

# How to handle business that arises between meeting

Last verified by Antlers Library Main on 07-31-2025

In Oklahoma, the **Open Meetings Act** and **Robert's Rules of Order** work together to guide how public bodies (like library boards or city councils) handle business that arises outside of a regular meeting.

Here's a clear breakdown of how to handle business that comes up during the month **between meetings**, while staying compliant with both:

---

## ✓ Step-by-Step Procedure

### 1. AVOID GROUP DECISION-MAKING OUTSIDE A MEETING

Under the **Oklahoma Open Meetings Act (OMA)**:

- A majority (quorum) of the public body **cannot discuss or decide business outside of a posted meeting**—not even via email, phone, or informal gatherings.
- This applies **even if no votes are taken**. The *discussion* itself is subject to OMA.

*OMA citation: 25 O.S. § 306 – "No informal gatherings or electronic communications... shall be used to decide any action."*

### 2. DOCUMENT THE ISSUE FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

When new business arises between meetings:

- A board member or staff can **submit the item** to be included on the next meeting's agenda.
- Per OMA, agendas must be **posted at least 24 hours before the meeting**, and must clearly state each item of business to be considered.
- The agenda should use **clear and specific language** so the public can understand what will be discussed.

✓ *Best practice: Keep a shared running list of agenda items that the board chair or secretary reviews before each meeting.*

### 3. CALL A SPECIAL MEETING IF URGENT

If a decision is needed before the next regular meeting:

- The chair or majority of the board may call a **special meeting**.
- The agenda must be posted **at least 48 hours in advance** (excluding weekends and holidays).
- Only items listed on the agenda can be discussed or acted on.

*OMA citation: 25 O.S. § 311(A)(12)*

### 4. USE ROBERT'S RULES TO PROCESS THE ITEM AT THE MEETING

Once the meeting occurs (regular or special), follow **Robert's Rules of Order** to consider the item:

- A member **makes a motion** to introduce the item.
- Another member **seconds** it.
- The board **discusses** the motion.
- The chair **calls for a vote**.
- The result is recorded in the minutes.

### 5. DO NOT USE EMAIL TO DECIDE BUSINESS

Informational emails (like sharing a document) are okay, but:

- Do **not reply-all** to discuss or express opinions.
- **Do not poll** members for decisions.
- Email cannot be used to substitute for an open meeting.

## Summary Flow

New business comes up → Add to next agenda

If urgent → Call special meeting

At meeting → **Motion** → **Second** → **Discuss** → **Vote**

Never decide via **group email or informal discussions**