

Primer on Board Minutes

The importance of minutes

Minutes of board meetings are minutes of a governmental body, minutes of a corporate body, a public body. It is an official record of action, not talking, of the corporate entity and acts as a testament over time. It guides in the evaluation of the board and its governance duties. It guides management as it works to implement the actions of the board. Minutes should be treated as a formal document.

Names

Names of people should be written in a **formal** manner. William Fort made the motion, not Billy. Using first and last names are needed, especially when reviewing historical records. There may be 5 Billie's, but only one William Fort. It is also a matter of respect for the people and the corporation.

Word choice and sentence structure

Since the document is a formal corporate document of an educational institution, the minutes should be devoid of conjunctions, slang and poor grammar. Minutes should not be "chatty." Keep minutes simple and direct. Minutes should be treated as a professional record of excellence on an **educational** organization.

Motions and discussions

There are times when an item on an agenda is discussed and then discussion trails off. There may be consensus on action, but no motion was made. Therefore, a motion should be **made first**, then a discussion is conducted and motions are amended as needed. Without action, there is no basis for accountability. Motions should contain simple declarative sentences that provide precise direction. Motions contain a voting record.

Motions can be placed into the **template** for board members to consider. It helps board members focus on what the issue is. If, for example, the agenda says busing, it could be bus safety, bus purchase or bus contracting. The same idea holds for discussion points. Some discussion points can be placed in the crib (boilerplate for board members) to stimulate discussion and they can be deleted if they miss the mark.

Technique for minute taking

The individual charged with taking minutes should be doing so on a computer during the meeting. If a template is used (see below), minute taking is made considerably easier. If minutes are taken at the meeting, they can be **immediately e-mailed** to board members for comments. Typically, minutes are not delivered to board members until days or shortly before the start of the next meeting. The memory of the board member is taxed. The ability to clearly recall is compromised. The writer of the minutes retains all control. Board members need to respond to draft minutes within 24-48 hours of the meeting.

Charles A. Speiker

Erase directions on the attached template for minutes and feel free to use it as an electronic template or "crib." Once you have it set up, many of the items will be the same for each meeting. Discussion may change, but motions will many times be the same as in the case of the consent agenda or boilerplate items on mission reading or roll call. See 1-5 for examples. Instead of lines to fill in, use interactive boxes that are provided. Remember to attach this (crib) to the public agenda each month and attach this to the e-mails that go to the board at least 4-6 days before the meeting.

Dated

Reading of the Mission of the school by

1. The meeting was called to order at _____ (time) by Chairperson
(Make this the same every meeting. Change only when needed)
2. The Chairperson conducted the roll call.
Members Present:

Members Absent:

Others in Attendance: (Staff, vendors, authorizer)
3. Chairperson moved to approve the agenda. _____ seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
Alternate:
_____ moved, _____ seconded to amend the agenda by removing item _____ or adding
item _____. Motion passed unanimously.
4. _____ moved, _____ seconded to approve the Minutes of _____.
(Corrections noted here and on the electronic copy) Motion passed unanimously.
5. _____ moved, _____ seconded to approve the Treasurer’s Report.

Discussion:

Enrollment was reported at
Cash flow, balances, reconciliation, balance sheet and summary income and
expenditure data were satisfactory.

6. Add additional items with sample motions and alternatives typed in. Suggest discussion item where
appropriate.
e.g.
_____ moved, _____ seconded to receive the Good House Grant totaling \$4,000 dollars
from the State of _____

Discussion or information:

The grant is intended to provide improvements to the Family Living equipment base.
Motion passed unanimously.

7. Teachers, Supervisors, Grade Level and Student Reports. Demonstrations of Learning
List names of people who will be giving demonstrations or reports.
8. Director’s Report
Provide a sentence or two on each topic in the report

A motion to approve is made, seconded and passed. (Item 4 on next agenda.) This set of minutes (ready for approval),
should be on hand electronically so that changes can be made if necessary. A final printing is done at the meeting and
signatures obtained. Then, they are placed in the public board minutes book.

Approved on:

Signature of Officer: _____