

# MEETING MINUTES – ARE YOU GETTING IT ALL, BUT NOT TOO MUCH?

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Taking meeting minutes is an art. It is the art of creating a formal record of a meeting and official actions and decisions that were taken and made during the meeting, without getting down in the weeds and writing a novel. The term “minutes” implies brevity, but at the same time minutes are not “seconds” or “hours”.

If your meeting minutes (whether board meeting or owner meeting minutes) exceed three pages, you may be adding too much. On the other hand, if your meeting minutes are half a page or less, you may not be including enough.

So what exactly should be included in and excluded from minutes? The below checklist is a summary of the information that must be included in your minutes and the information that should be excluded.

- Don't transcribe conversations. You are not taking dictations—you are summarizing decisions and actions.
- Minutes should follow the agenda unless the board made a decision to address matters out of order.
- Include the following basic information in your minutes:
  - Date of Meeting
  - Time meeting was called to order
  - What kind of meeting was this? Board, membership, budget ratification, or other?
  - Who was at the meeting? Who was there physically and who was represented by proxy?
  - All actions taken (including motions and votes)
  - Notes to the extent necessary to protect the record concerning contentious matters
  - Time meeting adjourned
- State the motion made. Indicate who made the motion and who seconded the motion.
- State the vote. Indicate whether the vote was unanimous; if the vote was not unanimous, state the yes/no votes and abstentions by director name.
- Note any action items, who is responsible for the action items, and due date of same.

An important item of note is minutes must be formally approved at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the same group. For example, board meeting minutes should be approved by the board at the next regularly scheduled board meeting. On the other hand, membership meeting minutes must be approved by the membership (not the board) at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the members, which may be a year out if we're talking

about the annual meeting minutes. Until minutes are formally approved, they are drafts and not the formal minutes for that meeting.

### Agendas

An agenda is a list of items to be considered, discussed, or decided at a meeting. The agenda is intended to give notice to the possible attendees of the issues to be discussed and voted upon at the upcoming meeting. This allows interested individuals an opportunity to attend meetings and hear and/or participate in various discussions and votes on matters of interest to them.

Agendas for meetings of the executive board are required to be made “reasonably available” for examination by all members of the association. This typically means, copies of the board meeting agendas should be brought to such meetings and provided to owners who attend. Additionally, if an owner requests a copy of a board meeting agenda before the date of the meeting, if the agenda is prepared it should be provided to the owner.

Annual meeting agendas are typically mailed out with the meeting notices, however, it is also possible to hand out the agendas at the meeting itself. Generally, best practices dictate that agendas for annual meetings be made available and provided sooner rather than later, so to the extent a board has the annual meeting agenda ready at the time it sends out notice of the meeting, it is best to send the agenda (even if in draft form) out with the notice.