

Canadian Meeting Services

The Fundamentals of Minute Taking For Boards and Committees

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MINUTES AND MINUTE-TAKING

DEFINITIONS

Minutes are the records or reconstruction of the proceedings of a meeting. “The very purpose of minutes is to transcribe into permanent and official form the actions at a meeting of the organization.” *Managing Corporate Meetings*, George S. Hills.

The minutes of a meeting, *when approved*, are the *authenticated record* of the proceedings of a meeting and are required to be retained and preserved.

The minutes of an organization are a subset of the overall record-keeping requirements of an organization and are considered *official records of the organization*.

PURPOSE

There are three major purposes of minutes. Arguably, the most important purpose is to provide for the legal record, the decisions made and actions taken at a duly convened meeting of the organization. The duly convened meeting of the organization may be a general meeting of the members, the board of directors, its executive committee or any other committee, standing or special. If a dispute arises as to what transpired at a meeting the minutes of the meeting is the first document to be referenced. If the decisions or actions taken at a meeting are the subject of a legal proceeding the minutes will be the first document of authority and, other evidence to the contrary, will be used as the prima facie evidence of actions taken in the meeting.

The second purpose is to provide a record to the members of the current decisions being made within, and for, the organization. In many cases the minutes are, and should be, distributed liberally within the organization to fulfill this purpose. With today’s technology, distribution and access to minutes is made easier.

The third purpose is to provide an historical record of the organization. As a minimum, the minutes capture every decision of the organization, including a record of the participants and leaders of the organization. These can be invaluable to those interested in writing the history of the specific organization or in an even broader sense, to historians interested in writing social histories of the field the organization operates in, such as municipal or local government, sports, professional societies, scientific or religious organizations, to mention a few.

LEGAL MEETINGS

Because minutes are a product of a meeting, the minute-taker and others have to be cognizant of when a meeting is legal.

“A meeting of an organization will generally be considered “legal” if all members entitled to attend were notified sufficiently in advance of its time and place, a quorum of members is in attendance, that the meeting has been called to order at the notified time or later, and a presiding officer and secretary are present or are appointed at the meeting.” Meeting Procedures, p. 5.

The concepts of “time and place”, “in attendance” and being “present” have been recently modified by statute because of rapid changes in communication technology. Unless the bylaws of an organization otherwise provide, a meeting may be held by means of telephone, electronic or other communication facilities to permit all persons participating in the meeting to communicate with each other simultaneously and instantaneously. A meeting may no longer be limited to a physical location but may in fact be held at multiple locations many miles apart, provided that all persons participating can hear each other at the same time and can respond to all participants at the same time. Anyone participating in such a meeting is deemed to be present at the meeting.

The introductory paragraphs of the minutes provide the written evidence that a meeting is “legal.” See the section under Contents of Minutes for the information contained in the minutes.

TYPES OF MEETINGS

Any officially called or established meeting of an organization is required to have minutes. The following are the most common meetings:

➤ **General Meetings of Members.**

This includes the Annual Meeting and other general meetings or special general meetings.

➤ **Board or Council Meetings.**

Board meetings are those meetings of directors of a corporation or not-for-profit organization who have the authority to plan, direct and control the corporation between general meetings of members.

➤ **Committee Meetings.**

These are standing or special committees established by the board or council. They are more often advisory committees but in some cases are given the power to act through the corporation’s documents of authority.

➤ **In Camera or Closed Meetings.**

Meetings held only with members present and invited support staff (recording secretary, lawyer, senior staff). Boards, unless they obtain their authority through specific statute, have less restrictions on them and can select the business matters for which they can go into an in camera session.

➤ **Telephone or other Electronic Meetings.**

These types of meetings must be established in the corporation's bylaws and authorized by statute. Corporate Boards (for profit and not-for-profit) have this authority through statute in Ontario.

