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Knowing how to take effective meeting minutes is a crucial skill for professionals at all levels. Having the ability and knowledge to capture and document key discussions and decisions is essential for maintaining productivity and accountability. But how do you take minutes that can elevate your meetings? This article guides you through the process of taking effective meeting minutes by highlighting: The definition of meeting minutes; The main benefits of documenting; Primary tips that can boost the value of your meeting minutes. What Are Meeting Minutes? The term “meeting minutes” originates from the Latin word “minute,” which means “small notes.” In medieval times, monastic orders were used to keep track of their meetings and decisions in minutes (small notes), which were concise records of the proceedings. Over time, taking minutes spread to other organizations and formal gatherings. To this date, meeting minutes still serve as official documentation that captures the key points and outcomes of a meeting. It also acts as a reference for participants and non-participants, helping maintain effective communication and accountability within organizations. What Should You Include When Writing Meeting Minutes? Descending from the originators of the practice, meeting minutes are simply short notes that document the key discussions, action items, and decisions from a meeting. Minutes aren’t used to document every discussion from the meeting but rather to highlight only the most important parts. There are different types of meeting minutes, depending on the nature of the organization or the meeting itself. You can have a formal or informal setting where minutes are needed. All these different types of minutes have varying structures that you can follow. However, regardless of the meeting structure, there are a few things that should be included in a minutes document, such as: Meeting information: You ought to include the key meeting details, such as the date, time, and the purpose (or name) of the meeting. You can include the location if participating in a physical or hybrid virtual meeting. Main objectives or agenda: Every meeting should have a key objective or agenda. You should learn how to create an effective meeting agenda that helps you to expect the outcomes of the meeting, as well as know the order to run the meeting. Discussion summary: When writing meeting minutes, provide a brief overview of the discussions for each agenda item, only focusing on the main points. Decisions and actions: Every meeting minutes should include the key decisions made during the meeting, including the specifics of the people responsible for various activities, their expectations, and the timeline. What is the Objective of Creating Meeting Minutes? Meeting minutes provide crucial documentation that can be of significance to an organization. These documents have various benefits and objectives, including: Record keeping Minutes provide documentation of what transpired during a meeting. They are crucial in recording the key discussions, decisions, and action items assigned during organizational meetings. Moreover, they can act as a historical reference for future meetings. Effective communication The minutes of a meeting facilitate effective communication within an organization. These documents enable participants to share meeting outcomes with relevant non-participants and other stakeholders. Moreover, meeting minutes are structured in an easy-to-understand format that fosters clarity and ensures other team members are well-aligned with key decisions. Transparency and accountability Well-written meeting minutes can be used to hold individuals or teams accountable for their assigned tasks. Minutes promote transparency by ensuring that all the meeting discussions, decisions, and assigned responsibilities can be easily accessible for reference, enabling effective follow-up and progress tracking. How To Take Effective Meeting Minutes There are technically four stages involved when taking effective meeting minutes. They include: This is one of the most crucial stages, as it can make or break your experience when capturing the minutes. To know how to take meeting minutes, you have to be well-prepared to do so in different ways, such as: Familiarizing yourself with the meeting agenda; Gathering the necessary materials or background information; Preparing a template to be used in the minutes-writing process. When you know what exactly the meeting is all about, you can be better placed to identify and capture the main discussion and action items. During the meeting, the person taking meeting notes should be actively listening to understand the context and identify the key discussions. Rather than attempting to transcribe every word spoken during the meeting, the minute-taker should focus on summarizing the main points and outcomes of the discussions. Moreover, as they are actively engaged in the discussions, these individuals also can jot down the rationale behind certain decisions made during the meeting. In most cases, the minutes-taker will first take notes and summaries of the key discussions and decisions made during the meeting. Thereafter, they rely on these notes to write effective meeting minutes, structuring them in a clear and logical manner. The final stage of creating meeting minutes involves revising the compiled minutes for accuracy and clarity. If the meeting minutes show completeness, they can be shared or distributed to the relevant stakeholders. However, if any reviews and edits are needed, they can be amended before the final copy is distributed to others. 4 Steps To Take Effective Meeting Minutes So, what are the key considerations to enable you to take effective meeting minutes based on these four stages? Step 1: Preparation Many things with good success rates always begin with a plan. This includes when taking meeting minutes. Before the meeting, ensure to have a good plan on how you want to go about it, including: Knowing who will take the minutes (the minute-taker); Determining the objectives and agenda of the meeting. The agenda should be brief, even if you have different discussion items. The same applies if you are curating the agenda for a 1-on-1 meeting. Identifying the best means of taking good records of the discussion and preparing them; Note down the basics of the meeting minutes before the meeting starts, such as the date, name of the meeting, agenda, etc. Alternatively, you can use a meeting minutes template to make your work easier. If you are the one taking the minutes or using a meeting minutes app, here are a few questions to get the answers for that significantly boost your preparations: What is the most important goal of the meeting? What is the main agenda of the meeting? What is the most important decision you hope to make during the meeting? Will there be a likelihood of having action items during the meeting? If yes, who’s likely to get assigned? Do you need to understand any background or context before the meeting begins? Are there any pre-meeting materials or documents? Step 2: Documentation During the meeting, it is important that you are actively listening to enable you to take effective meeting takeaways. When doing so, only document the most important discussions, decisions, and action items. Thereafter, you can summarize the main points or arguments made by the participants, noting any vital considerations made during the meeting. However, being able to concentrate, actively taking part in the discussions, and recording the meeting minutes can be a daunting task, especially if you are also leading the meeting. This is why specialized meeting tools, such as Krisp’s AI Meeting Assistant, can be incredibly beneficial. The tool gets you your meeting transcriptions using the power of advanced Artificial Intelligence. The AI meeting assistant can identify speakers during the meeting, capturing and noting down everything they are saying without the need for extensive edits after that. Moreover, you also get a summarized version of the transcription that highlights the key discussions, decisions, and action items. This way, you can remain active during the meeting and still get a full transcription and notes of the meeting using the power of AI. Here are a few tips that can be helpful when you want to know how to take good meeting minutes: Know when it is best to just focus on listening: You don’t have to jot down everything from the meeting. If you understand the meeting objectives and agenda, you can know when to expect important discussions and points to be raised. Moreover, you can use a reliable AI meeting note taker to capture important discussions on your behalf. Write objectively: Meeting minutes should be written objectively, free from bias and personal opinions. Seek clarification: Minutes provide accurate documentation of the key discussion points made during a meeting. This is why, when you do not clearly understand something, it would be prudent to seek clarification rather than input incorrect information. Step 3: Compilation It is advisable that you promptly review your notes or transcriptions while the discussions are still fresh in your mind. Take your time to structure the minutes in a clear and logical manner, following your pre-set template. As you organize the minutes, it is important to consider the readability of the document. This means using headings, subheadings, and numbering to make the document easier to skim through. There are many key considerations when compiling and organizing the meeting minutes and making them more effective. Some of the most important considerations include: Review your notes thoroughly to ensure accuracy, clarity, and completeness; Structure the minutes logically; Summarize discussions succinctly; Highlight decisions and actions; Use formatting techniques. Step 4: Distribution Once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and approved as a true reflection of the key discussion points during the meeting, you can go ahead and share them. Sometimes, even before sharing the minutes with other stakeholders, it may have to get approval from relevant individuals. If they leave comments and feedback, it is important to incorporate them before sharing them with other stakeholders. Here are a few extra tips to consider when distributing the meeting minutes: Timeliness: Aim to distribute the minutes shortly after the meeting while the discussions remain fresh in everyone’s minds. Prompt distribution allows participants to review the minutes and take necessary actions accordingly. Use the appropriate distribution method: Knowing how to write meeting minutes is one part of the equation, and knowing how to share them is another. Select a suitable method for sharing the minutes based on the preferences and communication channels of the meeting participants. Use a clear and informative subject line: Assuming you are distributing the meeting minutes via email, it is advisable to use a clear and informative subject line that accurately reflects the content and purpose of the email. Not only does this enable the recipients to understand what is in the email, but it also makes searching for them much easier. Ensure accessibility and readability: Another way to make your meeting minutes more effective is to share them in a format that is easily accessible and readable by the recipients. For instance, you may use PDF or Google Docs format, which can easily be read and accessed by many. Elevating Your Meeting Minutes Experience With Krisp Krisp takes the heavy lifting out of your meetings, thanks to the advanced AI Meeting Assistant. Krisp works in the background and transcribes your entire meetings non-intrusively. This means you don’t require to download or install any plugins or software. Krisp can identify the speakers and jot down what these individuals say during a meeting. What’s more, you can get a summarized version of the meeting transcripts, highlighting only the most important discussions. Try out Krisp today and enjoy unlimited meeting transcriptions and meeting notes with clear action items with a free, no-strings-attached, 7-day trial. Frequently Asked Questions How do you take minutes in a meeting? When taking minutes in a meeting, it is important to listen actively and capture the key points. For example, you can summarize the discussions, decisions, and actions taken during the meeting. How can I improve my minute-taking skills? To improve your minute-taking skills, consider adequate preparations, active listening, and summarizing the key discussions. Moreover, you should continuously learn and adapt. What are the golden rules of minute-taking? The golden rules of minute-taking include being adequately prepared for the meeting by understanding the key objectives, accurately capturing the main discussion and action items, and being organized using a clear structure and formatting. Whether you’ve been tasked with taking notes for a committee or you’ve been appointed Secretary to the Board of your organization, preparing meeting minutes doesn’t have to be an arduous task. Here are some tips and ideas that will help you get started with writing and preparing effective meeting minutes, as well as a meeting minutes sample and a meeting minutes template that you can follow. This guide on how to write meeting minutes was prepared by WildApricot to help the volunteers and/or staff of small non-profits and membership organizations who may be new to the task of taking and preparing minutes of meeting for committees or Boards of Directors. What Are Meeting Minutes? Meeting minutes are the written record of what was discussed and decided during a meeting. They typically include the date and time of the meeting, a list of attendees, a summary of the topics discussed, decisions made, action items assigned, and the time of adjournment. Minutes are essential for providing an official account of the meeting, ensuring accountability, and helping attendees recall important details. They are usually prepared by a designated person, such as a secretary or administrative assistant, and are approved at the subsequent meeting. What Should You Include When Writing Meeting Minutes? The five steps that you must include are: Pre-Planning Record taking – at the meeting Minutes writing or transcribing Distributing or sharing of meeting minutes Filing or storage of minutes for future reference For more detail on each step, read on! Read more: 13 Meeting Minutes Templates for More Productive Nonprofit Board Meetings Who Should Write the Meeting Minutes? Meeting minutes are typically written by the designated secretary or administrative assistant of the group or organization. In some cases, a specific member of the group may be assigned to take minutes for a particular meeting. The person responsible for writing the minutes should be someone who is attentive, detail-oriented, and capable of accurately capturing the discussions and decisions made during the meeting. Meeting Minutes Template: Here’s a simple template you can refer to next time you need to take meeting minutes: Organization Name Meeting Minutes Date: Opening: The meeting was called to order at [Time] by [Name] at [Location]. Present: [List of all present members] Absent: [List of any members who were not present] Approval of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved. Business From the Previous Meeting: [Summary of any motions or topics from the previous meeting, including decisions made] New Business: [Summary of any new motions or topics raised, including decisions made] Additions to the Agenda: [Summary of any additional items raised during the meeting] Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at [Time] by [Name]. The next meeting will be held on [Date] at [Location]. Minutes submitted by: [Name] Minutes approved by: [Name] How to Create Your Meeting Minute Process As mentioned above, there are essentially five steps involved with meeting minutes: Pre-Planning Record taking – at the meeting Minutes writing or transcribing Distributing or sharing of meeting minutes Filing or storage of minutes for future reference Pre-Plan Your Meeting Minutes A well-planned meeting helps ensure effective meeting minutes. If the Chair and the Secretary or minutes-taker work together to ensure the agenda and meeting are well thought out, it makes minute taking much easier. For example, depending on the meeting structure and the tools you use, the minutes-taker could work with the Chair to create a document format that works as an agenda and minutes outline as well. Set the Agenda of a Meeting At the very least, it’s important to get a copy of the meeting agenda and use it as a guide or outline for taking notes, setting up your mom format, and preparing the minutes – with the order and numbering of items on the minutes of meeting matching those of the agenda. In addition, the agenda and/or meeting notice also provides information that will need to be included in the minutes, such as: the names of all the meeting attendees, including guests or speakers documents that are sent out with the agenda or handed out in the meeting – copies (digital or hard copy) of handouts should be stored with the meeting minutes for future reference and for sharing with those who were unable to attend the meeting (and others as determined by the meeting’s Chair). Clarify Expectations When you take on a new role as minutes-taker or Secretary, be sure to ask the Chair of the committee or Board what their expectations are of your role during the meeting, as well as the type of detail he/she expects in