

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA

ONE HUNDRED SECOND LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE BILL 1076**

Introduced by Karpisek, 32.

Read first time January 18, 2012

Committee: Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

A BILL

1 FOR AN ACT relating to public records and meetings; to amend sections  
2 84-712 and 84-1412, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska,  
3 and section 84-1411, Revised Statutes Cumulative  
4 Supplement, 2010; to change provisions relating to copies  
5 of records and speaking at meetings; and to repeal the  
6 original sections.

7 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1                   Section 1. Section 84-712, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
2 Nebraska, is amended to read:

3                   84-712 (1) Except as otherwise expressly provided by  
4 statute, all citizens of this state, and all other persons interested  
5 in the examination of the public records, as defined in section  
6 84-712.01, are hereby fully empowered and authorized to (a) examine  
7 the same, and make memoranda, copies using their own copying or  
8 photocopying equipment in accordance with subsection (2) of this  
9 section, and abstracts therefrom, all free of charge, during the  
10 hours the respective offices may be kept open for the ordinary  
11 transaction of business and (b) except if federal copyright law  
12 otherwise provides, obtain copies of public records in accordance  
13 with subsection (3) of this section during the hours the respective  
14 offices may be kept open for the ordinary transaction of business.

15                  (2) Copies made by citizens or other persons using their  
16 own copying or photocopying equipment pursuant to subdivision (1)(a)  
17 of this section shall be made on the premises of the custodian of the  
18 public record or at a location mutually agreed to by the requester  
19 and the custodian.

20                  (3)(a) Copies may be obtained pursuant to subdivision (1)  
21 (b) of this section only if the custodian has copying equipment  
22 reasonably available. Such copies may be obtained in any form  
23 designated by the requester in which the public record is maintained  
24 or produced, including, but not limited to, printouts, electronic  
25 data, discs, tapes, and photocopies.

21 (c) This section shall not be construed to require a  
22 public body or custodian of a public record to copy, produce, or  
23 generate (i) any public record in a new or different form or format  
24 modified from that of the original public record or (ii) any public  
25 record created within a certain time frame unless the request

1       specifies a specific subject matter.

2                   (d) If copies requested in accordance with subdivision  
3       (1)(b) of this section are estimated by the custodian of such public  
4       records to cost more than fifty dollars, the custodian may require  
5       the requester to furnish a deposit prior to fulfilling such request.

6                   (4) Upon receipt of a written request for access to or  
7       copies of a public record or both access and copies relating to a  
8       specific subject matter, the custodian of such record shall provide  
9       to the requester as soon as is practicable and without delay, but not  
10      more than four business days after actual receipt of the request,  
11      either—(a) access to or, if copying equipment is reasonably  
12      available, such public record if requested and copies of the public  
13      record, if requested and copying equipment is reasonably available,  
14      (b) if there is a legal basis for denial of access or copies, a  
15      written denial of the request together with the information specified  
16      in section 84-712.04, or (c) if the entire request cannot with  
17      reasonable good faith efforts be fulfilled within four business days  
18      after actual receipt of the request due to the significant difficulty  
19      or the extensiveness of the request, a written explanation, including  
20      the earliest practicable date for fulfilling the request, an estimate  
21      of the expected cost of any copies, and an opportunity for the  
22      requester to modify or prioritize the items within the request.

23                  Sec. 2. Section 84-1411, Revised Statutes Cumulative  
24      Supplement, 2010, is amended to read:

25                  84-1411 (1) Each public body shall give reasonable

1      advance publicized notice of the time and place of each meeting by a  
2      method designated by each public body and recorded in its minutes.  
3      Such notice shall be transmitted to all members of the public body  
4      and to the public. Such notice shall contain an agenda of subjects  
5      known at the time of the publicized notice or a statement that the  
6      agenda, which shall be kept continually current, shall be readily  
7      available for public inspection at the principal office of the public  
8      body during normal business hours. Agenda items shall be sufficiently  
9      descriptive to give the public reasonable notice of the matters to be  
10     considered at the meeting. Except for items of an emergency nature,  
11     the agenda shall not be altered later than (a) twenty-four hours  
12     before the scheduled commencement of the meeting or (b) forty-eight  
13     hours before the scheduled commencement of a meeting of a city  
14     council or village board scheduled outside the corporate limits of  
15     the municipality. The public body shall have the right to modify the  
16     agenda to include items of an emergency nature only at such public  
17     meeting.