ADOPTION OR APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes are required to be approved and signed. The group of persons who approve minutes is usually the group in assembly (some organizations establish a minutes-approving committee, who are empowered to approve the minutes).

The approval of minutes, when done by the group itself is done at the next subsequent meeting. With advancements in technology it is not uncommon that the body, at the end of the meeting, especially when the meeting is short or dedicated to a single subject, approves the minutes prior to adjournment.

A closed (in-camera) meeting's minutes are required to be approved at another closed meeting. However, when a closed meeting is called *only* to approve the minutes of a closed meeting, then that second closed meeting's minutes are deemed to be automatically approved.

THE APPROVAL PROCESS

Approval of the minutes is generally done as one of the first actions of the assembly and may be done in one of two ways:

- ❖ By general consent
- ❖ By formal vote

Because the approval of minutes is routine business, the presiding officer may use general consent, which is a voting method, as follows, "Are there any corrections to the minutes? (*pause*) There being no corrections the minutes of the March 4, 2009 meeting are approved as distributed." If corrections are necessary the corrections are taken and usually approved by general consent. In this case where corrections have been accepted the chair would say, "If there are no further corrections the minutes stand approved as corrected." If there is any disagreement on corrections they must be approved by

majority vote like any other amendment. If corrections are to be voted on the minutes as amended should be voted on formally.

If using the formal method of voting a member moves the following motion, "That the minutes of April 6, 2009 be approved as printed and distributed." This motion requires seconding. Discussion and, if necessary, corrections are permitted as described above.

The minutes would contain the following items showing the approval of minutes:

The minutes of the regular meeting of council held 4th March 2009 were approved by general consent (or without objection)

Or, by motion

*It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of council held 4th March 2009. **Adopted.***

WHAT MINUTES CONTAIN

Principles of Minute Taking

In deciding what minutes should contain the following principles are applicable to all types of meetings:

1. The minutes must first establish that the meeting is a legal meeting. The legality of the meeting is established by recording, in the introductory paragraphs of the minutes, (i) what type of meeting is being held, (ii) that a quorum is present, (iii) the time the meeting was to begin, (iv) when the meeting did begin and (v) that a presiding officer and minute-taker were present.
2. The minutes must record all the substantive actions of the body which means all main motions or resolutions adopted or defeated, including notice of motions.
3. Any matter that will set a precedent for the organization which means all rulings of the chair or rulings of the assembly.
4. Any other matter that would be historically important. This means, for example, recording the presence of important dignitaries or special speakers. For committees it means recording important debate points and actions to be taken.
5. Minutes contain *what was done, not what was said*. Debate is not to be included in minutes of councils/boards. In committee debate points can be listed, if it will help the committee construct its final report or its recommendation to the board.

Differences in Board/Council Minutes and Committee Minutes

Board/Council and committee meeting minutes should be concise and clearly written so that anyone not present at the meeting would understand the actions taken. Minutes are a record of what was done not what was said, especially not who said it. Minutes do not contain debate. However, there is one major difference when taking minutes in committees. In committee work, summarizing, in point form, the key points made is important especially when decisions are in flux and the debate points are to be included in the minutes. Because committees are advisory and often have to report their recommendations to their parent body, important points made in debate may also form the rationale for their recommendations. In addition, the process that the committee followed to reach its conclusions may be crucial in convincing their parent body of the soundness of the committee's recommendations. This means that committee minutes need to contain more text from which they can construct their report to the parent body. Further, because committees tend to be more detailed oriented, the important details of

how they reached their conclusions and recommendations are often contained in the minutes of their meetings or in attachments to the minutes.

Names in Minutes

Unless it is traditional, the minutes need not contain who made the motion. The rationale is that when the chair states a motion it is owned by the assembly and only the assembly adopts, defeats or otherwise disposes of the motion. In addition, a motion may undergo amendments that may be hostile or distort the original mover of the motions intent.

The member's name who seconds a motion is not recorded in the minutes.

