

Special Meetings

As a publicly elected board of supervisors, each district has the responsibility to their community and conservation partners to adhere to Kentucky's Open Meetings Law. While most supervisors and district employees are familiar with how regularly scheduled meetings fit within the law, special meetings have some additional requirements.

A special meeting is when the meeting date, time, and/or location is changed from what is advertised. Changes to date and time are fairly self-explanatory. Changes to location include not just changes to physical location for people to attend in person, but also if the meeting is changed from in-person to online or if the meeting is changed from a hybrid meeting to only in-person.

Conservation districts and watershed conservancy districts generally announce the regularly scheduled meetings with the legal notice that is placed in the local newspaper by August 31 each year. If a board's meeting times change regularly throughout the year, that information can be included in the legal notice so that the change doesn't trigger the need for a special meeting. For instance, a legal notice could include statements such as, "Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month at 7:00 November through April and 6:00 May through October" or "Meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:00, except November and December's meetings, which will be held the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00."

Districts should make a sincere effort to have their meetings at their regularly scheduled times. This allows the community the opportunity to know when the district will be meeting to make decisions that may affect them. However, a district might need to change their meeting occasionally. When this happens, it is important that the additional requirements are followed so that the public knows about the meeting and has the opportunity to attend.

Key requirements for special meetings

- The public agency must provide written notice of the special meeting. This notice has to include, at a minimum, the date, time, and location of the meeting and an agenda for the meeting. This means that the notice should include everything a person would need to attend the meeting and understand what will happen at that meeting.
- The notice has to be provided at least 24 hours prior to the special meeting. This means that a district cannot decide at 9 am to reschedule their meeting for 1 pm the same day.
- The notice must be sent to every member of the agency, any media organization that has requested notice of the agency's meetings, and anyone else who has requested notice of the meetings. The last group includes, but is not limited to, all district employees, any district advisors, the district's field representative, and the county's NRCS personnel. This means that your field representative or your district conservationist or a local reporter

should never show up to your office for a meeting only to find out that the meeting happened the week before.

- Written notice must also be posted in a conspicuous place in the building where the meeting will take place and in a conspicuous place in the agency's headquarters. This means if your special meeting is at a local restaurant, the notice must be posted so that the public can see it in the district office and at the restaurant.
- Discussions at a special meeting are restricted to those items that are on the agenda. This means that the district cannot talk about anything that isn't specifically listed on the meeting notice.

Typical reasons to have a special meeting

Special meetings should be rare. As elected officials, each board member has committed to participate in the board's meetings and decisions. As such, every supervisor should have the regularly scheduled meeting time dedicated on their calendar. But things might be happening locally that would require the board to plan a special meeting. These things might be events like:

- Time-sensitive budget action
- Urgent contract approval
- Personnel matters requiring immediate action
- Emergency infrastructure or equipment issues
- Compliance with state or federal deadlines
- Legal matters needing timely action
- Time-critical planning or zoning decisions
- Special project approvals
- Local emergencies
- Federal office space closures during government furloughs

Format of special meetings

Special meetings can be in person, by videoconference, or as a hybrid of the two. The meeting notice should include information about how someone can attend the meeting, whether that is a physical address or a link to Zoom, Teams, etc.

For more information

[KRS 61.800-.850](tel:KRS61.800-.850)

[The Kentucky Open Records & Open Meetings Acts: A guide for the public and public agencies](#)

[Previous decisions by Kentucky Attorney General](#)