

TOWN OF PALMER, MASSACHUSETTS



Boards, Committees, and Commissions Handbook

December 2025

This handbook is intended as a guide for all Department Heads, Town Boards, Committees and Commissions, hereinafter collectively “public bodies”. It describes in general terms some important requirements, procedures, and responsibilities involved in the conduct of the Town business and should be utilized as a reference resource.

The handbook refers to various provisions of the general laws, identified as M.G.L. (Massachusetts General Laws), followed by the applicable chapter and section, and regulations, indicated by CMR (Code of Massachusetts Regulations). Some committees are governed by specific statute; some universal requirements are set forth in statute. Because this handbook only summarizes those requirements, the actual statute and its related regulations should be consulted as needed. Additional guidance is found in the MA Guide for Members of Public Boards and Commissions “[How to be an Effective Member of a Public Board or Commission](#)” on the website, [mass.gov](#).

All Boards, Committees, and Commissions are on file with the Town Clerk’s Office. Visit our website for our active groups here, [townofpalmer.com/boards](#)

Congratulations and thank you for your service!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. [The Role of Public Bodies in Town Government](#)
2. [Public Body Appointment](#)
3. [Resignation/Removal of Appointees; Vacancies](#)
4. [Organization of Public Bodies/Duties of Officers](#)
5. [Quorum](#)
6. [Conducting of Meeting](#)
7. [Meetings/Open Meeting Law](#)
8. [Executive Session](#)
9. [Posting/Scheduling of Meetings and Agendas](#)
10. [Meeting Minutes and Recording](#)
11. [Conflict of Interest Law](#)
12. [Standards of Conduct for Appointed Town Officials](#)
13. [Remote Participation](#)
14. [Administration and Public Records Law](#)
15. [Annual Report](#)
16. [Exhibit A - Interest Form](#)
17. [Exhibit B - Sample Meeting Notice](#)
18. [Exhibit C- Sample Meeting Minutes](#)
19. [Exhibit D - Acknowledgement Form](#)

1. The Role of Public Bodies in Town Government:

The general responsibilities of a public body are to act in the best interest of the Town within the scope of the public body's authority; to represent all Town residents, and not a particular sector; to understand the law as it relates to the public body's function and purpose; to understand and follow the law as it relates to procedure and decision-making; to implement its authority justly and responsibly; and to purposefully and effectively solve the issues which arise. Specific responsibilities may be detailed in relevant statutes and regulations.

While the specific role of each public body will differ, they may have concurrent responsibilities and jurisdiction. The Town Council expects that public bodies will cooperate and coordinate their work activities in the best interest of the Town. The power and authority of any public body are joint, and not several, meaning that they reside in the public body as a whole, and not within any individual member.

2. Public Body Appointment:

Qualifications for Appointment:

In accordance with section [Article 3 § C-3-5](#) of the Town of Palmer Charter, any Palmer resident may apply for membership on any appointed (i.e., non-elected) public body. Vacancies are posted on the bulletin board of Town Hall, the Town website (townofpalmer.com), or any other public place deemed appropriate by the Town Manager. For appointments to complete an existing term, at minimum, the opening will be advertised as soon as practicable, providing at least 30 days' notice before the appointing authority interviews candidates. The objective is to appoint candidates who are generally representative of the community and whose qualifications and interests correspond to the needs of the public body.

Applicant Selection Procedure:

Residents applying for an appointment must submit a completed Interest Form to the Office of the Town Manager. To access the Interest Form, see [Exhibit B](#) or visit the Town's website. Applicants may attend at least one meeting of the public body prior to being considered for appointment, to learn more about the public body, including scheduling and expectations. Applicants will be reviewed by the Town Manager and if recommended, the applicant will be brought forth to the Town Council in accordance [Article 2 § C-2-10](#) of the Town of Palmer Charter.