18                (2) A meeting of a state agency, state board, state  
19     commission, state council, or state committee, of an advisory  
20     committee of any such state entity, of an organization created under  
21     the Interlocal Cooperation Act, the Joint Public Agency Act, or the  
22     Municipal Cooperative Financing Act, of the governing body of a  
23     public power district having a chartered territory of more than fifty  
24     counties in this state, of a board of an educational service unit, or  
25     of the governing body of a risk management pool or its advisory

1 committees organized in accordance with the Intergovernmental Risk  
2 Management Act may be held by means of videoconferencing or, in the  
3 case of the Judicial Resources Commission in those cases specified in  
4 section 24-1204, by telephone conference, if:

5                 (a) Reasonable advance publicized notice is given;

6                 (b) Reasonable arrangements are made to accommodate the  
7 public's right to attend, hear, and speak at the meeting, including  
8 seating, recordation by audio or visual recording devices, and a  
9 reasonable opportunity for input such as public comment or questions  
10 to at least the same extent as would be provided if videoconferencing  
11 or telephone conferencing was not used;

12                 (c) At least one copy of all documents being considered  
13 is available to the public at each site of the videoconference or  
14 telephone conference;

15                 (d) At least one member of the state entity, advisory  
16 committee, board, or governing body is present at each site of the  
17 videoconference or telephone conference; and

18                 (e) No more than one-half of the state entity's, advisory  
19 committee's, board's, or governing body's meetings in a calendar year  
20 are held by videoconference or telephone conference.

21                 Videoconferencing, telephone conferencing, or  
22 conferencing by other electronic communication shall not be used to  
23 circumvent any of the public government purposes established in the  
24 Open Meetings Act.

25                 (3) A meeting of a board of an educational service unit,

1     of the governing body of an entity formed under the Interlocal  
2     Cooperation Act, the Joint Public Agency Act, or the Municipal  
3     Cooperative Financing Act, or of the governing body of a risk  
4     management pool or its advisory committees organized in accordance  
5     with the Intergovernmental Risk Management Act may be held by  
6     telephone conference call if:

7                 (a) The territory represented by the educational service  
8     unit or member public agencies of the entity or pool covers more than  
9     one county;

10                 (b) Reasonable advance publicized notice is given which  
11     identifies each telephone conference location at which an educational  
12     service unit board member or a member of the entity's or pool's  
13     governing body will be present;

14                 (c) All telephone conference meeting sites identified in  
15     the notice are located within public buildings used by members of the  
16     educational service unit board or entity or pool or at a place which  
17     will accommodate the anticipated audience;

18                 (d) Reasonable arrangements are made to accommodate the  
19     public's right to attend, hear, and speak at the meeting, including  
20     seating, recordation by audio recording devices, and a reasonable  
21     opportunity for input such as public comment or questions to at least  
22     the same extent as would be provided if a telephone conference call  
23     was not used;

24                 (e) At least one copy of all documents being considered  
25     is available to the public at each site of the telephone conference

1       call;

2                         (f) At least one member of the educational service unit  
3       board or governing body of the entity or pool is present at each site  
4       of the telephone conference call identified in the public notice;

5                         (g) The telephone conference call lasts no more than one  
6       hour; and

7                         (h) No more than one-half of the board's, entity's, or  
8       pool's meetings in a calendar year are held by telephone conference  
9       call, except that a governing body of a risk management pool that  
10      meets at least quarterly and the advisory committees of the governing  
11      body may each hold more than one-half of its meetings by telephone  
12      conference call if the governing body's quarterly meetings are not  
13      held by telephone conference call or videoconferencing.

14                         Nothing in this subsection shall prevent the  
15      participation of consultants, members of the press, and other  
16      nonmembers of the governing body at sites not identified in the  
17      public notice. Telephone conference calls, emails, faxes, or other  
18      electronic communication shall not be used to circumvent any of the  
19      public government purposes established in the Open Meetings Act.

20                         (4) The secretary or other designee of each public body  
21      shall maintain a list of the news media requesting notification of  
22      meetings and shall make reasonable efforts to provide advance  
23      notification to them of the time and place of each meeting and the  
24      subjects to be discussed at that meeting.

25                         (5) When it is necessary to hold an emergency meeting

1 without reasonable advance public notice, the nature of the emergency  
2 shall be stated in the minutes and any formal action taken in such  
3 meeting shall pertain only to the emergency. Such emergency meetings  
4 may be held by means of electronic or telecommunication equipment.  
5 The provisions of subsection (4) of this section shall be complied  
6 with in conducting emergency meetings. Complete minutes of such  
7 emergency meetings specifying the nature of the emergency and any  
8 formal action taken at the meeting shall be made available to the  
9 public by no later than the end of the next regular business day.

