

WRITING GREAT MINUTES FOR THE BOARD

Introduction

Taking great minutes requires practice and diligence. Meeting minutes should allow the reader to get a good sense of what happened at the meeting without being a transcript of the meeting.

- They are written for the general public (do not assume knowledge of district operations or education in general)
- Avoid the use of acronyms, abbreviations and “edu-speak”

Legal Requirements

- Minutes must be taken of all public meetings and executive sessions
- Minutes may be written or may be a recording of the meeting
- Minutes must be available for public inspection within three working days after the meeting
 - ✓ Tuesday night meeting = available by Friday afternoon
 - ✓ Thursday night meeting = available by Tuesday afternoon
- Can mark “draft” or “unapproved” on minutes requested that have not yet been adopted
 - ✓ If minutes are taken in shorthand, must be transcribed in longhand to fulfill requirement
- Can provide a copy of the recorded minutes or allow public to listen to the recording
 - ✓ Keep in mind that the public records law also requires prompt disclosure of requested records: if minutes were recorded, you may be in violation of public records law if not disclosing recording almost right away
- See the Attorney General’s Agency Handbook:
http://www.azag.gov/Agency_Handbook/ch07.pdf

Regular Sessions

The following should be included in the minutes:

- The date, time and place of the meeting
- The members of the public body recorded as either present or absent
- A general description of the matters discussed or considered (even if no formal action or vote was taken on matter)
- An accurate description of all legal actions proposed, discussed or taken, and the names of persons who proposed each motion
- The name of each person “making statements or presenting material to the public body and a specific reference to the legal action” to which the statement or presentation relates
- If the discussion in the public session did not adequately disclose the subject matter and specifics of the action taken, the minutes of the public meeting at which such action was taken

should contain sufficient information to permit the public to investigate further the background or specific facts of the decision

- If matters not on the agenda were discussed or decided at a meeting because of an actual emergency, the minutes must contain a full description of the nature of the emergency
- If a prior act was ratified, the minutes must contain a copy of the disclosure statement required for ratification

Executive Sessions

All of what is included in the regular session minutes, PLUS:

- Include a statement that those present were advised that the information discussed in the session and the session minutes are confidential.
- The Attorney General's Office Agency Handbook contains a suggested statement that be read each time there is an executive session.



It may be necessary to divide the executive session minutes into several sections if there were multiple reasons for holding the executive session to ensure that an authorized person sees only the minutes for the portion of the executive session they are authorized to see.

Procedural Comments

Minutes must reflect what happened at meeting - not what board members wished happened (or didn't).

The ability for a board member to have comments entered into the record or attach documents to the minutes is up to the board collectively, through articulated policy or in approving the minutes.

Storage of Minutes

- Regular session minutes and executive session minutes should be stored in separate areas. Executive Session minutes should be secured.
- Executive session minutes are confidential except they can be disclosed to the following:
 - ✓ Any member of the public body that met in the executive session and members that did not attend the executive session,
 - ✓ Any employee who was the subject of discussion at an executive session,
 - ✓ Attorney for the public body,
 - ✓ Auditor General, Attorney General or court of law.

Sample Minutes

Sample consent agenda items: From Mesa Public Schools:

Purchases (Consent agenda)

1. Increase the encumbrance of federal grant funds for the purchase of childcare services for preschool students through the First Things First program from various vendors, up to an amount of \$258,000.00, as per RFP 12-21MP.
2. Encumbrance of capital funds for the purchase of the district library and textbook management system from Follett Software Company, up to an amount of \$76,576.74.
3. Encumbrance of Title I funds for the purchase of library information technology professional development services from Mesa Community College, up to an amount of \$50,000.00.
4. Encumbrance of capital funds for the purchase of A+ software, a credit recovery product for our high schools from Backbone Communications, up to an amount of \$93,083.00.

Sample: Superintendent Report from Vail Unified

- ▶ Mr. Calvin Baker recognized the editors of Cat Chat as the last edition was particularly attractive and informative; Geoff Parks who was named Golf Coach of the Year and Nemer Hassey who was named Division II Football Coach of the Year. Kevin Carney also won the “Visionary” category in the “Edtech Digest Awards: Disrupting the Classroom.” Mr. Baker also recognized all those who have contributed to Beyond Textbooks, which received the “Trendsetter Award” from the nationally published *Edtech Digest*.

Sample: Action Item from Madison Elementary

- ▶ Mr. Stamp moved and Ms. Kelly seconded to approve the motion 'Approval of Minutes from Regular/September 6, 2011'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: 4 Nay: 0. The motion CARRIED. 4 – 0.

Sample: Action Item with Discussion: Lake Havasu Unified School District

▶ Approval of High School Key Club Leadership Trip to Key Club International Convention

Mrs. Walker recommended that the Governing Board approve the High School Key Club trip to the International Convention in Orlando, FL. The LHHS Key Club is requesting approval of this trip because it is an out-of-state student trip.

Purpose of travel:

- Students will be attending workshops on duties for officers and members.
- Students will be voting on amendments to the international bylaws and electing the international officers for Key Club International.

DEPARTURE: Travelers will depart from the Phoenix Airport on July 1, 2012

RETURN: Travelers will return to the Phoenix Airport on July 9, 2012

FUNDING SOURCE(S): Parent's funds, Kiwanis of Lake Havasu City, Club funds and Tax Credit funds

CHAPERONES: Key Club Faculty Advisors Valari Rose-Johnson & Joann Walker and Kiwanis Advisor, Vickie Biehn

The trip is during the summer. It is the parents' responsibility to take their child and pick him/her up from the airport in Phoenix.

Mrs. Iannone moved that the Board approve the High School Key Club trip to the International Convention in Orlando, FL.

Mr. Hobday seconded the motion. There will be approximately 5-6 students attending.

Chaperones always stay with students at the airport until they are picked up by parents.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Hobday: YES, Iannone: YES, Rooney: YES, Troyer: YES, Navaretta: YES. Motion passed 5 -0.

Sample of Minutes on Board and Superintendent Reports: Humboldt Unified School District

▶ REPORTS

A. Board

- ▶ Shelly Damschroder: Congratulated the BMHS Girls' Basketball Team on their victory over PHS
- ▶ Carm Staker: Was pleased to announce the birth of her ninth great-grandchild. She is very active with the Hungry Kids Backpack Program
- ▶ Howard Moody: Attended the JTED/CTE Open House at BMHS. He was disappointed with the turnout. Sheryl McCully gave a wonderful presentation. Students in the CNA Program demonstrated skills. He talked to the students about their plans after high school; many plan to become doctors, surgeons, and nurses.
- ▶ Richard Adler: Congratulated PR Director Mariela Bean for the website and marketing strategies

B. Superintendent

- ▶ Dr. Stanton: Reported that radio ads for tax credits have begun
 - ▶ He and Finance Director Cynthia Windham met with staff from the Auditor General's Office
 - ▶ Attended a Prescott Area Leadership meeting where he and Prescott Superintendent Smucker gave presentations
 - ▶ Attended the JTED Open House at the high school
 - ▶ Attended the Big Brother/Big Sister Breakfast Meeting
 - ▶ Met with Board Member Carm Staker and Mary Diaz to work on an orientation program for new Board members
 - ▶ Attended the first Parent Academy, hosted by Mariela Bean

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