Appointment Procedure:

Written notification of appointment will be issued to newly-appointed members from the Town Manager's Office. Appointees must report to the Town Clerk's office within 30 days of being appointed, to be sworn to faithful performance of their duties prior to taking any official action as a member of a public body (M.G.L. c.41, s 107). The Town Clerk will provide information about the [Open Meeting Law](#) and require acknowledgement of receipt (M.G.L.c.30A,s.20(h)). All municipal employees (which includes paid and unpaid members of boards, committees, and commissions) will annually receive a "Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law" prepared by the State Ethics Commission; and biannually, all municipal employees must complete the online conflict of interest training program at muniprogram.eth.state.ma.us. At the conclusion, the program will prompt the public body member to print a certificate of completion which will be electronically filed. Appointees must also review [Town of Palmer bylaws](#) and [public hearings](#). Failure to complete these requirements within 30 days will result in the appointment not being recognized.

3. Resignation/Removal of Appointees; Vacancies; Reappointment:

Any appointed member who resigns before a term is complete shall provide immediate written notice of the resignation to the public body chair, the Town Clerk, and Town Manager, and cite the effective date of resignation.

The Town Manager, may request an appointed member's resignation or revoke such member's appointment in accordance with section [Article 3 § C-3-5](#) of the Town of Palmer Charter

Attendance:

Regular attendance is imperative to maintain the optimal functioning of a public body, and members are expected to attend scheduled meetings and report anticipated absences to the committee chair prior to the missed meeting. A member's attendance record is a relevant factor in actions to remove or reappoint that member.

Appointment/Reappointment:

Generally, public body appointments begin July 1st for a term of three years. If an appointment is made to complete a term, then the new appointee will serve for the duration of the original term, subject to M.G.L.c.41,s.11. Reappointment is not automatic, and members are under no obligation to accept reappointment. Interested candidates must follow the [Application Selection Procedure](#) and if reappointed, the [Appointment Procedure](#).

Elected Public Bodies:

If there is a vacancy on an elected body, according to [Article 2 § C-2-11](#) of the Town of Palmer Charter, the following takes place:

(a) Filling of Vacancies by Town Council

Whenever a vacancy shall occur in the office of Councilor-At-Large or District Councilor the remaining members of the Town Council shall appoint a registered voter to fill the vacancy until the next municipal election by majority vote. The voter chosen to fill a vacancy in the seat of a District Councilor shall reside in the district where the vacancy exists. Individuals serving on the Council as a result of appointment shall not be entitled to have the words "candidate for reelection" printed alongside their names on the election ballot. All vacancies shall be filled within 60 days.

(b) Filling of Vacancies in Other Elected Offices

Whenever a vacancy shall occur in the office of Planning Board, the remaining members of the Planning Board shall notify the Town Council of the vacancy, and the Town Council shall then call for a joint meeting between the Town Council and Planning Board, where the Town Council and the remaining members of the Planning Board shall by majority vote fill the vacancy until the next regularly scheduled municipal election. Individuals serving on the Planning Board as a result of election by the Town Council and Planning Board shall not be entitled to have the words "candidate for re-election" printed alongside their names on the election ballot. All vacancies shall be filled within 60 days.

(c)

Whenever a vacancy shall occur in the office of School Committee, the remaining members of the School Committee shall notify the Town Council of the vacancy, and the Town Council shall then call for a joint meeting between the Town Council and School Committee, where the Town Council and the remaining members of the School Committee shall by majority vote fill the vacancy until the next regularly scheduled municipal election. Individuals serving on the School Committee as a result of election by the Town Council and School Committee

shall not be entitled to have the words "candidate for re-election" printed alongside their names on the election ballot. All vacancies shall be filled within 60 days.

4. Organization of Public Bodies/Duties of Officers:

Election of Officers:

All elected public bodies shall reorganize at their first meeting following the Annual Town Elections and all appointed public bodies shall reorganize each year at their first meeting following June 30th, by electing a chair, vice-chair, and clerk by majority vote. After reorganization, the chair should notify the Town Clerk of changes in officers.

Duties of Officers:

Chair:

- Presides at all meetings: opens the meeting, announces the sequence of business in accordance with the agenda, recognizes members entitled to the floor, states and puts to vote all legitimate questions and announces the result of each vote, enforces order and decorum, decides questions of order, declares the meeting adjourned;
- Calls meeting dates and times; sets calendar; ensures required materials are available;
- Ensures that meeting notices and agendas are properly posted in accordance with the Open Meeting Law;
- Sets agenda topics;
- Represents the public body before the appointing authority, other town bodies, and the public, as required;
- Ensures that members are kept informed of meetings;
- Ensures that all members have taken the oath of office and acknowledged receipt of information from the Town Clerk with regard to the Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest Law;
- Ensures that a summary of the public body's actions of the previous year are submitted to the Town Manager for inclusion in the Annual Town Report.

