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Minutes Template

A Guide For Writing Better Minutes

What should the minutes contain?

- ▶ The kind of meeting.
- ▶ Name of the organization.
- ▶ Date, time, and place.
- ▶ Fact that the chair and secretary were present, or their substitutes.
- ▶ Approval of the minutes of previous meeting
- ▶ All Main Motions, plus secondary motions when necessary for clarity
- ▶ Complete substance of oral reports (when permitted)
- ▶ All notices of motions
- ▶ All points of order and appeals, with reasons given by the chair for rulings
- ▶ Hour of adjournment

I. First Paragraph

- 1.Type of Meeting
- 2.Name of the Organization
- 3.Date and Time, and Place (if place is not always the same)
- 4.President and Secretary
- 5.Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RONR (11th ed.), p. 468-469

“ . . . the minutes should contain mainly a record of what was *done* at the meeting, not what was *said* by the members. The minutes should never reflect the secretary’s opinion, favorable or otherwise, on anything said or done.” - RONR (11th ed.), p. 468, ll. 17-20.



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Example of First Paragraph with President and Secretary

The _____ (Regular / Special) _____ meeting of _____ (Organization's Name) _____ was held on _____ (Date) _____, at _____ (Time) _____, at _____ (Location) _____, the President being in the chair and the Secretary being present. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved as corrected.

Example of First Paragraph with temporary chair and temporary secretary

The _____ (Regular / Special) _____ meeting of _____ (Organization's Name) _____ was held on _____ (Date) _____, at _____ (Time) _____, at _____ (Location) _____, with _____ (Name) _____ serving as chair pro tem and _____ (Name) _____ serving as secretary pro tem. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved as corrected.



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II. The Body of the Minutes, What should it Contain?

1. REPORTS RECEIVED: A statement of which reports were received at the meeting should be included in the minutes, but not the reports themselves. The reports, which should be written, should be kept by the secretary.

EXAMPLE: The report of the President was received and placed on file.

2. MOTIONS: All Main Motions and Motions to Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly (unless withdrawn)

- a. include the exact wording as adopted or otherwise disposed of (note that it was debated or amended only parenthetically)
- b. if it was temporarily disposed of, explain how, and include any adhering secondary motions

EXAMPLE 1. - MAIN MOTION

ASSUME THE FOLLOWING HAPPENED IN THE MEETING:

Tom Thompson says, "I move that Rita Brown be endorsed for Region One representative." The motion is debated, then adopted.

PUT THE FOLLOWING IN THE MINUTES:

Tom Thompson moved "that Rita Brown be endorsed for Region One representative."
The motion was adopted after debate.

Alternative Form:

A motion by Tom Thompson "that Rita Brown be endorsed for Region One representative" was adopted after debate.

Alternate Form:

A motion by Tom Thompson was adopted, after debate, as follows: "that Rita Brown be endorsed for Region One representative."



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EXAMPLE 2. - MAIN MOTION with AMENDMENT:

Barbara Jones says, “I move that \$800 be donated to the Make-a-Wish Foundation.”

Ann Adams says “I move to amend by striking out \$800 and inserting \$200.”

The assembly debates the amendment. The assembly adopts the amendment. The assembly debates the main motion. The assembly adopts the main motion.

IN THE MINUTES:

A motion by Barbara Jones, after debate and amendment, was adopted as follows: “That \$200 be donated to the Make-a-Wish Foundation.”

III. Final Paragraph

Close with the hour of adjournment.

EXAMPLE: The meeting adjourned at 11:46 A.M.

IV. Signature

The minutes are signed by whoever drafted them.

V. Initials And Date

When the minutes are approved by the assembly, the secretary writes the word “Approved” on them, along with the date they were approved, and then initials them.



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SAMPLE MINUTES

ABC Foundation of Springfield

The regular meeting of ABC Foundation of Springfield was held on July 11, 2016, at 7:13 P.M., at the American Patriots Post #1234 in Springfield, FL, with President Roberta Jones presiding and Secretary Ken Allen present. The minutes of the previous regular meeting were approved as corrected.

The reports of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Executive Board, and Finance Committee were received and placed on file.

Jane Doe moved “that \$500 be donated to the ABC Foundation.” The motion was adopted.

A motion by Karl Lancaster, after debate and amendment, was adopted as follows: “that flowers be sent to Mindy Mathis at a cost not to exceed \$75.”

A motion by Bob Jones “that a car wash be held on December 8th” was referred to a committee of three, along with a pending motion by Anne Lewis “to amend by striking out ‘December 8th’ and inserting ‘November 28th’.” The president appointed Bob Jones, Anne Lewis, and Patty Smith to the committee.

A motion by Amy Adams “that the website be password-protected to prevent access by nonmembers” was lost after debate.

A motion by Lynn Parker “that the parking-lot lights be turned off on the weekends” was postponed to the next meeting.

A motion by Alice Carmichael “that \$50 shall be donated to the Hirsch Research Facility” died due to lack of a second.

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 P.M.

Ken Allen, Secretary



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Tips on Taking Minutes

1. Start Writing the Minutes Before the Meeting Starts

The details of the first paragraph are likely to be the same from meeting to meeting, except for the time and date. Get this information out of the way.

2. Know What Goes In the Minutes and What Doesn't

Trying to take notes on everything is nerve-racking. Knowing what goes into the minutes allows more comfort in minute taking. Don't summarize reports. Take note of motions; ignore debate.

3. Be Vocal about What You Need

Communicate with the chair openly and often. Don't be bashful about your duty.

4. Insist that Reports be in Written Form

It's the secretary's duty to maintain the records of the organization, including written reports presented to the assembly. It is NOT appropriate for the secretary to include in the minutes a summary of what someone says.

5. Be Clear on the EXACT Language of Each Motion

If you're unclear on the exact language, speak up right away to get the language clarified. As the secretary, if you're not clear on the language, chances are that no one else is either.

6. Be Sure the Chair Announces the Result of Each Vote

The chair's announcement of the result is the official determination of the voting result.

7. Finish the Minutes Before Leaving the Meeting Site

At the close of the meeting is the best time to finish the minutes. Keeping the minutes in the proper form as the meeting goes along and expecting to complete them at the close of the meeting will make you more efficient.