Minutes Structure

The minutes provide an accurate statement of the type of meeting, evidence of its legality and a record of its proceedings. It is divided into three sections – the Introductory Section, the Main body, and the Concluding Section. The content of each of these sections is:

Introductory Section

1. The **name** of the organization or committee
2. The **type of meeting** (regular, special, continued)
3. The **date and time** of the meeting
4. The **location** where the meeting was held (includes electronic meetings)
5. The name of the **presiding officer** and **recording secretary**
6. The time the meeting **commenced**
7. **Attendees** or the roll call of members (may include absentees)
8. A statement that a **quorum** was present
9. The disposition of **previous minutes**
10. **Declaration(s) of Interest** (sometimes called declarations of pecuniary interest)

Main Body of Minutes

11. Disposition of **Consent Agenda**, if used
12. **Reports** of officers, standing committees, special committees, and staff
13. For all **substantive main motions** the exact text as voted on and the disposition of the motion, whether adopted, defeated, postponed to a later time or referred to a committee (see later for details on how motions may be disposed of).
14. **Points of order** and **points of privilege** and the presiding officer's **ruling**
15. **Appeals** from rulings of the presiding officer and whether sustained or reversed
16. All **counted votes** listing the number for and the number against the motion
17. On a **recorded vote** (sometimes called a roll call vote), the names of all members answering the roll call and how they responded (Yes, No, Abstain)

18. In **elections**, all persons nominated and accepting the nomination for a position
19. In elections, the complete **teller's report**.
20. In elections, the **result of the election** as announced by the presiding officer
21. All **advance notices of motion**
22. The name of all **appointees** to committees and other bodies
23. All **actions** whether assigned to a committee or an individual

Concluding Section

24. Date of **next meeting**
25. The time the meeting **adjourned**
26. The **recording secretary's** title and signature (and other signatures and titles as required by the bylaws)

The minutes do not normally contain the following information:

1. Who made the motion, unless it is customary to record the maker of the motion
2. Who seconded the motion
3. Secondary motions that have been defeated
4. Procedural type motions such as limit debate, close debate, suspend the rules

In formal meetings debate should not be included in the minutes. In committee meetings the points made in debate may be captured in the minutes to assist in writing a report that contain recommendations for the consideration of the committee's parent body.

CONTENT OF MINUTES EXPANDED AND EXPLAINED

Because the recording secretary in a meeting needs to know the processes in a meeting in order to be fully competent in producing the minutes the following sections expand on the content of the minutes in the following areas:

Corrections to Minutes

When minutes are presented to the assembly for adoption it is not necessary to include in the current meeting minutes what the actual corrections were to the minutes being approved. These corrections are made to the minutes being approved and when approved and signed, become the official record. The current meeting minutes, for example, would read:

“With no objection, the minutes of the meeting held March 1, 2009 were approved as distributed (or presented),”

Or,

“With no objection, the minutes of the meeting held March 1, 2009 were approved as corrected.”

In the event of a contentious disagreement over the wording in the minutes, which was resolved by a motion, then the amending motion is included in the minutes of the current meeting.

See below, for the unusual situation when minutes are required to be corrected after they have been approved.

Declaration(s) of Interest

A declaration of interest is a self-declaration by a member of the assembly of a pecuniary interest or potential pecuniary interest in an issue. When an interest is declared the member disassociates from the consideration of the agenda item and from the vote. The minutes would read:

“There were no declarations of interest,”

Or,

“Director Smith declared an interest on item # 7 (b). His Father is employed in one of the companies bidding on the contract.”

Although a member might not declare an interest at the beginning of the meeting, a member may during the consideration of an agenda item, recognize that he/she has an interest or potential interest and declare it at that time. The minutes should reflect that declaration at that point in the minutes. The minutes, for example, might read:

“During the consideration of agenda item 7 (c), Land Use on Concession Road # 2, Councilor Angelino declared an interest and removed himself from consideration of the matter and did not vote. He declared that he owned a property on Concession Road # 2.”