the minutes. For example, if your Board or committee will be dealing with motions, or voting on items/issues, be clear on whether you need to offer names of those making motions, seconding, etc. If you will be dealing with this type of procedures, you (and your Chair) may want to refer to Robert’s Rules of Order. What Should Be Included in Meeting Minutes? Before you start taking notes, it’s important to understand the type of information you need to record at the meeting. As noted earlier, your organization may have required content and a specific meeting minute format that you’ll need to follow, but generally, meeting minutes usually include the following: Date and time of the meeting Names of the meeting participants and those unable to attend (e.g., “regrets”) Acceptance or corrections/amendments to previous meeting minutes Decisions made about each agenda item, for example: Actions taken or agreed to be taken Next steps Voting outcomes – e.g., (if necessary, details regarding who made motions; who seconded and approved or via show of hands, etc.) Motions taken or rejected Items to be held over New business Next meeting date and time You can find more templates and details on formatting meeting minutes here. The Minutes Writing Process Once the meeting is over, it’s time to pull together your notes and write the minutes. Here are some tips that might help: Try to write the minutes as soon after the meeting as possible while everything is fresh in your mind. Review your outline and if necessary, add additional notes or clarify points raised. Also check to ensure all decisions, actions and motions are clearly noted. Ensure you’re including sufficient detail For Board of Director’s minutes in particular, we recommend including a short description of each action taken, as well as the rationale behind the decision If there was a lot of discussion before passing a motion, write down the major arguments for and against Edit to ensure brevity and clarity, so the minutes are easy to read In terms of mom format, here are a few things to keep in mind: Be objective Write in the same tense throughout Avoid using names other than to record motions and seconds. Avoid personal observations — the minutes should be solely fact-based If you need to refer to other documents, don’t try to summarize them. Rather, simply indicate where they can be found or attach them as an appendix Meeting Minute Best Practices: Create an outline As discussed earlier, having an outline (or template) based on the agenda makes it easy for you to simply jot down notes, decisions, etc. under each item as you go along. If you are taking notes by hand, consider including space below each item on your outline for your hand-written notes, then print these out and use this to capture minutes. Check-off attendees as they join the meeting If you know the meeting attendees, you can check them off as they arrive, if not have folks introduce themselves at the start of the meeting or circulate an attendance list they can check-off themselves. Record decisions or notes on action items As the meeting progresses, it will be critical to annotate decisions and key points made in your outline as soon as they occur to be sure they are recorded accurately. Include the names of the owners of the action items and other key personnel involved. Ask for clarification if necessary Don’t be afraid to speak up if you need clarification on something that was said in the meeting. It’s your job to make these meeting minutes as accurate as possible. For example, if the group moves on without making a decision or an obvious conclusion, ask for clarification of the decision and/or next steps involved. Don’t try to capture it all You can’t keep up if you try to write down the conversation verbatim, so be sure to simply (and clearly) write (or type) just the decisions, assignments, action steps, etc. Record the meeting If you are concerned about being able to keep up with note taking, consider recording the meeting (e.g., on your smart phone, iPad, recording device, etc.) but be sure to let participants know they are being recording. While you don’t want to use the recording to create a word-for-word transcript of the meeting, the recording can come in handy if you want to review the meeting for clarification. Download our Meeting Minute Checklist for Associations and Nonprofits with sample minutes taken at a meeting and learn how to take better minutes. Meeting Minutes Samples: Still wondering if you’re taking notes correctly? Here’s a sample of what meeting minutes at a board meeting might look like. Do Meeting Minutes Have To Be Approved? Yes, meeting minutes typically need to be approved to ensure accuracy and completeness. The approval process usually occurs at the beginning of the next meeting, where attendees review the minutes from the previous meeting and either approve them as written or suggest corrections. Once approved, the minutes become the official record of the meeting. This process helps maintain transparency and accountability within the organization. Before you share your meeting minutes, make sure that your board chair has reviewed and either revised and/or approved the minutes for circulation. They are not an official record of a meeting unless this has taken place. Distributing or Sharing Meeting Minutes As the official “minutes-taker” or Secretary, your role may include dissemination of the minutes. Online sharing The method of sharing or distribution will depend on the tools that you and your organization use. Since minutes and other documentation can create a pile of paper, it’s great if you can use a paperless sharing process. For example, if you are using a word processing tool (e.g., Microsoft Word) that doesn’t offer online sharing, you might want to create a PDF of the document and send this and the other attachments or meeting documentation via email. Alternately, if you are all using Google docs – for meeting invitations, agenda and additional document sharing – you can simply “share” the document with that group once it has been finalized. Committee or Board members can simply read the documents online and save a few trees! Sharing in the Cloud? If your organization is using a cloud-based membership management system (like WildApricot), you can publish the minutes as a web page and give access only to the committee or Board members, depending on your organization’s needs. Through members-only webpages, you can create a secure online Intranet for your Board and committees. Tools Specifically For Meeting Minutes: If you are wondering about the types of tools you might use specifically for meeting minutes, here are some tools that organizations we’ve worked with have found helpful: Google Docs: Also supports collaborative note taking. [Here are some meeting minute sample templates in Google docs. If you send out a meeting request using Google Calendar, you can attach a Google doc agenda outline. Once minutes are crafted (using the outline), you can simply share the document with the group using their email addresses.] OneNote: (if you are a Microsoft user) – Very fast and allows for organization of notes. Also support audio recording with corresponding note time-stamping. Notion: Notion is a great platform for organizing meeting minutes. It’s hierarchical document structure is a fantastic way to organize your meeting minutes in any way you want. Evernote: Great note taking tool. Agreedo: supports creation of meeting minutes and tracking the results. minutes.io: allows you to quickly take meeting minutes with hotkey shortcuts and the ability to work online or offline. Filing/Storage of Meeting Minutes Most committees and Boards review and either approve or amend the minutes at the beginning of the subsequent meeting. Once you’ve made any required revisions, the minutes will then need to be stored for future reference. Some organizations may store these online (e.g., in Google docs or SkyDrive) and also back these up on an external hard drive. You may also need to print and store hard copies as well or provide these to a staff member or Chair for filing. What Is the Purpose of Meeting Minutes? You shouldn’t be intimidated by the term “minutes”, since it’s actually a little misleading. After all, your committee or Board doesn’t want or need a record of its meeting proceedings minute by minute! But it is important to capture the essence of the meeting, including details such as: decisions made (motions made, votes, etc.) next steps planned identification and tracking of action items Minutes are a tangible record of the meeting for its participants and a source of information for members who were unable to attend. In some cases, meeting minutes can act as a reference point, for example: when a meeting’s outcomes impact other collaborative activities or projects within the organization minutes can serve to notify (or remind) individuals of tasks assigned to them and/or timelines Download our Meeting Minute Checklist for Associations and Nonprofits with examples and learn how to take better minutes. Why Are They Called Minutes of a Meeting? According to Today I Found Out, the “minutes” of “meeting minutes” don’t refer to the minute measurement of time, but to the “minute” (my-newt) notes taken during meetings. And… If You’re a Nonprofit with Regular Board and Member Meetings If you’re a nonprofit with regular board and member meetings and you want to save time and money managing your organization, get a free trial of WildApricot, an all-in-one membership management software which allows you to: Easily schedule online events with instant online payment processing and automated invoices. Create a stunning website with online member applications. Access an easy-to-search and filter contact database. Send out professionally-designed newsletters and emails. and much more. Find out all the features of WildApricot’s free membership management software here. WildApricot is also the the #1 rated membership management software used by over 20,000 organizations every day. Get your free trial now. In Closing…Enjoy Your New Role! Meeting minutes are important – after all, they capture the essential information of a meeting. But taking and preparing minutes doesn’t have to be a daunting task. We hope this article helps meeting minutes newbies in getting started in creating effective meeting minutes for your organization. Thank you for reading our guide on how to write meeting minutes! Taking meeting minutes is the practice of documenting what happened in a meeting. It’s an essential step to ensure meetings are productive and actionable. After all, if you have a meeting with no written trace, it’ll be hard to hold anyone accountable, or even remember what was discussed. But, there are a number of things to keep in mind to ensure your meeting minutes are effective. We’ve got you covered! In this article we’ll walk through: You’ll be a pro at taking meeting minutes in no time! Meeting minutes are concise notes that summarize discussions from your meeting. They’re a record you can refer back to for clarification on what happened in the meeting. But, they shouldn’t be a record of everything that happened. The phrase “meeting minutes” actually doesn’t have anything to do with 60 seconds. Rather, the phrase dates back to the early 18th century to the Latin words “minuta scriptura,” which means small notes. The are a number of purposes meeting minutes serve that make them an important part of every meeting. Since meeting minutes are typically a more formal documentation of meetings, they’re especially used when an official record of the discussion is needed, for example in board meetings and leadership meetings. If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound? Well, if a meeting happened but there are no notes, did it really happen? This might sound silly. But the fact of the matter is that people are forgetful. Your team likely isn’t trying to pass the buck on commitments made, but if you don’t write it down, it’s pretty easy to forget. The entire purpose of a meeting is to get the right people in a room to collectively solve a problem. Documenting the solution, whether through meeting notes or meeting minutes, will ensure that the whole team stay accountable — so your discussion gets turned into action. Miscommunication is a great way to cause frustration, resentment and loss of productivity. We all have different communication styles, and if you’re not intentional about how you communicate, this can cause misunderstandings galore. Taking meeting minutes gives you the opportunity to ensure clarity on what’s discussed. For example, let’s say someone needs to create templates for customer onboarding. You think your colleague agreed to do it, but their understanding is that you’re taking the lead. Without minutes, you both leave with a different perspective on what’s supposed to happen next. Since meeting minutes force you to write down what was decided, this misalignment will be caught before it leads to frustration. So you both leave crystal clear on what’s next. “Hmm...what was it that Kathleen said last week about the marketing plan?” If you’ve clearly labelled your notes with the right details, it will be quick and easy to answer this question! For every meeting, make sure to cover off the very basics in the minutes. The date: This may seem obvious but adding the date to your notes allows you to look back on not only what was discussed, but also when they were discussed. Who attended: Note who was present for a better understanding and context for the discussion. Typically you can add this to the minutes ahead of time, based on the invite list. The purpose: Why are you conducting the meeting in the first place? If it’s a recurring sync, the purpose will likely stay the same each time. If it’s a one-off meeting, make sure to write a purpose statement. Agenda items that were discussed: The bulk of your meeting minutes should be the agenda items discussed. Having the agenda items laid out ahead of time will help guide your minutes so they stay clear and concise. Relevant documents: Was there a presentation? Were you discussing a brief? Be sure to include links to all of these in your minutes – that way they’re easy to access later on. Next steps: Based on your discussion, what needs to be done next? Make sure you include who’s responsible and by when. More on that in step 7. If everyone’s taking minutes at the same time, things will get confusing quickly. Decide from the outset who will take the notes. Elect someone who isn’t running the meeting to take clear, concise notes throughout. That way, everyone else can focus on making decisions and assigning next steps. It’s not particularly inclusive to pick the same person to take minutes each time. Consider rotating the notes taker each meeting. Once you’ve assigned someone responsible for the minutes, ensure they’re taking minutes throughout the meeting – not making rough scribbles they’ll turn into proper meeting minutes afterward. The trick here is to find the right tool. For example, if using paper and pen, you’ll need to re-write the notes after so they’re shareable. Instead, choose a device that will make note-taking easy (like a laptop or iPad) and remove a step. Taking minutes during the meeting also ensures you get everyone’s buy-in on key decisions and next steps. After each agenda item, the note-taker can say, “OK, here’s what I’ve written for the summary. Did I miss anything?” This way, everyone is consistently engaged in the conversation and stays aligned. The first step of taking minutes in the agenda is actually having a clear agenda. This will help guide your minutes and streamline everything in one place. Ideally, your agenda is collaborative (whether it be in a meeting agenda tool like Spinach AI or a shared doc like One Note or Google Docs), so while you’re taking notes everyone can follow along — particularly helpful for remote meetings! You don’t need to capture everything in your meeting minutes. Think of it as Cole’s Notes. If someone couldn’t make it, what are the key points they need to know? Focus on the essentials: For each agenda item include a summary of what you discussed, any decisions made, and what the next steps are. Not only will this make your typing fingers less tired, but it will also make the final product easier to understand. The note-taker should always feel comfortable (and encouraged!) to ask for clarification or repetition when needed. Trying to remember what was discussed later can result in misinformation or missing pieces. If you’re leading the meeting, don’t hesitate to reiterate key points or crucial decisions. Not only will it help ensure accurate documentation – it repeats key information for the whole team to hear (win-win!). You went through everything on the agenda? Great! You summarized all your decisions? Great! ...but, who is doing what? ☹ For a meeting to be truly effective, you need to break down your decisions into action items. And don’t leave actions to nameless people, either – they won’t get done! Encourage ownership and responsibility by assigning the actions to attendees – ideally with deadlines attached to them. Possibly the most important part of writing minutes is actually making sure everyone has access to the minutes. Whether you’re sharing a Google doc, or you’re using meeting minute software that everyone can access (we prefer the latter! ☺), it’s crucial that everyone can refer back to notes and next steps whenever they need. It helps to foster a culture of accountability, and encourages follow-through across the team. As we mentioned earlier, the template for your minutes