

Taking Minutes

Minutes serve as a record of what was DONE, not of ALL THAT WAS SAID, at a meeting. You can evaluate whether minutes are good on the following criteria:

- Paragraphs are organized well, with clear agenda headings and subsequent topic headings.
- It is clear what action has taken place, who is committed to doing what tasks/assignments in the future, when those task/assignments are to be completed or updated, and what the process was that brought the decisions about.
- Personal opinion and other discussion should generally be avoided.
- They contain the following information:
 1. Name of the organization and designation of “Minutes”.
 2. Designation of “special meeting” if not a regularly scheduled meeting.
 3. Date and place of meeting and the designation “Minutes”.
 4. Presence of officers and members (or their proxies/substitutes).
 5. Presence of guests (and/or the organization they represent).
 6. Who called the meeting to order and at what time.
 7. Notes about the approval or amendment of the previous minutes.
 8. All reports made and actions taken.
 9. All main motions carried or lost (omit those withdrawn).
 10. All other motions carried which contain information which may be needed at future meetings.
 11. Vote counts on motions for which a specific count is taken and to which future reference may be made.
 12. The first name and last name initial of persons making reports.
 13. The first name and last name initial of persons who initiate motions and amendments.
 14. Adjournment.
 15. Date, time and location of the next meeting.
 16. Signature of the secretary or person taking the minutes.

Minutes should be disseminated WITHIN 48 HOURS to all on a “mailing list”, which generally includes the members, advisor and anyone else who requests them.

(Note: the addition of appropriate cartoons or amusing quotes can add some zip to otherwise pretty dry minutes.)