Consent Agenda

A consent agenda, sometimes called consent calendar, is a list of non-controversial business of the meeting that is intended to be adopted *en bloc* through a single motion. The types of business in the consent agenda would be such as: receiving of communications from outside parties and the disposition of the same, reports from committees and the disposition of same, receiving of minutes from committees, routine assembly business, motions, resolutions and recommendations from committees and from staff of a non-controversial nature.

A member may, by demand, remove any item from the consent agenda and place it in the regular agenda for consideration. This should be noted in the minutes as shown by the two examples as follows:

“Agenda item 4 c) was removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda for consideration.

“Agenda item 6 b) was removed from the consent agenda and placed on the regular agenda for consideration.”

These items may be taken up after the adoption of the consent agenda or placed elsewhere on the agenda by the presiding officer.

A committee chair or a staff member, having put an item on the consent agenda may wish to withdraw (as opposed to remove) an item from the consent agenda, such that the item will not come before the meeting. If granted by the chair or the assembly, the item will be noted as follows:

“With permission (or without objection), item 9 a) on the consent agenda was withdrawn and was not considered.”

When the consent agenda is voted on the minutes will read as follows:

“The consent agenda was moved and seconded”. Adopted.

Note: Each motion on the consent agenda is included in the minutes and shown as **Adopted.**

Reports of Officers and Committees

It is important to recognize that a committee generates three products: the committee's minutes, committee reports and committee recommendations. The recommendations are usually contained in the written report, but must be dealt with separately from the report. The minutes contain the proceedings in a committee and provide the superior body with assurance that items of business were properly considered and voted on at the committee level.

The minutes are received by the superior body for information and do not constitute the report of the committee. The superior body on receiving the minutes acknowledges in the superior body's minutes the reception of minutes of the committee, as follows:

"The assembly received the minutes of the regular meeting of the Library Board held 9th April, 2009,"

Or, more formally

"It was moved and seconded to receive the minutes of the regular meeting of the Library Board held 9th April, 2009." **Adopted.**

The reports of officers and committees are also received by the superior body and are filed but not adopted, except in specific circumstances. The entry in the minutes for officer and committee reports is as follows:

"The assembly received the written report of the secretary-treasurer dated 10th October, 2009"

Or, more formally,

"It was moved and seconded to receive the written report of the secretary-treasurer dated 10th October, 2009." **Adopted.**

A recommendation contained in a report is required to be considered, by the assembly, separately from the report. The committee when presenting a recommendation in a report should formulate the recommendation in the form of a motion or resolution. The motion is moved by the committee chair or the designated reporting member and does not require a second. If the committee chair is not a member of the assembly or it is a staff report, a member of the superior body must formally move the motion and a second is required.

The entry in the minutes is as follows:

“The chair of the Bylaws Committee moved, on behalf of the committee, the following resolution ...”

This is repeated for each recommendation. In the event that the committee has a series of connected resolutions that they wish to move, consider and adopt as a block, the series of resolution may be recorded in the minutes as a composite motion, with each resolution clearly delineated.

In the event that an oral report is given instead of a written report, any motions presented orally should be put in writing prior to adoption. The chair has the authority to insist on written motions when they are substantive. In addition, the recording secretary includes in the minutes the main points of the oral report (but not the debate on the report). For example,

Councilor Strong, reported on behalf of the Canada Games Committee the following interim report:

- *That seven meetings have been held with sporting organizations*
- *That the police are fully involved and have allocated resources to the event*
- *That medical personnel will attend each sporting event and that a stand-by ambulance will be available.*
- *That costs are well within the approved budget*
- *That the final report from the committee will be forthcoming at the February, 2009 meeting*

Points of Order and Appeals

When a member believes that a rule is being broken the member may raise a point of order. This does not require a second and is ruled on by the presiding officer. The entry in the minutes would be:

“A point of order was raised that the amendment was not germane to the resolution.”

