

Essentials of Good Minutes

From the Virginia Community Association Network

Minutes document decisions made during a meeting. They provide a permanent public record of positions and actions taken by the board and are the official record of the business conducted.

A recorder is appointed to record and prepare the minutes. The secretary is responsible for maintaining all official records, including the minute book of all board meetings.

Minutes should reflect what was **done** at a meeting, not what was **said**. The chairperson uses them for reference and all the directors use the minutes of committee meetings to keep informed of committee activities.

Minutes of both board and committee meetings are normally distributed to all board members in the Board Package. They are essential for continuity and for providing a formal record to future committees and directors.

Content

1. Place the name of the group at the top of the first page.
2. Kind of meeting, regular or special.
3. Name of the group.
4. Date, time, and place of the meeting.
5. Name of the presiding officer and secretary or their substitutes.
6. Presence of a quorum and the names of members present and those absent.
7. Whether minutes of the previous meetings were approved as read or as corrected.
8. Exact wording of each motion adopted, with the name of the person making the motion, the name of the person seconding the motion, and whether the motion was adopted, lost or withdrawn. If the vote was split, the names of those dissenting should also be shown.
9. The date, time and place of the next meeting.
10. Hour of adjournment.
11. The name and position of the recorder.

The recorder should prepare the minutes within a day or two of the meeting while it is still fresh in his or her mind and make them available for inclusion in the board package and a synopsis for publication.

After the minutes have been approved, the secretary should write *Approved* with the date at the bottom.

Separate from the official minutes, each participant should keep their own notes, especially of ideas expressed and main points made, including projects or goals to be undertaken, suggestions proposed, and clarifications offered. This will help them remember what transpired during the meeting and keep things in perspective.

Tips for the Recorder

1. Make sure you have a copy of the meeting agenda. Most information may be recorded directly on the agenda.
2. Obtain a copy or notes of any lengthy reports from the person giving the report, then summarize it. There is no need to record volumes of information from a report if the information is available in the files of another committee or file. In most cases, the report can be attached to the minutes and merely be referred to in the minutes.
3. Request that all motions, other than routine administrative motions, should be written out and given to you. This assists with accuracy and understanding.
4. Minutes should be written within two days after the meeting, preferably within 24 hours, to assist memory retention and improve accuracy.
5. When applicable, emphasize (highlight, underline, or capitalize) topical headings to help the reader focus on specific areas.
6. Attach the agenda for the next meeting, if available, or list items that will be on the agenda that need special thought in preparation for the meeting.
7. Go over the minutes with the chairperson to insure accuracy.
8. Distribute the minutes to all board or committee members as appropriate a week or two before the next meeting.