

Sample Meeting Minutes

(Excerpted from *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised Edition*)

MINUTES AND REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Minutes

The record of the proceedings of a deliberative assembly is usually called the minutes, or sometimes - particularly in legislative bodies - the journal. In an ordinary society, unless the minutes are to be published, they should contain mainly a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said by the members. The minutes should never reflect the secretary's opinion, favorable or otherwise, on anything said or done. The minutes should be kept in a substantial book or binder.

CONTENT OF THE MINUTES. The first paragraph of the minutes should contain the following information (which need not, however, be divided into numbered or separated items directly corresponding to those below):

- 1) The kind of meeting: regular, special, adjourned regular, or adjourned special;
- 2) The name of the society or assembly;
- 3) The date and time of the meeting, and the place, if it is not always the same;
- 4) The fact that the regular chairman and secretary were present or, in their absence, the names of the persons who substituted for them; and
- 5) Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved-as read, or as corrected-and the date of that meeting if it was other than a regular business meeting. Any correction is made in the text of the minutes being approved; the minutes of the meeting making the correction merely state that the minutes were approved "as corrected".

The body of the minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each subject matter, giving, in the case of all important motions, the name of the mover, and should show:

- 6) All main motions (10) or motions to bring a main question again before the assembly except, normally, any that were withdrawn* - stating:
 - a) the wording in which each motion was adopted or otherwise disposed of (with the facts as to whether the motion may have been debated or amended before disposition being mentioned only parenthetically); and
 - b) the disposition of the motion, including - if it was temporarily disposed of any primary and secondary amendments and all adhering secondary motions that were then pending;
- 7) Secondary motions that were not lost or withdrawn, in cases where it is necessary to record them for completeness or clarity-for example, motions to Recess or to Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn (among the privileged motions), or motions to Suspend the Rules or grant a Request to Be

Excused from a Duty (among the incidental motions), generally only alluding to the adoption of such motions, however, as ". . . the matter having been advanced in the agenda on motion of . . ." or ". . . a ballot vote having been ordered, the tellers . . .";

- 8) All notices of motions and
- 9) All points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost, together with the reasons given by the chair for his or her ruling.

The last paragraph should state:

- 10) The hour of adjournment.

Additional rules and practices relating to the content of the minutes are the following:

- The name of the seconder of a motion should not be entered in the minutes unless ordered by the assembly.
- When a count has been ordered or the vote is by ballot, the number of votes on each side should be entered; and when the voting is by roll call, the names of those voting on each side and those answering "Present" should be entered. If members fail to respond on a roll-call vote, enough of their names should be recorded as present to reflect that a quorum was present at the time of the vote. If the chair voted, no special mention of this fact is made in the minutes.
- The proceedings of a committee of the whole, or a quasi committee of the whole, should not be entered in the minutes, but the fact that the assembly went into committee of the whole (or into quasi committee) and the committee report should be recorded.
- When a question is considered informally, the same information should be recorded as under the regular rules, since the only informality in the proceedings is in the debate.
- When a committee report is of great importance or should be recorded to show the legislative history of a measure, the assembly can order it "to be entered in the minutes," in which case the secretary copies it in full in the minutes.
- The name and subject of a guest speaker can be given, but no effort should be made to summarize his remarks.

THE SIGNATURE. Minutes should be signed by the secretary and can also be signed, if the assembly wishes, by the president. The words Respectfully submitted - although occasionally used - represent an older practice that is not essential in signing the minutes.

FORM OF THE MINUTES. The principles stated above are illustrated in the following model form for minutes:

The regular monthly meeting of the L.M. Society was held on Thursday, January 4, 20__, at 8:30 P.M., at the Society's building, the President being in the chair and the Secretary being present. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved as corrected.

The Treasurer reported the receipt of a bill from the Downs Construction Company in the amount of \$5,000 for the improvements recently made in the Society's building. The question put by the chair "that the bill be paid" was adopted.

Mr. Johnson, reporting on behalf of the Membership Committee, moved "that John R. Brown be admitted to membership in the Society." The motion was adopted after debate.

The report of the Program Committee was received and placed on file.

The special committee that was appointed to investigate and report on suitable parking facilities near the Society's building reported, through its chairman, Mrs. Smith, a resolution, which, after debate and amendment, was adopted as follows: "Resolved, That . . . [its exact words immediately before being acted upon, incorporating all amendments]."

The resolution relating to the use of the Society's library by nonmembers, which was postponed from the last meeting, was then taken up. This motion and a pending amendment were laid on the table after the chair announced that the guest speaker had received a phone message which would require his early departure.

The President introduced the guest speaker, Mr. James F. Mitchell, whose subject was _____. At the conclusion of Mr. Mitchell's talk, the resolution relating to the use of the Society's library by nonmembers was taken from the table. After amendment and further debate, the resolution was adopted as follows: "Resolved, That . . . [its exact wording immediately before being finally voted on]."

Mr. Gordon moved "that the Society undertake the establishment of a summer camp for boys on its lakefront property." Mrs. Thomas moved to amend [page 456] this motion by inserting the word "underprivileged" before "boys." On motion of Mr. Dorsey, the motion to establish the camp, with the pending amendment, was referred to a committee of three to be appointed by the chair with instructions to report at the next meeting. The chair appointed Messrs. Flynn, Dorsey, and Fine to the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 P.M.

Lashaunda Williams, Secretary