Fund and to perform such other tasks relating to the use and administration of the Fund as the Board of Selectmen may direct.

Quassett School Advisory Committee

This Committee is a six member committee established in 1996 to cover the use and care of the Quassett School and its collection of historical artifacts.

Veteran's Advisory Committee

This is a five member committee that was established by the Selectmen in 1993.

Other Appointments by Board of Selectmen

The following positions are appointed representatives for the Town of Woodstock:

Agent for the Elderly; Arboretum Committee, Beautification Committee, Charter Communications; Eastern Regional Mental Health Coordinator; Green Energy Committee, Municipal Agent for Youth; CT East Tourism District; NE District Department of Health; Quassett School Advisory Committee.

This table lists all Town Boards & Commissions, the number of members on each board, the length of the regular terms, elected or appointed, the manner in which vacancies are filled and when the vacancy appointment is filled to.

Title of Board	Appt or Elected	# of Mem	Term Length	How Vacancy Filled	Vacancy Filled To
Arboretum Committee	A	7	BOS term	Selectmen	Unexp. Portion of term
Beautification Committee	A	9	BOS term	Selectmen	Unexp. Portion of term
Board of Assessment Appeals	E	3	4 years	Selectmen	Next Town Election
Conservation Commission	A	11	5 years	1 st Selectman	Unexp. portion of term
Alternates	A	3	5 years	1 st Selectman	Unexp. portion of term
Camp Nahaco Park Commission	A	8	2 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Alternates	A	2	2 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Economic Development Comm.	E	5	5 years	1 st Selectman	Unexp. portion of term
Education, Board of	E	9	6 years	MVRM**	Next Town Election
Finance, Board of	E	6	6 years	MVRM	Next Town Election
Alternates	E	3	6 years	MVRM	Next Town Election
Green Energy Committee	A	7	BOS term	Selectmen	Unexp. Portion of term
Historic District Commission	A	5	5 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Alternates	A	3	5 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Historic Properties Commission	A	5	5 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Alternates	A	3	5 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Housing Authority	A	5	5 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Inland Wetlands Commission	A	7	5 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Alternates	A	3	3 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Justices of the Peace	A	18	5 years	Political Party	Unexp. portion of term
Open Space Land Acquisition & Preservation Commission	A	11	No set term	Selectmen	Serve at the pleasure of the Bd of Selectmen
Open Space Funding Study Committee	A	7	BOS Term	Selectmen	Unexp. Portion of term
Planning & Zoning Commission	E	9	4 years	MVRM	Unexp. portion of term
Alternates	E	3	4 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Quassett School Advisory	A	7	BOS term	Selectmen	Unexp. Portion of term
Recreation Committee	A	5	2 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Selectmen, Board of	E	3	2 years	MVRM	Unexp. portion of term
Tax Abatement Committee	A	5	2 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Water Pollution Control Authority	A	5	5 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Website and Technology Committee	A	5	2 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term
Zoning Board of Appeals	A	5	4 years	MVRM	Unexp. portion of term
Alternates	A	3	4 years	Selectmen	Unexp. portion of term

**MVRM: Majority Vote of Remaining Members

POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR ELECTED & APPOINTED BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

Authority

Each board, commission and committee is granted its authority to take action from one or more of three sources. The State of Connecticut General Statutes, the Town of Woodstock Special Acts & Ordinances, and/or a charge from the Board of Selectmen. The authority of the body to take action is vested in the body as a whole, acting in a duly noticed and convened meeting, not in any of its individual members.

The actions of the various Boards and Commissions of the Town of Woodstock, CT set the legal and historical groundwork for years, decades and even centuries to come. The volumes of minutes and land records, survey maps, audit reports, budgets, notices and agenda that you create become permanent records and it is these archives that validate the rights and interests of the Town of Woodstock.

These resources are essential to insure the proper, accurate, and effective conduct not only of our own local government, but the impact we have on a regional, state, and federal governments as well.

Meetings, CGS 1-225a

The meetings of all public agencies, except executive sessions, as defined in subdivision (6) of section 1-200, shall be open to the public.

Yearly Schedule of Regular Meetings, CGS 1-225b

The chairperson or secretary of any such public agency of any political subdivision of the state shall file, not later than January 31st of each year, with the clerk of such subdivision the schedule of regular meetings of such public agency for the ensuing year, and no such meeting of any such public agency shall be held sooner than thirty days after such schedule has been filed.