Vice-Chair:

- The Vice-Chair acts as Chair in the absence of the Chair.

Secretary:

- Ensures that minutes of every meeting are taken, prepared, voted, certified, on file, and filed electronically with the Town Clerk within the next three public body meetings or within 30 days, whichever is later, unless the public body can show good cause for further delay.
- Ensures that copies of documents and other exhibits used during meetings are provided and referenced in a list to be included as addenda to the approved meeting minutes, in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.

5. Quorum:

In order for a public body to take an official vote, a quorum must be present. A quorum is a simple majority of a governmental body, unless otherwise defined by law. A simple majority is based on the total number of positions on a public body, whether all available positions have been filled; except, if any public body does not have an established number of positions, then the majority will be based on the current number of members. Please consider, a public body may have a quorum present, but some actions may also require additional presence such as 2/3 votes, super majority, etc. Once a quorum is present, a public body may act by a majority of the quorum, unless otherwise provided by law.

6. Conducting a Meeting:

Basic guidelines for conducting meetings include: Schedule meeting date, time, and place; use a handicap-accessible location; post meetings and agendas, in writing, with the Town Clerk at least 48 hours in advance of their public meetings, so that the Clerk can comply with the 48-hour posting (notice) requirement. Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays are not included in the computation of the 48-hour period (see section 9 for more information); prepare and distribute agendas and meeting material to public body members in advance; ensure that meetings begin as scheduled and proceed in a timely manner; distribute or review the agenda for the public at the beginning of the meeting; provide a public comment/question period; establish mutually acceptable rules of order and procedures; allow only questions and comments that are relevant to the discussion, concise, and non-repetitive; establish time limits, as necessary; schedule and announce future meetings as practicable; submit approved minutes electronically to the Town Clerk within the next three public body meetings or within 30 days, whichever is later, unless the public body can show good cause for further delay.

All Town Council Meetings must adhere to the Town Council Rules Document.

All votes must be taken publicly.

7. Meetings/Open Meeting Law:

The Open Meeting Law (M.G.L. c.30A,ss.18-25) and regulations (940 CMR 29.00 et seq.) require that meetings be conducted in open session, where the public and press are given notice and allowed to attend, to ensure that deliberations and decisions made by public officials are conducted openly. However, there is no requirement that the public be allowed to participate. A meeting is held any time a majority of a public body is present, subject to exceptions set forth in the law: an on-site inspection of a project or program, so long as the members do not deliberate; attendance by a quorum of a public body at a public or private gathering, including a conference or training program or media, social, or other event, so long as the members do not deliberate; attendance by a quorum of a public body at a meeting of another public body that has complied with the requirements of the open meeting law, so long as the visiting members communicate only by open participation in the meeting on those matters under discussion by the host body and do not deliberate; a meeting of a quasi-judicial board or commission held for the sole purpose of making a decision required in an adjudicatory proceeding brought before it; or a session of a town meeting convened under M.G.L.c.39, s.10 which would include the attendance by a quorum of a public body at any such session.

It is a violation of the Open Meeting Law to conduct “telephone meetings,” “revolving door meetings,” “e-mail meetings,” individual conversations that occur in serial fashion in which a quorum of members participates and/or deliberates, or to hold other such discussions outside of a duly-posted meeting at which the public is deprived of the opportunity to attend and monitor the decision-making process and deliberation.

“Deliberation” is an oral or written communication through any medium, including electronic mail and social media, between or among a public body on any public business within its jurisdiction; provided, however, that “deliberation” shall not include the distribution of a meeting agenda, scheduling information, or distribution of other procedural materials, or the distribution of reports or documents that may be discussed at a meeting, provided that no opinion of a member is expressed.

Failure to comply with the Open Meeting Law may result in the invalidation of action taken at a meeting and the imposition of a penalty.

