

## Chapter 6 Meetings and Public Hearings

*This chapter contains detailed instructions that are intended for state agency users.*

The Town Hall website meetings function is for entities with rulemaking authority that use the Town Hall to submit their regulatory actions and post meetings relating to their regulations. As a convenience, any meetings that are posted on the Town Hall will automatically be posted to the Commonwealth Calendar, as well.

Meetings that do **not** pertain to regulatory matters should be posted directly to the [Commonwealth Calendar](#) website, and **not** on the Town Hall.

### Types of Meetings

When a meeting is added to the Town Hall, the agency is asked to specify the nature of the meeting:

- General business of the board;
- To discuss particular regulations/chapters; or a
- Public hearing during the comment period for a proposed stage.

An agency may select both “General business of the board” and “To discuss particular regulations/chapter” when creating a meeting. At a later date, the meeting can be edited to note which particular regulations will be discussed during the meeting. Alternatively, the agency can remove one of these options if necessary.

Please note that a meeting cannot be later changed into a public hearing. The inverse is also true: if a meeting is created as a public hearing, it cannot be later edited to be a different type of meeting. A public hearing is a special type of meeting that is convened to receive public comment on a regulatory change.

- The Administrative Process Act (APA) requires an agency to indicate in the Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) of a regulatory action whether it plans to hold a public hearing during the 60-day public comment period after the proposed stage of the action is published ([Section 2.2-4007.01 \(B\)](#)). As stated in that section of the APA:
  - Agencies shall hold such public hearings if required by the laws that apply to the agency.
  - If the agency states in its NOIRA that it will hold a public hearing on the proposed regulation, then it must hold the public hearing.
  - If the agency states in its NOIRA that it does not plan to hold a hearing on the proposed regulation, then no public hearing is required unless, prior to the end of the NOIRA comment period, (1) the Governor directs the agency to hold a public hearing or (2) the agency receives requests for a public hearing from at least 25 persons.

## Minutes and Agenda Documents

Pursuant to the Executive Order on Rulemaking, all agencies are required to post the notice of, and an agenda for, a public regulatory meeting on the Town Hall at least seven days prior to the date of the meeting.

Agencies are also required to post all minutes of regulatory meetings on the Town Hall in accordance with [Section 2.2-3707.1](#) of the Code of Virginia, which requires that:

- Draft minutes be posted as soon as possible but no later than 10 working days after the conclusion of the meeting, and that
- Final minutes be posted within three working days of the final approval of the minutes.

When they are posted, you will find the links to the minutes and agenda documents on the main [meetings](#) page of the Town Hall.

## Creating a Meeting Notice

1. After logging on to the Town Hall as an agency user, select the drop-down AGENCY FUNCTIONS menu, and then chose MY MEETINGS.
2. Click on CREATE A NEW MEETING.
3. Click on the appropriate board name.
4. Enter the appropriate information in the fields below. Note: *You can pick a recent meeting as a template from the dropdown list to help fill in all the information.*
  - a. **Meeting title:** Enter a brief descriptive title explaining the purpose of the meeting. Note that this title will be used to identify the meeting on the Town Hall, as well as on the *Commonwealth Calendar*.
  - b. **Date of meeting:** Enter a correctly formatted date. Example: 07/20/2005.
  - c. **Time of meeting:** Enter a correctly formatted time. Example: 7:00 PM.
  - d. **Location:** Enter the location of the meeting. Enter in the following order, as applicable, building name, street address, floor, room, city, VA. Do not include zip code.
  - e. **Agenda/briefing document:** Use the CHOOSE FILE button to select an Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word document. If the agenda has not yet been finalized, you may add it later by editing the meeting (see below).
  - f. **Purpose of meeting:** Describe why the meeting is going to be held. Please limit this to 25 words or less.
5. Check the appropriate box for the meeting scope.
  - a. Public hearing to discuss a proposed stage per [Section 2.2-4007.01 \(B\)](#). If you select this option, you can select the regulatory action(s) that will be discussed at the public hearing. Only actions with an available proposed stage will be shown in the list.
  - b. General business of the board.
  - c. Discuss particular regulations/chapters. If you select this option, you can select the regulations/chapters that will be discussed.
6. The default contact for the board will automatically appear. Change the contact information if a different contact is desired.
7. If desired, include text in the “Custom note to include in email notification” box.

8. Click on the **SAVE** button to post the meeting information on the Town Hall. This information will be automatically sent to the Commonwealth Calendar.

### **Editing an existing meeting**

1. After logging on to the Town Hall as an agency user, select the drop-down **AGENCY FUNCTIONS** menu, and then choose **MY MEETINGS**.
2. In the top drop-down menu, select the correct timeframe, such as “Today” or “Future.”
3. Choose the appropriate board from the **BOARD** dropdown list.
4. Find the meeting you wish to edit from the resulting list and click on its **TITLE**.
5. Click **EDIT MEETING**.
6. Update the fields as needed.
7. If you have made a significant change to a meeting, ensure the box at the bottom of the screen (“Send email notification to public users that changes were made to this meeting?”) is checked. This box will automatically be checked if a change is made to a meeting’s time, date, or location, thereby ensuring that a public notification is sent out.
8. Click on the **SAVE** button to save your changes.

### **Posting agenda and minutes documents**

You can post the agenda when adding a meeting or later by choosing to edit an existing meeting.

- Before a meeting has occurred: Select the Agenda or briefing document **CHOOSE FILE** button from the **EDIT MEETING** page, and then select a Microsoft Word document or Adobe PDF file from your system. Afterwards, click on the **SAVE** button. If you posted a Microsoft Word document, a message will indicate that your document is being converted to Adobe PDF format.
- After a meeting has started or occurred: The process is the same, but there will also be a **CHOOSE FILE** button on the **EDIT MEETING** page. On the **EDIT MEETING** screen you can select whether the minutes being posted are the final version or a draft version.

### **Canceling or Deleting a Meeting**

You have the option to either cancel or delete a meeting.

**Canceling a Meeting:** When you cancel a meeting on the Town Hall, the word “Canceled” will appear in red next to the meeting and an announcement will go out to registered public users.

1. Locate the desired meeting in the same manner as described above for Editing an existing meeting.
2. Click on the **TITLE** of the meeting.
3. Select the **CANCEL MEETING** link at the top of the page and confirm that you wish to cancel the meeting.

**Deleting a Meeting Instead:** A meeting can be deleted in cases where a duplicate meeting has been scheduled accidentally, and a duplicate notice and meeting on the Town Hall would cause confusion. If you need to delete a meeting, contact DPB staff.

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