

Public Property, Safety, and Works Committee  
Monday, May 8, 2023 4:00 PM  
Council Chambers  
2500 14 Street  
Columbus, NE 68601

The Mayor and City Council reserve the right to go into closed session as per Section 84-1410 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes. A current agenda is on file at the office of the city clerk at City Hall, 2500 14 Street, Columbus, Nebraska. For more information, call 402-562-4224 or visit our website at [www.columbusne.us](http://www.columbusne.us).

{{Name: Agenda Item Name}}

**1. Statement of compliance with Open Meetings Act and roll call.**

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**NEBRASKA OPEN MEETINGS ACT**

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**84-1407. Act, how cited.**

Sections 84-1407 to 84-1414 shall be known and may be cited as the Open Meetings Act.

**Source:** Laws 2004, LB 821, § 34.

**84-1408. Declaration of intent; meetings open to public.**

It is hereby declared to be the policy of this state that the formation of public policy is public business and may not be conducted in secret.

Every meeting of a public body shall be open to the public in order that citizens may exercise their democratic privilege of attending and speaking at meetings of public bodies, except as otherwise provided by the Constitution of Nebraska, federal statutes, and the Open Meetings Act.

**Source:** Laws 1975, LB 325, § 1; Laws 1996, LB 900, § 1071; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 35.

**Annotations**

- Nebraska's public meetings laws do not apply to school board deliberations pertaining solely to disputed adjudicative facts. *McQuinn v. Douglas Cty. Sch. Dist. No. 66*, 259 Neb. 720, 612 N.W.2d 198 (2000).
- The primary purpose of the public meetings law is to ensure that public policy is formulated at open meetings. *Marks v. Judicial Nominating Comm.*, 236 Neb. 429, 461 N.W.2d 551 (1990).
- The public meetings law is broadly interpreted and liberally construed to obtain the objective of openness in favor of the public, and provisions permitting closed sessions must be narrowly and strictly construed. *Grein v. Board of Education of Fremont*, 216 Neb. 158, 343 N.W.2d 718 (1984).
- Although a committee was a subcommittee of a natural resources district board, it was not subject to the Open Meetings Act because there was never a quorum of board members in attendance and the committee did not hold hearings, make policy, or take formal action on behalf of the board. *Koch v. Lower Loup NRD*, 27 Neb. App. 301, 931 N.W.2d 160 (2019).
- A county board of equalization is a public body whose meetings shall be open to the public. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).

**84-1409. Terms, defined.**

For purposes of the Open Meetings Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1)(a) Public body means (i) governing bodies of all political subdivisions of the State of Nebraska, (ii) governing bodies of all agencies, created by the Constitution of Nebraska, statute, or otherwise pursuant to law, of the executive department of the State of Nebraska, (iii) all independent boards, commissions, bureaus, committees, councils, subunits, or any other bodies created by the Constitution of Nebraska, statute, or otherwise pursuant to law, (iv) all study or advisory committees of the executive department of the State of Nebraska whether having continuing existence or appointed as special committees with limited existence, (v) advisory committees of the bodies referred to in subdivisions (i), (ii), and (iii) of this subdivision, and (vi) instrumentalities exercising essentially public functions; and

(b) Public body does not include (i) subcommittees of such bodies unless a quorum of the public body attends a subcommittee meeting or unless such subcommittees are holding hearings, making policy, or taking formal action on behalf of their parent body, except that all meetings of any subcommittee established under section 81-15,175 are subject to the Open Meetings Act, (ii) entities conducting judicial proceedings unless a court or other judicial body is exercising rulemaking authority, deliberating, or deciding upon the issuance of administrative orders, and (iii) the Judicial Resources Commission or subcommittees or subgroups of the commission;

(2) Meeting means all regular, special, or called meetings, formal or informal, of any public body for the purposes of briefing, discussion of public business, formation of tentative policy, or the taking of any action of the public body; and

(3) Virtual conferencing means conducting or participating in a meeting electronically or telephonically with interaction among the participants subject to subsection (2) of section 84-1412.

**Source:** Laws 1975, LB 325, § 2; Laws 1983, LB 43, § 1; Laws 1989, LB 429, § 42; Laws 1989, LB 311, § 14; Laws 1992, LB 1019, § 124; Laws 1993, LB 635, § 1; Laws 1996, LB 1044, § 978; Laws 1997, LB 798, § 37; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 36; Laws 2007, LB296, § 810; Laws 2011, LB366, § 2; Laws 2021, LB83, § 11; Laws 2022, LB922, § 12.

**Operative Date: July 21, 2022**

**Annotations**

- A township is a political subdivision, and as such, a township board is subject to the provisions of the public meetings laws. *Steenblock v. Elkhorn Township Bd.*, 245 Neb. 722, 515 N.W.2d 128 (1994).
- A county agricultural society is a public body to which the provisions of the Nebraska public meetings law are applicable. *Nixon v. Madison Co. Ag. Soc'y*, 217 Neb. 37, 348 N.W.2d 119 (1984).
- Failure by a public governing body, as defined under section 84-1409, R.R.S.1943, to take and record a roll call vote on an action, as required by section 84-1413(2), R.S.Supp.,1980, grants any citizen the right to sue for the purpose of

having the action declared void. In this case such failure could not be later corrected by a nunc pro tunc order because there was no showing that a roll call vote on the disputed action was actually taken, and even if it was the record showed it was not recorded until over a year later. Sections 23-1301, R.R.S.1943, and 23-1302, R.R.S.1943, make it the duty of the county clerk to record proceedings of the board of county commissioners. *State ex rel. Schuler v. Dunbar*, 208 Neb. 69, 302 N.W.2d 674 (1981).

- Although a committee was a subcommittee of a natural resources district board, it was not subject to the Open Meetings Act because there was never a quorum of board members in attendance and the committee did not hold hearings, make policy, or take formal action on behalf of the board. *Koch v. Lower Loup NRD*, 27 Neb. App. 301, 931 N.W.2d 160 (2019).
- Although the Open Meetings Act does not define "subcommittee," a subcommittee is generally defined as a group within a committee to which the committee may refer business. *Koch v. Lower Loup NRD*, 27 Neb. App. 301, 931 N.W.2d 160 (2019).
- The Open Meetings Act does not require policymakers to remain ignorant of the issues they must decide until the moment the public is invited to comment on a proposed policy. By excluding nonquorum subgroups from the definition of a public body, the Legislature has balanced the public's need to be heard on matters of public policy with a practical accommodation for a public body's need for information to conduct business. *Koch v. Lower Loup NRD*, 27 Neb. App. 301, 931 N.W.2d 160 (2019).
- As an administrative agency of the county, a county board of equalization is a public body. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- The electors of a township at their annual meeting are a public body under the Open Meetings Act. *State ex rel. Newman v. Columbus Township Bd.*, 15 Neb. App. 656, 735 N.W.2d 399 (2007).
- The meeting at issue in this case was a "meeting" within the parameters of subsection (2) of this section because it involved the discussion of public business, the formation of tentative policy, or the taking of any action of the public power district. *Hansmeyer v. Nebraska Pub. Power Dist.*, 6 Neb. App. 889, 578 N.W.2d 476 (1998).
- Informational sessions in which the governmental body hears reports are briefings. *Johnson v. Nebraska Environmental Control Council*, 2 Neb. App. 263, 509 N.W.2d 21 (1993).