The chair has potentially three responses. The entry in the minutes for each of these responses is:

“The chair ruled that the point of order was well taken and the amendment was ruled out of order.”

Or,

“The chair ruled that the point of order was not well taken and that the amendment was in order.”

Or,

“The chair was unsure on the ruling and turned the decision over to the assembly to decide.”

In the latter case the chair should state the question to be decided by the assembly. When it is decided the minutes will record the decision. For example:

*The question is shall the amendment be considered? **Adopted** (or **Defeated.**)*

When the chair rules on a point of order, the ruling may be appealed from. In this case the entry in the minutes is:

*“The ruling of the chair was appealed from.” **The ruling was Sustained** (or **Not Sustained**)*

Recorded Vote or Roll Call Vote

A recorded vote may be demanded in some boards. When the recorded vote is ordered each member casts his or her vote and it is recorded in the minutes as follows:

“A recorded vote was ordered by Council. The roll was called by the secretary and the vote was as follows:

*Councilor A Aye
Councilor B No
Councilor C Aye
Councilor D No
Mayor Mack Aye*

*For the motion 3, Against the motion 2.” **Adopted.***

Nominations and Elections

The election of the leadership of an organization and in some cases the election of important chairs of committees has to be meticulously planned and executed. The minutes only need to record the final result of the planning, namely, those nominated, the vote count and the result of the election. Although the casting of votes is normally secret, the vote count and the election results are not secret but are included in the minutes.

If a nominations committee is used and reports its nominations to the assembly the entry in the minutes is as follows (includes nominations from the floor) and the full election results:

“The nominations committee nominated the following two candidates for the position of

President:

*Carla Trivett
William Harrington*

Nominated from the floor for President was:

*Peter Messer
Ashok Kumar*

The President announced that a majority of votes cast would elect.

The polls were open at 10:05 a.m. and closed at 10:32 a.m.

The tellers report is as follows:

<i>Number of Votes Cast:</i>	<i>103</i>
<i>Necessary for Election (majority)</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Carla Trivett received</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>William Harrington received</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Peter Messer received</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Ashok Kumar received</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Gil Evans received</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Illegal votes</i>	<i>2</i>

The president announced that Mr. William Harrington was elected to the position of President.”

Disposition of Main Motions/Resolutions

There are a limited number of ways in which a motion may be disposed of in a meeting. They are:

1. Adopted
2. Defeated
3. Postponed indefinitely (not in committees)
4. Referred to a committee (not in committees)
5. Postponed to another time

6. Postponed and made a special order
7. Laid on the table
8. Withdrawn
9. Object to consideration of the Question (not in committees)
10. Carried to the next meeting (because time has expired)
11. Not reached (because time has expired)

Motions 3 through 9 are included in the minutes only if they are adopted.

The entry in the minutes for each of the above motions is:

Adopted – After the motion in the minutes write the word **Adopted or Carried.**

Defeated – After the motion in the minutes write the word **Defeated.**

Postpone Indefinitely

“It was moved and seconded to postpone indefinitely the main motion.”
Adopted.

Refer

“It was moved and seconded to refer the main motion (or the pending motions) to the Planning Committee.” **Adopted**

Or,

“It was moved and seconded to refer the main motion (or the pending motions) to the Planning Committee, with instructions to the Planning Committee to consult with legal counsel and to report at the next meeting.” **Adopted**

Or,

“It was moved and seconded to refer the main motion (or the pending motions) to a committee of three members of the Board to be appointed by the President.” **Adopted**

Or,

“It was moved and seconded to refer the main motion (or the pending motions) to a committee of three members comprising Councilors A, B and C and that the committee report at the June meeting.” **Adopted**

Postpone

*“It was moved and seconded to postpone the main motion (or pending motions) to the next meeting.” **Adopted***

Or,

*“It was moved and seconded to postpone the main motion (or pending motions) to 8:00 p.m. this evening.” **Adopted***

Or,

*“It was moved and seconded to postpone the main motion (or pending motions) to 8:00 p.m. this evening and make it a special order.” **Adopted***

Lay on the Table

*“It was moved and seconded to lay the main motion (or pending motions) on the table.” **Adopted***

Note: Any member may move to take the motion from the table. This can be done by general consent (usually) or by motion.

