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# Ohio's Public Agencies Need to Prepare for In-Person Meetings

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Since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ohio Legislature has permitted virtual public meetings under an exemption to Ohio's Sunshine Laws. Substitute House Bill 404, enacted in November 2020, extended permission for virtual public meetings until July 1, 2021. This date is statutory and not tied to the June 2 expiration of the Ohio Department of Health Emergency Orders.

To date, the Ohio Legislature has not extended the date, and so public bodies should prepare as if they will be required to meet in person starting July 1. The state budget bill currently being considered in the Ohio Legislature (H.B. 110) extends permission for virtual meetings until December 31, 2021. However, Governor Mike DeWine's recent announcement that the Emergency Orders will expire on June 2 may prompt the Ohio Senate to strike this extension.

As of now, public bodies are permitted to meet virtually through June 30 but must meet in person starting on July 1. Public entities should begin alerting members of their various public bodies and the general public that virtual meetings will soon come to an end. There is of course no legal prohibition on continuing to livestream meetings for the general public's benefit, so long as the actual meeting occurs in person.

If H.B. 110, or any other legislative act, extends the permission for virtual meetings, we will update this advisory. Please contact [Scott Phillips](#) or [Jesse Shamp](#) of Frost Brown Todd's [Government Services](#) for more information.

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