



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of the Attorney General
One Ashburton Place
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

OPEN MEETING LAW COMPLAINT FORM

Instructions for completing the Open Meeting Law Complaint Form

The Attorney General's Division of Open Government interprets and enforces the Open Meeting Law, Chapter 30A of the Massachusetts General Laws, Sections 18-25. Below is the procedure for filing and responding to an Open Meeting Law complaint.

Instructions for filing a complaint:

- o Fill out the attached two-page form completely and sign it. File the complaint with the public body within 30 days of the alleged violation. If the violation was not reasonably discoverable at the time it occurred, you must file the complaint within 30 days of the date the violation was reasonably discoverable. A violation that occurs during an open session of a meeting is reasonably discoverable on the date of the meeting.
- o To file the complaint:
 - o For a local or municipal public body, you must submit a copy of the complaint to the chair of the public body **AND** to the municipal clerk.
 - o For all other public bodies, you must submit a copy of the complaint to the chair of the public body.
 - o Complaints may be filed by mail, email, or by hand. Please retain a copy for your records.
- o If the public body does not respond within 14 business days and does not request an extension to respond, contact the Division for further assistance.

Instructions for a public body that receives a complaint:

- o The chair must disseminate the complaint to the members of the public body.
- o The public body must meet to review the complaint within 14 business days (usually 20-22 calendar days).
- o After review, but within 14 business days, the public body must respond to the complaint in writing and must send the complainant a response and a description of any action the public body has taken to address it. At the same time, the body must send the Attorney General a copy of the response. The public body may delegate this responsibility to its counsel or a staff member, but only after it has met to review the complaint.
- o If a public body requires more time to review the complaint and respond, it may request an extension of time for good cause by contacting the Division of Open Government.

Once the public body has responded to the complaint:

- o If you are not satisfied with that the public body's response to your complaint, you may file a copy of the complaint with the Division by mail, e-mail, or by hand, but only once you have waited for 30 days after filing the complaint with the public body.
- o When you file your complaint with the Division, please include the complaint form and all documentation relevant to the alleged violation. You may wish to attach a cover letter explaining why the public body's response does not adequately address your complaint.
- o The Division will not review complaints filed with us more than 90 days after the violation, unless we granted an extension to the public body or you can demonstrate good cause for the delay.

If you have questions concerning the Open Meeting Law complaint process, we encourage you to contact the Division of Open Government by phone at (617) 963-2540 or by e-mail at openmeeting@state.ma.us.



OPEN MEETING LAW COMPLAINT FORM

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One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

Please note that all fields are required unless otherwise noted.

Your Contact Information:

First Name: Osnat Last Name: Hoffman

Address: [REDACTED]

City: Somerville State: MA Zip Code: 02144

Phone Number: _____ Ext. _____

Email: [REDACTED]

Organization or Media Affiliation (if any): _____

Are you filing the complaint in your capacity as an individual, representative of an organization, or media?

(For statistical purposes only)

☒ Individual ☐ Organization ☐ Media

Public Body that is the subject of this complaint:

☒ City/Town ☐ County ☐ Regional/District ☐ State

Name of Public Body (including city/town, county or region, if applicable): Somerville City Council

Specific person(s), if any, you allege committed the violation: Lance Davis, President

Date of alleged violation: 11 / 16 / 2025

Description of alleged violation:

Describe the alleged violation that this complaint is about. If you believe the alleged violation was intentional, please say so and include the reasons supporting your belief.

Note: This text field has a maximum of 3000 characters.

On November 13, 2025, during a regular meeting of the Somerville City Council, the Council took up a citation for "Somerville for Palestine." During that item, a member of the public associated with the group was allowed to speak at length on a matter that was not on the publicly noticed agenda.

During the citation, the speaker said, among other things, "I look forward to the day that the council implements the will of our people... all you really have to do is your job and represent your constituents who voted [for ballot question 3]." The agenda did not indicate that any discussion would be taken on any future ordinance or resolution related to ballot question 3.

The Council President initially attempted to interrupt and redirect the speaker but was not successful; the speaker continued, and the President ultimately allowed her to proceed. By permitting extended remarks on an unposted topic and effectively turning a ceremonial citation into an unscheduled discussion, the Council deprived members of the public of proper notice and the opportunity to attend and participate. Residents who might have wished to speak on the same issue had no reasonable way to know that comment would be taken.

This violated the Open Meeting Law's requirement that the public be given notice of the topics the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed and that a public body conduct its business predictably based on the posted agenda. By allowing an individual to address an unposted topic at length, the Council effectively conducted part of its public discussion without proper notice. Based on the circumstances - including the Council President's awareness that the remarks were outside the posted agenda - I believe the violation was at least reckless, if not intentional.

What action do you want the public body to take in response to your complaint?

Note: This text field has a maximum of 500 characters.

I request that the Somerville City Council:

1. Acknowledge that its handling of the Nov. 13, 2025 meeting violated the Open Meeting Law.
2. Adopt a policy requiring that any invited or recognized speaker address only the posted agenda item the Council is currently considering.
3. Ensure all councilors receive Open Meeting Law training to prevent future violations.

Review, sign, and submit your complaint

I. Disclosure of Your Complaint.

Public Record. Under most circumstances, your complaint, and any documents submitted with your complaint, is considered a public record and will be available to any member of the public upon request.

Publication to Website. As part of the Open Data Initiative, the AGO will publish to its website certain information regarding your complaint, including your name and the name of the public body. The AGO will not publish your contact information.

II. Consulting With a Private Attorney.

The AGO cannot give you legal advice and is not able to be your private attorney, but represents the public interest. If you have any questions concerning your individual legal rights or responsibilities you should contact a private attorney.

III. Submit Your Complaint to the Public Body.

The complaint must be filed first with the public body. If you have any questions, please contact the Division of Open Government by calling (617) 963-2540 or by email to openmeeting@state.ma.us.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understood the provisions above and certify that the information I have provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: _____



Date: 11 / 16 / 2025

For Use By Public Body
Date Received by Public Body:

For Use By AGO
Date Received by AGO: