

# MINUTES

National PTA

# Secretary's Duty to Prepare Minutes

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- When asked to give the minutes of the previous meeting, the newly elected secretary said:
- “The previous meeting lasted about 21 minutes.”

# What are Minutes?

- A legal document recording what was done at a meeting, **not what was said**.
- Minutes should never reflect the opinion of the secretary/recorder—favorable or otherwise—on anything said or done.
- The secretary/recorder should not be expected to summarize the discussion of others.



# Outline of Minutes

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- The following is the typical sequence of items in a set of minutes for a meeting of a deliberative organization:
  - Opening paragraph
  - Treasurer's report
  - Reports of other officers
  - Reports of committees
  - Unfinished business (not old business)
  - New business
  - Announcements
  - Closing paragraph

# Standard Opening Paragraph

- Kind of meeting: regular, special, adjourned
- Name of the organization
- Date, time, and place of the meeting
- The fact that the regular presiding officer and secretary/recorder were present, or in their absence, the names of the persons who substituted for them
- Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved

# Opening Paragraph

- The regular meeting of the XYZ PTA Unit was called to order at 8 a.m. on July 5, 2003, at the XYZ Building. President ABC presided and Secretary CDE recorded the minutes. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

# Record What is Done, Not What is Said

- Proposals the organization must consider are offered in the form of a “motion” that the group do something.
- A motion begins with “I move that...” and then the proposal.
- If you are a meeting recorder, listen carefully for those three words. It’s your cue to take down the next statement.

# “I move that...”

- James Olson says:
- “Madam President, because our third floor meeting room is not accessible to disabled members, I move that all meetings be held in Room 141.”
- You need to capture only the words “that all meetings be held in Room 141.”

# How Recorded in the Minutes

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- It was moved “that all meetings be held in Room 141.” The motion was adopted (or defeated).

Or

- A motion “that all meetings be held in Room 141” was adopted (or defeated).

# “I move that...”

- Jane Williams says:
- “Members may not be aware of the increased use of the computer room by nonmembers. The computer room supervisor has recommended that the computer room be open to nonmembers only during the weekend. I move the adoption of the computer room supervisor’s recommendation.”



# How Recorded in the Minutes

- Upon the recommendation of the computer room supervisor, it was moved “that the computer room be open to nonmembers only during the weekend.” The motion was adopted (or defeated).
- Upon the recommendation of the computer room supervisor, a motion “that the computer room be open to nonmembers only during the weekend” was adopted (or defeated).



# Motion Forms

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- Make regular use of motion forms

# Standard Closing Paragraph

- The last paragraph of the minutes states the hour of adjournment and is followed by the signature of the secretary/recorder.
- The words “Respectfully submitted”-- while used occasionally--represent an outdated practice not essential in signing the minutes.



# Reports of Committees

- When a committee or individual reports information to the members, the report is merely referred to:

*The special committee on fundraising reported on its activities and indicated that grants in excess of \$100,000 were raised this year.*

# Reports with Recommendations

- When a report ends with a recommendation, the recommendation is made by the committee chair or reporting member in the form of a motion
- The secretary records this motion's disposition like any other motion
- The motion in the minutes might be preceded by a few lead-in words such as “By direction of the resource committee, it was moved and seconded that...”

# Handling Amendments

- An amendment is a proposal to change the wording of the original motion by adding words, striking out words, or striking out words and inserting other words in their place.
- As secretary/recorder, you need to keep track of the amendments and whether or not they are adopted or defeated.

# Handling Amendments

- When preparing the minutes, however, show only the final wording of the motion as it may have been amended. **Don't list the separate amendments in the minutes.**
- Original motion: “that we publish a weekly calendar of PTA events.”
- Amendment: “to strike out ‘weekly’ and insert ‘monthly.’”
- The amendment was adopted and then the original motion as amended was adopted.

# Final Wording in the Minutes

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- After amendment a motion was adopted “that we publish a monthly calendar of PTA events.”
- No reference is made to the fact that “weekly” was considered.

# What Can You Do?

- Write out your main motion in advance
- Let it “gel” overnight, over lunch, or even over the next five minutes
- Have a colleague critique it and help improve it with the aim of minimizing amending and getting your proposal adopted
- Stay on track

# Committees

- Two types of committees
  - Standing committees
  - Special committees
    - Also called ad hoc committees or task forces
- Purpose of committees
  - Study, investigate, report/recommend



# Committee Reports

- Can be written or presented orally
- Can be for information only or end with a recommendation on which the body takes action
- Committees need not report if they have nothing additional to report since the previous meeting



# Minutes and Committee Reports

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- When a committee reports with information only, the report is not part of the minutes
- However, for informational purposes, committee reports may be attached to the minutes

# PTA Policy

- Minutes will continue to have committee reports attached to them for informational purposes
- Committees wishing to have their report attached to the minutes must give a written copy of the report to Barb Sargent no later than prior to presenting the report at the meeting
- If a written report is not received from a committee, nothing will be attached to the minutes.

# PTA Policy

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- For committee reports presented orally, the secretary will **not** prepare a written summary of the committee reports from the audiotapes
- The committee may prepare its own written version of the verbal report and give it to the secretary prior to the meeting

# Committee Recommendations

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- Committee reports concluding with a recommendation will be handled as a main motion
- The recommendation will be moved by the reporting member of the committee, and its disposition will be recorded in the minutes

# Form of Recommendation

- Committees preparing recommendations should strive to make the report clearly end in a recommendation that can stand alone as a main motion, making complete sense without the need to refer back to other documents

*On behalf of the marketing committee, I move the adoption of the “final steps” in the consultant’s report.*

# Examples:

- On behalf of the education committee, I move that the PTA undertake a program of promote literacy.
- On behalf of the education committee, I move that \$50,000 be allocated for a pilot project on literacy developed by the education committee.

# Examples:

- On behalf of the legislative committee, I move that the PTA publication “Legislative Hotline” cease publication on January 1, 2004.
- The 2004 convention planning committee moves that the committee be authorized to engage entertainment and purchase decorations and favors for the post-convention party at a cost not to exceed \$6,000.

# Resources

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- National Association of Parliamentarians
  - [www.parliamentarians.org](http://www.parliamentarians.org)
- Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised
  - 2000 edition



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# Rollie Cox

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