**84-1410. Closed session; when; purpose; reasons listed; procedure; right to challenge; prohibited acts; chance meetings, conventions, or workshops.**

(1) Any public body may hold a closed session by the affirmative vote of a majority of its voting members if a closed session is clearly necessary for the protection of the public interest or for the prevention of needless injury to the reputation of an individual and if such individual has not requested a public meeting. The subject matter and the reason necessitating the closed session shall be identified in the motion to close. Closed sessions may be held for, but shall not be limited to, such reasons as:

(a) Strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining, real estate purchases, pending litigation, or litigation which is imminent as evidenced by communication of a claim or threat of litigation to or by the public body;

(b) Discussion regarding deployment of security personnel or devices;

(c) Investigative proceedings regarding allegations of criminal misconduct;

(d) Evaluation of the job performance of a person when necessary to prevent needless injury to the reputation of a person and if such person has not requested a public meeting;

(e) For the Community Trust created under section 81-1801.02, discussion regarding the amounts to be paid to individuals who have suffered from a tragedy of violence or natural disaster; or

(f) For public hospitals, governing board peer review activities, professional review activities, review and discussion of medical staff investigations or disciplinary actions, and any strategy session concerning transactional negotiations with any referral source that is required by federal law to be conducted at arms length.

Nothing in this section shall permit a closed meeting for discussion of the appointment or election of a new member to any public body.

(2) The vote to hold a closed session shall be taken in open session. The entire motion, the vote of each member on the question of holding a closed session, and the time when the closed session commenced and concluded shall be recorded in the minutes. If the motion to close passes, then the presiding officer immediately prior to the closed session shall restate on the record the limitation of the subject matter of the closed session. The public body holding such a closed session shall restrict its consideration of matters during the closed portions to only those purposes set forth in the motion to close as the reason for the closed session. The meeting shall be reconvened in open session before any formal action may be taken. For purposes of this section, formal action shall mean a collective decision or a collective commitment or promise to make a decision on any question, motion, proposal, resolution, order, or ordinance or formation of a position or policy but shall not include negotiating guidance given by members of the public body to legal counsel or other negotiators in closed sessions authorized under subdivision (1)(a) of this section.

(3) Any member of any public body shall have the right to challenge the continuation of a closed session if the member determines that the session has exceeded the reason stated in the original motion to hold a closed session or if the member contends that the closed session is neither clearly necessary for (a) the protection of the public interest or (b) the prevention of needless injury to the reputation of an individual. Such challenge shall be overruled only by a majority vote of the members of the public body. Such challenge and its disposition shall be recorded in the minutes.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require that any meeting be closed to the public. No person or public body shall fail to invite a portion of its members to a meeting, and no public body shall designate itself a subcommittee of the whole body for the purpose of circumventing the Open Meetings Act. No closed session, informal meeting, chance meeting, social gathering, email, fax, or other electronic communication shall be used for the purpose of circumventing the requirements of the act.

(5) The act does not apply to chance meetings or to attendance at or travel to conventions or workshops of members of a public body at which there is no meeting of the body then intentionally convened, if there is no vote or other action taken regarding any matter over which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power.

**Source:** Laws 1975, LB 325, § 3; Laws 1983, LB 43, § 2; Laws 1985, LB 117, § 1; Laws 1992, LB 1019, § 125; Laws 1994, LB 621, § 1; Laws 1996, LB 900, § 1072; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 37; Laws 2004, LB 1179, § 1; Laws 2006, LB 898, § 1; Laws 2011, LB390, § 29; Laws 2012, LB995, § 17.

**Annotations**

- There is no absolute discovery privilege for communications that occur during a closed session. *State ex rel. Upper Republican NRD v. District Judges*, 273 Neb. 148, 728 N.W.2d 275 (2007).
- If a person present at a meeting observes a public meetings law violation in the form of an improper closed session and fails to object, that person waives his or her right to object at a later date. *Wasikowski v. Nebraska Quality Jobs Bd.*, 264 Neb. 403, 648 N.W.2d 756 (2002).
- The public interest mentioned in this section is that shared by citizens in general and by the community at large concerning pecuniary or legal rights and liabilities. *Grein v. Board of Education*, 216 Neb. 158, 343 N.W.2d 718 (1984).
- Hearing in closed executive session was contrary to this section since there was no showing of necessity or reason under subdivision (1)(a), (b), or (c), but did not result in reversal of board decision. *Simonds v. Board of Examiners*, 213 Neb. 259, 329 N.W.2d 92 (1983).
- Negotiations for the purchase of land need not be conducted at an open meeting but the deliberations of a city council as to whether an offer to purchase real estate

should be made should take place in an open meeting. *Pokorny v. City of Schuyler*, 202 Neb. 334, 275 N.W.2d 281 (1979).

- Public meeting law was not violated where the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska voted to hold a closed session to consider the university president's resignation, and also discussed the appointment of an interim president during such session. *Meyer v. Board of Regents*, 1 Neb. App. 893, 510 N.W.2d 450 (1993).

**84-1411. Meetings of public body; notice; method; contents; when available; right to modify; duties concerning notice; virtual conferencing authorized; requirements; emergency meeting without notice; appearance before public body.**

(1)(a) Each public body shall give reasonable advance publicized notice of the time and place of each meeting as provided in this subsection. Such notice shall be transmitted to all members of the public body and to the public.

(b)(i) Except as provided in subdivision (1)(b)(ii) of this section, in the case of a public body described in subdivision (1)(a)(i) of section 84-1409 or such body's advisory committee, such notice shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction and, if available, on such newspaper's website.

(ii) In the case of the governing body of a city of the second class or village or such body's advisory committee, such notice shall be published by:

(A) Publication in a newspaper of general circulation within the public body's jurisdiction and, if available, on such newspaper's website; or

(B) Posting written notice in three conspicuous public places in such city or village. Such notice shall be posted in the same three places for each meeting.

(iii) In the case of a public body not described in subdivision (1)(b)(i) or (ii) of this section, such notice shall be given by a method designated by the public body.

(c) In addition to a method of notice required by subdivision (1)(b)(i) or (ii) of this section, such notice may also be provided by any other appropriate method designated by such public body or such advisory committee.

(d) Each public body shall record the methods and dates of such notice in its minutes.

(e) Such notice shall contain an agenda of subjects known at the time of the publicized notice or a statement that the agenda, which shall be kept continually current, shall be readily available for public inspection at the principal office of the public body during normal business hours. Agenda items shall be sufficiently descriptive to give the public reasonable notice of the matters to be considered at the meeting. Except for items of an emergency nature, the agenda shall not be altered later than (i) twenty-four hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting or

(ii) forty-eight hours before the scheduled commencement of a meeting of a city council or village board scheduled outside the corporate limits of the municipality. The public body shall have the right to modify the agenda to include items of an emergency nature only at such public meeting.

(2)(a) The following entities may hold a meeting by means of virtual conferencing if the requirements of subdivision (2)(b) of this section are met:

(i) A state agency, state board, state commission, state council, or state committee, or an advisory committee of any such state entity;

(ii) An organization, including the governing body, created under the Interlocal Cooperation Act, the Joint Public Agency Act, or the Municipal Cooperative Financing Act;

(iii) The governing body of a public power district having a chartered territory of more than one county in this state;

(iv) The governing body of a public power and irrigation district having a chartered territory of more than one county in this state;

(v) An educational service unit;

(vi) The Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council;

(vii) An organization, including the governing body, of a risk management pool or its advisory committees organized in accordance with the Intergovernmental Risk Management Act;

(viii) A community college board of governors;

(ix) The Nebraska Brand Committee;

(x) A local public health department;

(xi) A metropolitan utilities district;

(xii) A regional metropolitan transit authority; and

(xiii) A natural resources district.

(b) The requirements for holding a meeting by means of virtual conferencing are as follows:

(i) Reasonable advance publicized notice is given as provided in subsection (1) of this section, including providing access to a dial-in number or link to the virtual conference;

(ii) In addition to the public's right to participate by virtual conferencing, reasonable arrangements are made to accommodate the public's right to attend at a physical site and participate as provided in section 84-1412, including reasonable seating, in at least one designated site in a building open to the public and identified in the notice, with: At least one member of the entity holding such meeting, or his or her designee, present at each site; a

recording of the hearing by audio or visual recording devices; and a reasonable opportunity for input, such as public comment or questions, is provided to at least the same extent as would be provided if virtual conferencing was not used;

(iii) At least one copy of all documents being considered at the meeting is available at any physical site open to the public where individuals may attend the virtual conference. The public body shall also provide links to an electronic copy of the agenda, all documents being considered at the meeting, and the current version of the Open Meetings Act; and

(iv) Except as otherwise provided in this subdivision or subsection (4) of section 79-2204, no more than one-half of the meetings of the state entities, advisory committees, boards, councils, organizations, or governing bodies are held by virtual conferencing in a calendar year. In the case of an organization created under the Interlocal Cooperation Act that sells electricity or natural gas at wholesale on a multistate basis or an organization created under the Municipal Cooperative Financing Act, the organization may hold more than one-half of its meetings by virtual conferencing if such organization holds at least one meeting each calendar year that is not by virtual conferencing. The governing body of a risk management pool that meets at least quarterly and the advisory committees of the governing body may each hold more than one-half of its meetings by virtual conferencing if the governing body's quarterly meetings are not held by virtual conferencing.

(3) Virtual conferencing, emails, faxes, or other electronic communication shall not be used to circumvent any of the public government purposes established in the Open Meetings Act.

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

(5) When it is necessary to hold an emergency meeting without reasonable advance public notice, the nature of the emergency shall be stated in the minutes and any formal action taken in such meeting shall pertain only to the emergency. Such emergency meetings may be held by virtual conferencing. The provisions of subsection (4) of this section shall be complied with in conducting emergency meetings. Complete minutes of such emergency meetings specifying the nature of the emergency and any formal action taken at the meeting shall be made available to the public by no later than the end of the next regular business day.

(6) A public body may allow a member of the public or any other witness to appear before the public body by means of virtual conferencing.

(7)(a) Notwithstanding subsections (2) and (5) of this section, if an emergency is declared by the Governor pursuant to the Emergency Management Act as defined in section 81-829.39, a public body the territorial jurisdiction of which is included in the emergency declaration, in whole or in part, may hold a meeting by virtual conferencing during such emergency if the

public body gives reasonable advance publicized notice as described in subsection (1) of this section. The notice shall include information regarding access for the public and news media. In addition to any formal action taken pertaining to the emergency, the public body may hold such meeting for the purpose of briefing, discussion of public business, formation of tentative policy, or the taking of any action by the public body.

(b) The public body shall provide access by providing a dial-in number or a link to the virtual conference. The public body shall also provide links to an electronic copy of the agenda, all documents being considered at the meeting, and the current version of the Open Meetings Act. Reasonable arrangements shall be made to accommodate the public's right to hear and speak at the meeting and record the meeting. Subsection (4) of this section shall be complied with in conducting such meetings.

(c) The nature of the emergency shall be stated in the minutes. Complete minutes of such meeting specifying the nature of the emergency and any formal action taken at the meeting shall be made available for inspection as provided in subsection (5) of section 84-1413.

(8) In addition to any other statutory authorization for virtual conferencing, any public body not listed in subdivision (2)(a) of this section may hold a meeting by virtual conferencing if:

(a) The purpose of the virtual meeting is to discuss items that are scheduled to be discussed or acted upon at a subsequent non-virtual open meeting of the public body;

(b) No action is taken by the public body at the virtual meeting; and

(c) The public body complies with subdivisions (2)(b)(i) and (2)(b)(ii) of this section.

**Source:** Laws 1975, LB 325, § 4; Laws 1983, LB 43, § 3; Laws 1987, LB 663, § 25; Laws 1993, LB 635, § 2; Laws 1996, LB 469, § 6; Laws 1996, LB 1161, § 1; Laws 1999, LB 47, § 2; Laws 1999, LB 87, § 100; Laws 1999, LB 461, § 1; Laws 2000, LB 968, § 85; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 38; Laws 2004, LB 1179, § 2; Laws 2006, LB 898, § 2; Laws 2007, LB199, § 9; Laws 2009, LB361, § 2; Laws 2012, LB735, § 1; Laws 2013, LB510, § 1; Laws 2017, LB318, § 1; Laws 2019, LB212, § 5; Laws 2020, LB148, § 3; Laws 2021, LB83, § 12; Laws 2022, LB742, § 1; Laws 2022, LB908, § 1; Laws 2022, LB922, § 13.

**Note:** The Revisor of Statutes has pursuant to section 49-769 correlated LB742, section 1, with LB908, section 1, and LB922, section 13, to reflect all amendments.

