

Minutes Overview

Florida Association of City Clerks
Municipal Clerk 101

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Objectives

- Develop effective minute taking skills
- Provide tools and techniques to enable skills
- Introduce minute taking methods
- Cover essential topics in a short time
- Preparation for minute taking
 - Active listening
 - Critical thinking
 - Accurate and clear writing

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Benefits

- Learn to use tools
- Develop listening and writing skills
- Develop speed writing skills
- Identify key and mail points
- Develop comprehension skills

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Purpose of Minutes

- Provide clear, concise, coherent, and accurate summary of a meeting
- Records decisions and actions made at a meeting
- Provide a review document for the next meeting
- Used to recommend action

Minutes should be about what was DONE, not what was SAID

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Minutes Should:

- Summarize discussions
- Accurately summarize decisions and agreed actions
- Provide a prompt for matters to be discussed at the next meeting
- Provide an account of decisions for staff and the public

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Minutes Should Include:

- City Name
- Time, date, and location of meeting
- Names and titles of members present
- Names and titles of members excused
- All items discussed in order of the agenda
- Agreed actions
- Who made the motion, who seconded, and did it pass or fail
- Minutes should be approved at the next meeting

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Minutes Should Avoid:

- Blow by blow account of discussion
- Specifying who said what
- Reports on off-track discussions
- Optional items that could embarrass someone

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Minute Tips

- Be objective
 - Do not interpret mood or tone
- Consistency
 - Comply with, content and format standards that are City policy
- Professionalism
 - Proofread technical terms before circulating minutes
- Logical Flow
 - All events that relate to an Item should be grouped together
- Archive(-ability)
 - Minutes should be easy to archive and retrieve

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Ask Yourself This Question:

- Would someone who did not attend the meeting understand:
 - The main points of the discussion?
 - The decisions reached?
 - The required actions?

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During the Meeting

- Meeting are tools for generating ideas, expanding through processes, and managing group activities
- Listen carefully
- Accurately note FACTS, DECISIONS, ACTIONS

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After the Meeting

- Prepare minutes ASAP
- Be concise
- Write in the third person and past tense ("it was reported that.....")
- Follow the order of the agenda
- Give each item a heading
- Record the exact wording of actions
- Use speech marks for direct quotes
- Do not use jargon or abbreviation

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THE ART OF TAKING MINUTES:

- Three main styles of minute taking
 - Verbatim Minutes
 - Summary Minutes
 - Action Minutes

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THE ART OF TAKING MINUTES:

- **Verbatim Minutes**
 - Are a record of every single word said at a meeting; this type is likely to be used to capture what happened at a disciplinary hearing for example. They are often long and can be difficult to skim for a particular piece of information.

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THE ART OF TAKING MINUTES:

- **Summary Minutes**
 - This type of minutes are the most commonly used. They include the discussion leading up to a decision and the action as a result. Summary minutes are normally written in full sentences rather than bullet points and are useful as a reminder for participants after the meeting and also ensure that absent colleagues are able to know what decisions were made and the discussion leading up to those decisions.
 - They can also be used to trace a history of a project.

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THE ART OF TAKING MINUTES:

- **Action Minutes**
 - This type of minutes simply record what actions have been decided upon, who is responsible and what the milestones and deadlines are.
 - The purpose of these minutes is to provide only a record of decisions that require action.

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Best Practices

- 1. Ask yourself, as you're taking notes, "Will it matter in two days, two weeks, two months, two years?" If yes, include it.
- 2. Summarize. Don't record conversations word for word.
- 3. Do record motions word for word state carried or failed
- 4. Use keywords vs. sentences. *Tip:* Record minutes in a steno pad. On the left side, write keywords; on the right side, make short notations on the keywords
- 5. Keep emotions out of the minutes—yours and those of attendees.

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Best Practices

- 6. Be an active listener. "If someone makes a motion and you didn't hear it clearly, interrupt the meeting and ask,"
- 7. Reflect accurately the order of the discussion, even if doesn't follow the agenda.
- 8. Take your laptop for minute-taking. It's an extreme timesaver.
- 9. Create bulleted lists when recording a list of comments, suggestions or concerns.
- 10. Remember to indicate who make the motion and who was the seconder.

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QUESTIONS?

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