

Minutes of Meetings of the Legislature, Legislative Standing Committees, and Special Committees of the Legislature

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| Objective: | To establish procedures and standards for preparing meeting minutes to ensure consistency and to facilitate content accuracy. | Policy/Procedure Number: | 08-00 |
| Reference: <i>(All applicable federal, state, and local laws)</i> | NY State Public Officers Law, Section 106— Minutes; New York State Freedom of Information Law; Tompkins County Administrative Policy 01-25: Compliance with the Open Meetings Law; Rules of the Tompkins County Legislature | Effective Date: | February 21, 1995 |
| Legislative Policy Statement: | It is the policy of the Tompkins County Legislature that the minutes of its meetings and of the meetings of its Standing and Special Committees shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a timely, accurate, and understandable record of the actions of those groups for members of the public, for future readers, and for those who are not able to attend those proceedings;• Ensure that requests for follow-up actions are recorded;• Ensure that the group itself has confirmed its decisions; and• Ensure that a Legislature member's record is clear to the public. | Responsible Department: | Clerk of the Legislature |
| | | Modified Date (s): | June 19, 2018 |
| | | Resolution No.: | 2011-92 |
| | | Next Scheduled Review: | June 2023 |

General Information:

I. Definitions:

Minutes - The official record of the meetings of an established body.

Meeting - The official convening of a public body for the purpose of conducting public business.

Public Body - Any entity, for which a quorum is required in order to conduct public business and that consists of two or more members, performing a government function for the County or for an agency or department thereof, or for a committee or subcommittee or other similar body of such public body.

Executive Session - That portion of a meeting not open to the general public.

II. Policy:

A. Guidelines

1. Chairs should provide guidance in adhering to the minutes policy. Staff designated to take minutes should feel free to refer to the policy when it is being disregarded and to invoke its use.
2. All persons who prepare minutes shall file a copy of the approved minutes with the office of the Clerk of the Legislature.
3. Minutes of meetings of all public bodies shall be available to the public in accordance with the provisions of the NY State Freedom of Information Law and generally within two weeks from the date of such meeting.

Minutes of an Executive Session when action was taken shall be available to the public within one week from the date of the executive session.

4. Once approved, the minutes will be archived in an electronic searchable format and the minutes of the Legislature will become part of the County's Annual Proceedings. Once archived, each document will be available to the public online.

B. Standards for Preparing Meeting Minutes

All staff who prepare minutes of meetings of the Legislature, and legislative standing (program) and special committees of the Legislature must adhere to the following standards:

1. Each set of minutes should include a heading that includes the name of the group that is meeting; the location and date of the meeting; the names of all members of the group and whether they are present, absent, or excused; the names and affiliation or identification of any other persons who attend and participate in the deliberations of the group; and the time the meeting started.
2. Where the group allows Privilege of the Floor for the Public, a list of the names as provided by the person(s) who spoke and the topic of discussion.
3. Each set of minutes should be organized and formatted according to the meeting agenda. If the agenda published prior to the meeting has been changed then all subjects (i.e., action items, discussion items, and reports) included in the minutes shall appear in the actual order that they occurred in the meeting.
4. Each set of minutes should include the point in the meeting when members arrive and leave.
5. Each set of minutes should include every action taken and subject raised as these relate to the following:
 - Resolutions, motions, and actions including mover, seconder, and the vote of each person present.
 - Any formal or informal action; this shall include an action as informal as, for example, the Chair stating that a particular subject will appear on the next agenda. This also includes any formal or informal decision of the group for which follow-up is expected; any such notation should include the name(s) of the person(s) expected to follow up and the date, if specified, by which the follow up is expected to be completed.
6. Each set of minutes should include any statement that a member of the Legislature specifically requests to be included as a matter of record.
7. To provide an accurate record of discussion, deliberations, and actions taken, minutes may include a synopsis of points made, in order to:
 - Provide rationale for a Legislative decision or a member's vote;

- Summarize arguments, viewpoints, or positions;
 - Provide additional useful information of debates and conclusions.
8. Each set of minutes should include the time of adjournment.
 9. Minutes shall be taken at Executive Sessions of any action that is taken by formal vote, which shall consist of a record or summary of the final determination of such action, and the date and vote thereon; provided, however, that such summary need not include any matter that is not required to be made public by the New York State Freedom of Information Law.
 10. Draft minutes must include the word "Draft" at the top of the document and the date that the draft is submitted. Draft minutes shall be included in the agenda packet and presented for approval at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
 11. Approved minutes must include the word "Approved" at the top and the date of approval.

III. Procedure:

Attendance Sheet

An attendance sheet that includes a place for names, addresses, and affiliations may be circulated at meetings. If this is done, this sheet shall be filed in the office of the Clerk of the Legislature.

Revising Meeting Minutes

Corrections of Fact

When a member has a request for a correction of fact (e.g., dollar amounts or dates), the member should notify the minute-taker as soon as possible after receipt of the minutes and not less than 24 hours before minutes are to be approved. There should not be an expectation that revised draft minutes reflecting the corrected information will be produced before the meeting; however, the changes should be noted and incorporated into the final form.

Only the body that originally approved the minutes may amend minutes. If approved, the amendment will be incorporated into the originally approved minutes.

Corrections of Errors

Errors such as typographical, grammatical, spelling, and non-substantive changes may be accepted by the minute-taker without committee approval. Such changes should be submitted in a timely and easy-to-read manner. Changes the minute-taker feels to be substantive shall be presented to the body for which the minutes were prepared.