

21.5 Closed session.

1. A governmental body may hold a closed session only by affirmative public vote of either two-thirds of the members of the body or all of the members present at the meeting. A governmental body may hold a closed session only to the extent a closed session is necessary for any of the following reasons:

a. To review or discuss records which are required or authorized by state or federal law to be kept confidential or to be kept confidential as a condition for that governmental body's possession or continued receipt of federal funds.

b. To discuss application for letters patent.

c. To discuss strategy with counsel in matters that are presently in litigation or where litigation is imminent where its disclosure would be likely to prejudice or disadvantage the position of the governmental body in that litigation.

d. To discuss the contents of a licensing examination or whether to initiate licensee disciplinary investigations or proceedings if the governmental body is a licensing or examining board.

e. To discuss whether to conduct a hearing or to conduct hearings to suspend or expel a student, unless an open session is requested by the student or a parent or guardian of the student if the student is a minor.

f. To discuss the decision to be rendered in a contested case conducted according to the provisions of [chapter 17A](#).

g. To avoid disclosure of specific law enforcement matters, such as current or proposed investigations or inspection or auditing techniques or schedules, which if disclosed would enable law violators to avoid detection.

h. To avoid disclosure of specific law enforcement matters, such as allowable tolerances or criteria for the selection, prosecution, or settlement of cases, which if disclosed would facilitate disregard of requirements imposed by law.

i. To evaluate the professional competency of an individual whose appointment, hiring, performance, or discharge is being considered when necessary to prevent needless and irreparable injury to that individual's reputation and that individual requests a closed session.

j. To discuss the purchase or sale of particular real estate only where premature disclosure could be reasonably expected to increase the price the governmental body would have to pay for that property or reduce the price the governmental body would receive for that property. The minutes and the audio recording of a session closed under this paragraph shall be available for public examination when the transaction discussed is completed.

k. To discuss information contained in records in the custody of a governmental body that are confidential records pursuant to [section 22.7, subsection 50](#).

l. To discuss patient care quality and process improvement initiatives in a meeting of a public hospital or to discuss marketing and pricing strategies or similar proprietary information in a meeting of a public hospital, where public disclosure of such information would harm such a hospital's competitive position when no public purpose would be served by public disclosure. The minutes and the audio recording of a closed session under this paragraph shall be available for public inspection when the public disclosure would no longer harm the hospital's competitive position. For purposes of this paragraph, "public hospital" means a hospital licensed pursuant to [chapter 135B](#) and governed pursuant to [chapter 145A, 226, 347, 347A, or 392](#), or a health care facility operated by an institution governed by the state board of regents. This paragraph does not apply to the information required to be disclosed pursuant to [section 347.13, subsection 11](#), or to any discussions relating to terms or conditions of employment, including but not limited to compensation of an officer or employee or group of officers or employees.

2. The vote of each member on the question of holding the closed session and the reason for holding the closed session by reference to a specific exemption under [this section](#) shall be announced publicly at the open session and entered in the minutes. A governmental body shall not discuss any business during a closed session which does not directly relate to the specific reason announced as justification for the closed session.

3. Final action by any governmental body on any matter shall be taken in an open session

unless some other provision of the Code expressly permits such actions to be taken in closed session.

4. A governmental body shall not exclude a member of the governmental body from attending a closed session, unless the member's attendance at the closed session creates a conflict of interest for the member due to the specific reason announced as justification for holding the closed session.

5. *a.* A governmental body shall keep detailed minutes of all discussion, persons present, and action occurring at a closed session, and shall also audio record all of the closed session.

b. (1) The detailed minutes and audio recording of a closed session shall be sealed and shall not be public records open to public inspection. However, upon order of the court in an action to enforce [this chapter](#), the detailed minutes and audio recording shall be unsealed and examined by the court in camera. The court shall then determine what part, if any, of the minutes should be disclosed to the party seeking enforcement of [this chapter](#) for use in that enforcement proceeding. In determining whether any portion of the minutes or recording shall be disclosed to such a party for this purpose, the court shall weigh the prejudicial effects to the public interest of the disclosure of any portion of the minutes or recording in question, against its probative value as evidence in an enforcement proceeding. After such a determination, the court may permit inspection and use of all or portions of the detailed minutes and audio recording by the party seeking enforcement of [this chapter](#). A governmental body shall keep the detailed minutes and audio recording of any closed session for a period of at least one year from the date of that meeting, except as otherwise required by law.

(2) This paragraph "b" does not require the office of ombudsman to obtain a court order to examine the detailed minutes and audio recording of a closed session when such examination is relevant to an investigation under [chapter 2C](#) and the information sought is not available through other reasonable means. Any portion of the minutes or recording released by a governmental body to the office of ombudsman shall remain confidential pursuant to [section 2C.9](#).

6. Nothing in [this section](#) requires a governmental body to hold a closed session to discuss or act upon any matter.

[C71, 73, 75, 77, §28A.3; C79, 81, §28A.5]

C85, §21.5

[2002 Acts, ch 1076, §1](#); [2007 Acts, ch 63, §1, 2](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1191, §33, 99](#); [2009 Acts, ch 110, §1](#); [2011 Acts, ch 106, §5, 6, 17](#); [2013 Acts, ch 138, §114, 127](#); [2015 Acts, ch 67, §1](#); [2016 Acts, ch 1073, §14](#); [2016 Acts, ch 1074, §1](#); [2020 Acts, ch 1045, §4](#)

Referred to in [§21.3, 21.8, 22.7\(60\), 97B.8A, 203.11B, 203D.4, 279.24, 388.9, 411.5](#)