

INCORPORATED COUNTY OF LOS ALAMOS RESOLUTION NO. 24-01

A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING MINIMUM STANDARDS OF REASONABLE NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC FOR ALL MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL, COUNTY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND OTHER PUBLIC BODIES CREATED BY THE STATE AND THOSE APPOINTED BY THE COUNCIL (COLLECTIVELY “APPOINTED COUNTY COMMITTEES”)

WHEREAS, the democratic ideal is best served by a well-informed public, and sunshine laws generally require that public business be conducted in full public view, that the actions of public bodies be taken openly, and that the deliberations of public bodies be open to the public; and

WHEREAS, the Open Meetings Act states that, except as may be otherwise provided in the Constitution or the provisions of the Open Meetings Act, all meetings of a quorum of members of any board, council, commission, administrative adjudicatory body or other policymaking body held for the purpose of formulating public policy, discussing public business, or for the purpose of taking any action within the authority of or the delegated authority of such body, are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times [Section 10-15-1(B) NMSA 1978]; and

WHEREAS, when it is difficult or impossible for a member to attend a meeting in person, the member may participate by means of a conference telephone, video communications, or similar communications equipment [Section 10-15-1(C) NMSA 1978]; and

WHEREAS, any meetings subject to the Open Meetings Act at which the discussion or adoption of any proposed resolution, rule, regulation or formal action occurs shall be held only after reasonable notice to the public [Section 10-15-1(D) NMSA 1978]; and

WHEREAS, the Open Meetings Act requires the Council of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos (“Council”) to determine annually what constitutes reasonable notice of its public meetings and those of all County boards, commissions and policymaking bodies [Section 10-15-1(D) NMSA 1978]; and

WHEREAS, the Council wishes to establish the minimum standards of reasonable notice to the public for all public meetings of the Council and all Appointed County Committees, as defined herein, for the remainder of the year 2024, and until a new resolution concerning public meetings is adopted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos as follows:

I. General Provisions

A. All meetings of a quorum of the Council of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos shall be open to the public except where specifically provided for in the State of New Mexico’s Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978 §10-15-1, and as provided herein.

B. All meetings of a quorum of an Appointed County Committee shall be open to the public except where specifically provided for in the State of New Mexico’s Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978 §10-15-1, and as provided herein. Appointed County Committees are defined as the

Boards, Commissions, Committees, Task Forces, etc., that are created by State Statute, County ordinance, or through formal Council action, and include but are not limited to the following:

- Art in Public Places Board
- Board of Adjustment (formerly Variance Board)
- Board of Appeals
- Board of Public Utilities
- DWI Planning Council
- Environmental Sustainability Board
- Historic Preservation Advisory Board
- Labor Management Relations Board
- Library Board
- Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board
- Los Alamos County Health Council
- Nuisance Code Implementation Review Task Force
- Parks and Recreation Board
- Personnel Board
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Transportation Board
- Valuation Protests Board

II. Regular Meetings.

A. Council Meetings.

All meetings of the Council shall be held on the dates specified in the schedule attached to this Resolution as Schedule "A" unless notice is otherwise provided at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the meeting date. An agenda for all regular meetings of the Council shall be available at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting from personnel in the Office of the County Manager. All agendas shall be posted on the County's website, provided the website is operational during the period of seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting.

B. Appointed County Committee Meetings.

Notice of regular meetings of all Appointed County Committees shall be given no less than ten (10) days in advance of the meeting date. The notice may include an agenda for the meeting or indicate how a copy of the agenda may be obtained. An agenda shall be available at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting. All meetings of each Appointed County Committee shall be held at the time and at the place indicated in the meeting notice. Each Appointed County Committee may adopt a schedule of its regular meetings for the present calendar year or the balance thereof. Such a schedule shall contain the date, time, and place of each regular meeting. For purposes of Paragraph V of this Resolution, notice of all regular meetings contained in such schedule is met if a copy of the schedule is posted and provided to the media as provided for in Paragraph V of this Resolution; provided, however, that Appointed County Committee must still post and provide to the media a copy of the agenda prior to each regularly scheduled meeting as required under this Resolution. All agendas shall be posted on the County's website, provided the website is operational during the period of seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting.

III. Special meetings.

Special Meetings may be called by the Chair or a majority of the members of the Council or respective Appointed County Committee upon at least seventy-two (72) hours' notice. The notice shall include an agenda for the meeting or information to indicate how a copy of the agenda may be obtained. An agenda for the meeting shall be available to the public and posted on the County's website at least seventy-two (72) hours before any special meeting, provided the website is operational during the period of seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting.

