

MINUTES GUIDELINES

The purpose of minutes is to summarize the events of a meeting. Minutes are the official report of a meeting and become a part of the organization's permanent records. While the format for recording minutes may vary from organization to organization, it is imperative that the information in the minutes be complete, concise, and accurate. The recording secretary should determine a definite style for recording the minutes so that every meeting is documented in the same manner. This consistency not only makes the business of the organization easy to follow from month to month, it saves time for the secretary. Minutes should be recorded so that a person reading them 10 days or 10 years after the meeting would know what business took place at that particular meeting. The following is the format generally used in recording minutes:

A. HEADING

The heading contains the name of the organization, the date, and the place of the meeting and should indicate whether this is a regularly scheduled meeting or special meeting.

The heading begins 1 ½ to 2 inches from the top edge of the page, is either centered or arranged across the line of print, and is either typed in initial caps or in all capital letters. The time may be typed as part of the heading or may be incorporated into the first paragraph as part of the call to order. After the heading, triple space to the next section.

B. ATTENDANCE

Information on attendance can be tabulated or incorporated into the first paragraph of the minutes. The names and titles of those present should be listed alphabetically. An alphabetical listing of those absent is optional. If a sign-in sheet is utilized, the original can be attached to the minutes instead.

C. BODY

Minutes are a summary of topics discussed at the meeting. It is helpful to follow the agenda when taking minutes, with each topic being designated by a heading followed by a short paragraph describing the action taken. Material within the paragraphs is usually single-spaced with double spacing between paragraphs; double spacing is also appropriate. Block style (no paragraph indentions) may be used for single spaced minutes but modified block style (paragraphs and closing indented) must be used when minutes are double-spaced. A copy of the agenda should be attached to the meeting minutes.

Minutes are written in third person. They should be factual, brief, and devoid of editorial opinion or comment. Because names and titles of those present are given in the attendance section of the minutes, only last names are needed in the body of the minutes.

D. MOTIONS

For routine motions, it is sufficient to record, "It was moved and seconded that..." When a motion is made where the exact wording is required, the names of those making and seconding the motion are also recorded. If a motion is passed by the group, this should be noted in the paragraph pertaining to the motion.

E. CLOSING

The time of adjournment should be noted in the closing paragraph of the minutes. The complimentary closing for minutes is "Respectfully submitted." There are three blank lines between the complimentary closing and the typed signature of the secretary.