should be your agenda! Ensure each agenda item has space for notes and next steps, and that it’s easily accessible by all the attendees. Below you can find a few examples, based on agenda templates, that you can use in the Spinach AI app or download as a Word, Excel or PDF. Use the full team meeting template in Spinach AI or download (Word, Excel, PDF) Use this full board meeting template in Spinach AI or download (Word, Excel, PDF) Use this full level 10 meeting template in Spinach AI or download (Word, Excel, PDF) Take meeting minutes more effortlessly by starting with a template from our library of over 100 types of meetings. Access more agenda templates (it’s free!) What you should do now Next, here are some things you can do now that you've read this article: I think you will love our library of meeting agenda templates for every type of meeting. You should try Spinach to see how it can help you run a high performing org. If you found this article helpful, please share it with others on Linkedin or X (Twitter) If you're feeling lucky try our previous post or our next post.Otherwise, here are related articles we've picked for you: Do we hate meetings or just bad meetings? A case on directing blame to the wrong place. Posted May 25, 2023 Jocelyn Brown Don't let back-to-back meetings hold you back from being productive. That time between meetings lies the key to productivity. Read about our case for gap time Updated Feb 26, 2025 Jocelyn Brown Maximize productivity and achieve goals with focus time - dedicated periods of distraction-free work. In this post we explore the science and benefits of focus time, how to create more focus time, and where to find benchmarks. Updated Feb 26, 2025 Jocelyn Brown Whether you’ve been tasked with taking notes for a committee or you’ve been appointed Secretary to the Board of your organization, preparing meeting minutes doesn’t have to be an arduous task. Here are some tips and ideas that will help you get started with writing and preparing effective meeting minutes, as well as a meeting minutes sample and a meeting minutes template that you can follow. This guide on how to write meeting minutes was prepared by WildApricot to help the volunteers and/or staff of small non-profits and membership organizations who may be new to the task of taking and preparing minutes of meeting for committees or Boards of Directors. What Are Meeting Minutes? Meeting minutes are the written record of what was discussed and decided during a meeting. They typically include the date and time of the meeting, a list of attendees, a summary of the topics discussed, decisions made, action items assigned, and the time of adjournment. Minutes are essential for providing an official account of the meeting, ensuring accountability, and helping attendees recall important details. They are usually prepared by a designated person, such as a secretary or administrative assistant, and are approved at the subsequent meeting. What Should You Include When Writing Meeting Minutes? The five steps that you must include are: Pre-Planning Record taking – at the meeting Minutes writing or transcribing Distributing or sharing of meeting minutes Filing or storage of minutes for future reference For more detail on each step, read on! Read more: 13 Meeting Minutes Templates for More Productive Nonprofit Board Meetings Who Should Write the Meeting Minutes? Meeting minutes are typically written by the designated secretary or administrative assistant of the group or organization. In some cases, a specific member of the group may be assigned to take minutes for a particular meeting. The person responsible for writing the minutes should be someone who is attentive, detail-oriented, and capable of accurately capturing the discussions and decisions made during the meeting. Meeting Minutes Template: Here’s a simple template you can refer to next time you need to take meeting minutes: Organization Name Meeting Minutes Date: Opening: The meeting was called to order at [Time] by [Name] at [Location]. Present: [List of all present members] Absent: [List of any members who were not present] Approval of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved. Business From the Previous Meeting: [Summary of any motions or topics from the previous meeting, including decisions made] New Business: [Summary of any new motions or topics raised, including decisions made] Additions to the Agenda: [Summary of any additional items raised during the meeting] Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at [Time] by [Name]. The next meeting will be held on [Date] at [Location]. Minutes submitted by: [Name] Minutes approved by: [Name] How to Create Your Meeting Minute Process As mentioned above, there are essentially five steps involved with meeting minutes: Pre-Planning Record taking – at the meeting Minutes writing or transcribing Distributing or sharing of meeting minutes Filing or storage of minutes for future reference Pre-Plan Your Meeting Minutes A well-planned meeting helps ensure effective meeting minutes. If the Chair and the Secretary or minutes-taker work together to ensure the agenda and meeting are well thought out, it makes minute taking much easier. For example, depending on the meeting structure and the tools you use, the minutes-taker could work with the Chair to create a document format that works as an agenda and minutes outline as well. Set the Agenda of a Meeting At the very least, it’s important to get a copy of the meeting agenda and use it as a guide or outline for taking notes, setting up your mom format, and preparing the minutes – with the order and numbering of items on the minutes of meeting matching those of the agenda. In addition, the agenda and/or meeting notice also provides information that will need to be included in the minutes, such as: the names of all the meeting attendees, including guests or speakers documents that are sent out with the agenda or handed out in the meeting – copies (digital or hard copy) of handouts should be stored with the meeting minutes for future reference and for sharing with those who were unable to attend the meeting (and others as determined by the meeting’s Chair). Clarify Expectations When you take on a new role as minutes-taker or Secretary, be sure to ask the Chair of the committee or Board what their expectations are of your role during the meeting, as well as the type of detail he/she expects in the minutes. For example, if your Board or committee will be dealing with motions, or voting on items/issues, be clear on whether you need to offer names of those making motions, seconding, etc. If you will be dealing with this type of procedures, you (and your Chair) may want to refer to Robert’s Rules of Order. What Should Be Included in Meeting Minutes? Before you start taking notes, it’s important to understand the type of information you need to record at the meeting. As noted earlier, your organization may have required content and a specific meeting minute format that you’ll need to follow, but generally, meeting minutes usually include the following: Date and time of the meeting Names of the meeting participants and those unable to attend (e.g., “regrets”) Acceptance or corrections/amendments to previous meeting minutes Decisions made about each agenda item, for example: Actions taken or agreed to be taken Next steps Voting outcomes – e.g., (if necessary, details regarding who made motions; who seconded and approved or via show of hands, etc.) Motions taken or rejected Items to be held over New business Next meeting date and time You can find more templates and details on formatting meeting minutes here. The Minutes Writing Process Once the meeting is over, it’s time to pull together your notes and write the minutes. Here are some tips that might help: Try to write the minutes as soon after the meeting as possible while everything is fresh in your mind. Review your outline and if necessary, add additional notes or clarify points raised. Also check to ensure all decisions, actions and motions are clearly noted. Ensure you’re including sufficient detail For Board of Director’s minutes in particular, we recommend including a short description of each action taken, as well as the rationale behind the decision If there was a lot of discussion before passing a motion, write down the major arguments for and against Edit to ensure brevity and clarity, so the minutes are easy to read In terms of mom format, here are a few things to keep in mind: Be objective Write in the same tense throughout Avoid using names other than to record motions and seconds. Avoid personal observations — the minutes should be solely fact-based If you need to refer to other documents, don’t try to summarize them. Rather, simply indicate where they can be found or attach them as an appendix Meeting Minute Best Practices: Create an outline As discussed earlier, having an outline (or template) based on the agenda makes it easy for you to simply jot down notes, decisions, etc. under each item as you go along. If you are taking notes by hand, consider including space below each item on your outline for your hand-written notes, then print these out and use this to capture minutes. Check-off attendees as they join the meeting If you know the meeting attendees, you can check them off as they arrive, if not have folks introduce themselves at the start of the meeting or circulate an attendance list they can check-off themselves. Record decisions or notes on action items As the meeting progresses, it will be critical to annotate decisions and key points made in your outline as soon as they occur to be sure they are recorded accurately. Include the names of the owners of the action items and other key personnel involved. Ask for clarification if necessary Don’t be afraid to speak up if you need clarification on something that was said in the meeting. It’s your job to make these meeting minutes as accurate as possible. For example, if the group moves on without making a decision or an obvious conclusion, ask for clarification of the decision and/or next steps involved. Don’t try to capture it all You can’t keep up if you try to write down the conversation verbatim, so be sure to simply (and clearly) write (or type) just the decisions, assignments, action steps, etc. Record the meeting If you are concerned about being able to keep up with note taking, consider recording the meeting (e.g., on your smart phone, iPad, recording device, etc.) but be sure to let participants know they are being recording. While you don’t want to use the recording to create a word-for-word transcript of the meeting, the recording can come in handy if you want to review the meeting for clarification. Download our Meeting Minute Checklist for Associations and Nonprofits with sample minutes taken at a meeting and learn how to take better minutes. Meeting Minutes Samples: Still wondering if you’re taking notes correctly? Here’s a sample of what meeting minutes at a board meeting might look like. Do Meeting Minutes Have To Be Approved? Yes, meeting minutes typically need to be approved to ensure accuracy and completeness. The approval process usually occurs at the beginning of the next meeting, where attendees review the minutes from the previous meeting and either approve them as written or suggest corrections. Once approved, the minutes become the official record of the meeting. This process helps maintain transparency and accountability within the organization. Before you share your meeting minutes, make sure that your board chair has reviewed and either revised and/or approved the minutes for circulation. They are not an official record of a meeting unless this has taken place. Distributing or Sharing Meeting Minutes As the official “minutes-taker” or Secretary, your role may include dissemination of the minutes. Online sharing The method of sharing or distribution will depend on the tools that you and your organization use. Since minutes and other documentation can create a pile of paper, it’s great if you can use a paperless sharing process. For example, if you are using a word processing tool (e.g., Microsoft Word) that doesn’t offer online sharing, you might want to create a PDF of the document and send this and the other attachments or meeting documentation via email. Alternately, if you are all using Google docs – for meeting invitations, agenda and additional document sharing – you can simply “share” the document with that group once it has been finalized. Committee or Board members can simply read the documents online and save a few trees! Sharing in the Cloud? If your organization is using a cloud-based membership management system (like WildApricot), you can publish the minutes as a web page and give access only to the committee or Board members, depending on your organization’s needs. Through members-only webpages, you can create a secure online Intranet for your Board and committees. Tools Specifically For Meeting Minutes: If you are wondering about the types of tools you might use specifically for meeting minutes, here are some tools that organizations we’ve worked with have found helpful: Google Docs: Also supports collaborative note taking. [Here are some meeting minute sample templates in Google docs. If you send out a meeting request using Google Calendar, you can attach a Google doc agenda outline. Once minutes are crafted (using the outline), you can simply share the document with the group using their email addresses.] OneNote: (if you are a Microsoft user) – Very fast and allows for organization of notes. Also support audio recording with corresponding note time-stamping. Notion: Notion is a great platform for organizing meeting minutes. It’s hierarchical document structure is a fantastic way to organize your meeting minutes in any way you want. Evernote: Great note taking tool. Agreedo: supports creation of meeting minutes and tracking the results. minutes.io: allows you to quickly take meeting minutes with hotkey shortcuts and the ability to work online or offline. Filing/Storage of Meeting Minutes Most committees and Boards review and either approve or amend the minutes at the beginning of the subsequent meeting. Once you’ve made any required revisions, the minutes will then need to be stored for future reference. Some organizations may store these online (e.g., in Google docs or SkyDrive) and also back these up on an external hard drive. You may also need to print and store hard copies as well or provide these to a staff member or Chair for filing. What Is the Purpose of Meeting Minutes? You shouldn’t be intimidated by the term “minutes”, since it’s actually a little misleading. After all, your committee or Board doesn’t want or need a record of its meeting proceedings minute by minute! But it is important to capture the essence of the meeting, including details such as: decisions made (motions made, votes, etc.) next steps planned identification and tracking of action items Minutes are a tangible record of the meeting for its participants and a source of information for members who were unable to attend. In some cases, meeting minutes can act as a reference point, for example: when a meeting’s outcomes impact other collaborative activities or projects within the organization minutes can serve to notify (or remind) individuals of tasks assigned to them and/or timelines Download our Meeting Minute Checklist for Associations and Nonprofits with examples and learn how to take better minutes. Why Are They Called Minutes of a Meeting? According to Today I Found Out, the “minutes” of “meeting minutes” don’t refer to the minute measurement of time, but to the “minute” (my-newt) notes taken during meetings. And… If You’re a Nonprofit with Regular Board and Member Meetings If you’re a nonprofit with regular board and member meetings and you want to save time and money managing your organization, get a free trial of WildApricot, an all-in-one membership management software which allows you to: Easily schedule online events with instant online payment processing and automated invoices. Create a stunning website with online member applications. Access an easy-to-search and filter contact database. Send out professionally-designed newsletters and emails. and much more. Find out all the features of WildApricot’s free membership management software here. WildApricot is also the the #1 rated membership management software used by over 20,000 organizations every day. Get your free trial now. In Closing…Enjoy Your New Role! Meeting minutes are important – after all, they capture the essential information of a meeting. But taking and preparing minutes doesn’t have to be a daunting task. We hope this article helps meeting minutes newbies in getting started in creating effective meeting minutes for your organization. Thank you for reading our guide on how to write meeting minutes! Let’s be honest—taking meeting minutes doesn’t sound like the most thrilling part of