“The motion regarding ... which was laid on table was taken from the table by general consent.”

Or, more formally

*“It was moved and seconded to take the motion regarding ... from the table.” **Adopted***

Withdraw

At any time a member who moved a motion may request to withdraw the motion. This is usually done by general consent or by motion. In the minutes this is recorded as:

“By general consent (or without objection) the motion regarding ... was withdrawn.”

Or, more formally

*“It was moved and seconded that the motion regarding ...be withdrawn.” **Adopted***

Object to Consideration of the Question

A main motion may be objected to before consideration of the question or before amendments are moved to the main motion. The presiding officer would state the motion as, "Shall the question be considered?" If adopted, the minutes would read:

*The main motion was objected to and the objection to the consideration of the question was sustained. **Adopted by a 2/3 vote.***

Business Carried to Next Meeting

When the time for adjournment is reached business may be pending. If the meeting adjourns with the business pending, that business is carried to the next meeting and is placed under Unfinished Business or in an equivalent location on the agenda. The business comes up in the exact same status as it was left in when the previous meeting adjourned. For example, if a main motion and an amendment to the main motion are pending when the meeting adjourned, these two motions are again pending when the next meeting reaches unfinished business. The presiding officer would state the main motion as pending and the amendment as immediately pending. In the minutes of the previous meeting this would be shown as:

The main motion and the following amendment were pending when the meeting adjourned. These two motions will come up under unfinished business at the next meeting. The amendment was, "to add the words, 'with the proviso that the effective date of implementation will be July 1, 2009.'"

At the next meeting both motions are shown on the agenda and are dealt with in the same manner as any regular motion. To provide continuity the minutes would read:

The following main motion and amendment were carried over to unfinished business from the meeting held October 2nd, 2004: (list both motions).

Business not Reached

Business that was not reached when the meeting adjourned needs no special reference in any of the minutes, but would be added to the agenda of the subsequent meeting under Unfinished Business.

SKILLS REQUIRED OF MINUTE-TAKERS

Although many people take notes at a meeting and often distribute these notes there is only one person designated as the minute-taker. In a municipal council this is the clerk or deputy clerk. In other organizations it is the recording secretary or in the absence of the recording secretary someone appointed to take the minutes.

The skills, knowledge and experience of the minute-taker are paramount and that person should be carefully selected. The skills are:

- Critical listening
- Ability to summarise in writing
- Organizational knowledge sufficient to follow the progress in the meeting
- Understanding the jargon of the organization
- Confidence to speak up to clarify the subject under debate or clarify the actions taken
- Knowledge of what is required to be entered in the minutes
- Some knowledge of parliamentary procedure as used by the assembly

Recording secretaries to meetings often have other duties in the organization but the above skills are particularly pertinent to minute-taking. Such duties as maintaining a list of committees, the membership of each committee, their mandate, the committee schedule, receiving and reporting on the correspondence of the organization, maintaining the corporate seal are often duties of the recording secretary but are not included in this workshop.

Listening and Summarising

Today there are much more opportunities for people to let other people know what they think. The problem is that fewer people are listening than are speaking. It has been shown that one hour after listening to a talk the listener has forgotten 75% or more of what has been communicated and the next day the retention of information will have dropped off yet again. In minute-taking the minute-taker has to be focused on what has been said and to summarise the information within minutes. This is particularly important in committee work where the procedure is much more relaxed and decisions have not yet been settled on. In these cases the minute-taker is required to listen intently and then to summarise, in point form, the key points of debate.

