STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 48th Legislature (2001)

SENATE BILL 410 By: Williamson

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act; amending 25 O.S. 1991, Section 311, as amended by Section 2, Chapter 12, O.S.L. 1992 (25 O.S. Supp. 2000, Section 311), which relates to open meetings; construing act; allowing public comment; stating that Open Meeting Act does not establish specified right; specifying subject of public comments; limiting subject matter of actions and discussion of members of public body; providing exceptions to limitations on subject matter; allowing certain communications by public body; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 25 O.S. 1991, Section 311, as amended by Section 2, Chapter 12, O.S.L. 1992 (25 O.S. Supp. 2000, Section 311), is amended to read as follows:

Section 311. A. Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, all regularly scheduled, continued or reconvened, special or emergency meetings of public bodies shall be preceded by public notice as follows:

1. All public bodies shall give notice in writing by December 15 of each calendar year of the schedule showing the date, time and place of the regularly scheduled meetings of such public bodies for the following calendar year.

2. All state public bodies, including, but not limited to, public trusts and other bodies with the state as beneficiary, shall give such notice to the Secretary of State.

3. All county public bodies, including, but not limited to, public trusts and any other bodies with the county as beneficiary,

shall give such notice to the county clerk of the county wherein they are principally located.

4. All municipal public bodies, including, but not limited to, public trusts and any other bodies with the municipality as beneficiary, shall give such notice to the municipal clerk of the municipality wherein they are principally located.

5. All multicounty, regional, areawide or district public bodies, including, but not limited to, district boards of education, shall give such notice to the county clerk of the county wherein they are principally located, or if no office exists, to the county clerk of the county or counties served by such public body.

6. All governing boards of state institutions of higher education, and committees and subcommittees thereof, shall give such notice to the Secretary of State. All other public bodies covered by the provisions of this act which exist under the auspices of a state institution of higher education, but a majority of whose members are not members of the institution's governing board, shall give such notice to the county clerk of the county wherein the institution is principally located.

7. The Secretary of State and each county clerk or municipal clerk shall keep a record of all notices received in a register open to the public for inspection during regular office hours, and, in addition, shall make known upon any request of any person the contents of said register.

8. If any change is to be made of the date, time or place of regularly scheduled meetings of public bodies, then notice in writing shall be given to the Secretary of State or county clerk or municipal clerk, as required herein, not less than ten (10) days prior to the implementation of any such change.

9. In addition to the advance public notice in writing required to be filed for regularly scheduled meetings, all public bodies shall, at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to such meetings,

display public notice of said meeting, setting forth thereon the date, time, place and agenda for said meeting, such twenty-four (24) hours prior public posting shall exclude Saturdays and Sundays and holidays legally declared by the State of Oklahoma; provided, however, the posting of an agenda shall not preclude a public body from considering at its regularly scheduled meeting any new business. Such public notice shall be posted in prominent public view at the principal office of the public body or at the location of said meeting if no office exists. "New business", as used herein, shall mean any matter not known about or which could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to the time of posting.

10. In the event any meeting is to be continued or reconvened, public notice of such action, including date, time and place of the continued meeting, shall be given by announcement at the original meeting. Only matters appearing on the agenda of the meeting which is continued may be discussed at the continued or reconvened meeting.

11. Special meetings of public bodies shall not be held without public notice being given at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to said meetings. Such public notice of date, time and place shall be given in writing, in person or by telephonic means to the Secretary of State or to the county clerk or to the municipal clerk by public bodies in the manner set forth in paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this section. The public body also shall cause written notice of the date, time and place of the meeting to be mailed or delivered to each person, newspaper, wire service, radio station, and television station that has filed a written request for notice of meetings of the public body with the clerk or secretary of the public body or with some other person designated by the public body. Such written notice shall be mailed or delivered at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the special meeting. The public body may charge a fee of up to Eighteen Dollars ($18.00) per year to persons or entities

filing a written request for notice of meetings, and may require such persons or entities to renew the request for notice annually. In addition, all public bodies shall, at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to such special meetings, display public notice of said meeting, setting forth thereon the date, time, place and agenda for said meeting. Only matters appearing on the posted agenda may be considered at said special meeting. Such public notice shall be posted in prominent public view at the principal office of the public body or at the location of said meeting if no office exists. Twenty-four (24) hours prior public posting shall exclude Saturdays and Sundays and holidays legally declared by the State of Oklahoma.

12. In the event of an emergency, an emergency meeting of a public body may be held without the public notice heretofore required. Should an emergency meeting of a public body be necessary, the person calling such a meeting shall give as much advance public notice as is reasonable and possible under the circumstances existing, in person or by telephonic or electronic means.

B. 1. All agendas required pursuant to the provisions of this section shall identify all items of business to be transacted by a public body at a meeting, including, but not limited to, any proposed executive session for the purpose of engaging in deliberations or rendering a final or intermediate decision in an individual proceeding prescribed by the Administrative Procedures Act.

2. If a public body proposes to conduct an executive session, the agenda shall:

a. contain sufficient information for the public to ascertain that an executive session will be proposed;

b. identify the items of business and purposes of the executive session; and

c. state specifically the provision of Section 307 of this title authorizing the executive session.

C. 1. Nothing in the Open Meeting Act shall prohibit the hearing of comments from the public during an open meeting, nor shall anything in this act be construed as establishing a right of a member of the general public to be permitted time to speak before any public body. Comments from the public, when permitted during a meeting of a public body, may be concerning any subject(s) under the jurisdiction of the body holding such meeting and shall not be limited to items on the advance agenda.

2. No action or discussion shall be undertaken by members of a public body on any item not appearing on the posted agenda, except that members of a public body or its staff may make brief comments in response to statements made or questions posed by members of the public. In addition, on their own initiative or in response to questions posed by the public, a member of a public body or its staff may ask a question for clarification, make a brief announcement, or make a brief report on his or her own activities. Furthermore, a member of a public body, or the body itself, subject to rules or procedures of the public body, may provide a reference to staff or other resources for factual information, request staff to report back to the body at a subsequent meeting concerning any matter, or take action to direct staff to place a matter of business on a future agenda.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2001.

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