More information of the Open Meeting Law is available at mass.gov/ago/openmeeting.

8. Executive Session:

The Open Meeting Law sets forth 10 exceptions for which a governmental body may hold a closed meeting. No public body should convene an executive session without first consulting the Town Manager.

Executive session is closed to the public, but the public body must first convene a duly-posted meeting in open session. A majority of the members must vote by roll-call in favor of a motion to enter into executive session. The motion must state the purpose for the executive session and must state whether the public body will return to open session. All votes taken in executive session must be recorded roll-call votes and entered into the minutes. Minutes must be taken during executive session; however, they will not be released to the public until the purpose for the executive session no longer exists. Each public body shall regularly review executive session minutes to determine if they have become eligible for public release, unless the public body determines an alternative approval process for executive session minutes in accordance with M.G.L.c.30A,s.22(a).

Executive session may be held only for the following purposes:

1. To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition, or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual. (See M.G.L. c.30A, s.21 for rights reserved to the individual who is the subject of the discussion).
*Purpose #1 does not include a regular performance review.
2. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel.
3. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if any open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.
4. To discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto.
5. To investigate charges of criminal misconduct or to consider the filing of criminal complaints.
6. To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property, if the chair declares that on open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.
7. To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or general grant-in-aid requirements.
8. To consider or interview applicants for employment or appointment by a preliminary screening committee, if the chair declares that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants; provided, however, that this clause shall not apply to any meeting, including meetings of a preliminary screening committee, to consider and interview applicants who have passed a prior preliminary screening.
9. To meet or confer with a mediator, as defined in section 23C of chapter 233, with respect to any litigation or decision on any public business within its jurisdiction involving another party, group, or entity. (See M.G.L. c.30A, s.21 for further provisions).
10. To discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively sensitive, or other proprietary information provided in the course of activities conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier under a license granted by the department of public utilities pursuant to section 1F of chapter 164, in the course of activities conducted as a municipal aggregator under section 134 of said chapter 164, or in the course of activities conducted by a cooperative consisting of governmental entities organized pursuant to section 136 of said chapter 164, when such government body, municipal aggregator, or cooperative determines that such disclosure will adversely affect its ability to conduct business in relation to other entities making, selling, or selling or distributing electric power and energy.

9. Posting/Scheduling of Meetings and Agendas:

It is the responsibility of each public body to ensure that all meetings are posted.

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, public bodies shall file written meeting notices with the Town Clerk, in compliance with the specific instructions of the Clerk, more than 48 hours in advance of their public meetings, so that the Clerk can comply with the 48-hour posting (notice) requirement. Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays are not included in the computation of the 48-hour period. Meeting notices must include the name of the public body; the date, time, and location of the meeting; and a list of the topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting. ([See Exhibit B – Sample Meeting Notice](#)).

Chairs are expected to exercise good judgment when hearing/discussing/deliberating on issues which are not included on the agenda. In general, routine issues may be aired, while new and/or potentially contentious issues should be noted but passed over to allow for proper posting and public discussion at a subsequent meeting.

In the event of a sudden, unexpected issue which requires immediate action by a public body, an emergency meeting may be held and the 48-hour posting requirement is waived; however, the Town Clerk must be informed forthwith and the meeting posted as soon as possible, prior to the meeting.

If a meeting date, time, or location changes, a re-posting may be required. If a meeting is canceled, the Town Clerk should be notified immediately. Only the Town Clerk has the authority to remove meeting notices from the posting board.

10. Meeting Minutes and Recording:

Content of Minutes:

M.G.L.c.30A,s.22(a) states that “A public body shall create and maintain accurate minutes of all meetings, including executive sessions, setting forth the date, time and place, the members present or absent, a summary of the discussions on each subject, a list of documents and other exhibits used at the meeting, the decisions made and the actions taken at each meeting, including the record of all votes”. Documents and other exhibits, such as photographs, recordings, or maps, used by the body at an open or executive session shall, along with the minutes, be maintained as part of the official record of the session. In addition, it is best practice to include the names of additional participants (not including press or observers); name of person recording minutes; time that meeting was convened and adjourned; and name of persons making and seconding motions.

