

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Forms of meeting minutes vary with different organizations. However, there is certain information that should always be included:

Title of Meeting (name of group, committee or organization)

- Place, date and hour
- Attendance (by roll call or observation)
- Procedure:
 - Minutes of previous meeting – approved or corrected
 - Reports
 - Unfinished business
 - New Business
 - Next meeting (if designated)
 - Adjournment (hour)
 - Signed by Secretary/Clerk
 - Countersigned by President/Mayor

Always make a rough draft of the minutes before copying them into the minute book. No large erasures should appear in the minute book. If minutes are amended or corrected at the meeting at which they are read, the corrections should be put in red ink, or the amendments should be written on a separate page to be attached. No minutes should be rewritten after they have been read. They should stand as corrected.

The clerk or secretary of the meeting should sit near the chairman or Mayor, or in a position to hear every word that is said. If unable to hear, the recorder should, by a signal, so inform the chairman or Mayor who can interrupt the speaker and ask for a repetition of what has been said if he deems it of sufficient importance to do so.

Note late arrivals and early departures, because an important point may hinge on whether or not a certain person heard a certain discussion.

The more pre-knowledge that can be had of a meeting, the easier it will be to record the minutes.

Immediately obtain copies of all papers read or discussed at the meeting and write up the minutes as soon as possible.

Notes are taken “in depth”; but minutes are written in summary. Remember that what is done or accomplished at a meeting (or left unfinished) is of the utmost importance, **not what is said**. Therefore, be alert to recognize and record all definite decisions; all actions to be taken, by whom; and all business left pending.

During debates and discussions, summarize these, noting highlights, such as the “for” and “against” arguments and by whom.

- Motions: every motion must be recorded, its maker, its second and its final outcome.
- Reports: record the presentation, by whom and the final action of each, if any.
- Voting: record all voting, how taken, and the count (if countable). Voting is by these methods in this order of formality:
 - General (or silent) assent or consent
 - Voice – all in favor say aye
 - Show of hands (all in favor raise your hand)
 - Standing (to be counted)
 - Roll call (yeas and nays or for and against, registered)
 - Secret ballot (many use this?)

The tone of the minutes should be completely impersonal, with no comments from the clerk, such as “heated”, “lengthy” or “moving”.

Acknowledgement:

Standard handbook for Secretaries by Lois Hutchinson