



Guidelines for Meeting Minutes

Minutes of school board meetings are usually taken and prepared by the board clerk. The school board clerk is responsible for a well-kept, legal record of all official actions by the school board.

Here are some suggested procedures and guidelines for preparing and preserving school board minutes.

- Minutes taken at a meeting are not the “official” minutes until approved in a subsequent meeting.
- The minutes of the meeting—regular or special—must be preserved and safeguarded as the district’s official record of business transacted.
- The following format could be used in writing the official board meeting record: The school board of (your) school divisions met in regular session on (day), (month), (date), (year) at (time) p.m. in the boardroom located in (building), as advertised on (date) in (newspaper).
- Absence of members should be recorded. Arrivals after roll call have been taken and early departures should be recorded in the minutes by time notation.

How to Write and Keep Meeting Minutes

Defined

Minutes are the official record of an organization. The accuracy of minutes is crucial since they are the legal record of the proceedings and actions of the organization.

Content

- First paragraph: Kind of meeting (regular, special, etc.); the name of the school district; the date, time and place of the meeting; the names of the board members present (establishing a quorum); and names of board members absent.
- The body should include:
 - The exact wording of motions, whether passed or failed, and the way they were disposed of, along with the name of the maker
 - The vote count must be recorded. In all votes, the record of each person’s vote must be included (Vote: 5-1-1 with Klanderud voting no and Gundlach abstaining)
 - Notices of motions – previous notice is sometimes required (e.g. amendments of the bylaws)
 - Points of order and appeals
- Last paragraph: time of adjournment

Not Included

- The opinion or interpretation of the secretary/clerk
- Judgmental phrases (e.g. “heated debate,” “valuable comment”)
- Discussion: Minutes are a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said at the meeting
- Motions that were withdrawn

Attachments

The official copy of the minutes should have attached to it the original signed copy of:

- Committee Reports
- Officers Reports
- Written Motions
- Correspondence

Approval

If the minutes have been distributed to the members before the next meeting, then the approval process can be very short. The presiding officer simply states, “Are there any corrections to the minutes as printed?” If there are none, or after all corrections have been made, the chair may say, “If there is no objection, the minutes will be approved as printed (or as corrected).” Or “Is there a motion to approve the minutes as printed (or as corrected)?”

Signature

After the minutes have been corrected and approved by the board, they should be signed by the clerk and can be signed by the chair. The word “approved”, and the date of the approval should also be included.

Minutes book

The official copy of the minutes should be entered in the Minutes Book and kept by the clerk. These are the property of the school district, not the clerk. The official copy of the minutes should be kept in the school district office.

Copies

If the board members receive a copy of the minutes, the attachments do not need to be included. When members do not receive the attachments, the minutes should include a summary of the attachments. This would be a local board decision as to how these are distributed.

Publishing

Minutes should be published in the official newspaper of the district within 30 days of the meeting at which they occurred. If a board has regular meetings, not more often than once every 30 days, the board has 10 days after the minutes are approved to publish the minutes (M.S. 331A.08 Subd. 3). The school board may determine that publishing a summary of the minutes would adequately inform the public.



Minn. Stat. 123b.09 boards of independent school districts

Subd. 10. Publishing proceedings. The board must cause its official proceedings to be published once in the official newspaper of the district. Such publication shall be made within 30 days of the meeting at which such proceedings occurred. If the board determines that publication of a summary of the proceedings would adequately inform the public of the substance of the proceedings, the board may direct that only a summary be published, conforming to the requirements of section 331A.01, subdivision 10.