The minutes of an open meeting, in whatever form (notes, draft, recording, etc.), are public records and must be made available to the public upon request in accordance with the Public Records Law protocols.

Availability/Filing of Minutes:

Meetings may not proceed without a designated clerk/secretary responsible for providing a written record of the meeting as prescribed by the Open Meeting Law. Audio or video recordings may not be used as permanent records of a meeting. Recordings can be destroyed once written minutes are approved unless the recording itself is an exhibit entered into the minutes.

Minutes of all open and executive sessions must be created and approved by vote in a timely manner, which will generally be considered to be within the next three public body meetings or within 30 days, whichever is later, unless the public body can show good cause for further delay. However, best practice dictates that public bodies schedule approval of minutes on each agenda and approve minutes at the next meeting whenever possible, 940 CMR 29.11 Approved minutes must be submitted electronically to the Town Clerk within 30 business days, or by the next scheduled meeting of the body. The Town Clerk will then post the minutes on the Town of Palmer website.

Recording:

“After notifying the chair of the public body, any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting of a public body, or may transmit the meeting through any medium, subject to reasonable requirements of the chair as to the number, placement, and operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. At the beginning of the meeting, the chair shall inform other attendees of any recordings.”
M.G.L.c.30A,s.20(f)

11. Conflict of Interest:

As stated by the State Ethics Commission, “the purpose of the conflict of interest law is to ensure that public employees’ private financial interests and personal relationships do not conflict with their public obligations.” [Read more about the Conflict of Interest Law from the State Ethics Commission on their website, mass.gov.](#) The law is broadly written to prevent a public employee from becoming involved in a situation which could result in a conflict or give the appearance of a conflict.” M.G.L. c.268A “Municipal employee” is defined broadly and includes all public body members. Violations are punishable by fines up to \$10,000 and/or imprisonment.

The law restricts what a municipal employee or former municipal employee may do: (1) on the job; (2) after hours; and (3) after leaving public service. The law prohibits conduct including bribery, corruption, receipt of gifts or privileges related to official actions, and acting as an agent or attorney for someone relative to Town business. The law prohibits municipal employees from participating in a matter in which they have a financial interest, and their financial interest includes those of their immediate family members, partner or business associate, business organization for which the employee serves as an officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee; and any person or organization with whom the employee is negotiating or has any arrangement concerning prospective employment.

If public body members have a conflict or an appearance of conflict in any matter before their public body, they should not be counted in the quorum, and should not participate in or be present for any pertinent discussions or votes. If a member has a question about their conflict status, they can, and should, contact the Town Manager or request a confidential legal determination from the State Ethics Commission. Under certain circumstances, the law provides for special exemptions after disclosure of the conflict. Also, “special municipal employee” status may be assigned to certain municipal positions, and less restrictive provisions of parts of the law may apply.

12. Standards of Conduct for Appointed Town Officials:

- Be well-informed concerning the duties of the public body on which the member serves.
- Be cognizant that the members represent the Town of Palmer and conduct themselves accordingly to maintain public confidence in government.
- Accept the public body position as a means of unselfish public service, and not a means to benefit personally, professionally, or financially.
- Act respectfully and professionally in interactions with other public body members, persons who come before the board, staff members, other public bodies, and the public.
- Share information obtained on pending issues with other public body members.
- Conduct official business in a manner that gives the clear impression that members cannot be improperly influenced in the performance on their official duties, avoid any appearance of conflict, and properly disclose any possible conflict.
- Conduct government business in a manner that promotes open and transparent government, in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.
- Honor confidential matters not legally subject to disclosure that come before the public body in executive session.

Anyone who feels that an appointed public body member is acting inconsistently with these standards of conduct may take one or more of the following actions:

- Speak privately with member about their behavior in an effort to correct said behavior.
- Request that the public body chair speak with the individual in an effort to correct said behavior.
- Bring the matter to the attention of the appointing authority.
- File a formal complaint in writing to the Town Manager, who shall conduct an investigation and issue a written report with a recommendation for corrective action within thirty days of receipt of the complaint. The Town Manager shall have the authority at their discretion to seek the services of an independent mediation service when the situation warrants.

