

# Louisiana Legislative Auditor

## BEST PRACTICES – BOARD OVERSIGHT

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The Louisiana Legislative Auditor (LLA) is providing the following best practices to help local government entities create their own written policies and procedures. Because this document may not include all legal provisions applicable to different types of local government entities, entities should consult with legal counsel when developing written policies and procedures. Also, many of the legal provisions referenced in this document may not apply to quasi-public organizations, such as non-profits. Quasi-public organizations should refer to the LLA’s legal FAQs for additional guidance.

### **Sources:**

Louisiana Legislative Auditor FAQs – <https://www.lla.la.gov/legal-faqs/>  
Louisiana Open Meetings Law – R.S. 42:12-42:28  
Lawrason Act – R.S. 33:321-463  
Board Meeting Minutes - R.S. 42:20(B)(2)

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Written policies and procedures over board oversight should include **conducting board meetings** and **monitoring operations** of the entity. See also “Best Practices – Budgeting” for board responsibilities specifically related to the Local Government Budget Act.

### **Conducting Board Meetings:**

1. Governing boards should meet with a quorum at least monthly, or on a frequency in accordance with the board’s enabling legislation, charter, or other equivalent document. Meetings should be scheduled as soon as practicable after completion of the month-end closing and account reconciliation processes to allow the board to review current financial information.
2. The board members and chief executive must comply with all provisions of the Open Meetings Law, including notices of meetings and agendas, quorums, public participation, executive sessions, voting, and written minutes.
3. The board should establish/adopt a protocol to follow when conducting its meetings, and insist that the rules be respected and obeyed by board members. For example, *Robert’s Rules*

# Louisiana Legislative Auditor

## BEST PRACTICES – BOARD OVERSIGHT

*of Order* is a comprehensive set of rules that addresses meeting issues and is commonly used by boards.

4. The board should establish and display general rules of decorum for attendees at meetings. Such rules should promote an atmosphere of openness, courtesy, and respect for differing points of view.
5. The board should publish minutes, ordinances, resolutions, budgets, and other official documents in the entity's official journal as required by law. If the entity also has a website, the minutes should be posted on the website in accordance with law.
6. Minutes must include (1) The date, time, and place of the meeting; (2) the members of the public body recorded as either present or absent; (3) the substance of all decisions made during the meeting; and (4) if requested by a board member, a record of each board member's vote.

### Monitoring Operations:

1. The board members, chief executive, and finance committee members if applicable, should meet to determine the information that should be compiled and presented to the board (and finance committee) to help members make informed fiscal and programmatic decisions as part of their legislative/oversight responsibilities.
2. Presentation and discussion of financial information should be shown as an item on the monthly meeting agenda, and the related discussions should be documented in the minutes. Also, non-budgetary financial information (e.g., approval of contracts and disbursements) should be referenced or included in the minutes.
3. As a best practice, the LLA recommends that the official responsible for budget preparation report budget-to-actual comparisons for the General Fund, special revenue funds, and any other large funds (including proprietary and fiduciary funds) to the governing authority on a monthly basis. *See also "Best Practices – Budgeting" for board responsibilities specifically related to the Local Government Budget Act.*
4. As a best practice, the LLA also recommends that the board receive and review a (1) monthly Balance Sheet; (2) Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance; (3) listing of accounts payable; and (4) listing of customer accounts receivable

## **Louisiana Legislative Auditor**

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5. As a best practice, the LLA recommends that the board develop a strategic/operating plan with both short-term and long-term goals, monitor the plan at least quarterly, and incorporate the plan into decision-making processes and budgeting.