they need. It’s a small habit that makes a big difference. #2 Clear, Concise, and Objective Notes When writing meeting minutes, it’s tempting to include every little detail or to paraphrase things in your own words—but that can actually make the minutes confusing or biased. Instead, focus on writing notes that are clear, to the point, and neutral. You’re not telling a story—you’re capturing what people said and decided in a clear way that anyone can understand, even if they missed the meeting. Stick to the facts, skip the fluff, and don’t include personal opinions or side comments. Use simple language that keeps things easy to read. When you’re concise and objective, your minutes become a reliable reference, not just a bunch of notes no one wants to revisit. #3 Capture Key Discussions and Decisions You don’t need to write down every single word, but you should capture the core of the conversation. Focus on the points that truly moved the meeting forward—highlight key questions people raised, concerns the team discussed, and especially the decisions everyone made. Think of it this way: if someone who missed the meeting reads your minutes, they should quickly understand what was discussed and what outcomes came from it. Make sure you note any agreements, rejections, or follow-up actions clearly. These are the moments that shape what happens next, so they deserve a clear spot in your minutes. Listen for conclusions – Pay attention when conversations start to wrap up. That’s usually when someone summarizes the outcome or says, “So, we’ll do it this way.” That’s your cue to write it down. Don’t try to write everything – Focus on summarizing the main idea of a discussion instead of capturing every word. For example, instead of writing five sentences, note: “The team agreed to postpone the product launch to Q3 due to testing delays.” Use shorthand or bullet points during the meeting – While people are talking, jot down quick notes or key phrases. After the meeting, go back and clean them up into full sentences for clarity. Watch for action verbs – Words like decided, agreed, approved, postponed, or assigned signal important moments you should include. Confirm key points if needed – If you’re unsure whether something was a final decision, you can ask, “Should I note that as a confirmed decision in the minutes?” It keeps things clear and shows you’re being thorough. Let Krisp Handle the Note-Taking for You Instead of stressing about jotting down every important moment yourself, you can let Krisp do the heavy lifting. With Krisp’s AI-powered meeting minutes app, you don’t have to focus on writing or summarizing while people are talking—you can stay present in the conversation, knowing Krisp is capturing everything for you. Krisp automatically records your meetings, transcribes them in real-time, and highlights the key points like decisions, action items, and follow-ups. It listens for the important parts of the conversation and organizes them clearly, so you can review or share the outcomes afterwards without sorting through a pile of messy notes. #4 Use Bullet Points for Readability Let’s be honest—no one wants to read through long blocks of text after a meeting. That’s where bullet points save the day. They make your meeting minutes easier to scan, faster to understand, and much more user-friendly, especially when people are just looking for the key takeaways. Instead of writing everything in full paragraphs, break down discussions, decisions, and action items into short, snappy bullet points. This helps highlight what’s important without overwhelming the reader. It also makes it easier to organize information under each agenda item and keep your minutes looking clean and structured. The more readable your minutes are, the more likely people will actually use them. #5 Cross-check key points for Accuracy After the meeting ends, don’t just hit “send” on your notes and call it a day. Take a few extra minutes to review and double-check that everything you’ve written is accurate. Did you capture the decisions correctly? Are the assigned action items linked to the right people? Did you miss any final conclusions? Cross-checking helps you avoid misunderstandings and ensures your meeting minutes actually reflect what happened—not what you thought happened. If something feels unclear, it’s totally okay to follow up with the meeting host or another participant to confirm. A quick check now can save a lot of confusion (or awkward emails) later. #6 Distribute Minutes Promptly The sooner you share the meeting minutes, the more useful they are. When details are still fresh in everyone’s minds, it’s easier for people to act on them, give feedback, or clarify anything that might be unclear. Ideally, you should send out the minutes within 24 hours—but definitely no later than 72 hours after the meeting. #7 Store and Organize Meeting Minutes Once you’ve written and shared the meeting minutes, don’t just let them disappear into someone’s inbox. Make sure you save them in a central, easy-to-access place—like a shared team drive, project management tool, or company intranet. This way, anyone who needs to reference them later knows exactly where to look. Use consistent and clear file names like “Board Meeting Minutes_2025-03-13” so everything stays organized and easy to search. #8 Turn Minutes into a Decision Log Make sure you don’t bury decisions deep inside your meeting minutes—pull them out clearly and track them actively in a dedicated decision log. This can be a separate document, spreadsheet, or even a simple table within your meeting notes. The goal is to have one clear place where all important decisions live—so you’re not flipping through old minutes trying to remember what the team agreed on two months ago. When you consistently log decisions with the date, a brief summary, and the people involved, you create a searchable history that clearly tracks your team’s choices over time. It keeps everyone on the same page, helps new team members catch up faster, and even improves future decision-making because you can look back at what worked—or didn’t. It’s a small habit with long-term impact, and it turns your meeting minutes into a living tool rather than a forgotten file. #9 Secure Approval of Minutes Once you’ve drafted the meeting minutes, don’t just assume they’re ready to go—get them reviewed and approved. This step is especially important for formal meetings like board sessions, committee meetings, or anything with legal or organizational weight. When you seek approval, you ensure the record truly reflects what happened and verify that everyone agrees with how you documented the meeting. Usually, this involves sharing the minutes with the chairperson or key attendees before you finalize them. Sometimes the group might approve them at the beginning of the next meeting. Either way, this review step helps you catch any errors, clarify confusing points, and confirm that you’ve captured the decisions and action items accurately. It’s a simple habit that builds trust in your meeting records and keeps things professional and transparent. #10 Ensure Confidentiality When Necessary Not everything discussed in a meeting belongs in front of everyone—and that’s why you need to stay mindful of confidentiality when writing and sharing meeting minutes. Sometimes your team handles sensitive topics like finances, personal matters, client data, or strategic decisions that you shouldn’t share widely. In these cases, be intentional about what you include in the minutes and who has access to them. You can leave out or summarize certain details in a more general way, or you can create a separate, limited-access version of the minutes for sensitive content. Always check if the meeting involved confidential topics, and when in doubt, ask the meeting host or leadership for guidance. Protecting confidentiality builds trust and shows your team handles information responsibly. #11 Follow Up on Action Items Writing down action items is a great start—but if no one follows up, they just sit there collecting digital dust. After the meeting, actively remind team members about their assigned tasks to make sure they follow through and don’t ignore any responsibilities. A simple follow-up message or reminder can go a long way in keeping things moving forward. You don’t need to micromanage—just check in after a few days or right before the next meeting to see if the team has made progress. When you follow up, you not only hold everyone accountable but also reinforce that meeting minutes have a real purpose—they exist to drive action, not to collect digital dust. Best methods to record meetings When it comes to recording meetings, choosing the right method can save you a ton of time and effort. It really depends on your team’s style, the type of meeting, and how detailed you need the records to be. The manual method is the old-school classic—just you, your notebook, or a blank document, typing or scribbling as fast as you can. You control everything you capture, but staying focused becomes essential—and quick-moving meetings can easily overwhelm you. It also puts pressure on you to stay on top of everything while still trying to participate in the conversation. Digital tools like Google Docs or Microsoft OneNote, offer a nice middle ground. They let you type quickly, organize your notes in real time, and collaborate with others. You can even create reusable templates, highlight action items, and link notes to tasks. It’s cleaner, faster than pen and paper, and much easier to share afterward. Then there are AI-powered tools like Krisp, which are changing the game completely. These tools can record meetings, transcribe them automatically, and even identify highlights like decisions and action items. They’re especially helpful if you want to stay present during the meeting without scrambling to take notes. AI tools don’t just save time—they also create cleaner, more structured summaries with less effort from you. Each method has its place, but if you’re looking for accuracy, speed, and ease of sharing, digital or AI-powered tools are hard to beat. Also, to maximize your productivity by combining the strengths of AI tools and collaborative platforms, this article will explore how to use Krisp alongside Google Docs. What are Best AI-powered tools to record meetings? When it comes to capturing and organizing meeting minutes, AI-powered tools are completely transforming how teams work. These tools don’t just record—they transcribe, summarize, and even highlight key takeaways automatically. And among the best of the bunch, Krisp AI stands out as a truly all-in-one solution. Krisp is more than just a note-taker—it’s your intelligent meeting minutes companion. It delivers real-time transcription with high accuracy, capturing every important point instantly so you can stay focused without lifting a finger. Krisp’s Meeting Minutes app listens to your meetings, extracts the most relevant highlights, and generates structured meeting minutes that you can instantly review, share, or store. Krisp doesn’t just transcribe conversations—it intelligently categorizes notes into topics, decisions, and tasks by analyzing meeting context, so teams can easily follow up and take action. Its powerful noise cancellation ensures high-quality audio input, which improves transcription accuracy even more. And because it works bot-free, Krisp records audio directly from your device, offering a more private and less disruptive experience. For those who prefer transparency or shared notes, there’s also the option to use a bot. Krisp also offers synchronized playback with AI transcriptions, allowing you to follow along with the written text while listening to the meeting minutes. What Krisp AI Offers For Your Next Meeting Minutes Real-time transcription captures everything for post-meeting minutes access. AI-powered noise cancellation removes background distractions. Meeting summaries highlight key takeaways and action items. Integration with Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and more. Call recording allows users to revisit full discussions AI chat within meeting notes provides interactive insights. Speaker identification differentiates voices in conversations Supports multiple languages for global teams. How to Download Krisp To get started with Krisp, visit here, sign up, and follow the simple installation instructions provided on the site to set up the tool on your device. Make sure your device is running the latest version of your operating system (Mac or Windows) to ensure compatibility. Best Practices for Meeting Minutes: Free Effective Meeting Agenda Template Meeting Title: [Insert meeting name or purpose] Date: [Insert date] Time: [Insert start and end time] Location: [Insert location or platform, e.g., Zoom, Office Room A] Meeting Facilitator: [Insert name] Note Taker: [Insert name] Attendees: [List all participants’ full names and roles, if applicable] [Agenda Item 1] [Agenda Item 2] [Agenda Item 3] 2.1 Agenda Item [Insert title] Summary of discussion Key points raised Questions asked and answered 2. 2 Agenda Item [Insert title] Summary of discussion Decisions made Any follow-ups assigned 2.3 Agenda Item 3: [Insert title] Summary of discussion Suggestions or concerns raised [Insert Action Items Generated by Krisp] [Insert key decision 1] [Insert key decision 2] Date: [Insert next meeting date] Time: [Insert next meeting time] Location: [Insert location or platform] If you want more examples of meeting minutes agenda templates, explore this article for practical layouts and actionable tips. Helpful Resources on Best Practices for Meeting Minutes To help you create more effective and organized meeting minutes, we’ve gathered a few helpful resources to cover other aspects of meeting minutes. Here we go: Meeting Minutes: Definition, Free Templates + 8 Tips How To Write Meeting Minutes (Examples & Templates) Best Free Meeting Minutes Templates Board Meeting Minutes: How to Take Minutes at a Board Meeting How to Record and Transcribe Meeting Minutes for Free Free Board Meeting Minutes Template: Best Practices How to Take Effective Meeting Minutes How to Run a Corporate Meeting: Corporate Meeting Minutes FAQ What are the best practices for meeting minutes? To take effective meeting minutes, you should prepare by reviewing the agenda and attendee list before the meeting begins. During the session, focus on capturing key decisions, action items, deadlines, and important discussion points rather than trying to write everything word-for-word. What is the best format for meeting minutes? The best format for meeting minutes includes clearly labeled sections such as meeting details (date, time, location, attendees), agenda items, discussion summaries, action items with assigned responsibilities and deadlines, and any decisions made. What are the rules for minutes of meetings? The core rules for writing meeting minutes include maintaining objectivity, using concise language, documenting facts (not opinions), and clearly assigning tasks and decisions to individuals. Always include the date, time, location, attendees, and the meeting’s purpose. Ensure the final version remains consistent in tone and format with previous meeting records. If the meeting minutes serve as legal or official records, you should also secure approval and archive them properly for future reference. How do I write the minutes of a meeting? To write effective meeting minutes, start by reviewing the agenda and preparing a structured template before the meeting begins. During the session, actively listen and record only the essential information—such as decisions made, action items, assigned responsibilities, and relevant deadlines. What is the best tool for documenting meeting minutes? The best tool for documenting meeting minutes depends on your workflow, but many teams find great value in using AI-powered platforms like Krisp, which transcribes meetings in real time and highlights action items automatically. You can also use collaborative tools like Google Docs or Microsoft OneNote, which allow team members to contribute, edit, and store minutes in a shared space. What are meeting minutes? Meeting minutes are official records of discussions, decisions, and assigned tasks during a meeting, serving as a reference for all participants. Why are meeting minutes important? They enhance accountability, track progress, provide clarity, and justify decisions over time, ensuring effective project management. How should I write meeting minutes? Include essential details like date, attendees, agenda items, decisions made, action items, and next steps. What are best practices for meeting minutes? Use collaborative tools for note-taking, distribute minutes quickly, set reminders for action items, and designate an action item manager. How does Wrike’s template help? Wrike’s actionable meeting notes template streamlines minute-taking, organizes information, and facilitates task tracking for efficient follow-through. Whether they take place in a conference room, a busy café, or over a Zoom link, meetings are an essential part of working life. They’re a chance to get people together to brainstorm ideas, sort out challenges, and clarify any questions quickly. Because it’s hard to get busy people together, it’s vital that we make the most of meetings. Taking meeting minutes is a great way to record their contents, making sure the important points are written down so they can be actioned later. This blog post will look at what meeting minutes mean for modern organizations, how to write action items in meeting minutes, and the best practices to apply. It’ll also include top tips on saving time with a prebuilt template — this will help you record key information and turn actionable items into tasks, delivering projects faster and more efficiently than ever. What are meeting minutes? Put simply, meeting minutes are notes about what happened during a discussion or get-together. Think of them as a story that begins when the meeting starts and ends when the meeting finishes. Meeting minutes are an official record of the decisions made, tasks assigned, and actions decided upon. They preserve the knowledge and intentions shared, making them a valuable point of reference for everyone involved. By documenting your discussions, decisions, and deadlines, you’ll create a clear path