

# Effective Ways to take Meeting Minutes



Kathy Bizoukas  
Daughters of Penelope  
Grand Secretary

Washington, DC  
September 22, 2018

# How to Take Minutes at a Meeting

Taking good minutes at a meeting is an important and fulfilling role. Meeting minutes are more than a general accounting of membership discussions; *they serve as an official and legal record of the meeting of the membership.* Minutes are used in a variety of ways including tracking progress, detailing future plans, and serving as a reference point. Among other things, your meeting minutes should reflect a record of motions, votes, and abstentions.

## Taking Meeting Minutes – Step by Step

In your role as secretary, you'll essentially have *four steps* involved with recording effective meeting minutes. You'll need to spend a little time planning **before the meeting**, take notes **during the meeting**, and writing a formal report **after the meeting**. You'll also be responsible for filing and sharing the minutes of each meeting.

### Step 1: Preparation for the Meeting

Every organization records their minutes a little bit differently. Have a discussion with your president about the format. Review past meeting minutes to use as a template. Ask the president for a copy of the meeting agenda, any correspondence, and any guests or speakers that may be attending.

### Step 2: Taking a Record of the Meeting

You can either type them out or write them longhand. The two most important things to know when taking the record of the meeting is what information to record and how to present it.

Meeting minutes **should** include:

- Date of the meeting
- Time the meeting was called to order
- Names of the meeting participants and absentees
- Corrections and amendments to previous meeting minutes
- Additions to the current agenda
- Whether a quorum is present
- Motions taken or rejected
- Voting-that there was a motion and second, and the outcome of the vote
- Actions taken or agreed to be taken
- New business
- Time of adjournment

How you detail the discussions during a meeting is as important as making sure to include all of the information in the bullets shown above.

Record discussions objectively, avoiding inflammatory remarks and personal observations. A good way to do this is by avoiding adjectives and adverbs whenever possible.

Check your language to be sure that it is clear, unambiguous, and complete.

As noted earlier, minutes are an official and legal record of the meeting. Keep information basic and language simple to avoid any complications.

**Use names only when recording motions and seconds.**

After the meeting, you will want to write the formal record when everything is still fresh in your mind, so prepare the record as soon after the meeting as you possibly can.

### *Step 3: Writing the Official Record of the Meeting Minutes*

Review the agenda to gain the full scope of the meeting. Add notes for clarification. Review actions, motions, votes, and decisions for clarity. Edit the record so that the minutes are succinct, clear, and easy to read.

It's better to attach meeting handouts and documents that were referred to during the meeting to the final copy, rather than summarizing the contents in the minutes.

### *Step 4: Signing, Filing, and Sharing Minutes*

Once your meeting minutes are fully written, you are responsible for making them official by signing the minutes.

The President's signature should also be added after the minutes have been approved by drawing a line at the end or bottom of the minutes and signing.

Follow your organization's by-laws and protocols. It's a good idea to have back-up copies either in print, a hard drive, or "In the Cloud" or on "Google Drive"

The secretary also has the responsibility for sharing minutes. Make sure the president has approved the minutes before sharing in print or online.

### *Common Mistakes in Taking Meeting Minutes*

- Failure to document a quorum
- Ambiguous description of member actions
- Including information that could harm a member or the chapter
- Lengthy delays in providing minutes after a meeting
- Delays in approving minutes from past meetings-missing mistakes
- Failing to file and manage documents
- Failing to get documents signed so they serve as an official record

Always be mindful that the purpose of taking meeting minutes is to reflect the true intentions of the membership and that they are official and of history record. Given the detail and complexity of proper documentation of meeting minutes, we find using a template as a tool, helps make this work easier and more efficient, and can ultimately elevate organizational performance. As serious as the job is, the task of taking and preparing minutes is a rewarding and edifying experience.

