

TAKING REALLY GOOD MINUTES

WORKBOOK

Craft Clear, Actionable Minutes of Board Meetings



GETTING STARTED

The simple fact is a set of well-constructed minutes of one meeting lays the foundation for the next.

Yet, despite their importance, many boards continue to create less than stellar minutes.

Often by recording irrelevant statements, missing important decisions, or recording too much or too little information.

By creating an accurate statement of actions the board members took during the meeting, you are more likely to achieve your goals during the next meeting.

Get your board ready for action by mastering the entire process of recording accurate board meeting minutes with the Taking Really Good Minutes course.

MINUTE TAKING BEST PRACTICES

While each organization will have slightly varied approaches to taking board minutes, you should always use these best practices to create an official document that identifies and tracks action items.

1. Focus on Value

The purpose of board meeting minutes is to produce a document that accurately references past meetings.

They're explicitly not a transcript and should never be verbatim documentation of all statements made during the board meeting.

Instead, they should be concise and informative, providing only the most valuable statements.

As a rule of thumb, if your minutes take more than 15 minutes to read, they're not helpful for any staff or volunteers in your organization.

2. Be Familiar with The Topic Matter

To ensure the minutes are accurate, it's best if the minute taker has experience with the discussed matters.

Otherwise, the record will poorly reflect on the meeting, and the actions taken will get lost in irrelevant chatter.

3. Use a Template

Recording board meeting minutes is often a complex, lengthy and fiddly process.

Ensure you're creating the proper documentation for your board using a template.

Just select one from the Taking Effective Meeting Minutes course materials.

FIXING ERRORS & AMENDING MINUTES

Whoops, you've made a mistake!

Not to worry; it does happen from time to time.

Luckily, there are a few simple steps that you can take to rectify this situation and correct your mistake:

Before Approval

Easy-peasy.

If you find a mistake before approval from your president or chair, you could change it at any time before the board reviews it without notifying them.

After Approval

If you find a mistake after the board has approved the minutes, you must notify the board that you made a mistake and will rectify it.

There are a few steps you will need to follow to do so:

1. The first thing the board will need to do is **clarify the changes**. You must fully understand the necessary correction; speak with the person who identified the issue and explain what it should be.
2. **Cross-check your original notes** against the agenda and supporting handouts to confirm their proposed revision.
3. **Rewrite and then redistribute** those minutes. So reopen the document, correct the mistake, and then redistribute the amended version to your board.

Pro Tip: It's always helpful to attach a cover letter or a note to describe the document's revision and state that you've sent a replacement.

Sometimes board members want to see the original mistake and the correction.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF MEETING MINUTES

These are the essential items to include in your meeting minutes:

1. Date
2. Time
3. Location
4. Participants
5. Topics discussed
6. Motions
7. Voting outcomes
8. Next meeting date and place

What else should meeting minutes include?

Most organizations will add at least one or two other elements in their meeting notes.

Beyond the essentials, your meeting notes can include and be structured in whatever way best fits your organization's needs.

Here are some additional elements you can include in your meeting minutes:

- Supplementary documents
- Action items
- Purpose of meeting
- Items to be discussed next time
- Project status updates and voting results
- Next steps, like research and follow-ups
- A section to define attendees who are guests, nonvoters, or speakers
- Corrections or amendments to previous meeting minutes

SAMPLE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Board of Directors Meeting

June 21, 2022
3823 Henning Drive
Vancouver B.C.

Minutes

Present: Jeff Jefferson
(Chair) Hoe Hum
Don Snow
Sun Ray
Tom
Collins
Heidi Ho

Regrets: Cal Can
Kim Swift

Absent: Dan Short

Recorder: Tom Plume

Agenda Item

1. **Call meeting to order and chair's remarks**
2. **Acceptance of agenda**
3. **Consent Agenda**

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 pm. The agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting had been pre-circulated and it was:

Moved/seconded that the agenda be accepted.

Motion carried.

Moved/seconded that the items in the Consent Agenda be received and/or approved. Motion carried.

4. **Business arising (not elsewhere on the agenda) 4.1] Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

There was a lengthy discussion about the Goods and Services Tax and Hoe Hum circulated an article that indicated that the association was not obligated to collect the GST on member dues. It was agreed that this matter would be reviewed by the Finance Committee and a report circulated prior to the next meeting. (For those who were unable to attend the meeting a copy of the article is appended to these minutes.)

ACTION BY: Hoe Hum

COMPLETION DATE: Prior to next meeting

Continued

Continued

Continued... to number 8

9. **Date, time and location of next meeting and adjournment**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, July 13 at the College offices beginning at 3:30 pm. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 pm.

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