**Note:** Changes made by LB742 and LB908 became effective July 21, 2022. Changes made by LB922 became operative July 21, 2022.

### Cross References

- **Intergovernmental Risk Management Act**, see section 44-4301.
- **Interlocal Cooperation Act**, see section 13-801.
- **Joint Public Agency Act**, see section 13-2501.

- **Municipal Cooperative Financing Act**, see section 18-2401.

#### **Annotations**

- Under subsection (1) of this section, the Legislature has imposed only two conditions on the public body's notification method of a public meeting: (1) It must give reasonable advance publicized notice of the time and place of each meeting and (2) it must be recorded in the public body's minutes. *City of Elkhorn v. City of Omaha*, 272 Neb. 867, 725 N.W.2d 792 (2007).
- An emergency is "(a)ny event or occasional combination of circumstances which calls for immediate action or remedy; pressing necessity; exigency; a sudden or unexpected happening; an unforeseen occurrence or condition." *Steenblock v. Elkhorn Township Bd.*, 245 Neb. 722, 515 N.W.2d 128 (1994).
- An agenda which gives reasonable notice of the matters to be considered at a meeting of a city council complies with the requirements of this section. *Pokorny v. City of Schuyler*, 202 Neb. 334, 275 N.W.2d 281 (1979).
- When notice is required, a notice of a special meeting of a city council posted in three public places at 10:00 p.m. on the day preceding the meeting is not reasonable advance publicized notice of a meeting as is required by this section. *Pokorny v. City of Schuyler*, 202 Neb. 334, 275 N.W.2d 281 (1979).
- Teacher waived right to object to lack of public notice in board of education employment hearing by voluntary participation in the hearing without objection. *Alexander v. School Dist. No. 17*, 197 Neb. 251, 248 N.W.2d 335 (1976).
- A county board of commissioners and a county board of equalization are not required to give separate notices when the notice states only the time and place that the boards meet and directs a citizen to where the agendas for each board can be found. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- A county board of equalization is a public body which is required to give advanced publicized notice of its meetings. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- Notice of recessed and reconvened meetings must be given in the same fashion as the original meeting. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- True notice of a meeting is not given by burying such in the minutes of a prior board proceeding. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- An agenda notice which merely stated "work order reports" was an inadequate notice under this section because it did not give interested persons knowledge that plans for a 345 kv transmission line through the district was going to be discussed and voted upon at the meeting. Inadequate agenda notice under this section meant there was a substantial violation of the public meeting laws; however, later actions by the board of directors cured the defects in notice, and such actions were in substantial compliance with the statute. *Hansmeyer v. Nebraska Pub. Power Dist.*, 6 Neb. App. 889, 578 N.W.2d 476 (1998).

**84-1412. Meetings of public body; rights of public; public body; powers and duties.**

(1) Subject to the Open Meetings Act, the public has the right to attend and the right to speak at meetings of public bodies, and all or any part of a meeting of a public body, except for closed sessions called pursuant to section 84-1410, may be videotaped, televised, photographed, broadcast, or recorded by any person in attendance by means of a tape recorder, a camera, video equipment, or any other means of pictorial or sonic reproduction or in writing.

(2) It shall not be a violation of subsection (1) of this section for any public body to make and enforce reasonable rules and regulations regarding the conduct of persons attending, speaking at, videotaping, televising, photographing, broadcasting, or recording its meetings, including meetings held by virtual conferencing. A body may not be required to allow citizens to speak at each meeting, but it may not forbid public participation at all meetings.

(3) No public body shall require members of the public to identify themselves as a condition for admission to the meeting nor shall such body require that the name of any member of the public be placed on the agenda prior to such meeting in order to speak about items on the agenda. The body shall require any member of the public desiring to address the body to identify himself or herself, including an address and the name of any organization represented by such person unless the address requirement is waived to protect the security of the individual.

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

(5) No public body shall be deemed in violation of this section if it holds its meeting in its traditional meeting place which is located in this state.

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

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

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

(c) Reasonable arrangements are made to accommodate the public's right to attend, hear, and speak at the meeting, including making virtual conferencing available at an in-state location to members, the public, or the press, if requested twenty-four hours in advance;

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

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

(f) The public body publishes notice of the out-of-state meeting at least twenty-one days before the date of the meeting in a legal newspaper of statewide circulation.

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

(8) Public bodies shall make available at the meeting or the instate location for virtual conferencing as required by subdivision (6)(c) of this section, for examination and copying by members of the public, at least one copy of all reproducible written material to be discussed at an open meeting, either in paper or electronic form. Public bodies shall make available at least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room at a location accessible to members of the public. At the beginning of the meeting, the public shall be informed about the location of the posted information.

**Source:** Laws 1975, LB 325, § 5; Laws 1983, LB 43, § 4; Laws 1985, LB 117, § 2; Laws 1987, LB 324, § 5; Laws 1996, LB 900, § 1073; Laws 2001, LB 250, § 2; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 39; Laws 2006, LB 898, § 3; Laws 2008, LB962, § 1; Laws 2021, LB83, § 13.

**Annotations**

- To preserve an objection that a public body failed to make documents available at a public meeting as required by subsection (8) of this section, a person who attends a public meeting must not only object to the violation, but must make that objection to the public body or to a member of the public body. *Stoetzel & Sons v. City of Hastings*, 265 Neb. 637, 658 N.W.2d 636 (2003).

**84-1413. Meetings; minutes; roll call vote; secret ballot; when; agenda and minutes; required on website; when.**

(1) Each public body shall keep minutes of all meetings showing the time, place, members present and absent, and the substance of all matters discussed.

(2) Any action taken on any question or motion duly moved and seconded shall be by roll call vote of the public body in open session, and the record shall state how each member voted or if the member was absent or not voting. The requirements of a roll call or viva voce vote shall be satisfied by a public body which utilizes an electronic voting device which allows the yeas and nays of each member of such public body to be readily seen by the public.

(3) The vote to elect leadership within a public body may be taken by secret ballot, but the total number of votes for each candidate shall be recorded in the minutes.

(4) The minutes of all meetings and evidence and documentation received or disclosed in open session shall be public records and open to public inspection during normal business hours.

(5) Minutes shall be written or kept as an electronic record and shall be available for inspection within ten working days or prior to the next convened meeting, whichever occurs

earlier, except that cities of the second class and villages may have an additional ten working days if the employee responsible for writing or keeping the minutes is absent due to a serious illness or emergency.

(6) Beginning July 31, 2022, the governing body of a natural resources district, the city council of a city of the metropolitan class, the city council of a city of the primary class, the city council of a city of the first class, the county board of a county with a population greater than twenty-five thousand inhabitants, and the school board of a school district shall make available on such entity's public website the agenda and minutes of any meeting of the governing body. The agenda shall be placed on the website at least twenty-four hours before the meeting of the governing body. Minutes shall be placed on the website at such time as the minutes are available for inspection as provided in subsection (5) of this section. This information shall be available on the public website for at least six months.