The chief executive officer of any multitown district or agency shall file, not later than January 31st of each year, with the clerk of each municipal member of such district or agency, the schedule of regular meetings of such public agency for the ensuing year, and no such meeting of any such public agency shall be held sooner than thirty days after such schedule has been filed.

Committee Member List

A current listing of each committee member's name, mailing address and e-mail address shall be filed with the Town Clerk by January 31st of each year.

By-Laws and Regulations

A copy of the current by-laws and or regulations of all Town Board's and Commissions shall be filed with the Town Clerk by January 31st of each year.

Agenda, Regular Meeting, CGS 1-225c

Those meetings included on the yearly schedule of meeting filed with the Town Clerk.

The agenda of the regular meetings of every public agency shall be available to the public and shall be filed, not less than twenty-four hours before the meetings to which they refer, in such agency's regular office or place of business or, if there is no such office or place of business, in the office of the clerk of such political subdivision. Upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of a public agency present and voting, any subsequent business not included in such filed agendas may be considered and acted upon at such meetings. (This statute allows a commission to add to the agenda of a REGULAR meeting)

Agenda, Special & Emergency Meetings, CGS 1-225b & CGS 1-225d

Those meetings not included on the yearly schedule of meetings filed with the Town Clerk.

Notice of each special meeting of every public agency shall be given not less than twenty-four hours prior to the time of such meeting by filing a notice of the time and place thereof in the office of the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk shall cause any notice received under this section to be posted in their office.

Such notice shall be given not less than twenty-four hours prior to the time of the special meeting; provided, in case of emergency, any such special meeting may be held without complying with the foregoing requirement for the filing of notice but a copy of the minutes of every such emergency special meeting adequately setting forth the nature of the emergency and the proceedings occurring at such meeting shall be filed with the Town Clerk not later than seventy-two hours following the holding of such meeting.

The notice shall specify the time and place of the special meeting and the business to be transacted. No other business shall be considered at such meetings by such public agency. (This statute prohibits a commission to add new items to the agenda of a Special Meeting at such meeting)

Executive Sessions, CGS 1-225f & CGS 1-200

A commission may hold an executive session, as defined in subdivision (6) of section 1-200, upon affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members of such body present and voting, taken at a public meeting and stating the reasons for such executive session, as defined in section 1-200.

Attendance is limited to members of said body and persons invited by said body.

The minutes of each executive session shall disclose all persons in attendance, the time the board went into executive sessions, and the time the board came out of executive session.

There shall be no votes taken while in executive session.

Minute Requirements & Standards, CGS 1-225

The votes of each member of any public agency upon any issue before such public agency shall be reduced to writing and made available for public inspection within 48 hours and shall also be recorded in the minutes of the session at which taken, which minutes shall be available for public inspection within seven days of the session to which they refer. (Please do not count weekends or legal holidays when determining minute due dates)

All town boards and commissions should be recording its agenda and minutes, as defined in state statute, in a standard minute book.

Vacancies – Elected Positions, CGS 9-223

Any person vacating a seat on an elected board or commission must notify the Town Clerk in writing within 5 days of such vacancy.

Vacancies – Appointed Positions

Any person vacating a seat on an appointed board or commission must notify the Town Clerk in writing within 5 days of such vacancy.

Meetings of Public Agencies, CGS 1-225e

No member of the public shall be required, as a condition to attendance at a meeting of any such body, to register the member's name, or furnish other information, or complete a questionnaire or otherwise fulfill any condition precedent to the member's attendance.

Annual Reports

Each board must submit an end of fiscal year report for publication in the Town of Woodstock Annual Report. These reports must be submitted by October 1st of every year to the Board of Finance.

Legal Holidays

No board shall hold a meeting on a legal holiday or holidays declared by the Governor, unless it is an emergency meeting of that board.