Speaking for a Public Body:

An individual member has a right to speak publicly as a private citizen, but cannot represent the public body or exercise the authority of the public body except when specifically authorized by that public body to do so, and has an obligation to clarify that status.

13. Remote Participation:

In order to implement remote participation, both the members of a public body who participate remotely and all persons present at the meeting location must be clearly audible to each other, clearly visible to each other if video technology is used, and a quorum of the body, including the chair or the acting chair, must be physically present at the meeting location. Members of public bodies who participate remotely may vote and shall not be deemed absent.

A member of a public body shall be permitted to participate remotely only if physical attendance would be unreasonably difficult.

Remote participation must take place through the following methods only: **1.** telephone, internet, or satellite-enabled audio or video conferencing; or **2.** any other technology that enables the remote participant and all persons present at the meeting location to be clearly audible to one another. Accommodation shall be made for required adaptive telecommunications. The public body shall determine which of the acceptable methods may be used by its members. The chair may decide how to address technical difficulties that arise as a result of utilizing remote participation, but is encouraged wherever possible to suspend discussion while reasonable efforts are made to correct any problem that interferes with a remote participant's ability to hear or be heard clearly by all persons present at the meeting location. If technical difficulties result in a remote participant being disconnected from the meeting, that fact and the time at which the disconnection occurred shall be noted in the meeting minutes. The amount and source of payment for any costs associated with remote participation shall be determined by the Town Manager as authorized by the Town Council.

Any member of a public body who wishes to participate remotely shall, as soon as possible prior to a meeting, so notify the chair, including the reason for, and facts supporting, the request. At the start of the meeting, the chair shall announce the name of any member who will be participating remotely, which shall be recorded in the meeting minutes. All votes shall be by roll call vote. A member participating remotely in an executive session shall state at the start of any such session that no other person is present and/or able to hear the discussion at the remote location, unless approved by a majority vote of the public body. M.G.L.c.30A,s.20(d), 940 CMR 29.10

14. Administration and Public Records Law:

The Massachusetts Public Records Law (M.G.L.c.66) provides a public right to access governmental records, including all books, papers, maps, meeting material, memoranda, minutes, financial statements and any other items made or received by any Town official or employee to serve a public purpose; subject to the exemptions set forth in M.G.L.c.4,s.7(26), including personnel and medical files, proposals, bids, appraisals, etc. Most material

produced or used by a public body is public record. Public bodies are obligated to properly secure and maintain public records. Public records should never be kept in a home or on private property of a public body member.

A guide to the Massachusetts Public Record law is available through the Office of the Secretary of State, sec.state.ma.us/pre/prepdf/guide.pdf

Fees for photocopying and researching records may be charged as outlined in the Public Records Law. The Town Clerk is the Public Records Officer and must be notified of all public record requests as soon as the request is received. Contact the Town Clerk for assistance before responding to a request.

Public Hearings:

Many public bodies are required by Massachusetts General Laws to conduct public hearings. Public bodies may also choose to have a public hearing in order to receive input from the community. All public hearings must be conducted in accordance with Massachusetts General Law. The chair or other designated person should administer the hearing, including providing guidelines and time allowances, before any testimony is given. Detailed minutes are required. All questions should be directed to the chair, who may ask for a response from the members or the public attending.

Appointing Authorities:

The Town Council may require that a public body chair report regularly to the appointing authority about the public body's actions and plans. The Town Manager is responsible for maintaining communication between public bodies, their staff, and the appointing authority. A chair may request a meeting with the appointing authority to resolve problems and report progress.

Professional Memberships:

The Town Council shall support the work and professional development of the public bodies by establishing memberships in state-wide associations, as appropriate and approved within the budget.

Town Counsel/Legal Services:

There will be no direct communication initiated by staff, officials, and/or board, committee, and commission members with Town Counsel. Any communication with Town Counsel will occur only after prior authorization of the Town Manager, acting in their role as agent of the Town Council, in order to control the town's legal budget, eliminate duplicate requests, and keep the Town Manager apprised of pending issues.

15. Annual Report:

All appointed public bodies must file an annual report of public body activities for the Annual Town Report. The chair or other designated member should detail public body membership, including changes, and a one to three paragraph explanation of accomplishments and future plans to be submitted to be submitted to the Town Manager by the date given by the Town Manager's Office.



