

Public Meeting Notice & Record Keeping Policy

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all public meetings conducted by Sandy River Plantation's boards, committees, and officials comply with Maine's Freedom of Access Act (FOAA), 1 M.R.S. §§ 400–414, thereby promoting transparency, public participation, and consistent public recordkeeping.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all appointed and elected public bodies of Sandy River Plantation, including but not limited to the Board of Assessors, Budget Committee, and any standing or ad hoc committees authorized by the Plantation.

III. Definitions

- **Public Meeting:** Any meeting of a public body where a quorum is present and matters within the body's jurisdiction are discussed or acted upon.
- **Notice:** A public posting that informs the public of the date, time, place, and purpose of a meeting.
- **Minutes:** A written record of the discussions, decisions, and votes that occur during a public meeting.
- **Public Body:** Any elected or appointed municipal board, committee, or commission with authority to make decisions or provide recommendations on public matters.

IV. Public Meeting Notice Requirements

A. Posting Timeframe

- Meeting notices shall be publicly posted at least three (3) calendar days in advance, not counting the day of the meeting.
- Emergency meetings may be called with less notice only when urgent, unforeseen circumstances require immediate action. In such cases, reasonable notice must still be given.

B. Posting Locations

Meeting notices must be posted in at least two (2) of the following public locations:

- Sandy River Plantation Town Office
- Sandy River Plantation Social Media Sites
- The official Sandy River Plantation website

C. Notice Contents

All meeting notices shall include the following:

- The name of the board or committee holding the meeting
- The date, time, and location of the meeting
- A brief agenda or summary of topics to be discussed

V. Meeting Minutes and Records

A. Content of Minutes

Written minutes must be prepared for all public meetings and include at minimum:

- Date, time, and location of the meeting
- Names of members present and absent
- Motions made and seconded
- Votes taken and results (including how members voted, if recorded)
- A summary of discussions, actions, and public comments

B. Timeliness and Availability

- Draft minutes should be available for public inspection within **three (3) business days** of the meeting.
- Final approved minutes shall be retained **permanently** and made available to the public upon request, in compliance with FOAA.

C. Record Retention

- Notices, agendas, and approved minutes are official public records and must be retained in accordance with the Maine State Archives Local Government Retention Schedule.

VI. Audio/Video Recordings (Optional)

If a public body records a meeting by audio or video:

- The recordings are considered public records under FOAA.
- They must be retained for at least one (1) year, or longer if legally required.
- Recordings do not replace the requirement for written meeting minutes.

VII. Compliance and Responsibility

- The Municipal Clerk is responsible for ensuring that notices are properly posted and minutes are recorded and retained in compliance with this policy.
- All members of public bodies are expected to be familiar with this policy and the requirements of Maine's Freedom of Access Act (FOAA).

VIII. Effective Date

This policy shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the Board of Assessors. It was formally adopted by vote of the Board at a duly posted public meeting held on **8/12/2025**. From this date forward, all boards, committees, and public bodies of Sandy River Plantation shall follow the procedures and requirements set forth herein.

IX. Review & Amendments

This policy shall be reviewed annually within 60 days of the start of the new fiscal year and may be amended by a majority vote of the Board of Assessors at a publicly posted meeting.