



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE Joint Fiscal Office

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Fiscal Note

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Scott Moore, Legislative Finance Manager

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

Bill Summary

This bill proposes to amend the Open Meeting Law to authorize public bodies to meet through electronic means without designating a physical meeting location.

Background and Details

The following section has a fiscal impact.

Section 8

This section appropriates \$250,000 from the General Fund in fiscal year 2025 for grants to municipalities for the purpose of acquiring equipment, technical assistance, and training necessary to host effective electronic and hybrid meetings.

Costs for Remote Meeting Access

The cost of a video conferencing system can vary significantly depending on its size and complexity. There are setup costs for equipment, software, and training. Ongoing costs include internet, software subscriptions, data storage, and website hosting and maintenance.

Minimum Setup Cost	
Workstation	\$800
External Monitor (TV or Projector)	\$1,000
Internet Access (annual)	\$600
Video Conferencing System	\$800
Website Design	\$500
Website Hosting & Domain (annual)	\$250
Subtotal:	\$3,950
Additional Setup Costs	
Data Storage Solution (annual)	\$250
Networking Software (annual per user)	\$150
Training	\$500
Subtotal:	\$900
Grand Total:	\$4,850

Running a meeting can also incur additional hourly costs including staffing, IT support, and translators.

Vermont Town Data

Currently 91% of all Vermont Cities, Towns, and Villages have an official municipal website for the purposes of governmental business.

As of April 2023, 75 municipalities in Vermont applied for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funding to improve or expand their online capabilities. These grants went towards creating or updating websites, networking software, video conferencing systems, and other IT improvements to enable remote meeting requirements.