**Source:** Laws 1975, LB 325, § 6; Laws 1978, LB 609, § 3; Laws 1979, LB 86, § 9; Laws 1987, LB 663, § 26; Laws 2005, LB 501, § 1; Laws 2009, LB361, § 3; Laws 2015, LB365, § 2; Laws 2016, LB876, § 1; Laws 2021, LB83, § 14; Laws 2022, LB742, § 2.

**Effective Date: July 21, 2022**

**Annotations**

- If a person present at a meeting observes and fails to object to an alleged public meetings laws violation in the form of a failure to conduct rollcall votes before taking actions on questions or motions pending, that person waives his or her right to object at a later date. *Hauser v. Nebraska Police Stds. Adv. Council*, 264 Neb. 944, 653 N.W.2d 240 (2002).
- Subsection (2) of this section does not require the record to state that the vote was by roll call, but requires only that the record show if and how each member voted. Neither does the statute set a time limit for recording the results of a vote, after which no corrections of the record can be made. If no intervening rights of third persons have arisen, a board of county commissioners has power to correct the record of the proceedings had at a previous meeting so as to make them speak the truth, particularly where the correction supplies some omitted fact or action and is done not to contradict or change the original record but to have the record show that a certain action was taken or thing done, which the original record fails to show. *State ex rel. Schuler v. Dunbar*, 214 Neb. 85, 333 N.W.2d 652 (1983).
- Failure by a public governing body, as defined under section 84-1409, R.R.S.1943, to take and record a roll call vote on an action, as required by section 84-1413(2), R.S.Supp.,1980, grants any citizen the right to sue for the purpose of having the action declared void. In this case such failure could not be later corrected by a nunc pro tunc order because there was no showing that a roll call vote on the disputed action was actually taken, and even if it was the record showed it was not recorded until over a year later. Sections 23-1301, R.R.S.1943,

and 23-1302, R.R.S.1943, make it the duty of the county clerk to record proceedings of the board of county commissioners. *State ex rel. Schuler v. Dunbar*, 208 Neb. 69, 302 N.W.2d 674 (1981).

- There is no requirement that a public body make a record of where notice was published or posted. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).

**84-1414. Unlawful action by public body; declared void or voidable by district court; when; duty to enforce open meeting laws; citizen's suit; procedure; violations; penalties.**

(1) Any motion, resolution, rule, regulation, ordinance, or formal action of a public body made or taken in violation of the Open Meetings Act shall be declared void by the district court if the suit is commenced within one hundred twenty days of the meeting of the public body at which the alleged violation occurred. Any motion, resolution, rule, regulation, ordinance, or formal action of a public body made or taken in substantial violation of the Open Meetings Act shall be voidable by the district court if the suit is commenced more than one hundred twenty days after but within one year of the meeting of the public body in which the alleged violation occurred. A suit to void any final action shall be commenced within one year of the action.

(2) The Attorney General and the county attorney of the county in which the public body ordinarily meets shall enforce the Open Meetings Act.

(3) Any citizen of this state may commence a suit in the district court of the county in which the public body ordinarily meets or in which the plaintiff resides for the purpose of requiring compliance with or preventing violations of the Open Meetings Act, for the purpose of declaring an action of a public body void, or for the purpose of determining the applicability of the act to discussions or decisions of the public body. It shall not be a defense that the citizen attended the meeting and failed to object at such time. The court may order payment of reasonable attorney's fees and court costs to a successful plaintiff in a suit brought under this section.

(4) Any member of a public body who knowingly violates or conspires to violate or who attends or remains at a meeting knowing that the public body is in violation of any provision of the Open Meetings Act shall be guilty of a Class IV misdemeanor for a first offense and a Class III misdemeanor for a second or subsequent offense.

**Source:** Laws 1975, LB 325, § 9; Laws 1977, LB 39, § 318; Laws 1983, LB 43, § 5; Laws 1992, LB 1019, § 126; Laws 1994, LB 621, § 2; Laws 1996, LB 900, § 1074; Laws 2004, LB 821, § 40; Laws 2006, LB 898, § 4.

**Annotations**

- The Legislature has granted standing to a broad scope of its citizens for the very limited purpose of challenging meetings allegedly in violation of the Open Meetings Act, so that they may help police the public policy embodied by the act. *Schauer v. Grooms*, 280 Neb. 426, 786 N.W.2d 909 (2010).

- Any citizen of the state may commence an action to declare a public body's action void. *City of Elkhorn v. City of Omaha*, 272 Neb. 867, 725 N.W.2d 792 (2007).
- The reading of ordinances constitutes a formal action under subsection (1) of this section. *City of Elkhorn v. City of Omaha*, 272 Neb. 867, 725 N.W.2d 792 (2007).
- If a person present at a meeting observes a public meetings law violation in the form of an improper closed session and fails to object, that person waives his or her right to object at a later date. *Wasikowski v. Nebraska Quality Jobs Bd.*, 264 Neb. 403, 648 N.W.2d 756 (2002).
- Under the Public Meetings Act, a county lacks capacity to maintain an action to declare its official conduct "void" for noncompliance with the act. *County of York v. Johnson*, 230 Neb. 403, 432 N.W.2d 215 (1988).
- When a petitioner under this section is successful in the district court, that court may allow attorney fees. *Tracy Corp. II v. Nebraska Pub. Serv. Comm.*, 218 Neb. 900, 360 N.W.2d 485 (1984).
- Informal discussions between the Tax Commissioner and the State Board of Equalization in which instructions were clarified, with such clarification leading to the amendment of hearing notices, did not constitute a public meeting subject to the provisions of this section. *Box Butte County v. State Board of Equalization and Assessment*, 206 Neb. 696, 295 N.W.2d 670 (1980).
- The right to collaterally attack an order made in contravention of the Public Meeting Act must occur within a period of one year as is specifically provided by this section. *Witt v. School District No. 70*, 202 Neb. 63, 273 N.W.2d 669 (1979).
- Statutory change, requiring "publicized notice" for board of education employment hearings, occurring between dates meeting scheduled and conducted, held not to void proceedings. *Alexander v. School Dist. No. 17*, 197 Neb. 251, 248 N.W.2d 335 (1976).
- Voiding an entire meeting is a proper remedy for violations of the Open Meetings Act. Once a meeting has been declared void pursuant to Nebraska's public meetings law, board members are prohibited from considering any information obtained at the illegal meeting. *Wolf v. Grubbs*, 17 Neb. App. 292, 759 N.W.2d 499 (2009).
- Actions by the board of directors were merely voidable under this section, and not void. Pursuant to subsection (3) of this section, the plaintiffs were awarded partial attorney fees because they were successful in having the court declare that the board of directors was in substantial violation of the statute, even though the plaintiffs did not get the relief requested of having the board's actions declared void. *Hansmeyer v. Nebraska Pub. Power Dist.*, 6 Neb. App. 889, 578 N.W.2d 476 (1998).

