**HOW TO TAKE MINUTES**

**At the Top of the Minutes:**

Name of Committee

Meeting Place and Address

Date and Time of Meeting:

Members Present:
Members Absent (if members arrive late, I add them in as a side note with time of arrival so we know what they have and haven’t heard)

Approval of Minutes

Agenda Attached

**Business:**

Include key points of discussions. Make sure to record all actions to be taken: Who Agreed to do What and When. Include Timeline for when things are to be done or action to be taken.

Also include the names of the people proposing any action, stating an option or making a motion.

Take down as accurately as possible any motions, resolutions, amendments, decisions or conclusions and who seconded the motion and whether the motion is approved or defeated.

**NOTE:** The summarizer should be most careful in clarifying any point of controversy. It is the secretary's responsibility/opportunity to signal the president or chairperson to ask questions regarding the subject of discussion if he or she becomes lost or unsure. The meeting should be stopped for clarification.

Time of adjournment and next meeting.

Though taking them is sometimes a challenge, minutes are important. They are saved and are often referred to in the years to come.

Try to send out a DRAFT copy of the minutes *as soon as possible* to all attendees.

Give them 24 hours to suggest corrections.

Send the FINAL copy of the minutes to all attendees and the webmaster to deposit on the  ACW website.

**Meeting Minutes and How to Take Them Effectively and Efficiently**

Meeting minutes are the detailed notes that serve as an official written record of a meeting or conference. Depending on the formality of the gathering, there is an official secretary or the person in charge may ask one of the participants to tend to this task. While sometimes challenging, taking minutes IS an important task. Since meeting minutes are an official record of what transpired, accuracy is necessary. You will need to take detailed notes that people can refer to later if necessary.

Here are some pointers to help you handle this task with finesse. Find out what to do before, during, and after the meeting.

Before the Meeting

* Choose your recording tool: The first thing you must do is decide how you will take your notes: Go old school and use pen and paper or will you go tech and use a [laptop computer](https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-a-laptop-computer-2533639), tablet, or smartphone? Check with the person in charge to see if he or she prefers you to use a particular method. It is unlikely, but possible.
* Make sure your tool of choice is in working order and have a backup just in case your original one fails. If you bring a laptop, for instance, have pen and paper handy as well. You don't want to have to stop the meeting while you search for something to write on if your computer crashes.
* Read [the meeting agenda](https://www.thebalance.com/how-to-develop-an-effective-meeting-agenda-1918731) before the meeting starts. It will allow you to formulate an outline for your minutes. Leave some space below each item on it and write your notes there. Doing this will make your job a little easier, *as long as the person running the meeting sticks to the agenda.*

During the Meeting

* Pass around an attendance sheet and make sure everyone signs in. You will need to include a list of all attendees in the official meeting minutes.
* Make sure you know who everyone is. That way you will be able to identify who is speaking and correctly record that information.
* Note the time the meeting begins.
* Don't try to write down every single comment. It is okay to include only the main ideas.  *Be very careful not to leave out items with which you disagree*. Your biases shouldn't influence you. Remember this is an official account and not your opinion of what happened.
* **Write down all motions, who made them, and the results of votes, if any; you don't need to write down who seconded a motion.** Of course, the rules of your organization may differ so verify them first.
* If votes on any motions or discussions are deferred until the next meeting, make a note of that.
* Record the ending time of the meeting.

After the Meeting

* Type up the minutes *as soon as possible* after the meeting while everything is still fresh in your mind. If you find an error in your notes or if you have a question, you can get it cleared up quickly by talking to other attendees.
* **On the final copy of the minutes, Include the name of the organization, title of the committee, type of meeting (daily, weekly, monthly, annual, or special), and its purpose.**
* **Since our meeting places will vary, please indicate the location and address**
* Give the times the meeting began and ended.
* Provide the list of attendees and a note about who ran the meeting. You can also indicate here that you took the minutes. Include your name on the list of participants and, in parentheses after your name, say that you took the minutes. **Alternatively, at the end of the document you can sign off by writing "Respectively submitted by," followed by your name. (This is how I’ve always seen it done. Jill W)**
* Proofread the minutes before you submit them. Ask someone else who attended to look them over as well. He or she will be able to let you know if you accidentally left something out.
* Often, in a business setting, you would submit them to the person who ran the meeting, unless instructed to do otherwise.
* **ACW ALTERNATE PROCESS** for Submission of Minutes - which is used often by committees such as ours and was requested by Barbara:

**Please submit the minutes to all committee members for comment and review. Give them 24-48 hours to review for corrections or comments. Once all corrections/comments are received, add them into the minutes and resend the final minutes to the entire group.**