Town of Palmer

Palmer Town Building
4417 Main St. Palmer, MA 01609

BOARDS, COMMITTEE, COMMISSIONS INTEREST FORM

Name: _____
Address: _____
Home Phone: _____
E-mail address: _____

1. Interested in serving on: _____
2. Number of years living in Palmer? _____
3. Please describe your background or training from work and/or life experience that relates to your interest in serving on a town committee/board.

4. Please describe any town government experience you have.

5. Please describe any community experience you have. Have you served as an officer or held any leadership position in any other community organization(s)?

6. Additional information for the Town Manager to consider.

7. Do you have any restrictions on your availability to attend committee meetings?



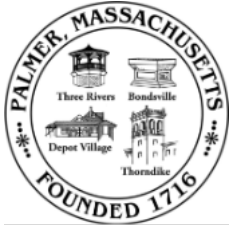
Feel free to contact the Office of the Town Manager 413-283-2603 to find out more about a committee, the time commitment involved, or other questions. Please submit this completed form to the Town Manager's Office by sending an email to TownManagerOffice@townofpalmer.com or mail to:

Palmer Town Administration Building
Attn: Town Manager Office
4417 Main St. Palmer, MA 01609

SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

(As required by MGL Chapter 30A, sections 18-25)

Please email or hand deliver all meeting notices to Palmer Town Clerk Susan Coache, scoache@townofpalmer.com and Mary Fickett, mfickett@townofpalmer.com



INSERT PUBLIC BODY NAME

INSERT DATE AND TIME

INSERT MEETING LOCATION | Insert address

If applicable: This meeting will be televised live on Channel 15, recorded and shown on M-Pact.

Meeting Agenda*:

1. Insert Items

***The agenda should be a numbered listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting. In addition to old business and new business to come before the public body, suggestions include a vote on approving prior meeting's minutes and an open public comment session.**

Per the Open Meeting Law: (GL Chapter 30A, Section 19(a))

All meeting notices and agendas¹ are to be posted, by the board or committee, **48 hours in advance of the meeting** - *excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays*. The OML guidelines also require the posting to be submitted early enough to allow adequate time for posting before the deadline. As such, please keep in mind the Town Clerk's office hours of operation, which are Monday 8:30 AM-7:30 PM and Tuesday-Thursday 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM and make necessary arrangements to be sure your posting is submitted accordingly (do not wait until the deadline). The Clerk's Office will confirm via email that a meeting notice has been received.

NOTE: The official posting locations registered with the AGs office are the town's website and the public meeting board in the hallway next to the Clerk's office at the Town Office building.

Meeting notices must be posted in a legible, easily understandable format; contain the date, time, and place of the meeting; and list all topics that the chair reasonably anticipates, 48 hours in advance, will be discussed at the meeting. The list of topics must be sufficiently specific to reasonably inform the public of the issues to be discussed at the meeting. Where there are no anticipated topics for discussion in open session other than the procedural requirements for convening an executive session, the public body should list "open session" as a topic, in addition to the executive session, so the public is aware that it can attend and learn the basis for the executive session. While not required under the Open Meeting Law, public bodies are encouraged to make a revised list of topics to be discussed available to the public in advance of the meeting if the body intends to discuss topics that come up after posting, but before the meeting convenes.

SAMPLE MEETING MINUTES

(As required by MGL Chapter 30A, Section 22 a)

Please email all meeting notices to Palmer Town Clerk Susan Coache, scoache@townofpalmer.com and Mary Fickett, mfickett@townofpalmer.com



INSERT PUBLIC BODY

Insert Meeting's Date and Time

Meeting Minutes

Insert Agenda Item One

Insert Summary

Insert Agenda Item Two

Insert Summary

And continues...

PLEASE RETURN THIS COMPLETED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM TO THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE WITHIN 2 WEEKS OF RECEIPT



Town of Palmer

Palmer Town Building
4417 Main St. Palmer, MA 01609

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT FORM

I, _____ (*please print*), an employee (contractor or volunteer) with the Town of Palmer, hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Town of Palmer Boards, Committees, and Commissions Handbook.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Department: _____