

CONTENTS OF MINUTES

- The purpose of minutes is to provide an accurate record that a meeting was held and of the proceedings of that meeting.
- Important documentation includes identifying the specific body, the members in attendance, where, when and why they met. If a member is absent, the recorder may list the reason for the absence.
- Minutes should reveal what was done, not what was said. This includes the subject matter that was announced, reported, discussed, ordered, what commitments were made or discharged, and what was decided.
- In recording announcements, identify the person making the announcement and express the announcement in one sentence.
- The minutes do not have to be overly detailed but shall be an intelligible synopsis of the essential elements of the official action taken by a local governing body including the subject of a motion, the persons making and seconding the motion, and the roll call vote on the motion.
- When a governmental body is sitting in a quasi-judicial capacity and making a decision based on evidence presented to the body, the minutes should reflect the basis for the body's decision.
- Prepare the minutes in outline form with each category as a general heading and the specifics listed underneath as subordinate entries. Use underlining or bold face type to emphasize significant actions only.
- Keep the minutes brief. Combine sentences whenever possible. Avoid including pictures, unusual typeface, color, and unnecessary adjectives.
- Keep the minutes in chronological order unless there was a time specific item. Include that item at the required time and then return to chronological order.
- Be sure to record the exact wording of a motion before the vote is taken. If necessary, interrupt the meeting for clarity. Motions must be specific.
- If a motion is to be forwarded to another Committee or the County Board for action, indicate that action in the minutes.
- Find a brief way to express such frequent actions as motions made, seconded, etc.
MOTION (Smith/Brown)
- Whenever a vote is counted, the minutes must show the distribution, as in Motion carried, 4-3.
- When a vote is taken by roll call, the minutes must show how each person voted.
- When votes are taken by ballot, the count must be in the minutes and the ballots must be kept until the minutes are approved.
- Negative votes should always be called for and recorded.
- Do not report an outcome as unanimous unless there is a specific record as to how each person voted. A more accurate expression is motion carried without negative vote or motion failed without positive vote.
- If motions are tabled, report how long the matter is to be tabled and the person designated to follow-up and bring requested information back to the committee.
- Include the time of adjournment in the minutes.
- Minutes are considered draft until the minutes have been approved at a properly convened meeting of the governmental body. The minutes become public record after approval.
- The County Clerk will record the approval date on the committee minutes. Notify the County Clerk if the minutes have been corrected.

- The governmental body approves minutes as correct or incorrect. If an individual member disagrees with an item recorded in the minutes, the body must agree by majority vote before the minutes may be changed and approved.
- If the minute taker is instructed to change the minutes in a way he/she feels is incorrect or does not fairly reflect what transpired, the recorder has the responsibility to state to the entire governmental body that he/she was instructed to change the minutes and why he/she feels it was not an accurate correction. If the entire governmental body insists the minutes are to be corrected in this way, the recorder must change them but can choose to prepare and insert in the minute book a statement indicating his/her reasons for disagreeing with the minutes approved by the governing body. Such a note would not, however, be part of the official minutes.
- The recorder of the minutes must submit the minutes to the governmental body.
- Written reports need not be included in the minutes. They may be attached to the minutes or may specify that the report is on file in a departmental office.

CLOSED SESSION

- A motion to go into closed session must be carried by a majority vote of the governmental body and the vote of each member must be recorded in the minutes. The chief presiding officer announces to those present at the meeting that a motion is made, the nature of the business to be considered and the specific exemption or exemptions authorizing the closed session. The announcement must be part of the record of the meeting.
- Record those present for the closed session, the topic discussed, the time entered into the closed session, the roll call vote to return to open session and the time the governmental body reconvened in open session. Once the closed session roll call, the topic to be discussed and the time entered into the closed session is recorded, the minute recorder must leave the closed session unless the minute recorder is a member of the governmental body that is meeting. The body shall designate a member to record any action taken.
- Any substantive actions taken in closed session such as motions, seconds, or votes must be recorded to the same extent as in open session.
- Substantive action in closed session is only appropriate if the action is an integral part of the discussion and voting in open session would undermine the purpose for moving into closed session in the first place.
- If the body does not act in closed session, the minutes from the closed session should simply note that there was a motion, a second, a vote to go back into open session and that no action was taken.