IV. Emergency meetings.

Emergency Meetings may only be called under unforeseen circumstances which demand immediate action to protect the health, safety and property of citizens or to protect the public body from substantial financial loss. The Council and all Appointed Council Committees shall avoid emergency meetings whenever possible. Emergency meetings may be called by the Chair or a majority of the members of the Council or the respective Appointed Council Committee upon twenty-four (24) hours' notice, unless threat of personal injury or property damage requires less notice. The notice for all emergency meetings shall include an agenda for the meeting or information on how the public may obtain a copy of the agenda, which shall be posted on the County's website as soon as is practicable after the agenda is created, provided the website is operational during the period prior to the meeting.

V. Notice Requirements.

A. For the purposes of regular meetings described in Paragraph II of this Resolution, notice requirements are met if notice of the date, time, and place is posted in a conspicuous place in the vicinity of the front door of the Municipal Building located at 1000 Central Avenue, Los Alamos, New Mexico and visible from the exterior of the building, as well as being posted on the County's website, provided the website is operational. Copies of the notice shall be provided to those broadcast stations licensed by the Federal Communications Commission and newspapers of general circulation which have made a written request for notice of public meetings for the coming calendar year. Only one such written request shall be required for each calendar year.

B. For the purposes of special meetings described in Paragraph III of this Resolution, notice requirements are met if notice of the date, time, place and agenda is posted in a conspicuous place in the vicinity of the front door of the Municipal Building at 1000 Central Avenue, Los Alamos, New Mexico and visible from the exterior, as well as being posted on the County's website, provided the website is operational. Copies of the notice shall be provided to those broadcast stations licensed by the Federal Communications Commission and newspapers of general circulation which have made a written request for notice of public meetings for the coming calendar year. Only one such written request shall be required for each calendar year.

C. For the purposes of emergency meetings described in Paragraph IV of this Resolution, notice requirements are met if notice of the date, time, place and agenda is posted in a conspicuous place in the vicinity of the front door of the Municipal Building at 1000 Central Avenue, Los Alamos, New Mexico and visible from the exterior and posted on the County's website as soon as is practicable, provided the website is operational. Copies of the notice shall be provided to those broadcast stations licensed by the Federal Communications Commission and newspapers of general circulation which have made a written request for notice of public meetings for the coming calendar year. Only one such written request shall be required for each calendar year.

D. In addition to the information specified above, all notices shall include the following language:

“If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in the hearing of the meeting, please contact the County Human Resources Department at (505) 662-8040 at least one (1) week prior to the meeting or as soon as possible. Public documents, including the agenda and minutes, can be provided in various accessible formats. Please contact the personnel in the Office of the County Manager at (505) 663-1750, if a summary or other type of accessible format is needed.”

VI. Closure of Public Meetings.

The Council and all Appointed Council Committees may close a meeting to the public only if authorized by the Open Meetings Act [Section 10-15-1H NMSA 1978]:

A. If any meeting is closed during an open meeting, such closure shall be approved by a majority vote of a quorum of the Council or respective Appointed Council Committee, as applicable, taken during the open meeting. The authority for the closure and the subjects to be discussed shall be stated with reasonable specificity in the motion for closure and the vote on closure of each individual member shall be recorded in the minutes. Only those subjects specified in the motion may be discussed in the closed meeting.

B. If the decision to hold a closed meeting is made when the Council or an Appointed Council Committee is not in an open meeting, the closed meeting shall not be held until public notice, appropriate under the circumstances, stating the specific provision of law authorizing the closed meeting and the subjects to be discussed with reasonable specificity is given to the members and to the general public.

C. Following completion of any closed meeting, the minutes of the open meeting that was closed, or the minutes of the next open meeting if the closed meeting was separately scheduled, shall state whether the matters discussed in the closed meeting were limited only to those specified in the motion or notice for closure.

D. Except as provided in the Open Meetings Act, any action taken as a result of discussions in a closed meeting shall be made by a vote of the Council or respective Appointed Council Committee, in an open public meeting [Section 10-15-1(H) NMSA 1978].

VII. Remote Attendance.

Any member may participate by means of a conference telephone, video communication, or similar communications equipment when it is difficult or impossible for a member to attend a meeting in person, provided that each member participating by other means can be identified when speaking, all participants are able to hear each other at the same time and members of the public meeting attending the meeting are able to hear any member of the public body who speaks during the meeting.

VIII. Public Health Emergency.

In the event this Resolution is in effect during a public health emergency, the conduct of public meetings shall comport with any and all public health orders issued by the New Mexico Department of Health and comply with all guidance documents including advisory opinions issued by the Open Government Division of the Office of the Attorney General for the State of New Mexico. To the degree that this Resolution conflicts with these public health orders or the advisory opinions of the Attorney General, the provisions of the public health orders and the advisory opinions of the Attorney General shall control.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 9th day of January 2024.

**COUNCIL OF THE INCORPORATED
COUNTY OF LOS ALAMOS**

_____,
Council Chair

ATTEST:

**Naomi D. Maestas,
Los Alamos County Clerk**