10 (6) A public body may allow a member of the public or any  
11 other witness other than a member of the public body to appear before  
12 the public body and speak on agenda items by means of video or  
13 telecommunications equipment.

14 Sec. 3. Section 84-1412, Reissue Revised Statutes of  
15 Nebraska, is amended to read:

16 84-1412 (1) Subject to the Open Meetings Act, the public  
17 has the right to attend and the right to speak at meetings of public  
18 bodies, and all on agenda items as allowed by the individual  
presiding over the meeting. All or any part of a meeting of a public  
20 body, except for closed sessions called pursuant to section 84-1410,  
21 may be videotaped, televised, photographed, broadcast, or recorded by  
22 any person in attendance by means of a tape recorder, camera, video  
23 equipment, or any other means of pictorial or sonic reproduction or  
24 in writing.

25 (2) It shall not be a violation of subsection (1) of this

1 section for any public body to make and enforce reasonable rules and  
2 regulations regarding the conduct of persons attending, speaking on  
3 agenda items at, videotaping, televising, photographing,  
4 broadcasting, or recording its meetings. A body may not be required  
5 to allow citizens to speak on agenda items at each meeting, but it  
6 may not forbid such public participation on agenda items at all  
7 meetings. Each public body shall have a form on which citizens may  
8 recommend subjects for discussion as possible agenda items at a  
9 future meeting. Copies of such form shall be made available at every  
10 meeting and at the principal office of the public body during normal  
11 business hours. Within ten business days after receiving such form,  
12 the secretary or other designee of the public body shall, by first  
13 class mail, send the citizen a written statement regarding the status  
14 of the request.

15 (3) No public body shall require members of the public to  
16 identify themselves as a condition for admission to the meeting nor  
17 shall such body require that the name of any member of the public be  
18 placed on the agenda prior to such meeting in order to speak about  
19 items on the agenda. The body may require any member of the public  
20 desiring to address the body on agenda items to identify himself or  
21 herself.

22 (4) No public body shall, for the purpose of  
23 circumventing the Open Meetings Act, hold a meeting in a place known  
24 by the body to be too small to accommodate the anticipated audience.

25 (5) No public body shall be deemed in violation of this

1 section if it holds its meeting in its traditional meeting place  
2 which is located in this state.

3 (6) No public body shall be deemed in violation of this  
4 section if it holds a meeting outside of this state if, but only if:

5 (a) A member entity of the public body is located outside  
6 of this state and the meeting is in that member's jurisdiction;

7 (b) All out-of-state locations identified in the notice  
8 are located within public buildings used by members of the entity or  
9 at a place which will accommodate the anticipated audience;

10 (c) Reasonable arrangements are made to accommodate the  
11 public's right to attend, hear, and speak on agenda items at the  
12 meeting, including making a telephone conference call available at an  
13 instate location to members, the public, or the press, if requested  
14 twenty-four hours in advance;

15 (d) No more than twenty-five percent of the public body's  
16 meetings in a calendar year are held out-of-state;

17 (e) Out-of-state meetings are not used to circumvent any  
18 of the public government purposes established in the Open Meetings  
19 Act;

20 (f) Reasonable arrangements are made to provide viewing  
21 at other instate locations for a videoconference meeting if requested  
22 fourteen days in advance and if economically and reasonably available  
23 in the area; and

24 (g) The public body publishes notice of the out-of-state  
25 meeting at least twenty-one days before the date of the meeting in a

1       legal newspaper of statewide circulation.

2                     (7)   The public body shall, upon request, make a  
3   reasonable effort to accommodate the public's right to hear the  
4   discussion and testimony presented at the meeting.

5                     (8)   Public bodies shall make available at the meeting or  
6   the instate location for a telephone conference call or  
7   videoconference, for examination and copying by members of the  
8   public, at least one copy of all reproducible written material to be  
9   discussed at an open meeting. Public bodies shall make available at  
10   least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting  
11   room at a location accessible to members of the public. At the  
12   beginning of the meeting, the public shall be informed about the  
13   location of the posted information.

14                     Sec. 4. Original sections 84-712 and 84-1412, Reissue  
15   Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and section 84-1411, Revised Statutes  
16   Cumulative Supplement, 2010, are repealed.