

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE LEGISLATURE, LEGISLATIVE STANDING COMMITTEES, AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATURE

Objective:	To establish procedures and standards for preparing meeting minutes to ensure consistency and to facilitate content accuracy.	Policy/Procedure Number:	01-00
Reference: <i>(All Applicable Federal, State and Local Laws)</i>	Public Officers Law, Section 106—Minutes; Tompkins County Administrative Policy 01-25: Compliance with the Open Meetings Law; Rules of the Tompkins County Legislature	Effective Date:	11/01/2011 02/21/1995
		Responsible Department:	Clerk of the Legislature
		Modified Date (s):	11/01/2011
Legislative Policy Statement:	<p>It is the policy of the Tompkins County Legislature that the minutes of its meetings and of the meetings of its Committees shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a timely, accurate, and understandable record of the actions of those groups for members of the public, for future readers, and for those who are not able to attend those proceedings; ▪ Ensure that requests for follow-up actions are recorded; ▪ Ensure that the group itself has confirmed what are its own decisions; and ▪ Ensure that a Legislature member's record is clear to the public. 	Resolution No.:	2011-92
		Next Scheduled Review:	Nov. 2016

General Information:

- I. Definitions:**
- Minutes**—The official record of the meetings of an established body.
- Meeting**—The official convening of a public body for the purpose of conducting public business, including the use of videoconferencing for attendance and participation by the members of the public body.
- Notes**—An annotation, description, or explanatory comments provided for future reference.
- Public Body**—Any entity, for which a quorum is required in order to conduct public business and that consists of two or more members, performing a government function for the County or for an agency or department thereof, or for a committee or subcommittee or other similar body of such public body.
- Executive Session**—That portion of a meeting not open to the general public.

II. Policy:

A. Guidelines

1. Chairs should provide guidance in adhering to the minutes policy. Legislators and staff designated to take minutes should feel free to refer to the policy when it is being disregarded and to invoke its use.
2. Minutes will include only resolutions, motions proposed, actions taken, and any statement that a member of the Legislature specifically requests to be included.
3. Staff designated to provide draft minutes of the meeting will take meeting notes according to the Standards outlined in Section B. Of these notes, only the items specified in Section B will be presented to the Legislature or legislative committee for approval, and once approved, shall become the official minutes. Staff will keep notes of the meeting on file.
4. All persons who prepare minutes and notes of meetings of the Committees of the Legislature shall forward for filing a copy of the approved minutes and a copy of the notes to the office of the Clerk of the Legislature with a copy of all resolutions acted on by the Committee.

B. Standards for Preparing Meeting Minutes

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

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

8. Minutes shall be taken at Executive Sessions of any action that is taken by formal vote, which shall consist of a record or summary of the final determination of such action, and the date and vote thereon; provided, however, that such summary need not include any matter that is not required to be made public by the Freedom of Information Law.
9. Approved minutes must include the word "Approved" at the top and the date of approval.

III. Procedure

Attendance Sheet

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

Draft Minutes

Draft minutes must include the word "Draft" at the top of the document and the date that the draft is submitted.

Every effort must be made to provide draft minutes quickly enough so that members not in attendance can know what happened and so that the draft and any proposed amendments to it can be reviewed prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the group and approved at that meeting. The goal shall be to provide draft minutes of committee meetings within one to two working days, and of Legislature meetings within five working days.

Revising Meeting Minutes

Corrections of Fact

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

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

Corrections of Errors

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

Preservation of Minutes

Once approved the Minutes will be archived in an electronic searchable format and the Minutes of the Legislature will become part of the County's Annual Proceedings. Once finalized, the Notes will also be archived in an electronic searchable format. Once archived, each document will be available to the public on-line.

Comments and Additions to the Meeting Notes

Legislators and staff present at the meeting can submit comments or additions to the meeting Notes. Persons with comments or additions will need to identify the original agenda item, section, and line number of the Notes to which the additions or comments refer. Comments or additions must be submitted to the staff person who prepared the minutes. This staff person will give the comment or addition a number and shall add the same number as a footnote at the referenced section and line of the original with the submitter's name and identification in parentheses; the comment or addition shall be appended to the end of the notes. Comments and additions may be accepted up to 45 days after the notes are distributed.

Availability of Meeting Minutes to the Public

Minutes of meetings of all public bodies shall be available to the public in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information law and generally within two weeks from the date of such meeting except that minutes of an Executive Session when action was taken shall be available to the public within one week from the date of the executive session.

Draft minutes of legislature meetings are available within two weeks of the meeting. Draft minutes of legislative standing committees and special committees must also be available to the public within two weeks.

Availability of Meeting Notes

Notes of Legislative and Legislature Standing and Special Committee meetings shall be marked "Draft" and posted on-line for the public within two business days of completion. After the forty-five day period for modification has elapsed, the Notes plus any additions/corrections and the word "draft" removed shall be posted on-line in a searchable format for the public.