forward — eliminating confusion, misunderstandings, and inefficiencies. Good meeting minutes can: Provide an official record: Meeting minutes serve as a reliable record of what was discussed and agreed upon during a meeting. This may be relied upon for reference, evaluation, and clarification over time. Enhance accountability: Establish responsibility by recording who has been assigned which tasks, deadlines, and objectives. The minutes can then serve as a guide for stakeholders as the project progresses. Share information: For those unable to attend the meeting, meeting minutes are a useful solution for catching up on missed discussions. Simply share the document by email or tag them in the project space. Track progress: In regular meetings, minutes can operate as a benchmark to track progress, allowing participants to review previous decisions, check that milestones were achieved, and follow up on action items. Justify decisions: With the passage of time, it can be challenging to remember why decisions were made. Minutes can help to remind stakeholders about key considerations at the time. This can be particularly helpful in future audits or business queries. How to write meeting minutes Meeting minutes lay the foundation for future business discussions around strategy and next steps. As such, you need to know how to write effective meeting minutes to minimize the risk of confusion or misinterpretation of instructions or action items. There are several key elements you’ll want to include whenever you take notes for meetings. These include: Basic information: This includes the date, time, and location of the meeting, as well as the names of attendees, organizers, and the person responsible for the minutes. Agenda items: This is a list of topics that were discussed in the meeting, presented in the same order that the discussion took place. Decisions made: Always document the outcome of the meeting, including decisions, agreements, and the results of any votes carried out. Action items: List any tasks that have been assigned or agreed upon, along with the details of the assignees and deadlines. Next steps: Don’t forget to record any remaining tasks to be accomplished, follow-up meetings, or plans for implementation. Attachments: Any reports, charts, or other documents referenced in the meeting should be included with the minutes. Here are the most important steps you should follow to make sure your minutes are comprehensive and reliable: Note the finer details A critical element for any meeting minutes is information on when and where the meeting took place. It may seem obvious, but it’s easy to overlook. With the date, time, and location, you can develop an archive of previous meetings to timestamp the birth of certain ideas or the launch of different initiatives. Another straightforward element that should be present in meeting minutes is a list of participants. Failure to do so can result in confusion later down the line as the records won’t show who was involved in the meeting. Summarize the meeting goal A project goal statement or summary outlines the main purpose of the meeting. This is the overarching objective that will provide context to any of the action items assigned in the wake of the meeting. In any meeting, there’ll typically be a single topic of focus. It’s important to note this down so anyone who must review and approve the minutes will understand the conversations that took place and the action items that came from the meeting. Recap the previous meeting A simple recap of the previous meeting can again provide context to the current one. With a list of agenda items and action items from the last meeting, it’s easier to stay on track and keep the conversation moving in the same direction. It also helps prevent instances in which a particular issue is overlooked as it hasn’t been written down and is forgotten about. Detail the agenda items Agenda items are any topics or activities that you discuss during the meeting. By detailing the agenda items in meeting minutes, you can create an accurate record of exactly what issues were addressed, the concerns raised, and the resolutions reached. It also provides an idea of the structure of the meeting, mapping out the order of conversation, which can be useful for future reference. Define the action items Action items are the tasks assigned to participants after the meeting has concluded. They stem from the overall action plan born from the project goal and help provide direction to each employee regarding the next steps. To keep track of meeting minutes action items, it’s best to use a template to quickly plug them in as they arise. Once the meeting ends, share the action items as soon as you can so everyone has access to them. Use a prebuilt template Wrike provides a library of tried-and-tested templates that can help you make sure your work is uniform and fast. Our meeting notes template with actionable items is very popular with users in every industry, as it helps them capture all the information they need. It’s an easy and predictable way to track minutes and record vital information. You can even create tasks and subtasks from action items, then tag them into folders to keep the meeting notes organized and aligned with your overall organizational goals. Craft a succinct meeting recap using Wrike’s meeting notes template today. The last step to writing meeting minutes is assigning responsibility to the right participants and setting reasonable deadlines. An action item that isn’t assigned to anyone or doesn’t have a due date is worthless as it won’t be prioritized. To bring all these elements together in a coherent way, you can use the Wrike actionable meeting notes template. With a preformatted structure, all you have to do is enter the information into the corresponding fields as you go. This way, you won’t struggle to keep up with the pace of the meeting as you don’t have to worry about creating categories for each element along the way. Meeting notes best practices While taking meeting notes may seem relatively straightforward, it’s not uncommon for the meeting to get away from you as you’re typing up the minutes. To prevent this from happening and to make the best notes possible, here are some best practices to bear in mind: Back up your meeting notes If there’s anything worse than poorly taken meeting notes, it’s notes that are impossible to track down. Writing notes on paper is an outdated practice that’ll likely cost you in the long run and, of course, takes far too much time to digitize and distribute effectively. Your best option is to take minutes on a laptop or tablet and, rather than store them in a single place such as in an email, use a collaborative work management tool like Wrike. With Wrike, your notes will instantly become available to anyone you share them with, so you can have full transparency from the moment you upload them. If you use Wrike’s actionable meeting notes template, your job will be even easier since the notes will already be located in the software. Distribute the notes quickly With meeting minutes, you want to distribute them hot off the press. As soon as the meeting is over, all the participants should receive a summary, a list of action items, and any additional notes you took. That way, you streamline progress toward your project goal as each participant can get to work on the action items they were assigned as soon as they get back to their desk. Set reminders Whichever medium you use to store and distribute your notes, set reminders to keep the topics discussed in the meeting fresh in the participants’ minds. When you use a communication tool like Wrike, you can trigger reminder alerts for all the participants through the various action items you’ve assigned to them. Wrike’s integration with Google Calendar also lets you sync up with your calendar to ensure no deadlines are missed. Designate an action item manager While it may not be an official role, it’s worth designating one person to oversee the completion of the action items you assigned. This person’s responsibility will be to follow through with the participants and ensure they’re on track to finish their action items in time for the deadlines, providing assistance when necessary. Send invitations One of the most important aspects of meeting notes is acknowledging previous discussions while also looking ahead to upcoming meetings. To make sure your meetings follow a common thread and build upon one another, be sure to send invitations to follow-up meetings on the same day as the initial meeting. Meeting minutes examples with action items In James Bond films, it was usually Miss Moneypenny taking a meeting’s minutes but today the whole process can be automated and accelerated with powerful work management features like Wrike’s. However you choose to record them, the basics haven’t changed much over the years. So, what type of meeting scenarios might you face in any organization around the world? Let’s take a look at two common situations. 1. Project meeting minutes Let’s imagine a mobile app development project meeting. As project milestones are discussed and new tasks delegated, it’s essential that the details are recorded during the meeting, including action items, responsible individuals, and deadlines. Here’s an example of how those meeting minutes may look: Title: Project meeting – mobile app development Attendees: Team A, Team B leaders, Project Manager Overview of current progress Identified UI glitches to be fixed by Team A by the end of the week Team B has finalized backend updates Implementation of new security features next week Preparations for beta testing UI fixes: Team A (Due: Friday) Security features: Project Manager to draft requirements (Due: Monday) Beta testing: Team B to start prep (Due: Wednesday) 2. Departmental meeting minutes Department meetings often pool various strengths within a company to solve challenges. For example, in a marketing department brainstorming session, many ideas will surface and sometimes conversations will rapidly develop. Without meeting minutes, valuable insights may get lost. Here’s another example of simple minutes, this time for a marketing meeting: Title: Marketing meeting – Q4 campaign brainstorming Attendees: Marketing Team, Creative Director, Digital Strategists Influencer marketing for product X SEO efforts to target essential keywords Social media campaign with a focus on user-generated content Emphasis on influencer marketing and SEO efforts Further research required for social media campaign Influencer outreach: Assigned to Digital Strategist Annette (Due: Monday) SEO keyword mapping: Assigned to SEO Specialist Harry (Due: Friday) Both of these examples are very simple, but meeting minutes can be as complex as you need. By using Wrike’s ready-to-go template, you can store your meeting minutes in one centralized secure platform, making them available for access and consultation any time. You’ll also be able to attach any relevant files like presentations or research documents. Custom fields can be added to track specific tags, such as story points. Use these data as filters so you and your team can find the information you need fast. Meeting minutes in project management Project managers are under more pressure than ever to do more with less. For some, that means rising expectations, increased pace, and additional meetings. It’s crucial in these busy times to use meeting minutes as a tool for effective project management, as they can play a key role in tracking progress, ensuring accountability, and facilitating communication among team members. Progress tracking: Meeting minutes can record decisions taken, tasks assigned, and tentative timelines decided upon. Over time, these minutes can be used as a set of goals; reviewing them can help gauge how far the project has come. If roadblocks occur, timelines can be reassessed and plans adjusted in new meetings — with a fresh set of minutes. Accountability: Well-prepared minutes should capture the specifics of deliverables, including who is responsible for what task and by when. These recorded commitments promote a sense of duty, motivating team members to meet deadlines and fulfill their responsibilities. This type of accountability can really enhance a project’s efficiency and productivity. Communication: Can’t make a meeting? It happens. Minutes serve as a great way to make sure that absent team members stay up to date and on the same page about project plans, updates, and individual responsibilities. What’s more, minutes are also important to foster transparency and alignment by clarifying any misconceptions or ambiguities as team members can tag each other to discuss further. While ostensibly a simple, almost old-fashioned concept, meeting minutes are actually the lifeblood of effective project management. Their role extends beyond being a mere record of a meeting, as they help to turn the cogs of progress from planning to execution. Well-constructed meeting minutes can help to deliver projects on time, with minimal delays, roadblocks, or miscommunications. If you’re wondering what that might look like in real life, we’ve put together a list of the types of meetings project managers might have every day. Popular project management meeting types Let’s talk about a few of the most common meetings and how they’re best managed, from start to finish. You can use this information to create and use the most helpful meeting minute templates. Here are a few of the most important meetings that happen at the beginning, middle, and end of a project: Project kickoff Brainstorming session Project review/lessons learned Project kickoff Everyone knows the basics of a project kickoff meeting: Get the team together, talk about the project, share expectations, and discuss how to work together. The result should be a team that’s on the same page and ready to hit the ground running. There are a number of specific elements that go into a successful kickoff meeting, including: Develop an agenda: The agenda should include the purpose of the meeting, as well as a project statement/summary, participant list, project scope, timeline, approach, assignments, how collaboration will take place, and any background information to help attendees prepare. Devote adequate time to agenda items: Introductions may take five minutes, while discussing the project scope may take 15-20 minutes — and that’s OK. If you don’t have estimated times listed on the agenda, keep timing in mind as you go through the meeting. Cover every item on the agenda: This seems like a no-brainer, but it’s easy to get off track and not fully address an agenda item or two. If you know you might not address every agenda item, cover your highest priorities first. Follow up promptly and accurately: The meeting isn’t over until you follow up — share your meeting notes, action items, the schedule of next steps, and suggested times for the next meeting date with all attendees. A meeting notes template makes this easier since all information from the agenda and conversation during the meeting is captured in one place. Now to the next meeting: Could it be a brainstorming session? Yes, please! Brainstorming session Brainstorming meetings run the risk of going off on tangents, using a lot of time but not producing results, and bringing together too many people to be effective. Jeff Bezos is known for the “two-pizza rule” for meetings: If there are more people than can be fed by two pizzas, there are too many people in the meeting. It’s brilliant, right? You want to generate lots of ideas, but more bodies don’t equal more ideas. Brainstorm meeting best practices include: Keep the invite list small. Follow the pizza rule and mix it up. Bring together people from different departments or teams to get fresh perspectives. Plan at least two brainstorming meetings — one to generate as many ideas as possible and another to focus on the best ideas from the first meeting. It’s possible an idea or two can be refined or combined and result in the ultimate solution. Ask participants to come prepared. Provide some background information and ask participants to come up with a few prepared ideas. That makes the meeting run smoothly right from the start. Set a 30-minute meeting limit. The longer the meeting, the fewer creative ideas you’ll get at the end. Plan to keep it short and sweet so participants don’t get tired. Consider the location. Another meeting in the same old conference room could stifle creativity. Perhaps have a “progressive meeting,” similar to a progressive dinner, where participants move to different areas during the meeting. Or consider a lunchtime session in a reserved room at a local restaurant. Reinforce that there are no bad ideas. Gather every idea your team can muster, then take some time after the meeting to cull less creative solutions. Your second session can focus on the best of the best ideas. After all that brainstorming and work, what comes next? Project review You’ve kicked off the project, brainstormed the heck out of it, then finished it — and now it’s time to wrap things up with the project review or “lessons learned” meeting. This meeting can be a minefield of challenges. It’s easy to go negative. Participants can pile on one person or a less-than-positive event and make it a scapegoat. Some people may not be receptive to constructive criticism. The list goes on — but this is one of the most valuable kinds of meetings. Done right, the project review meeting helps teams determine what went well, what should be changed for the next project, and what should perhaps be removed from the project checklist altogether. Gather relevant