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Source: [http://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/display\\_html.php?begin\\_section=84-1407&end\\_section=84-1414](http://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/display_html.php?begin_section=84-1407&end_section=84-1414)

Date: July 2022

**2. Right-of-way agreement with Dusters for patio seating at 2804 13 Street.**



# The City of *Columbus*

RESPONSIBLE



RESPONSIVE



REPUTABLE

Administration Office (402) 562-4232

Fax (402) 563-1380

## memorandum

**DATE:** May 3, 2023  
**TO:** Mayor and City Council Members  
**FROM:** Tara Vasicek, City Administrator  
**RE:** Right-of-Way Easement Agreement for Gottberg Auto Company LLC doing business as Duster's

### RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the easement agreement with Gottberg Auto Company LLC

### DISCUSSION:

The owner of Duster's located at 2804 13<sup>th</sup> Street has been provided a ROW Easement Agreement which includes terms required by the city to enter into an easement agreement in order for the business owner to construct and operate an outdoor area within the City right of way. Before the project may be constructed the business owner must apply for a permit with community development which includes a drawing approved by engineering and community development.

The business owner will also be required to follow the rules set by the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission in requesting an outdoor area as part of their liquor license.

### FISCAL IMPACT:

None

### CONCURRENCE:

Andy Woehrer, Chief Building and Code Official

Rick Bogus, City Engineer

To: City of Columbus

Proposal: Fenced in Area for outdoor seating at Dusters

We would like to create an outdoor space for people to enjoy food and drinks. The space would be located outside the pub door along the building. The space proposed will be approximately 40 feet long by 6 ft wide. There will be one gate at the entrance by the pub door. I have spoken with the Fire Marshall who indicated that as long as the space does not hold 50 people or more, we are in compliance with the code and do not need another gate. The fencing leaves plenty of side walk to accommodate wheel chairs.

We likely can accommodate approximately 18 people depending upon the table configuration.

I have had many requests for outdoor seating. Please consider my request as I think it would add the ability to dine outdoors downtown.

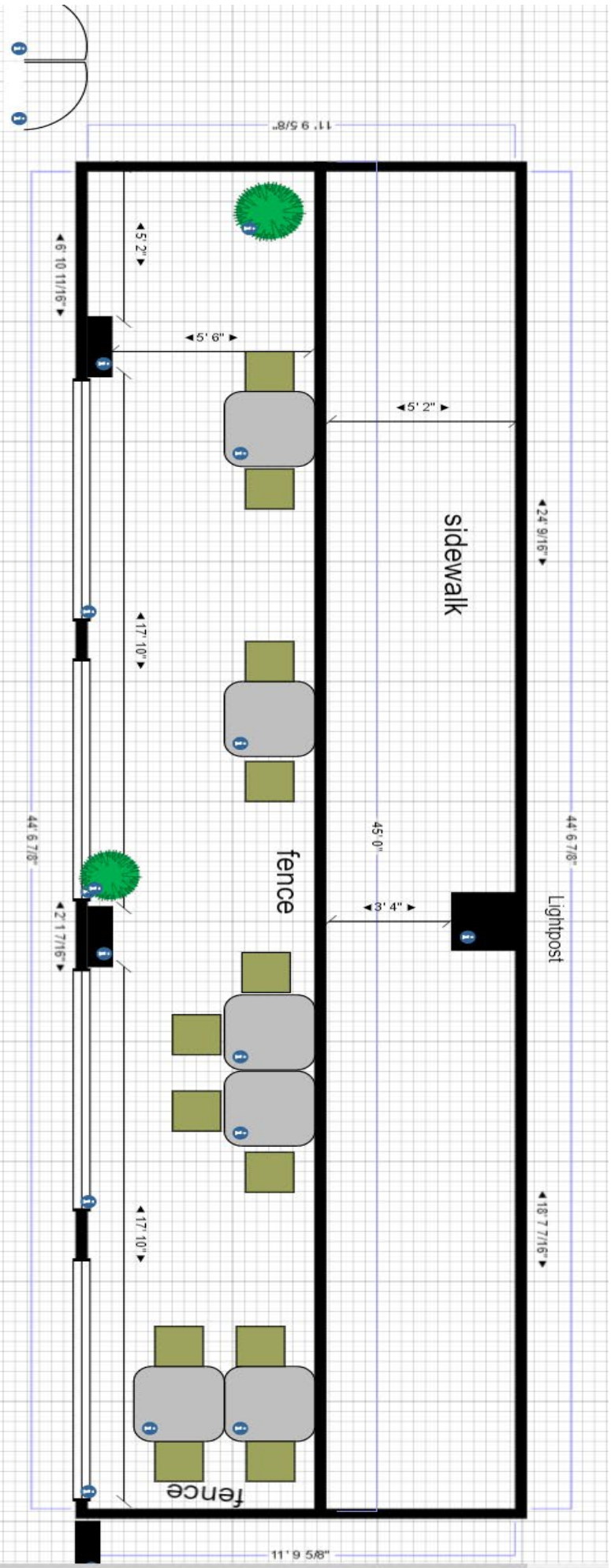
Regards

Marilea Hull

Owner, Dusters



The shaded area is where I want the proposed fenced in area would be located. Plan is on the next page





This is the metal fencing I was planning on. It will be 4 feet high.



We can fit small tables and chairs. This is an example of the table and chairs that I will be putting out there. These are 27 1/2 square which are big enough for 3 people max See the floor plan with layout.

## **EASEMENT AGREEMENT**

This Easement Agreement is made by and between the **City of Columbus**, Nebraska, a municipal Corporation (herein referred to as 'Grantor'), and **Dusters** (herein referred to as 'Grantee').

1. **PURPOSE**. The purpose of this Agreement is to set forth the terms and conditions under which Grantee may construct, maintain, repair, and utilize the following described improvement(s) which will infringe upon real estate or right-of-way owned and/or controlled by Grantor:

To install improvements to the sidewalk for outdoor seating in conjunction with the operation of Grantee's business (commonly referred to as Dusters Restaurant, and Gottberg Brew Pub). The improvements shall be located on the East side of the building located at 2801 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Columbus, Nebraska. The size of this area shall be approximately forty (40) feet long and six (6) feet wide. A perimeter fence shall be installed at the sole expense of Grantee. The fence shall be black iron at least thirty-six (36) inches high and have one (1) entrance/exit gate measuring at least forty-two (42) inches wide.

