

Meeting Minutes

“The clerk serves as secretary of the board and is responsible for recording, presenting, and preserving the minutes of the meetings.” (Church Manual - 18th Edition; page 126) Although a church secretary sometimes is delegated the responsibility of taking the minutes at church board and business meetings, it is the duty of the clerk to see that this task is performed and properly entered in the church records. The official copy of the minutes should include complete copies of all reports, documents and financial statements. It is a public record which any church member or denominational representative can look at. “When the clerk, as secretary, cannot attend a business meeting, the clerk should arrange for an assistant to be present to take the minutes.” (Church Manual - 18th Edition; page 79)

Minutes should be typed as soon as possible after the meeting, while details can be more easily recalled. Provide a copy for the pastor and/or chairperson to read and approve before the final copy of the minutes is copied and distributed. A copy of the previous minutes should be provided for each committee member at the next board meeting.

What Minutes Should Include

- Name of organization
- Type of meeting
- Date, time and place of the meeting
- Members present
- Members absent
- Invited guests present
- Agenda items
- Actions voted
- Major discussion items (even if no action was voted)

- Reports presented to the committee (if written reports are provided they should be attached to the minutes)
- Signature lines for chairperson and clerk/secretary to sign their names

What Minutes Should **Not** Include

- The clerk/secretary’s opinion or interpretation
- Discussion (Remember, minutes are a record of what was done, not what was said.)
- Dissenting votes (these should only be included if a member requests that they go on the record with their dissenting vote)
- Motions that are withdrawn
- Judgemental phrases such as: “heated debate” or “valuable comment”
- Transcripts of the meeting (minutes should not be taken down verbatim)
- Flowery language

Storage of Meeting Records

Minutes are official only after they have been approved by the Church board, typically at the next meeting. After the minutes have been corrected and approved, they should be signed by the secretary.

The official copy of the minutes should be placed on file in a minutes binder which is kept in a safe location. The official copy should have attached to it any attachments listed in the minutes.

As a general rule, it is recommended that the minutes from Church board and business meetings should be kept permanently, because they capture the history of that local Church.



Membership Basics, continued