information. That includes reports, data, and feedback from the team, client, or partners during the project. This should be shared in advance of the meeting to inform the conversation. Select a handful of events to discuss in detail. Choose a few good and a few bad so you can learn from both. Develop and share the agenda. Include the relevant data and specific events so participants can prepare for the meeting. Set the standard of civility and politeness. Remind participants that everyone’s feedback is important and feedback should be directed at the project, not specific individuals. No cage fights! Be open to all feedback. Some of it may not be complimentary, but keep an open mind and remember the purpose of every meeting is to improve for next time. Using the Wrike actionable meeting notes template To start, create a parent folder in Wrike titled “Meeting minutes.” Within this folder, you can create various action items to get right to work once the meeting is over. In the description area, you can map out all the previously described elements to accurately define what went on in the meeting. Use various views in Wrike to format the elements in a way that makes sense to you, and simply input the relevant information once the meeting is in session. Don’t forget to include any additional notes that may not fit under the label of “agenda item” or “action item” but are still important for the ongoing success of the project. Following the meeting, Wrike acts as an action item tracker since you’ll be able to visualize it in the dashboard even once it’s been assigned to a participant. You can effectively keep track of all the action items and monitor any progress that’s been made towards achieving the goals you set. Meeting notes with action items can be complicated to type out, assign, and back up without the right system. The Wrike actionable meeting notes template provides a comprehensive framework for your notes and is backed up by powerful communication features for seamless follow-through. Wrike’s ready-to-go actionable meeting items template is a best-in-class example of minutes that create a meeting agenda, record crucial details, and turn action items into tasks. Want to be good to go by the end of the meeting? Test out Wrike for your meeting minutes needs today. Taking down meeting minutes may feel mundane or critical, depending on what’s on the agenda, but it’s always important that your writing is clear and accurate. However you feel about your role as transcriber, recording effective meeting minutes is a long-term essential for any organization with meetings. In this article, we’ll discuss how to write meeting minutes like a pro so everyone involved clearly understands what took place during the meeting just by reading the minutes. Here are some tips and templates to make writing meeting minutes a breeze. How AI power users can drive enterprise AI adoption What are meeting minutes? Meeting minutes are the written record of a meeting or hearing. Minutes are usually structured and formal so that they can be shared after the meeting and serve as historical documents in the future. For those who could not attend the meeting, minutes bring them up to speed. Minutes also offer accountability to action items that were discussed during the meeting. More importantly, if an organization enters into any sort of legal situation, minutes serve as an official record proving due diligence, ethics, and bylaw compliance. Who takes meeting minutes? The secretary most often takes meeting minutes. Nonprofits, government entities, schools, public companies, and trade unions are usually required to record official meeting minutes. However, many other companies also use meeting minutes to maintain an official record. How to write meeting minutes The style and content of meeting minutes will vary depending on the organization and how it’s structured. Regardless, you should always include the basics, like date, time, and participants. But many organizations will also benefit from having other, optional items like supplementary documents and action items. Read on to find out what to include in your meeting minutes. 8 basic elements of meeting minutes These are the essential items to include in your meeting minutes: 1 Date 2 Time 3 Location 4 Participants 5 Topics discussed 6 Motions 7 Voting outcomes 8 Next meeting date and place What else should meeting minutes include? Most organizations will add at least one or two other elements in their meeting notes. Beyond the essentials, your meeting notes can include and be structured in whatever way best fits your organization’s needs. Here are some custom elements you can include in your meeting minutes: Supplementary documents Action items Purpose of meeting Items to be discussed next time Project status updates and voting results Next steps, like research and follow-ups A section to define attendees who are guests, nonvoters, or speakers Corrections or amendments to previous meeting minutes 5 tips for writing meeting minutes Once the meeting has adjourned, use your notes to write and edit your minutes, and then share them. It helps to write out your meeting minutes as soon as the meeting concludes so you don’t miss anything. 1 Be consistent It helps to use a template every time you take meeting minutes. That way, they’re all laid out the same way, and you won’t have to waste time adding headings and bullet points. This is useful later when other people in the organization need to reference them. Some organizations even put their agenda and expected attendees on the meeting notes for efficiency. 2 Record it When you start in your secretary role, you might have trouble keeping up with note-taking. If you’re experiencing this, consider recording the meeting. You can do this with any smartphone, audio recording device, or camera. Later, you can use an artificial intelligence transcription service or just listen back to the recording as a refresher when needed. Before recording, though, be sure to let your attendees know they are being recorded. 3 Make your notes viewable during the meeting Sometimes, meetings are collaborative. This can sometimes feel chaotic and make it difficult to keep track of everything. Making the notes viewable on a projector or sharing your screen or document during meetings allows your teammates to contribute to them. 4 Summarize When you’re writing meeting notes, summarize. You should document as much information as possible, but don’t write everything verbatim. It’s not necessary to record everything that was said during the meeting notes. You also might have difficulty keeping up if you try to write the entire conversation word-for-word. Simplify and clarify what happened during the meeting. 5 Label comments with initials If multiple people in the meeting have input on a matter, it can help to use attendees’ initials to indicate who contributed what. You can also use initials to indicate who will be in charge of the next steps. This shorthand technique is an efficient way to clarify a multiperson conversation. 5 templates for meeting minutes 1 Board meeting minutes Call to order Facilitated by the chair of the board. [Chair of the board’s name] called to order the regular meeting of [your organization] at [time of meeting] on [date of meeting] in [location of meeting]. Attendance Facilitated by the secretary. Secretary conducted roll call. The following persons were present: The following persons were absent: Approval of minutes [Secretary’s name] read the minutes from the last meeting. The minutes were approved. Open issues [Issue #1] [Issue #2] [Issue #3] New business [New business item #1] [New business item #2] [New business item #3] Adjournment [Meeting facilitator’s name] adjourned the meeting at [time meeting ended]. Submission and approval of minutes Minutes submitted by: [Secretary’s name] Minutes approved by: [Board chair or meeting facilitator’s name] 2 Informal meeting template Call to order A meeting of [organization name] was held at [location of meeting] on [date of meeting]. Attendees Voting members in attendance included: [Attendee #1] [Attendee #2] [Attendee #3] Guests in attendance included: [Guest #1] [Guest #2] [Guest #3] Approval of minutes A motion to approve the minutes of previous [date of previous meeting] was made by [secretary’s name] and seconded by [seconder’s name]. Reports [Report name] was presented by [name of presenter] [Report name] was presented by [name of presenter] Main motions [Name of motion] moved by [name of mover] and seconded by [name of seconders]. The motion [carried or failed] with [number of votes] in favor and [number of votes] against. Adjournment [Meeting facilitator’s name] adjourned meeting at [time of adjournment]. 3 Public hearing meeting template Meeting date: [Meeting date] Meeting time: [Meeting time] Secretary: [Secretary’s name] Introduction [Meeting conductor’s name] introduced the meeting: Roll call Members present: Motion #1 Motion #1 Objective Allotted time Presenter [Motion topic] [Outcome goals] [Time allotted] [Presenter initials or name] Comments: [Initials or name of commenter] [comment] [label such as: idea, action item, or conclusion] Motion #2 Motion #2 Objective Allotted time Presenter [Motion topic] [Outcome goals] [Time allotted] [Presenter initials or name] Comments: [Initials or name of commenter] [comment] [label such as: idea, action item, or conclusion] Ideas Next steps Conclusions 4 Client meeting notes Project: [Project name] Attendees: [Attendees] Date and time: [Date and time] Agenda [Topic to discuss] Notes [Any additional important information discussed during the meeting] Outcomes [Key decisions] Action items [Name of person responsible] [Next step] [Name of person responsible] [Next step] 5 Project management minutes Date and time: [Date and time] Present: [Attendees] Absent: [Project members not in attendance] Location: [Place of meeting] Project: [Name of project] Topics Update from [team] Progress on [project] Results from previous week Meeting minutes FAQs What are meeting minutes? Meeting minutes document what happened during a meeting. They are often shared within an organization after a meeting and serve as a reference document in the future. Why are meeting minutes important? Create a historical record Show progress over time Offer legal protection for the organization Adhere to local bylaws Explain why an organization made a decision Serve as a reminder of assignments or projects Act as evidence of deadlines Inform members who were unable to attend What should meeting minutes include? Date Time Location Participants Topics discussed Motions Voting outcomes Next meeting date and place Meeting minutes are a record of what happened in a meeting. They aren’t a transcription — they don’t cover everything that was said or done —but they highlight the key points so that everyone can remember what was discussed. Meeting minutes are also important to update people who weren’t able to attend the meeting. Usually, an individual is assigned the responsibility of writing up the minutes of a meeting. If you’ve been assigned that task, or just wondering what meeting minutes are, then keep reading. This article will discuss why meeting minutes are important, how to write them, and even give an example. Key Takeaways Good meeting minutes help companies run more effectively by establishing a record of what transpired in a meeting. Prepare to take meeting minutes by making sure you understand the purpose of the meeting, collecting the participants’ names, and creating a template to fill in as you take notes. After the meeting, type up your notes, submit them to your supervisors for approval, and then send them to the meeting participants. What are meeting minutes? Meeting minutes are documents that cover what happened during a meeting. Minutes focus on the key events of a meeting, paring it down to the major discussion points and decisions, along with the next steps that employees are supposed to take. In a sense, meeting minutes are the summary of the meeting. Documenting what happened in the meeting makes it possible for those not in attendance to know what happened, and to keep records of decisions, and they can be used as a reference for those who have specific tasks they have to undertake after the meeting. Meeting minutes are important because they help businesses operate more effectively. Meetings are regarded as the time for communication in a company to take place. If the information that’s handled during meetings becomes skewed, it’s a huge waste of time and effort. Writing meeting minutes increases effectiveness by establishing an accurate record of what transpired. It removes the room for error that comes with not keeping documentation. Monitoring meetings with a structured approach to the discussions, and actions that follow, leads toward success. How to write meeting minutes The process of writing meeting minutes isn’t complicated, but that doesn’t mean that you don’t have to put effort into it. Being detail-oriented will make it a lot easier, as well as taking careful notes during the meeting. As with most things, preparation and attentiveness are key. Here are some steps to take to write effective meeting minutes: Prepare beforehand. The best way to take flawless meeting minutes is by being prepared accordingly before ever walking into the meeting. Many professionals choose to arrange a template that guides them toward the information they need to collect during the meeting. Understanding what data you need to collect beforehand makes it much easier to distinguish when the meeting is actually happening. To help with preparations, ask your supervisors what the general objective of the meeting will be and gather knowledge about the event. Strong preparation work makes taking meeting minutes notes during the actual meeting more of just filling in the blanks. At the very least, have a firm understanding of the meeting’s purpose. Take detailed notes during the meeting. Once you’re at the meeting, the main focus is paying attention and taking clear notes. It likely means that you won’t contribute much to the meeting itself, but your task is to record it rather than to participate. Here are some suggestions for making organizing your notes easier: Pass around an attendance sheet. That way you don’t have to take an awkward attendance. This is doubly important if this is a larger group and you’re not sure of everyone’s name. If it’s a small group and you know everyone, you can omit this step. Write down brief notes as topics shift. Make sure you keep up with your note-taking. Major topic shifts should be noted down, especially if they’re moving on from one phase of the meeting to another. Put down the initials of the people who bring up major changes or topics. While it isn’t imperative to track who said what, it’s good to have an idea of whether or not the person bringing up the topic is a manager or an expert on the topic. Make a note of who is assigned certain tasks. There should ideally be some tasks assigned at the end of the meeting. Keep track of what they are and who they’re assigned to. This is something that people will want to know and reference in the future. Be objective. Keep your opinions out of it, as meeting minutes are supposed to be objective. Also, everyone will be able to find out who wrote the minutes of the meeting, so be sure to keep any commentary to yourself. Try recording it. If you find yourself struggling to keep up with note-taking, try recording the meeting. Every smartphone has a record feature. Just make sure to get permission to do so first, as some states have laws against recording someone without their knowledge or permission. Retrieve copies of all reports used at the meeting. Documents, reports, and presentations are often given during a

