

At the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ohio General Assembly enacted legislation on March 25, 2020, providing for alternative means of holding public meetings through December 1, 2020. Those public bodies normally subject to in-person open meeting and hearing requirements were authorized to hold meetings and hearings by teleconference, video conference or other similar electronic technology during the public health emergency. In November 2020, the General Assembly extended those provisions until July 1, 2021.

Although there was some expectation that the General Assembly would extend such provisions for another six months or longer, and for a fleeting moment, many thought the Ohio House would prevail with a provision in the budget bill, alas it was not to be. The final budget bill has been passed and it does not include an extension provision. Therefore, without further action by the General Assembly, public bodies are left with “what was old is new again.” As a reminder:

- Beginning July 1, 2021, each public body should revert back to its previous open meeting rules under which it operated prior to March 2020. Most importantly, a member of a public body must be physically present to be counted for purposes of quorum and to be able to vote.
- As was the practice of many public bodies prior to March 2020, public meetings may still be live-streamed over the internet, local radio, television, cable and public access channels, include call-in information for a teleconference, or any other similar electronic technology.

## Stay Tuned!

Squire Public Finance will make available any helpful information as soon as we receive it. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to your Squire Public Finance contact or any of the contacts listed.

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