The area of this improvement shall not be used by Grantee for any other purpose then what is contained in this Agreement.

2. **DESCRIPTION OF REAL ESTATE**. Grantee leases a portion of the following described real estate adjacent to Grantor's real estate and/or right-of-way to which this the Agreement shall apply:

Lots 5, 6, 7, & 8, Block 56 of the Original City of Columbus, Platte County, Nebraska.

3. **GRANTEE'S DUTIES AND RISKS**. It is understood and agreed that Grantee may construct, maintain, repair and utilize the above described improvement at Grantee's sole risk. Grantee hereby waives any claim for damages against Grantor, its officers, employee, agents and independent contractors for any damage or injury that may result to said improvement. If Grantor, in its sole discretion, determines that any part or all of the improvement must be removed, or is damaged by Grantor, its, employees, agents or independent contractors working for Grantor during the course of their employment or duties with Grantor, then Grantee agrees to assume and pay all costs relating to the replacement or repair of the improvement. Grantee agrees to indemnify and hold Grantor harmless from any and all liability, loss or damage, that Grantor may suffer as a result of any and all actions, claims, damages, costs and expenses on account of, or in any way arising out of, or from this Agreement; including, but not limited to, indemnify and save and hold harmless Grantor from any and all losses, claims, actions or judgments for damages or injuries to persons or property arising out of or from, or caused by, the construction, operation, maintenance and use of the aforesaid easement and improvement.

4. **PROTECTION OF EXISTING UTILITIES**. Grantee is responsible for locating and coordinating the original construction and future maintenance work on the described improvement. No excavation work will be permitted in the area of underground utility facilities until all such facilities have been located and identified to the satisfaction of all Parties. The excavation must be done with all reasonable care in order to avoid any possibility of damage to the utility facility. Grantee shall be

responsible for any and all damages.

5. RESTORATION OF PROPERTY. If the construction or maintenance of the improvement identified in this Agreement requires excavation of earth, or removal of hard surface, grass, vegetation, landscaping, or any other disruption of the surface of the public right-of-way or neighboring property, Grantee shall restore the surface of the area to the same condition as it existed immediately prior to Grantee's work in the area.

6. APPLICABLE LAW. Grantee shall conform to all existing and applicable ordinances, resolutions, and permit procedures of Grantor. Grantee shall also follow and comply with all other applicable local, state, and federal laws. Nebraska law shall govern this Agreement.

7. LIABILITY INSURANCE. Grantee shall procure, and continuously maintain during the term of Agreement at its sole cost and expense, a policy or policies of comprehensive general liability insurance with not less than the following limits:

|                                              |             |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Each Occurrence                              | \$1,000,000 |
| Damages to Rented Premises (each occurrence) | \$100,000   |
| Medical Payments (any one person)            | \$5,000     |
| Personal and Advertising Injury              | \$1,000,000 |
| General Aggregate                            | \$2,000,000 |
| Products-Completed Operations Aggregate      | \$2,000,000 |

Grantor shall be named as an additional insured on these liability insurance policies. Grantee shall provide Grantor with annual certificates from its insurers confirming the existence of the insurance coverage required herein; and, will immediately notify Grantor of any cancellation or lapse of coverage.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Agreement shall take effect the date it is executed by both Parties. It shall continue for an indefinite term, or until such time as it is terminated as provided hereafter.

9. TERMINATION. This Agreement shall terminate upon one or more of the following occurrences:

- A) The service of written notice of the intention to terminate by Grantee and the removal of any improvements infringing upon Grantor's property or right-of-way.
- B) Grantee's application for a permit to alter said improvement, or any part thereof, unless said permit is for work due to an occurrence as in Paragraph 3 of this Agreement and said work has the prior written approval of Grantor.
- C) Grantee's construction or installation of any structure or improvement of any nature upon the real estate or right-of-way owned or controlled by Grantor except as described in this Agreement.
- D) The failure of Grantee to maintain and/or repair the improvement in a condition acceptable to Grantor.

E) The termination or non-renewal of Grantee's lease with the owner of the real estate described in Paragraph 2 above.

F) Grantor may revoke this Agreement at any time for any reason.

Upon termination of the Agreement, Grantee shall be required, and hereby agrees, to remove said improvement from Grantor's real estate and/or right-of-way solely at its own expense and without cost to Grantor. Said removal to occur no later than sixty (60) calendar days after receipt of the notice to terminate or any of the occurrences set forth in Paragraph 9 of this Agreement. Should Grantee fail to do so, Grantor may remove or cause the removal of said improvement and Grantee agrees to reimburse Grantor for all its costs.

10. REAL ESTATE OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY. This Easement Agreement is conditional upon the owner of the real estate described in Paragraph 2 above consenting to this Agreement and agreeing that in the event Grantee, upon termination of this Agreement for any reason, fails to carry out Grantee's responsibility to remove the improvements from Grantor's real estate in accordance with Paragraph 9 above, said owner shall be responsible for such removal in strict accordance with such provision of said Paragraph 9.

11. NON-WAIVER. No waiver by Grantor of any default shall operate as a waiver of any other default or of the same default on a future occasion.

12. BINDING EFFECT. This Agreement shall extend to and be binding upon any heirs, personal representatives, successors and assigns of the Parties hereto (including guarantors, endorsers, and sureties) of the Parties hereto.

13. SEVERABILITY. Invalidity of any one or more of the provisions of this Agreement, by judgment or court order, shall in no way affect any other provisions of the Agreement which other provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

14. APPLICABLE LAW. The Parties agree that Nebraska law shall govern this Agreement. The Parties shall submit to personal jurisdiction and subject matter jurisdiction of the State of Nebraska in Platte County for any dispute between the Parties. Grantee agrees to follow all rules and regulations of Grantor's Zoning Code in the operation and maintenance of the improvement.

\*\*\*\*\*Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank\*\*\*\*\*

Duly executed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023, by Dusters:

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Marilea Hull, Owner and Operator and  
Authorized agent of Dusters

Duly executed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023, by the City Of Columbus:

By: \_\_\_\_\_

James Bulkley, Mayor of the City Of Columbus

STATE OF NEBRASKA       )  
                                          ) ss.  
COUNTY OF PLATTE       )

Before me, a Notary Public qualified for said county, personally came Marilea Hull, Owner and Operator and authorized agent of Dusters, known to me to be the identical person who signed the foregoing Easement Agreement and acknowledged the execution thereof to be their voluntary act and deed.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of May, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

STATE OF NEBRASKA       )  
                                          ) ss.  
COUNTY OF PLATTE       )

Before me, a Notary Public qualified for said county, personally came James Bulkley as Mayor of The City of Columbus and on behalf of such, known to me to be the identical person who signed the foregoing Easement Agreement and acknowledged the execution thereof to be her voluntary act and deed.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of May, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

## **CONSENT AND AGREEMENT**

Double T Realty, Inc, the owner of the real estate described in the foregoing Easement Agreement, hereby consents to such Easement Agreement and to the easement therein granted, and further agrees not to interfere in any way with the ability of the Grantee to carry out its obligations thereunder and make full use of the rights granted therein. The Undersigned owner hereby further agrees that if, upon termination of the Grantee's leasehold interest or the termination of the foregoing Easement Agreement for any reason, Grantee fails to carry out Grantee's responsibility to remove the improvements from Grantor's real estate in accordance with Paragraph 9 of the Easement Agreement, said owner shall be responsible for such removal in strict accordance with such provisions of said Paragraph 9.

