

Guidelines for Minute-Taking in the United Church of Canada

(adapted from united-church.ca)

General Rules on Content and Style

Minutes are not meant to be detailed accounts of who said what but a way to convey distilled, pertinent information, especially actionable items (i.e., motions).

Minutes should be

- well laid out
- easy to follow
- clear about what decisions were made
- written in plain business language

Rather than:

Nancy provided information about the leadership development course. Frank asked about the cost. Nancy informed us that it was \$1,760. Joe thought that was a bit expensive and asked if grants were available. Peter described what funding is available. Nancy felt that folks should look into the course.

The information would be better presented like this:

Leadership Development Program: Information provided. Total cost is \$1,760. Applications to the Congregational Learning Fund are available to help pay the cost.

What NOT to Include in Minutes

- private and confidential information, such as details on clergy misconduct, illnesses, etc.
- gossip or informal discussion
- advertisements for events
- copies of reports received simply for information and not essential for understanding the business and discussion of the meeting (Reports submitted for approval should be included in an appendix.)
- correspondence; this should be filed separately
- any information additional to the business discussion and actions taken at the meeting
- relevant information discovered after the end of the meeting
- opinions not expressed during the meeting or editorial comments

Disposition of Motions

Motions must include the full names of the mover and the seconder:

Motion: Nancy Drew/Joe Hardy

That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved. Carried

What to Include in an Appendix

Generally, the appendix is reserved for any document that was the basis of discussion or played an important role in the decision of the court. Such a document is normally prepared for the meeting and made available to all members of the court. Reports that are given orally are usually summarized in the body of the minutes.

More specifically, you might include in an appendix

- audited year-end financial reports
- committee reports received for approval
- commissioned reports received for approval

Include the appendices within the sequential pagination scheme of the minutes.

Do NOT include documents (reports, correspondence, etc.) that are personal and confidential.

Contents of Minutes

(adapted from united-church.ca)

Names of members

- Include people present, regrets, corresponding members, guests, recorder.
- Use full names, e.g., Mary Smith, not M. Smith.
- Include titles, e.g., Chairperson, General Secretary.

Meeting Details – Include date, time and place, and state that a quorum was declared present.

Worship – Include opening prayer, scripture, etc.

Minutes of last meeting

- A motion, or a statement that the minutes of the last meeting (date) were presented/circulated and approved.

Business – Use a heading for each subject in bold type.

Decision-making

- If decision making by consensus, include “It was agreed...” in bold.
- Record motions verbatim with the action decided upon reflected fully in the motion statement.
- Use bold print for motions.
- Full names of mover and seconder.
- Disposal of motions clearly indicated (e.g., carried, deferred, defeated, amended, etc.).

Adjournment – Record time meeting adjourns

Signatures – Include full name and position, e.g. Chairperson, staff resource, etc., below the signature.

Format of Minutes

- Margins minimum 0.7 in. (top and sides), allowing for storage and binding.
- Single space; double space before headings.
- True Type, fonts 10 to 14, with 12-point Times New Roman being the usual.
- Consecutive page numbering, preferably two-sided. All white spaces, including blank sides of pages should be struck out with a single ruled diagonal line. Include appendices in consecutive page numbering.
- Boldface headings
- Acronyms: Give full name of the organization followed by the abbreviation in brackets the first time it is mentioned for each meeting. The acronym is sufficient for subsequent references in the same meeting.
- Typed minutes are preferred; hand written minutes in ink are also acceptable.

Maintenance of Typed Minutes

- Typed minutes will preferably be kept in a binder for professional perfect-binding approximately every 10 years or 600 pages (300 sheets). Records which do not exceed 50 pages may be bound together with the minutes of another committee. There must be only one official copy of each committee's minutes. Alternatively, typed minutes may be well-pasted (not taped) into a pre-bound meeting book.

Professional Binding

The Archives Committee has negotiated the following prices with Bill Wicks at Royal Bookbinders in Charlottetown.

If you deliver your minutes to a Presbytery Meeting, the Archives Committee can have your minutes bound and delivered to you by the following meeting.

Questions? Call or email Keith Gale, Chair of Archives
(902) 962-2519
keith.gale@gmail.com

Royal Bookbinders
36 Palmers Lane
(902) 566-9274

For hard-cover perfect-binding:

Single records
\$38 (gold/silver leaf text on cover and spine)
\$28 each (no text)

Three or more sets of minutes bound at a time
\$20 each (text)
\$15 each (no text)

