

13. Internal Communication (revised By-law section)

The Committee is subject to Chapter 42.30 RCW, the Open Public Meetings Act which governs the various forms of internal communication discussed in these bylaws.

All members of the Committee shall have access to information developed or exchanged amongst the members. The Chair will solicit input and opinion from all members during Committee meetings. Members shall exchange information through e-mail, telephone, or other means and strive to keep each other up to date about issues pertaining to ongoing work of the Committee. Information pertinent to meeting agenda items will be shared as early as possible with all members in order that meetings may proceed efficiently.

Discussions of pipeline safety issues that could come before the committee for a vote must be conducted in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. The discussion of such issues shall be included on the next Committee meeting agenda. Where this is not possible because of the need for the committee to take action before the next meeting, a special conference call meeting of the Committee will be held. Such a meeting requires at least 24 hour notice with access available to the public. Minutes of this meeting will be published and reviewed at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

The following is intended as guidance to Committee members and not part of the by-laws

Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety “Best Practice” Sheet Internal Communications and Chapter 42.30 RCW

1. It is NOT a meeting of the Committee (subject to Open Public Meetings Act - OPMA) if there is not a quorum present. A quorum is defined in Section 7 of the by laws as “a majority of current voting members.” Note: The committee has nine (9) voting member positions. One of those positions is currently listed as vacant, therefore, there are 8 current voting members and the quorum is 5.
2. A discussion among four (4) or fewer voting members whether via e-mail, conference call, face-to-face or any other format is not a meeting of the Committee and, therefore, not subject to OPMA. Such a discussion can include all of the non-voting (industry) members. No vote can be taken as no quorum is present.
3. If a quorum is present, whether via e-mail, conference call, face-to-face or any other format, discussions of pipeline safety issues must be conducted in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. In cases where there is a need for the Committee to take action before the next scheduled Committee meeting, a special conference call meeting of the Committee will be held. Such a meeting requires at least 24 hour notice with access available to the public. Minutes of this meeting will be published and reviewed at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.
4. In the case where a group e-mail is sent to the Committee members requesting input on a particular pipeline safety issue that is (or could be) before the Committee, individual Committee members must Reply only to the party requesting the input and NOT Reply To All.
5. **Per the Commission’s guidance, the Citizens Committee is not subject to the Public Record Act.**

Example:

The Committee has discussed an issue at a scheduled Committee meeting and voted to send an advisory letter on the subject. The focus of the advisory letter has been clearly stated in the motion as voted upon and in the meeting minutes. A small (less than a quorum) working group has been charged with preparing the letter and given the authority to send it to the designated recipient.

- The Chair of the Citizens Committee should be a member of the working group.
- The working group is not subject to the OPMA
- The group may work together via e-mail, telephone or face-to-face meeting to develop the draft.
- The draft should be distributed to all Committee members for their review and advice.
- The member response should be sent only to the originator of the request who may summarize the responses for the use of the working group.
- The draft will be finalized by the working group and may, if authorized, send the advisory letter to the designated recipient.
- The next scheduled Committee meeting agenda should include discussion of the process, the summary of responses to the draft and the final advisory for inclusion in the Committee minutes (included in the public record).

The Committee or the working group may choose to call a special meeting of the Committee to review the final document and reaffirm their desire to send the advisory letter. In that case, the special meeting is subject to the OPMA.