of the meeting for its participants and a source of information for members who were unable to attend. In some cases, meeting minutes can act as a reference point, for example: when a meeting's outcomes impact other collaborative activities or projects within the organization minutes can serve to notify (or remind) individuals of tasks assigned to them and/or timelines Download our Meeting Minute Checklist for Associations and Nonprofits with examples and learn how to take better minutes. Why Are They Called Minutes of a Meeting? According to Today I Found Out, the "minutes" of "meeting minutes" don't refer to the minute measurement of time, but to the "minute" (my-newt) notes taken during meetings. And… If You're a Nonprofit with Regular Board and Member Meetings If you're a nonprofit with regular board and member meetings and you want to save time and money managing your organization, get a free trial of WildApricot, an all-in-one membership management software which allows you to: Easily schedule online events with instant online payment processing and automated invoices. Create a stunning website with online member applications. Access an easy-to-search and filter contact database. Send out professionally-designed newsletters and emails. and much more. Find out all the features of WildApricot's free membership management software here. WildApricot is also the the #1 rated membership management software used by over 20,000 organizations every day. Get your free trial now. In Closing…Enjoy Your New Role! Meeting minutes are important – after all, they capture the essential information of a meeting. But taking and preparing minutes doesn't have to be a daunting task. We hope this article helps meeting minutes newbies in getting started in creating effective meeting minutes for your organization. Thank you for reading our guide on how to write meeting minutes! Whether you've been tasked with taking notes for a committee or you've been appointed Secretary to the Board of your organization, preparing meeting minutes doesn't have to be an arduous task. Here are some tips and ideas that will help you get started with writing and preparing effective meeting minutes, as well as a meeting minutes sample and a meeting minutes template that you can follow. This guide on how to write meeting minutes was prepared by WildApricot to help the volunteers and/or staff of small non-profits and membership organizations who may be new to the task of taking and preparing minutes of meeting for committees or Boards of Directors. What Are Meeting Minutes? Meeting minutes are the written record of what was discussed and decided during a meeting. They typically include the date and time of the meeting, a list of attendees, a summary of the topics discussed, decisions made, action items assigned, and the time of adjournment. Minutes are essential for providing an official account of the meeting, ensuring accountability, and helping attendees recall important details. They are usually prepared by a designated person, such as a secretary or administrative assistant, and are approved at the subsequent meeting. What Should You Include When Writing Meeting Minutes? The five steps that you must include are: Pre-Planning Record taking – at the meeting Minutes writing or transcribing Distributing or sharing of meeting minutes Filing or storage of minutes for future reference For more detail on each step, read on! Read more: 13 Meeting Minutes Templates for More Productive Nonprofit Board Meetings Who Should Write the Meeting Minutes? Meeting minutes are typically written by the designated secretary or administrative assistant of the group or organization. In some cases, a specific member of the group may be assigned to take minutes for a particular meeting. The person responsible for writing the minutes should be someone who is attentive, detail-oriented, and capable of accurately capturing the discussions and decisions made during the meeting. Meeting Minutes Template: Here's a simple template you can refer to next time you need to take meeting minutes: Organization Name Meeting Minutes Date: Opening: The meeting was called to order at [Time] by [Name] at [Location]. Present: [List of all present members] Absent: [List of any members who were not present] Approval of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved. Business From the Previous Meeting: [Summary of any motions or topics from the previous meeting, including decisions made] New Business: [Summary of any new motions or topics raised, including decisions made] Additions to the Agenda: [Summary of any additional items raised during the meeting] Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at [Time] by [Name]. The next meeting will be held on [Date] at [Location]. Minutes submitted by: [Name] Minutes approved by: [Name] How to Create Your Meeting Minute Process As mentioned above, there are essentially five steps involved with meeting minutes: Pre-Planning Record taking – at the meeting Minutes writing or transcribing Distributing or sharing of meeting minutes Filing or storage of minutes for future reference Pre-Plan Your Meeting Minutes A well-planned meeting helps ensure effective meeting minutes. If the Chair and the Secretary or minutes-taker work together to ensure the agenda and meeting are well thought out, it makes minute taking much easier. For example, depending on the meeting structure and the tools you use, the minutes-taker could work with the Chair to create a document format that works as an agenda and minutes outline as well. Set the Agenda of a Meeting At the very least, it's important to get a copy of the meeting agenda and use it as a guide or outline for taking notes, setting up your mom format, and preparing the minutes – with the order and numbering of items on the minutes of meeting matching those of the agenda. In addition, the agenda and/or meeting notice also provides information that will need to be included in the minutes, such as: the names of all the meeting attendees, including guests or speakers documents that are sent out with the agenda or handed out in the meeting – copies (digital or hard copy) of handouts should be stored with the meeting minutes for future reference and for sharing with those who were unable to attend the meeting (and others as determined by the meeting's Chair). Clarify Expectations When you take on a new role as minutes-taker or Secretary, be sure to ask the Chair of the committee or Board what their expectations are of your role during the meeting, as well as the type of detail he/she expects in the minutes. For example, if your Board or committee will be dealing with motions, or voting on items/issues, be clear on whether you need to offer names of those making motions, seconding, etc. If you will be dealing with this type of procedures, you (and your Chair) may want to refer to Robert's Rules of Order. What Should Be Included in Meeting Minutes? Before you start taking notes, it's important to understand the type of information you need to record at the meeting. As noted earlier, your organization may have required content and a specific meeting minute format that you'll need to follow, but generally, meeting minutes usually include the following: Date and time of the meeting Names of the meeting participants and those unable to attend (e.g., "regrets") Acceptance or corrections/amendments to previous meeting minutes Decisions made about each agenda item, for example: Actions taken or agreed to be taken Next steps Voting outcomes – e.g., (if necessary, details regarding who made motions; who seconded and approved or via show of hands, etc.) Motions taken or rejected Items to be held over New business Next meeting date and time You can find more templates and details on formatting meeting minutes here. The Minutes Writing Process Once the meeting is over, it's time to pull together your notes and write the minutes. Here are some tips that might help: Try to write the minutes as soon after the meeting as possible while everything is fresh in your mind. Review your outline and if necessary, add additional notes or clarify points raised. Also check to ensure all decisions, actions and motions are clearly noted. Ensure you're including sufficient detail For Board of Director's minutes in particular, we recommend including a short description of each action taken, as well as the rationale behind the decision If there was a lot of discussion before passing a motion, write down the major arguments for and against Edit to ensure brevity and clarity, so the minutes are easy to read In terms of mom format, here are a few things to keep in mind: Be objective Write in the same tense throughout Avoid using names other than to record motions and seconds. Avoid personal observations — the minutes should be solely fact-based If you need to refer to other documents, don't try to summarize them. Rather, simply indicate where they can be found or attach them as an appendix Meeting Minute Best Practices: Create an outline As discussed earlier, having an outline (or template) based on the agenda makes it easy for you to simply jot down notes, decisions, etc. under each item as you go along. If you are taking notes by hand, consider including space below each item on your outline for your hand-written notes, then print these out and use this to capture minutes. Check-off attendees as they join the meeting If you know the meeting attendees, you can check them off as they arrive, if not have folks introduce themselves at the start of the meeting or circulate an attendance list they can check-off themselves. Record decisions or notes on action items As the meeting progresses, it will be critical to annotate decisions and key points made in your outline as soon as they occur to be sure they are recorded accurately. Include the names of the owners of the action items and other key personnel involved. Ask for clarification if necessary Don't be afraid to speak up if you need clarification on something that was said in the meeting. It's your job to make these meeting minutes as accurate as possible. For example, if the group moves on without making a decision or an obvious conclusion, ask for clarification of the decision and/or next steps involved. Don't try to capture it all You can't keep up if you try to write down the conversation verbatim, so be sure to simply (and clearly) write (or type) just the decisions, assignments, action steps, etc. Record the meeting If you are concerned about being able to keep up with note taking, consider recording the meeting (e.g., on your smart phone, iPad, recording device, etc.) but be sure to let participants know they are being recording. While you don't want to use the recording to create a word-for-word transcript of the meeting, the recording can come in handy if you want to review the meeting for clarification. Download our Meeting Minute Checklist for Associations and Nonprofits with sample minutes taken at a meeting and learn how to take better minutes. Meeting Minutes Samples: Still wondering if you're taking notes correctly? Here's a sample of what meeting minutes at a board meeting might look like. Do Meeting Minutes Have To Be Approved? Yes, meeting minutes typically need to be approved to ensure accuracy and completeness. The approval process usually occurs at the beginning of the next meeting, where attendees review the minutes from the previous meeting and either approve them as written or suggest corrections. Once approved, the minutes become the official record of the meeting. This process helps maintain transparency and accountability within the organization. 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Alternately, if you are all using Google docs – for meeting invitations, agenda and additional document sharing – you can simply "share" the document with that group once it has been finalized. Committee or Board members can simply read the documents online and save a few trees! Sharing in the Cloud? If your organization is using a cloud-based membership management system (like WildApricot), you can publish the minutes as a web page and give access only to the committee or Board members, depending on your organization's needs. Through members-only webpages, you can create a secure online Intranet for your Board and committees. Tools Specifically For Meeting Minutes: If you are wondering about the types of tools you might use specifically for meeting minutes, here are some tools that organizations we've worked with have found helpful: Google Docs: Also supports collaborative note taking. [Here are some meeting minute sample templates in Google docs. If you send out a meeting request using Google Calendar, you can attach a Google doc agenda outline. Once minutes are crafted (using the outline), you can simply share the document with the group using their email addresses.] OneNote: (if you are a Microsoft user) – Very fast and allows for organization of notes. Also support audio recording with corresponding note time-stamping. Notion: Notion is a great platform for organizing meeting minutes. It's hierarchical document structure is a fantastic way to organize your meeting minutes in any way you want. Evernote: Great note taking tool. Agreedo: supports creation of meeting minutes and tracking the results. minutes.io: allows you to quickly take meeting minutes with hotkey shortcuts and the ability to work online or offline. Filing/Storage of Meeting Minutes Most committees and Boards review and either approve or amend the minutes at the beginning of the subsequent meeting. Once you've made any required revisions, the minutes will then need to be stored for future reference. Some organizations may store these online (e.g., in Google docs or SkyDrive) and also back these up on an external hard drive. You may also need to print and store hard copies as well or provide these to a staff member or Chair for filing. What Is the Purpose of Meeting Minutes? You shouldn't be intimidated by the term "minutes", since it's actually a little misleading. After all, your committee or Board doesn't want or need a record of its meeting proceedings minute by minute! But it is important to capture the essence of the meeting, including details such as: decisions made (motions made, votes, etc.) next steps planned identification and tracking of action items Minutes are a tangible record of the meeting for its participants and a source of information for members who were unable to attend. In some cases, meeting minutes can act as a reference point, for example: when a meeting's outcomes impact other collaborative activities or projects within the organization minutes can serve to notify (or remind) individuals of tasks assigned to them and/or timelines Download our Meeting Minute Checklist for Associations and Nonprofits with examples and learn how to take better minutes. Why Are They Called Minutes of a Meeting? According to Today I Found Out, the "minutes" of "meeting minutes" don't refer to the minute measurement of time, but to the "minute" (my-newt) notes taken during meetings. And… If You're a Nonprofit with Regular Board and Member Meetings If you're a nonprofit with regular board and member meetings and you want to save time and money managing your organization, get a free trial of WildApricot, an all-in-one membership management software which allows you to: Easily schedule online events with instant online payment processing and automated invoices. Create a stunning website with online member applications. Access an easy-to-search and filter contact database. Send out professionally-designed newsletters and emails. and much more. Find out all the features of WildApricot's free membership management software here. WildApricot is also the the #1 rated membership management software used by over 20,000 organizations every day. Get your free trial now. In Closing…Enjoy Your New Role! Meeting minutes are important – after all, they capture the essential information of a meeting. But taking and preparing minutes doesn't have to be a daunting task. We hope this article helps meeting minutes newbies in getting started in creating effective meeting minutes for your organization. Thank you for reading our guide on how to write meeting minutes! Taking meeting minutes is an essential practice for organizations to record discussions, decisions, tasks assigned, and next steps to create an official record. But knowing exactly what to include in that written record can be tricky without a clear example.In this article, we'll walk you through helpful examples and templates of meeting minutes to help you confidently create effective meeting minutes of your own.Meeting Minutes Examples In This Article:Quick Tips on Writing Meeting MinutesBefore we jump into the examples of meeting minutes, here are some of the best practices to look out for:Use an AI note taker like Fellow to automatically record, transcribe, and summarize meeting minutes — whether virtually, hybrid, or from a conference room. That saves you from having to designate a person to take minutes, such as a board secretary.Keep the meeting minutes short and sweet. A full hour of discussion should result in around half a page or even less, depending on how much information and key discussions you need to include.Get the basics down: That means the meeting date and time, as well as other key details like the next meeting date.Include the names of present members at the meeting as well as the role of each of the meeting participants or board members (if relevant). Note decisions that were made. If something is decided upon, always state what decision was made so that future actions can be assigned and held accountable.Keep track of votes. If there was a disagreement or debate, make sure to note how the final decision came about (i.e., which board members voted for which option).Record any action items that need to get done at the end of the meeting so people know what they're responsible for before the next meeting.As you can see, meeting minutes are pretty straightforward to write. As long as you get all of the necessary information down in a clear and concise way it should be fine.Here are some examples of how to write meeting minutes for your own meetings. At the bottom of each meeting minutes sample is a link to download the meeting minutes template for free or to use it in Fellow.