

**Taking Meeting Minutes
for City Committees, Commissions, and Boards**

From: City Attorney Michael May
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 3:34 PM
Subject: Detail of meeting minutes

What I usually say to those taking minutes is the following:

1. All that is legally required is the agenda item, the motion, and the vote on the motion. I encourage you to stick to that if you are able to do so. As soon as you go beyond that, you run the risk of in fact distorting the history, because you will not catch everything unless you are a stenographer. Therefore, you will be selective, and persons may disagree about what was said or what was important. This will also encourage people to modify minutes later on.

2. Under no circumstances should you attempt to be a stenographer and capture everything verbatim. (That was a directive, because nobody who takes minutes is a court reporter).

3. The most important history (some lawyers will assert the ONLY history that matters, but I don't go that far) is what was actually voted upon. If something is critical to understanding the action of the body, it should be included in the ordinance, the resolution, or the motion, or if appropriate, in an accompanying report of staff. In this manner, if the body wants something reflected in the minutes, they can see that it is done.

4. Because of the above, I encourage you to keep minutes to the minimum required. If a body seriously wants some reflection of the debate, keep that to a minimum.

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