Focusing and listening can be very tiring and difficult. But for the minute-taker it is indispensable. Listening is the predominant communication activity of the minute-taker during the meeting. The minute-taker has to be self-inspired and continually keep in mind, "I will not be distracted." "I will listen objectively," and "I need to listen." The automatic responses to this self-talk will be that the minute-taker will lean forward to listen, will be more attentive and will ask questions when the meeting goes awry or is complicated. By listening critically the minute-taker will be intimately involved in the meeting.

Summarising a discussion is not possible unless one listens, but one can listen and fail to summarise properly. Summarising means to listen critically, to pick out key points and to put the key points in writing quickly. That is why knowledge of the organization and of the organization's jargon is important.

Confidence to Speak and Inquire

Meetings sometimes move quickly, and the presiding officer and members may skip procedural steps that cause confusion for the minute-taker. When this happens the minute-taker has the right to enquire of the presiding officer of the actions just taken. This must be timely. It is better to interrupt the proceedings to obtain the information than to get the minutes wrong. This is especially critical if the minute-taker has missed the result of a vote.

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

The minute-taker brings to the meeting the following items:

1. Extra copies of the previous meeting's minutes (unapproved)
2. The agenda and other meeting materials (reports, notice of motions)
3. The notice of meeting
4. The minute-book (journal) containing minutes for the past year
5. Motion forms, in triplicate
6. Recorded vote forms
7. Template for the minutes (in accordance with the distributed agenda)
8. Templates for recording the disposition of motions
9. The constitution, bylaws and other documents of authority
10. A copy of the organization's adopted parliamentary authority
11. Notepad
12. Pencils, pens and coloured markers
13. Extra diskettes, if using a computer
14. Extra audio tapes, if taping the meeting

In addition to the above physical tools the minute-taker:

15. Prepares by re-reading the previous minutes and the agenda
16. Reads reports and specifically notes recommendations (motions) contained in the reports
17. Contacts chairs of committees if a recommendation (motion) is badly worded or not easily understood or is formulated in a wrong format
18. Contact chairs who will not be reporting to confirm they will not report

19. If non-members will attend, gets the correct spelling of their name and title. If they will be presenting a paper or giving a speech, gets a copy of the speech, or, as a minimum, a description of the subject matter.
20. Makes himself/herself available to help members formulate motions
21. Speaks with the presiding officer about 60 minutes prior to the meeting regarding last minute changes (to inform and be informed)
22. Organizes oneself to be at the meeting at least 15 minutes before the meeting

GOOD PRACTICES DURING THE MEETING

This section relates to the actual meeting and the activities of the minute-taker. The following are considered good practices:

- If one is a member of the assembly the minute-taker will have a voice and vote. While the member should always cast a vote, the minute-taker should refrain from speaking frequently and exercise that right only on important matters.
- The minute-taker sits beside the presiding officer
- The minute-taker should have an unobstructed view of all members
- If it is necessary to leave the meeting, even for a short time, inform the presiding officer and ensure someone is appointed to fill the minute-taking position
- Use an agenda based template to record the proceedings
- Do not hesitate to ask for clarification and specifically clarification on the result of a vote
- Do not concentrate on who said what, but on the larger thrust of the points made or concepts explained
- Summarise debate in point form (usually required in committees)

GOOD PRACTICES IN WRITING MINUTES

- Write the minutes within 48 hours of the meeting
- Be consistent in formatting including font size, font type, headings, bolding, underlining, italics, headers, footers, page numbering and the overall layout.
- Use consistent language in stating the motions and the motions' disposition
- Do not include debate in the minutes unless the assembly orders debate to be included or it is customarily included. If included put in a succinct point form.
- Sign and date the minutes shortly after they are approved.