TOWN OF WOODSTOCK GENERAL MEETING SCHEDULE

Board/Commission	Time	Meeting Day	Meeting Place
Annual Town Meeting	7:30pm	2 nd Tuesday in May	Town Hall
Arboretum Committee	9:00am	4 th Tuesday	Town Hall
Beautification	10:30am	4 th Tuesday	Town Hall
Board of Education	7:00pm	4 th Thursdays	Woodstock Middle School
Board of Finance	7:30pm	Tuesdays - Varies	Town Hall
Board of Selectmen	4:00pm	1 st Thursday	Town Hall
	7:30pm	3 rd Thursday	Town Hall
Camp Nahaco Park Commission	6:30pm	1 st Wednesdays	Varies-call Town Clerk
Conservation Commission	7:30pm	4 th Mondays	Town Hall
Democratic Town Committee	7:30pm	1 st Wednesdays	Town Hall
Economic Development Commission	7:30pm	3 rd Wednesdays	Town Hall
Green Energy	7:00pm	1 st Tuesdays	Town Hall
Historic Properties Commission	7:30pm	4 th Mondays	Town Hall
Historic District Commission	8:00pm	4 th Mondays	Town Hall
Housing Authority	1:00pm	Quarterly - 2 nd Wednesday	Roxbury Village
Inland Wetlands	7:30pm	1 st Mondays	Town Hall
Open Space Land Acquisition Committee	7:30pm	4 th Wednesdays	Town Hall
Planning & Zoning Commission	7:30pm	3 rd Thursdays	Town Hall
Recreation Commission	6:30pm	2 nd Tuesdays	Town hall
Republican Town Committee	7:00pm	3 rd Wednesdays	Town Hall
Water Pollution Control Authority	7:30pm	3 rd Mondays	Town Hall
Zoning Board of Appeals	7:00pm	4 th Tuesdays	Town Hall

Please contact the Town Clerk if you have questions regarding commissions or boards not listed here.

QUICK REFERENCE FILING REQUIREMENTS

What to file with the Town Clerk	When to file with the Town Clerk
Agenda, Regular and/or Special Meetings	At least 24 hours before the meeting
Annual Reports	Filed with Board of Finance at Fiscal Year End
By-laws and/or Regulations	January 31 st deadline every year
Member List (name, phone, e-mail)	January 31 st deadline every year
Minutes, Regular and/or Special Meeting	Within 7 business days of meeting
Minutes, Emergency Meeting (must also include reason)	Within 3 business days of meeting
Vacancy notification	Within 5 days of vacancy
Votes of each member reduced to writing	Within 48 hours of meeting
Yearly Schedule of Regular Meetings	January 31 st deadline every year

PROPER AGENDA/MINUTE FORMAT

Agenda must include Items 1-3 with the order of business following

Minutes must include Items 1-8

1. Name of commission
2. Type of meeting (regular or special)
3. Date and place of meeting, including time convened
4. Roll call of members (list those present as well as those absent)
5. Approval of previous minutes
6. Record of reports (standing and special committees)
7. The names of makers and seconders of motions, and the vote of each member, including abstentions. Always use proper names.
8. Time of adjournment

Freedom of Information Commission

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (Be Sure To Consult Statutes)

PUBLIC AGENCIES

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO OBTAIN RECORDS AND ATTEND MEETINGS OF ALL PUBLIC AGENCIES - WITH CERTAIN LIMITED EXCEPTIONS.

This applies to

- State and local government agencies, departments, institutions, boards, commissions and authorities and their committees.
- Executive, administrative or legislative offices, and the judicial branch and the Division of Criminal Justice with respect to their administrative functions.
- Certain other entities based on the following criteria: (1) whether the entity performs a governmental function; (2) the level of government funding; (3) the extent of government involvement or regulation; and (4) whether the entity was created by the government.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

I. MEETINGS, INCLUDING HEARINGS AND OTHER PROCEEDINGS, MUST BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - EXCEPT IN LIMITED SITUATIONS.

A public meeting is any hearing or other proceeding of a public agency, or gathering of, or communication by or to a quorum of a multi-member agency, to discuss or act on any matter over which it has authority.

The following are not public meetings: meetings of certain personnel search committees; collective bargaining strategy and negotiating sessions; caucuses; chance or social gatherings not intended to relate to official business; administrative or staff meetings of a single-member agency (e.g., mayor); and communications limited to notice of agency meetings or their agendas.

No registration or other requirements may be imposed on a member of the public seeking attendance at a public meeting.

The public, as well as the news media, may photograph, record or broadcast meetings, subject to prior reasonable rules regarding non-interference with the conduct of the meeting.

II. ONLY THREE KINDS OF MEETINGS ARE RECOGNIZED UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT: REGULAR, SPECIAL AND EMERGENCY.

