

May 15, 2012: 1:00 2:00 and 2:15 3:15 p.m.
 Clerk Breakout: *The Happy Medium of Minutes*
 Bill Taylor

The Happy Medium of Minutes

The Importance of Taking, Preparing, and Maintaining Minutes

Bill Taylor, Field Services Manager
 Municipal Association of South Carolina



What Exactly are Minutes?

By definition: "a brief note" (as of summary or recommendation) Webster's Dictionary
 From Latin *minutus* - small

They are a summary of the actions and decisions taking place at a meeting.

They are NOT verbatim – no transcript required

Why Have Minutes?

Required by State Law

"The municipal clerk shall give notice of council meetings keep the minutes of its proceedings and perform such other duties as are assigned by council." [§ 5-7-220]

"The council shall determine its own rules and order of business and shall provide for keeping minutes of its proceedings which shall be public record." [§ 5-7-250 (b)]

What should be included in the Minutes?

- ❖ Name of the municipality, date, place & time of the meeting
- ❖ List of members present & absent and whether or not a quorum was present
- ❖ Note that the media was notified in accordance with FOIA about the meeting
- ❖ The "substance" of all matters proposed, discussed or decided and, at the request of any member, a record, by an individual, of any votes taken
- ❖ Any other information that any member wishes to be reflected in the minutes.

What Else Should be Included?

- All motions, adopted or defeated
- Names of those making the motion
- Points or orders & appeals; sustained or lost
- Summarized reports from committees, boards, etc.
- Appointments to committees & boards
- All resolutions, ordinances and other technical papers
- The number of votes on each side when requested
- Time of adjournment & signature of the clerk

OTHER NOTES ABOUT MINUTES

- Minutes are not "officially" approved until the next meeting.
- Should be kept in a permanent book
- Minutes can serve as a historical record and helps chronicle key decisions that affect the city over the years.

Example of Recording Minutes



Electronic Recordings

Electronic recordings (audio or video) are advisable as a means to double-check on actions taken at meetings.

Anyone may record the proceedings at these meetings just as long as they do not interfere with the actual proceedings taking place.

Storage of Records

Does This Look Like Your Record Storage?



Retention Schedule

- Audio/video recordings of meetings: 2 years; then destroy or re-use
- Minutes: Permanent; Microfilm for security
- Agenda Packets: Permanent; Microfilm for security
- Ordinances: Permanent; Microfilm for security
- Resolutions: Permanent; Microfilm for security

(General Records Retention Schedule for Municipal Records, 2003 – SC Dept. of Archives & History)

Some Final Hints For Recording Minutes:

- Use past tense. "Council approved ..."
- Be specific as to who is present
- Record those who make the motions and the vote of council
- Be brief, but concise
- Make sure enough information about any issue is included so that it can easily be discerned by the reader
- Try not to inject "personal" opinions

QUESTIONS?