

By: Nelson

S.B. No. 851

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the requirements for meetings of certain special districts.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 551.128(b-1), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b-1) A transit authority or department subject to Chapter 451, 452, 453, or 460, Transportation Code, an elected school district board of trustees for a school district that has a student enrollment of 10,000 or more, an elected governing body of a home-rule municipality that has a population of 50,000 or more, a governing body of a special district subject to Chapter 51, 53, 54, or 55, Water Code, that has a population of 500 or more, or a county commissioners court for a county that has a population of 125,000 or more shall:

(1) make a video and audio recording of reasonable quality of each regularly scheduled open meeting that is not a work session or a special called meeting; and

(2) make available an archived copy of the video and audio recording of each meeting described by Subdivision (1) on the Internet.

SECTION 2. Section 49.062, Water Code, is amended by amending Subsections (b) and (c) and adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

1           (b) Except as provided by Subsection (e), the [~~The~~] board  
2 shall designate one or more places inside or outside the district  
3 for conducting the meetings of the board. The meeting place may be  
4 a private residence or office, provided that the board, in its order  
5 establishing the meeting place, declares the same to be a public  
6 place and invites the public to attend any meeting of the board. If  
7 the board establishes a meeting place or places outside the  
8 district, it shall give notice of the location or locations by  
9 filing a true copy of the resolution establishing the location or  
10 locations of the meeting place or places with the commission and  
11 also by publishing notice of the location or locations in a  
12 newspaper of general circulation in the district. If the location  
13 of any of the meeting places outside the district is changed, notice  
14 of the change shall be given in the same manner.

15           (c) Except as provided by Subsection (e), after [~~After~~] at  
16 least 25 qualified electors are residing in a district, on written  
17 request of at least five of those electors, the board shall  
18 designate a meeting place and hold meetings within the district if  
19 it determines that the meeting place used by the district deprives  
20 the residents of a reasonable opportunity to attend district  
21 meetings. On the failure to designate the location of the meeting  
22 place within the district, five electors may petition the  
23 commission to designate a location. If it determines that the  
24 meeting place used by the district deprives the residents of a  
25 reasonable opportunity to attend district meetings, the commission  
26 may designate a meeting place inside or outside the district which  
27 is reasonably available to the public and require that the meetings

1 be held at such place. After the next election, the board may  
2 designate different meeting places, including one located outside  
3 the boundaries of the district.

4 (e) This subsection applies to a district with a population  
5 of 500 or more. The board shall designate a place inside the  
6 district for conducting the meetings of the board. If the board is  
7 unable to designate a suitable meeting place inside the district,  
8 the board may designate a place outside the district that is located  
9 not farther than 10 miles from the district's boundaries.

10 SECTION 3. The changes in law made by this Act apply only to  
11 an open meeting held on or after the effective date of this Act. An  
12 open meeting that is held before the effective date of this Act is  
13 governed by the law in effect on the date of the open meeting, and  
14 the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

15 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.