A state agency must file each year a schedule of its regular meetings with the Secretary of the State. A town or city agency must file each year a schedule of its regular meetings with the clerk of the town or city. A multi-town district or agency must file each year a schedule of its regular meetings with the clerk of each

municipal member of the district or agency. A special meeting may be called up to 24 hours (excluding weekends, holidays, and days on which the office of the Secretary of the State or municipal clerk, as the case may be, is closed) before the time set for the meeting. A special meeting is called by filing a notice stating the time, place and business to be transacted.

A state agency files this notice with the Secretary of the State; a local agency files this notice with the municipal clerk; a multi-town district or agency files this notice with the clerk of each municipal member of the district or agency.

An emergency meeting may be held without complying with the preceding notice requirements. However, the agency must file its minutes, including the reason for the emergency, within 72 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) of the meeting with the Secretary of the State if a state agency; or with the municipal clerk if a local agency; or with the clerk of each municipal member if a multi-town district or agency.

III. YOU ARE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE A COPY OF THE NOTICE AND AGENDA OF A MEETING.

An agency is required to send a notice of its meetings, where practicable at least 1 week prior to the meeting date, to any person who has made a written request. The agency may establish a reasonable charge for this service.

Each agency must make available its agenda for each regular meeting at least 24 hours before the meeting to which it refers. New business not on the agenda may be considered and acted on only on a 2/3 vote of the members of the agency.

IV. AGENCY MINUTES AND RECORD OF VOTES MUST BE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

The minutes of each agency meeting must be made available to the public within 7 days of the session to which they refer in the agency's office if it has one; or, if none, in the office of the Secretary of the State for state agencies or in the municipal clerk's office for local agencies. In the case of special meetings, the 7 day period excludes weekends and holidays. The minutes must contain the record of each member's vote on any issue before the agency.

The votes of each member on any issue must be put in writing and made available to the public within 48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays, of the meeting at which the votes were taken.

The minutes of a meeting at which an executive session occurs must indicate all persons who were in attendance at the closed session, except for job applicants who were interviewed.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

I. AN AGENCY MAY CLOSE CERTAIN PORTIONS OF ITS MEETINGS BY A VOTE OF 2/3 OF THE MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING. THIS VOTE MUST BE CONDUCTED AT A PUBLIC SESSION.

Meetings to discuss the following matters may be closed: specific employees (unless the employee concerned requests that the discussions be open to the public); strategy and negotiations regarding pending claims and litigation; security matters; real estate acquisition (if openness might increase price); or any matter that would result in the disclosure of a public record exempted from the disclosure requirements for public records.

Any business or discussion in a closed session must be limited to the above areas.

The agency may invite persons to present testimony or opinion in the executive session, but their attendance must be limited to only the time necessary for that testimony or opinion.

PUBLIC RECORDS

I. MOST RECORDS OR FILES OF STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, INCLUDING MINUTES OF ALL THEIR MEETINGS, ARE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC FOR INSPECTION OR COPYING.

This includes

- Information or data which is typed, handwritten, tape recorded, printed, photographed or computer-stored.
- Most inter-agency and intra-agency memoranda or letters.

II. RECORDS SPECIFICALLY EXEMPTED FROM DISCLOSURE BY FEDERAL LAW OR STATE STATUTE ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

In addition, the following records may not be available to the public: some preliminary drafts or notes; personnel or medical files; certain law enforcement records, including arrest records of juveniles and some witness and victim identification information; records relating to pending claims and litigation; trade secrets and certain commercial or financial information; test questions used to administer licensing, employment or academic examinations; real estate appraisals and construction contracts until all of the property has been acquired; personal financial data required by a licensing agency; records relating to collective bargaining; tax returns and communications privileged by the attorney-client relationship; names and addresses of public school students; information obtained by illegal means; certain investigation records of reported misconduct in state government or names of state employees who report such misconduct to the state Attorney General or Auditors; certain adoption records; election, primary, referenda and town meeting petition pages, until certified; certain health authority complaints and records; certain educational records; certain records, when there are reasonable grounds to believe disclosure may result in a safety risk; and certain records, if disclosure would compromise the security or integrity of an information technology system. Also, records of personnel search committees need not be disclosed if they would identify executive level employment candidates without their consent.

III. YOU MAY INSPECT PUBLIC RECORDS DURING REGULAR OFFICE HOURS, BUT COPIES, PRINT-OUTS OR TRANSCRIPTS SHOULD BE REQUESTED IN WRITING.