{{blog-insert-mm-2="/blog-inserts"}}1. Meeting Minutes Example: No Agenda or FormattingFor example, unstructured meeting minutes with no formatting might end up something like this:The meeting started at 11:00 am and was attended by John Smith, Jane Doe, and Robert Brown. The meeting minutes were kept by James Taylor.After an overview of how the project is going so far and what we hope to accomplish in the next week, we discussed how best to divide up our tasks for this upcoming week. For the first day, we decided to work on task A and B.We also reached a consensus that we would finish up our discussion about how best to handle issue C at next week's meeting instead of trying to solve it now.Advantages of no-agenda style of meeting minutesTaking meeting minutes without any agenda or formatting is not ideal, but it does have advantages over not taking meeting minutes at all. So if that's the way you've done it until now, it's a good start. They can still act as an official record and, if nothing else, help to jog your memory when read.Advantages include: At least you're taking meeting minutes!You can do it instantly, without any prepYou have some kind of record, even if it's not idealYou can easily copy, paste, and share the informationIt can work for very small teams, which don't have a lot of meetings (say, a tiny local sailing club's quarterly meetings.) The good news is it's easy to take this style of meeting minutes to the next level.Disadvantages of no-agenda style of meeting minutesBefore we look at an easy way to better organize meeting minutes, let's take a clear look at the disadvantages of taking meeting minutes without any agenda or formatting. Disadvantages include:They look unprofessional. A plain text form of meeting minutes is very informal — and not necessarily in a good way. A basic meeting agenda with simple formatting is so easy to put together with ample free apps and templates.They're hard to read. When meeting minutes are left unformatted, they're harder to read. Everything is one big mass of text, even if it's broken up into short paragraphs and sentences. They might be hard to access. Unformatted meeting minutes without an agenda are usually lacking in other best practices for meeting minutes. For example, easy cloud access. Can the right people access meeting minutes at any time, securely, from any device? They might be too easy to access for the wrong people. Again, unformatted meeting minutes often aren't created securely. Are they in simple Google Docs set to "Anyone with the Link Can Access"? The notes are unfocused. Meetings without agendas are unfocused. That means the person trying to take notes doesn't know what to focus on, and the conversation veers into multiple directions. The meeting notes will reflect the ongoing lack of focus in meetings. Formatted meeting minutes, using a professional agenda template and more formal language, can introduce a higher degree of order into a business meeting. You can bring a significant amount of focus into regular meetings just by regularly creating a formatted agenda. How to upgrade your meeting minutesTo take your meeting minutes from chaotic to polished, start with a professionally formatted agenda template.Scroll down to see some examples of professionally formatted, free meeting agendas, which you can download and use right now.2. Meeting Minutes Example: Simple Meeting TemplateIf you're in a hurry or want to keep things basic, this Simple Meeting Minutes template is for you. It starts with the goal of the meeting, segues into the agenda ttems, and closes with a next steps section. In the case of a simple meeting, meeting participants are there to quickly discuss a specific issue, solve a specific problem, answer a specific question, and reach a specific business goal. No one is concerned with Roberts' Rules of Order, a quorum, or recording votes according to accepted parliamentary procedure. That means this Simple Meeting Template is great for what it's good for, but could be limited when it comes to other kinds of meetings. If your needs are better served by a more detailed template, keep scrolling to see other popular examples of meeting minutes, each with a free template. Or, use the search or filter functions in our directory of Free Meeting Agenda Templates.{{simple-meeting-minutes="/blog-inserts-6"}}3. Meeting Minutes Example: Board Meeting TemplateThis board meeting minutes template includes all the basic components of a board meeting, so that the person or persons taking notes can have a clear focus. It starts with a call to order, includes attendance of voting board members and others, approval of the previous meeting minutes, reports, motions, announcements, and adjournment until the next board meeting. How to prepare to take minutes for a board meetingBoard meetings are among the highest level of meetings at which you could be responsible for taking notes. It's important to do your homework in order to prepare. Talk with someone who has done it well before at your company, or with your board chair. Ensure you understand what the expectations are of the meeting minutes taker, and how it's been done before. Review Robert's Rules of Order, where you'll learn about having a quorum, making motions, conducting and recording voting, and more under the most respected methodology for running meetings on parliamentary procedure.Make sure you're aware of your company's specific policies regarding the board meeting agenda and minutes.{{board-meeting="/blog-inserts"}}4. Meeting Minutes Example: Executive Monthly MeetingBecause weekly (or even monthly) Executive Team Meetings relentlessly come around on the calendar, taking meeting minutes for them can quickly overwhelm a person who doesn't yet have a good system in place.. A good system for executive meeting minutes includes built-in ways of: Collaborating on the agenda itemsSharing the agenda easilyTaking notes Handing off responsibility for taking notes on the flySecure, easy ways of sharing the meeting minutes afterwardSecure, easy ways of storing and searching the entire series of meeting minutesDesignating a person for the next meeting's agendaAny such system starts with an agenda template professionally designed for an Executive Weekly Meeting. Check out the free, instantly available template below. {{monthly-management-meeting="/blog-inserts-4"}}5. Meeting Minutes Example: Sprint PlanningSprints that reach their desired goals require effective sprint planning, which requires effective sprint meetings. Done well, a sprint planning meeting not only kicks off a new sprint, but also provides: MotivationStructureClear next stepsClear criteria by which success is judged A Sprint Planning Meeting Agenda will help to avoid unanticipated obstacles and make sure everyone knows who's accountable for what and who is authorized to make decisions on any given issue that may arise. Sprint GoalThe agenda plus meeting minutes example below starts with the goal, so that everyone knows what the purpose of the meeting is. Collaborate with other stakeholders to determine the goal. Sprint BacklogThen refine your backlog as you create the agenda. The backlog is a complete list of tasks to be completed along with their priority Presenting the backlog is part of mapping the progress in the project so far. Epics to be DeliveredThis template has you moving naturally then from where the project is to what epic deliverables are next. Scope of WorkFrom there the meeting will move to refining the scope of the work, to make sure everyone is on the same page about what "done" means in this sprint. Key Risks and Concerns The key risks and concerns section anticipates possible roadblocks that may arise, and how to deal with them, and who might help deal with them. Notes and Takeaways section, and the actions section, confirm what has been decided, and who is responsible for owning any given part of the process.FollowupFollowup specifies exactly how task owners will be held accountable, and how stakeholders can help and be kept up to speed.{{sprint-planning="/blog-inserts-6"}}6. Meeting Minutes Example: One-On-One MeetingsOne-on-one meetings can take many forms, from general one-on-ones, to a monthly coaching call, to mentoring meetings, one-on-one manager weekly meetings, and many more. The one thing that one-on-one meetings require, and that is often overlooked, is an agenda. The need for a one-on-one meeting agenda can be overlooked because a one-on-one meeting may seem simple, because it's just between two people. The reality is that a meeting between two people, just like one among 2,000 people in an all-hands-on-deck meeting, requires direction. A one-on-one meeting requires an agenda and meeting minutes so that each participant can know the focus of the meeting, what was decided, and directions going forward. Give this template a try for your next one-on-one meeting.{{one-on-one-manager-weekly="/blog-inserts-4"}}Get 80+ Meeting Minutes Templates (Free to Download)These examples of meeting minutes all come from our free agenda template library — only they've been filled in with more information.The best way to use these templates is with Fellow, an all-in-one AI meeting assistant that can join your meetings to record, transcribe, and summarize all of your key points. Every meeting with Fellow generates a collaborative agenda where you can use these templates that will later be filled in as meeting minutes.When the meeting is over, you can format your Fellow meeting summary to serve as detailed meeting minutes — all with a verbatim transcript to refer to. With Fellow, you no longer need a designated note taker, such as an administrative assistant. Rather, everyone can freely participate without worrying about writing everything down.Stop taking manual meeting minutes and let AI take care of it. Try Fellow today. Whether you've been tasked with taking notes for a committee or you've been appointed Secretary to the Board of your organization, preparing meeting minutes doesn't have to be an arduous task. Here are some tips and ideas that will help you get started with writing and preparing effective meeting minutes, as well as a meeting minutes sample and a meeting minutes template that you can follow. This guide on how to write meeting minutes was prepared by WildApricot to help the volunteers and/or staff of small non-profits and membership organizations who may be new to the task of taking and preparing minutes of meeting for committees or Boards of Directors. What Are Meeting Minutes? Meeting minutes are the written record of what was discussed and decided during a meeting. They typically include the date and time of the meeting, a list of attendees, a summary of the topics discussed, decisions made, action items assigned, and the time of adjournment. Minutes are essential for providing an official account of the meeting, ensuring accountability, and helping attendees recall important details. They are usually prepared by a designated person, such as a secretary or administrative assistant, and are approved at the subsequent meeting. What Should You Include When Writing Meeting Minutes? The five steps that you must include are: Pre-Planning Record taking – at the meeting Minutes writing or transcribing Distributing or sharing of meeting minutes Filing or storage of minutes for future reference For more detail on each step, read on! Read more: 13 Meeting Minutes Templates for More Productive Nonprofit Board Meetings Who Should Write the Meeting Minutes? Meeting minutes are typically written by the designated secretary or administrative assistant of the group or organization. In some cases, a specific member of the group may be assigned to take minutes for a particular meeting. The person responsible for writing the minutes should be someone who is attentive, detail-oriented, and capable of accurately capturing the discussions and decisions made during the meeting. Meeting Minutes Template: Here's a simple template you can refer to next time you need to take meeting minutes: Organization Name Meeting Minutes Date: Opening: The meeting was called to order at [Time] by [Name] at [Location]. Present: [List of all present members] Absent: [List of any members who were not present] Approval of Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and approved. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved. Business From the Previous Meeting: [Summary of any motions or topics from the previous meeting, including decisions made] New Business: [Summary of any new motions or topics raised, including decisions made] Additions to the Agenda: [Summary of any additional items raised during the meeting] Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at [Time] by [Name]. The next meeting will be held on [Date] at [Location]. Minutes submitted by: [Name] Minutes approved by: [Name] How to Create Your Meeting Minute Process As mentioned above, there are essentially five steps involved with meeting minutes: Pre-Planning Record taking – at the meeting Minutes writing or transcribing Distributing or sharing of meeting minutes Filing or storage of minutes for future reference Pre-Plan Your Meeting Minutes A well-planned meeting helps ensure effective meeting minutes. If the Chair and the Secretary or minutes-taker work together to ensure the agenda and meeting are well thought out, it makes minute taking much easier. For example, depending on the meeting structure and the tools you use, the minutes-taker could work with the Chair to create a document format that works as an agenda and minutes outline as well. Set the Agenda of a Meeting At the very least, it's important to get a copy of the meeting agenda and use it as a guide or outline for taking notes, setting up your mom format, and preparing the minutes – with the order and numbering of items on the minutes of meeting matching those of the agenda. In addition, the agenda and/or meeting notice also provides information that will need to be included in the minutes, such as: the names of all the meeting attendees, including guests or speakers documents that are sent out with the agenda or handed out in the meeting – copies (digital or hard copy) of handouts should be stored with the meeting minutes for future reference and for sharing with those who were unable to attend the meeting (and others as determined by the meeting's Chair). Clarify Expectations When you take on a new role as minutes-taker or Secretary, be sure to ask the Chair of the committee or Board what their expectations are of your role during the meeting, as well as the type of detail he/she expects in the minutes. For example, if your Board or committee will be dealing with motions, or voting on items/issues, be clear on whether you need to offer names of those making motions, seconding, etc. If you will be dealing with this type of procedures, you (and your Chair) may want to refer to Robert's Rules of Order. What Should Be Included in Meeting Minutes? Before you start taking notes, it's important to understand the type of information you need to record at the meeting. As noted earlier, your organization may have required content and a specific meeting minute format that you'll need to follow, but generally, meeting minutes usually include the following: Date and time of the meeting Names of the meeting participants and those unable to attend (e.g., "regrets") Acceptance or corrections/amendments to previous meeting minutes Decisions made about each agenda item, for example: Actions taken or agreed to be taken Next steps Voting outcomes – e.g., (if necessary, details regarding who made motions; who seconded and approved or via show of hands, etc.) Motions taken or rejected Items to be held over New business Next meeting date and time You can find more templates and details on formatting meeting minutes here. The Minutes Writing Process Once the meeting is over, it's time to pull together your notes and write the minutes. Here are some tips that might help: Try to write the minutes as soon after the meeting as possible while everything is fresh in your mind. Review your outline and if necessary, add additional notes or clarify points raised. Also check to ensure all decisions, actions and motions are clearly noted. Ensure you're including sufficient detail For Board of Director's minutes in particular, we recommend including a short description of each action taken, as well as the rationale behind the decision If there was a lot of discussion before passing a motion, write down the major arguments for and against Edit to ensure brevity and clarity, so the minutes are easy to read In terms of mom format, here are a few things to keep in mind: Be objective Write in the same tense throughout Avoid using names other than to record motions and seconds. Avoid personal observations — the minutes should be solely fact-based If you need to refer to other documents, don't try to summarize them. 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If you send out a meeting request using Google Calendar, you can attach a Google doc agenda outline. Once minutes are crafted (using the outline), you can simply share the document with the group using their email addresses.] OneNote: (if you are a Microsoft user) – Very fast and allows for organization of notes. Also support audio recording with corresponding note time-stamping. Notion: Notion is a great platform for organizing meeting minutes. It's hierarchical document structure is a fantastic way to organize your meeting minutes in any way you want. Evernote: Great note taking tool. Agreedo: supports creation of meeting minutes and tracking the results. minutes.io: allows you to quickly take meeting minutes with hotkey shortcuts and the ability to work online or offline. Filing/Storage of Meeting Minutes Most committees and Boards review and either approve or amend the minutes at the beginning of the subsequent meeting. 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Create a stunning website with online member applications. Access an easy-to-search and filter contact database. Send out professionally-designed newsletters and emails. and much more. Find out all the features of WildApricot's free membership management software here. WildApricot is also the the #1 rated membership management software used by over 20,000 organizations every day. Get your free trial now. In Closing…Enjoy Your New Role! Meeting minutes are important – after all, they capture the essential information of a meeting. But taking and preparing minutes doesn't have to be a daunting task. We hope this article helps meeting minutes newbies in getting started in creating effective meeting minutes for your organization. Thank you for reading our guide on how to write meeting minutes!

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