Duly executed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023, by Double T Realty, Inc:

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, as authorized agent of  
Double T Realty, Inc

STATE OF NEBRASKA     )  
                                          ) ss.  
COUNTY OF PLATTE     )

Before me, a Notary Public qualified for said county, personally came \_\_\_\_\_, as authorized agent of Double T Realty, Inc, known to me to be the identical person who signed the foregoing Consent and Agreement and acknowledged the execution thereof to be her voluntary act and deed.

Dated this \_\_\_\_\_ day of May, 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

### **3. Plans and specifications for Frankfort Square improvements.**

# The City of *Columbus*

## MEMORANDUM

---

**DATE:** May 3, 2023  
**FROM :** Richard J. Bogus, City Engineer  
**TO:** Tara Vasicek, City Administrator  
**RE:** Frankfort Square Improvements 2023

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

I recommend approval of the plans and specifications for the above referenced project. Staff will obtain quotes which will be provided to the city council for approval.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Refer to the attachment for reference. The project consists of constructing a food truck parking pad to be accessed off of 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue, internal sidewalks in the east quadrant connecting to existing park sidewalks, two concrete pads for placement of picnic tables, and the relocation of one bench (no donation name on the bench).

The work will need to include the removal of one large tree (hackberry), removal and relocation of the UPRR bell structure, removal of about 25 flag pole holders, and resetting of some underground sprinkler heads. Due to the limitations of distances needed between flags, only 11 holders could be reset. The American Legion sets the flags in this east quadrant. An unofficial discussion has been made and a formal meeting will be set, no major issue is anticipated.

Improvements to Frankfort Square was one of the derived concepts from the downtown study.

Design and construction phase services internally by the Engineering Department. If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

2022-2023 budget CIP 23-001 in the amount of \$125,000

### **ALTERNATIVE:**

Do not approve.

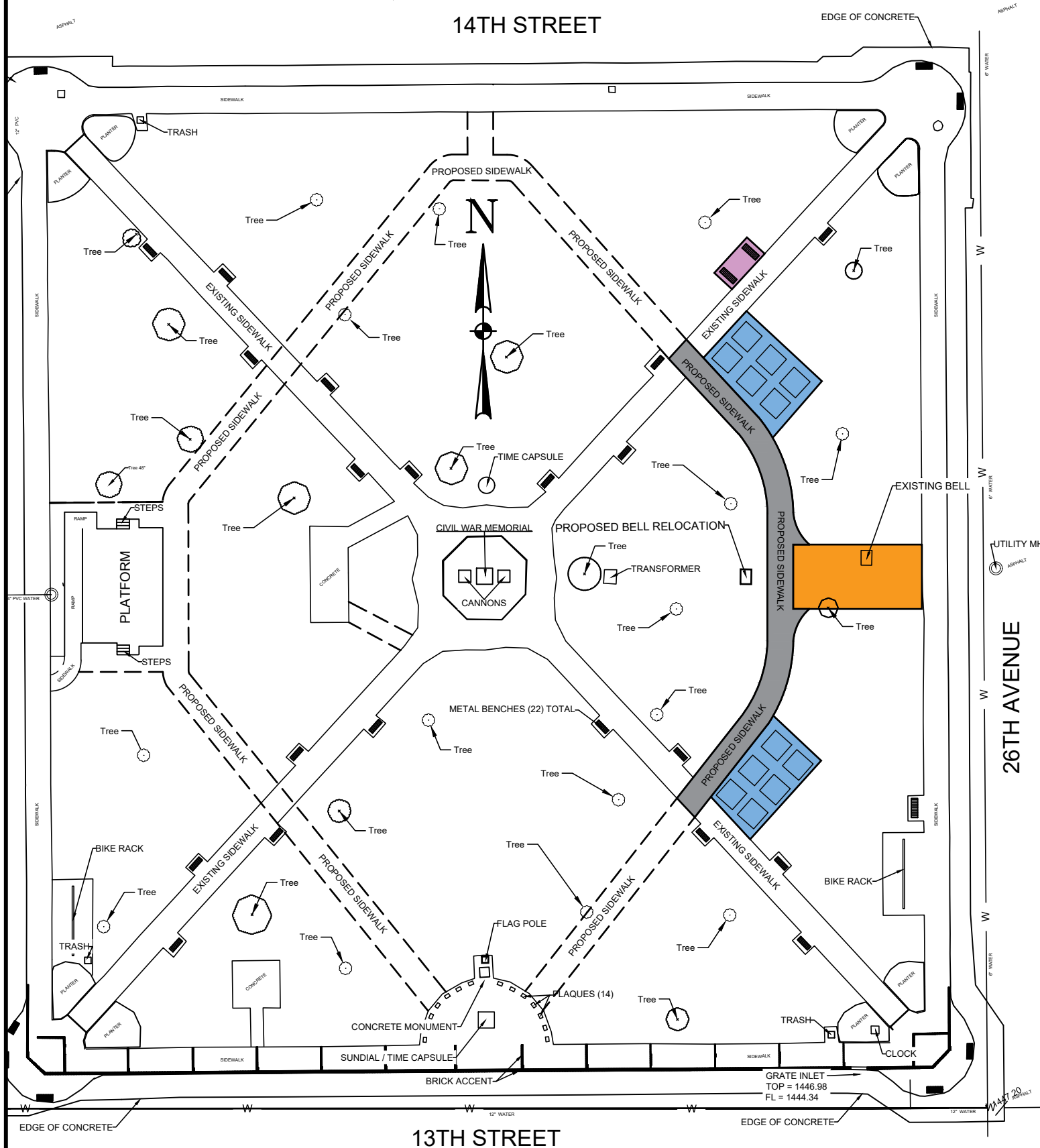
### **SIGNATURE:**

By: Richard J. Bogus

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_

# FRANKFORT SQUARE CONCEPTUAL DRAWING

14TH STREET



26TH AVENUE

## LEGEND:



PICNIC TABLE AREA



VEHICLE PAD



COMMUNITY BENCH

#### **4. Adjournment.**