

Module 1: Definitions and Key Principles

Based Partly on Chapter 1 of *Mina's Guide to Minute Taking*

Q1.1: In general, what are minutes and what is their value?

Q1.1.3: A School Board meeting includes an agenda item entitled "Trustee Reports." Under this item, elected Trustees report on their community activities since the last meeting. No decisions are made as a result of these reports and no actions are taken. Should these reports be captured in the minutes?

Q1.3: Your group skips over agenda item 4 because a member with unique input on item 7 needs to leave early. The group hears the member's input on item 7. It then returns to agenda item 4 without concluding item 7 (which it concludes later on, after item 6 is dealt with). How will you record this sequence of events in the minutes? Alternatively, what will you do if, at the start of the meeting, your group agrees to change the sequence of items on the agenda? Will you record the minutes in the order by which things occurred or in the order stated on the agenda?

Q1.6: When you take minutes, should you listen carefully to every word and write frantically, so you don't miss anything ("It's better to have more and then edit it, than to have less and be short of data later...")? Is it necessary for you to take "shorthand" training or to tape the meeting?

Q1.7: Identify the principles that are violated in the following excerpts from minutes. Re-write them, as needed:

Q1.7.2: "*The topic was very relevant to the department and everyone spoke passionately.*"

Q1.7.3: "*Jackie will follow up with John after the meeting.*"

Q1.7.5: "*At 3:42 p.m. Susan excused herself to answer a phone call. Discussion ensued. Susan returned to the meeting at 3:44 p.m.*"

Module 2: Minute Taking Standards

Based Partly on Chapter 2 of *Mina's Guide to Minute Taking*

Q2.2: You want support from your organization's decision makers (Board, Senior Management) to implement some of the ideas you gain from this course. The end result should be minute taking standards for your organization. How will you formalize the minute taking standards?

Q2.3: The minutes of a five hour meeting are more than 100 pages long. They include every word uttered plus references to background chatter and noise. What problems does this style of minute taking pose?

Q2.7: During a closed Board meeting, a vote is taken to punish a staff member for inappropriate behaviour. A Board member votes against the proposed penalty and demands that his reasons for voting against the penalty be recorded in the minutes (namely, he thinks the penalty is too light and he would have preferred a harsher penalty). What should be done?

Q2.8: A governmental regulatory body that oversees the operations of a Board of a financial institution indicates that decisions-only-minutes are insufficient, and that it requires evidence of due diligence in decision-making. How should future minutes be taken to address this concern?

Q2.10: A member of your Board of Directors is embarrassed when she sees her own words in the minutes, and demands that you remove or modify them. You have a recording of the meeting and can prove that she said exactly the words that you captured. What should you do?

Module 3: Minutes of Informal Meetings

Based Partly on Chapter 3 of *Mina's Guide to Minute Taking*

Q3.1: What should be recorded in the opening portion of the minutes?

Q3.2: What should be recorded in the closing portion of the minutes?

Q3.3: Create minutes from the following conversation (a staff meeting):
(Module includes word for word conversation among meeting participants)

Module 4: Minutes of Formal Meetings

Based Partly on Chapter 4 of *Mina's Guide to Minute Taking*

Q4.4: A member moves “*That we go for it*” and it is not clear what “*it*” is. You have a vague idea of what the member proposes, but there are several blanks to fill. Would it be okay for you to interpret and fill in the missing data after the meeting? What other alternatives do you have?

Q4.7: A committee report recommends that your group make certain decisions or pass certain motions. How should the report be dealt with? What should be done before the meeting to help make the meeting focused and efficient, and also make it easy to take minutes?

Q4.8: A report is presented for information only. After some questions and informal discussion, a motion is moved, seconded and adopted to *receive* the report. Is this needed? How about a motion to *accept* such a report? What would you capture in the minutes in either case?

Q4.13: Being sensitive to you and your job as a minute taker, several members hand over written motions to you and the meeting Chair. The problem is that there isn't enough time to deal with all of these motions. How would you record the motions that were not dealt with?

Q4.16: Is it important to distinguish between absent members (those who did not notify the group of their absence in advance) and regrets (those who gave advance notice of their absence)?

Q4.23: What is “business arising from the minutes?” How about “old business”?

Module 5: Minutes of Closed Meetings

Based Partly on Chapter 5 of *Mina's Guide to Minute Taking*

Q5.3: Should minutes be taken in closed meetings? If so, who should take them? What should be recorded and what should be omitted?

Q5.6: At an open meeting, the group digresses from the official agenda and begins to discuss whether an identified employee should be punished for misconduct. What should you do?

Q5.9: An important hiring contract was approved in a closed session. When is it okay to announce to the public who was hired? How should this be done?

Q5.11: What can your organization do to protect confidentiality if documents related to an extremely sensitive issue are circulated to participants?

Module 6: Minutes Approval Process

Based Partly on Chapter 6 of *Mina's Guide to Minute Taking*

Q6.5: A member was absent from the previous meeting. Is he or she allowed to make a motion that the minutes of a previous meeting be approved? Is he or she allowed to propose corrections to the minutes? Can he or she vote on changes or on the approval of the minutes?

Q6.7: A committee that reports to a Board (most of whose members are not committee members) presents its minutes and asks the Board to approve them. Is this procedure correct?

Q6.10: After a meeting of a public Board, it is discovered that a significant motion was not dealt with. The Chair polls the group by phone and then directs you to amend the minutes to show that the motion in question was adopted. Is this practice appropriate? If not, what should have been done instead? What should you do if this practice is followed by the Chair?

Q6.12: An elected Council holds the final meeting of its term of office. The next Council will probably be different and include several new members. How should the approval of the minutes of this final meeting be handled?

Module 7: Minute Taker's Roles

Based Partly on Chapter 7 of *Mina's Guide to Minute Taking*

Q7.5: Name some annoying habits of your group's members that make minute taking difficult. What can you do to get help from the Chair and the group?

Q7.8: Is it desirable to tape a meeting for backup purposes? Should you obtain the group's permission to do it? How long should you retain the recording?

Q7.9: In addition to taking minutes, you also know a great deal about the topics that are being discussed (e.g., you are a committee clerk, and many members are new community volunteers who do not have the history of the group). Is it acceptable for you to share your knowledge? If you opt to do so, what should you be careful about?

Q7.14: You are taking minutes during a conference call, and have no idea who is talking at any given time. What can you do?

Q7.17: The group's elected Chair gives you certain directions which contradict the directions of your boss, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). What should you do?