The fee for a copy of a public record from a state agency must not exceed 25¢ per page. The fee for a copy of a public record from a non-state agency must not exceed 50¢ per page. The fee for a computer disk, tape, printout or for a transcript, or a copy thereof, must not exceed the actual cost to the agency involved. The agency may also require the prepayment of these fees if their estimated cost is \$10.00 or more. No sales tax may be imposed for copies of the public records requested under this Act.

The agency is required to waive any fee for copies if the person requesting the copies is poor and cannot afford it; or if the agency determines that the request benefits the public welfare.

There is an additional charge for a certified copy of a public record.

You are entitled to prompt access to inspect or copy public records. If an agency fails to respond to a request within four business days, such failure can be treated as a denial of the request.

THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION

I. YOU MAY APPEAL THE DENIAL OF ANY RIGHT CONFERRED BY THIS ACT TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION.

You do not have to hire a lawyer to appeal to the Commission.

You must, however, appeal to the Commission within 30 days of the denial of any right conferred by this Act.

II. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CONCERNING YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, INCLUDING HOW TO APPEAL, CONTACT:

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

18-20 TRINITY STREET

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106

TELEPHONE: (860) 566-5682

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Freedom of Information Commission

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Q:** Is there a form that a person requesting access to public records must use to make requests?

A: No. There are no required forms. However, an agency may ask a person requesting copies of public records to complete a form prepared by the agency.

2. **Q:** What fees can an agency charge to provide copies of public records?

A: Municipal agencies may charge a maximum of fifty cents per page and state agencies may charge a maximum of twenty-five cents per page. Other fees may be charged for certified copies of public records or for transcriptions, printouts or records on electronic media.

3. **Q:** How quickly must an agency provide access to, or copies of, public records?

A: An agency is required to provide "prompt" access to public records. Promptness is a standard determined by consideration of a number of factors such as: how busy the agency is at the time of the request, how time-consuming it will be to comply with the request and the urgency of need for the information contained in the records.

4. **Q:** How long does an agency have to prepare minutes after a meeting has occurred?

A: Regular and special meeting minutes are required to be available to the public within seven days (excluding weekends and holidays for special meetings) of the meeting to which they refer. Minutes of emergency special

meetings must be available within seventy-two hours (excluding weekends and holidays) of the meeting to which they refer. The record of votes must be available within forty-eight hours of the meeting to which they refer.

5. Q: Do members of the public have a right under the Freedom of Information Act to speak at public meetings?

A: No. The Freedom of Information Act gives the public the right to attend the meetings of public agencies and to view meetings while they are taking place. Any additional rights concerning participation by members of the public at public meetings are not part of the Freedom of Information Act.

6. Q: Can an agency vote to consider business that was not listed on its meeting agenda?

A: At a regular meeting, a public agency can vote to consider a matter not listed on its agenda if the agency obtains a favorable 2/3 vote of those members of the agency who are present and voting at the meeting. At a special meeting, an agency may not consider a matter not listed on its notice of special meeting.

7. Q: If a person believes that a violation of the Freedom of Information Act has occurred, how long does he or she have to file a complaint with the Commission?

A: Generally, a complaint must be filed within thirty days of an alleged violation of the Freedom of Information Act. In the case of an alleged secret or unnoticed meeting, however, a complaint must be filed within thirty days from the time the person knew or could have known that such a meeting occurred.

8. Q: Is there a form that a person wishing to file a complaint with the Freedom of Information Commission must complete?

A: No. There are no required forms. A person must write a letter to the Commission alleging that a violation of the Freedom of Information Act has occurred and include all of the information needed to docket the matter as a complaint, including: the name, address and telephone number of both the person filing the complaint and the agency involved and the date the alleged violation occurred.

9. Q: Do persons who file complaints with the Commission need to be represented by an attorney?

A: No. Staff counsel from the Freedom of Information Commission will help parties with procedural questions, but will not represent you. The decision whether to be represented by counsel is entirely up to the party appearing before the Commission.

10. Q: I'm unable to find the information I need, will the Commission be able to tell me where to find it, or get the information for me?

A: No. The Commission is not a repository for information. The Commission is a quasi-judicial agency where you may file a complaint if a public agency has denied you access to public records or public meetings. (See also "What We Do" on Homepage.)

11. Q: Does the Commission act on tips?

A: No. In order for the Commission to act, a written complaint must be filed with the Commission against a public agency alleging a denial of access to public records or public meetings. (See also Questions 7 and 8, above.)