



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE Joint Fiscal Office

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Fiscal Note

May 3, 2024

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S.55 – An act relating to authorizing public bodies to meet electronically under Vermont’s Open Meeting Law

As recommended by the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, Draft 4.1

Bill Summary

This bill proposes to amend the Open Meeting Law such that regardless of the form and format of a meeting, whether in-person, remote, or a hybrid fashion, meetings of public bodies will be fully accessible and conducted using standard rules and best practices for both meeting format and method of delivery.

Fiscal Impact

This bill creates a working group with an estimated cost of \$9,100 in fiscal year 2025. It does not include an appropriation; the cost would be paid from monies appropriated to the Office of the Secretary of State.

Background and Details

The following sections have a fiscal impact.

Section 10

This section would establish a Working Group on Participation and Accessibility of Municipal Public Meetings and Elections to study and make recommendations to improve the accessibility of and participation in meetings of local bodies, annual municipal meetings, and local elections and to increase transparency, accountability, and trust in government.

The Group would be made up of two designees of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, two designees of the Vermont Municipal Clerks’ and Treasurers’ Association, one designee of the Vermont School Boards Association, one designee of Disability Rights Vermont, one designee of the Vermont Access Network, one member with expertise in remote and hybrid meeting technology appointed by the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Human Rights Commission or designee, and the Secretary of State or designee.

On or before November 1, 2025 the Group would submit a written report with its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs and the Senate Committee on Government Operations. Members who are not employed by the Administration would be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses, as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010, for not more than ten meetings