

**School Councils Training
Minutes – Records**

Records of Meetings:

Minutes

Normally include:

- Date, time, and place of the meeting;
- Kind of meeting – regular or special;
- Name of chairperson;
- Council members in attendance;
- Approval of minutes of the last meeting;
- All motions – adopted or lost;
- Names of persons making motions (optional);
- Summary of reports (optional);
- Recording of vote on a motion, if requested.

Minutes Should Be:

- Accurate and useful
- Grammatically correct, concise and clear,
- Understandable by the secretary's successor.

Minutes are part of the council's legal responsibility to the public. They are the only permanent and reliable record of decisions and are subject to the Archives Act of the Yukon S. 131

Minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each subject and documents referred to in the minutes become part of the minutes and are attached to them.

Minutes may not be altered. A resolution may be rescinded at a subsequent meeting by the council, but no motion may be deleted or crossed out from the council's minutes.

Minutes should be formally approved and signed by the secretary-treasurer and/or chairperson. Records of the council are legal and personal property of the council, but are subject to the terms of the Yukon Access to Information Act and the Archives Act.

Motions or Resolution

The debate for a motion does not have to be included, but sometimes including the reasons for a decision can be helpful. Summarize the debate in broad, concise terms and try to include all the main ideas – both pros and cons – but do not bog down the minutes with who said what.

Write the name of the person who has requested that his or her statement be made a part of the record and, of course, write their statement verbatim.

When a motion is amended, give the history of the motion in the minutes. First, state the motion, and who moved and seconded it. Include the amendments in the order

they were made – write each amendment verbatim, who moved and seconded and the votes cast for and against.

If all the amendments are defeated, the original motion is voted on and the minutes reflect this. State an amended motion verbatim and whether it was accepted or defeated and the votes for and against.

Action Items

If implementation of an action item was discussed, write the details of this in the paragraph following the statement of the action. State who will do what, when, (and possibly) where and how.

Carrying Items Forward

When an agenda item has been taken up but not completed, it becomes unfinished business on the next meeting's agenda. Include in the minutes any information that will be helpful when it is discussed again.

Correcting Minutes

When minutes need to be corrected or amended, the changes are recorded in two places – in the original minutes being corrected and in paragraph form in the current minutes of the meeting.

To show corrections in the original, add words in pen; show deletions by drawing lines through the words, do not erase them. In the margin, enter the date of the meeting which the changes were made. If the material being inserted is too long to do this way, type the corrections and additions on a separate sheet and attach it at the end of the minutes. Draw a line through all the material that is being deleted and make a note that the corrected paragraphs are attached.

If minutes are not regularly approved at the following meeting, it can be a problem of knowing which minutes have been approved and which have not. Sometimes approving minutes is not done during a meeting and numerous sets are done at a later meeting. To be able to tell which minutes have been approved, write "Approved" at the top of the first page along with the date of approval immediately after the meeting in which they were approved.

Tips for Minutes

- Minutes are usually written in the past tense.
- They should not include a subjective interpretation of the mood of the meeting or the tone in which comments were made. Phrases like "There was a heated discussion," "The presentation was very motivational," or "Mr. Smith was emphatic" do not belong in minutes. The document should be clean and objective
- Minutes should have consistency with the same general look and style from meeting to meeting
- They should be reviewed thoroughly and be free from typographical, grammatical or technical errors before a draft is distributed.
- Minutes should be clearly laid out, visually appealing, and easy to read. Long paragraphs can be replaced by concise point-form summaries. Word processing features (bolding, underlining, etc.) can be used to highlight key points and decisions.

- They should have a logical flow and should be logically organized, even if the meeting itself was fragmented and confusing. All information related to an agenda item should be grouped under the agenda item – even if it was discussed at different times during the meeting.
- Make sure you can put the name (correctly spelled of course) to each face so that you know instantly who is speaking. Use the initials of members in the left-hand side margin of your notes to save time. You can then use the right-hand margin to make particularly important notes.
- If you are using shorthand to take your notes avoid trying to take a verbatim transcript. The Chair usually does a summary towards the end of each item of business before a consensus decision is made or a vote taken. This is an important moment as it will provide the most important points for noting. If in doubt, ask the Chair before the meeting if there is any item for which a full transcription would prove useful.
- Condense lengthy and sometimes digressing discussions with phrases like: “After a general discussion it was decided to...”.
- If you have problems with a sensitive item, consult with the Chair and abide by his or her advice.
- Complete the minutes as soon as possible after a meeting while it’s still fresh in your mind.

Some words to watch for during the meeting:

- “A key point...” (usually something of some importance)
- “I note...” (usually something important to be documented)
- “I will...” or “Joe will...” (action item)
- “To summarize” (usually the chairperson summarizes the discussion and possible action)
- “Agreement” / “Consensus” (there is agreement for an item)
- “Flag” (something important to be noted)

Archives: s.131 Why Keep School Council Records?

The preservation of your records will document the activities and decisions of the school council. It will also allow for continuity, as the individuals elected to councils change over time. Records of historical value can only be made available to researchers in the futures, if they are deposited in the Yukon Archives.

Example: If someone 20 years from now wants to research the FH Collins School Build

Guidelines for the Preservation of School Council Records

Under the Education Act, School Councils are required to follow the Archives Act in the same way as if the Councils were departments of the Yukon Government (S. 131). Public records under the Archives Act are not to be destroyed or removed without knowledge of the Archivist.

Record Retention Schedule

The records the school council will generate will likely include correspondence, minutes, financial records and records concerning the hiring of principals. Ideally, the secretary-treasurer would only have to keep and store approximately four years of records. Records older than four years and are ready for permanent storage should be boxed and taken to Yukon Archives. They are **not** the responsibility of the School or the School Office.

Establishing a File Plan

To organize your records, the secretary-treasurer may want to establish a filing plan. Some kind of numbering system to represent the subjects is adequate.

Example: 100 Administration

Within the broader headings further subheadings can be made:

110 Minutes

120 Correspondence

200 Financial Records

300 Policy Development

400 Special Projects

Storage of Records

A filing cabinet provides adequate storage for your files. If this is not available, you may use cardboard record storage boxes available through local suppliers. These can accommodate either letter or legal sized files; can hold the weight of files; have handles, so they can be lifted, and your files can be transferred to Archives in these boxes.

For any further questions about record keeping and storage, please contact Yukon Archives at 867-667-5321 (or through the main Yukon Government Inquiry Centre 1-800-661-0408).