# Daughters of Penelope

Chapter Name and No. \_\_\_\_\_

## **AGENDA**

Date of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Place \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting opened at (time)

Installation of Officers (p.21)

Escort of Visitors (Dignitaries)(p.10)

### **Roll Call of Officers**

President-\_\_\_\_\_

Vice President-\_\_\_\_\_

Recording Secretary-\_\_\_\_\_

Corresponding Secretary-\_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer-\_\_\_\_\_

Warden-\_\_\_\_\_

*(Duty is to Open & Close Chapter Room & Keeper of Property)*

Priestess-\_\_\_\_\_

*(Open & Close meetings with a Prayer)*

Marshal-\_\_\_\_\_

*(To assist President in conduct of the meetings)*

Sentinel-\_\_\_\_\_

*(Guard of the Entrance to the Chapter Room)*

Parliamentarian-\_\_\_\_\_

*(Duty is to know Robert's Rules of Order)*

INITIATION of new Members (p.11)

### **Reading of the Minutes and any Special Meetings**

Reading of (Month) Minutes

### **Report of the Treasurer**

Checking Account \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Savings Account \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Special Account \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### **Correspondence from: (In this order)**

Supreme Lodge

Grand Lodge

District Lodge

Local Sources

**\*\*ALL LETTERS ARE ACTED UPON IMMEDIATELY AFTER THEY ARE READ\*\***

**Standing Committee Reports**

- 1) Sunshine
- 2) Education
- 3) Program-
- 4) Membership
  - *Membership applications are to be presented at this time*
- 5) Publication
  - *Penelope's Scroll Issues (January 15 and May 15)*
- 6) Special Committees
- 7) Maids of Athena

Unfinished Business

New Business

Bills Against the Order *(Read by Treasurer and Act upon)*

*Election of officers-(April, May, June)\* (Article XXII of the Constitution p.42-44)*

Special Announcements *(From the President-Reminders)*

Good of the Order *(From members and guests)*

Coin March *(optional)*

Closing Prayer

Meeting Adjourned at: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Board of Governors

Chairperson- (The retiring Past President)

Members- (3 to 5 members who are elected)

# Daughters of Penelope

Chapter Name and No. \_\_\_\_\_

## **MEETING MINUTES**

Date of Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Place \_\_\_\_\_

The meeting was called to order at \_\_\_\_\_ pm by President \_\_\_\_\_

Opening prayer was read by \_\_\_\_\_

### **Roll Call of Officers:** (Present or Absent)

- President-Sister \_\_\_\_\_
- Vice President-Sister \_\_\_\_\_
- Recording Secretary-Sister \_\_\_\_\_
- Corresponding Secretary-Sister \_\_\_\_\_
- Treasurer-Sister \_\_\_\_\_

### **Initiation-** (Member's names who were initiated)

### **Reading of the Minutes-**

The Minutes from (date of last minutes) were sent via email or regular mail or read  
Minutes were approved as (read or corrected)

### **Report of the Treasurer:**

As of (date)

Checking Account \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Savings Account \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Scholarship Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Special Account \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### **Correspondence:**

(Can review blogs and newsletters online at [www.daughtersofpenelope.org](http://www.daughtersofpenelope.org))

- **Grand Lodge**
- **District Lodge**
- **Local Sources**

**(All letters are acted upon immediately after they are read)**

### **Committee Reports**

1) Sunshine and Sorrow –  
Cards sent to-

- 

2) Education- Scholarship Committee

3) Program-

- 

4) Membership-

- 

5) Publication- can view online at [www.daughtersofpenelope.org](http://www.daughtersofpenelope.org)

- 

6) Special Committees-

- 

7) Maids of Athena-

- 

### **Unfinished Business:**

- 

### **New Business**

- 

### **Bills Against the Order**

- 

### **Special Announcements** *(President's announcements)*

- Dues are now being accepted by our "Dues Secretary" Sister Georgianne
- *Upcoming Events-*
- 

### **Good of the Order** *(Members and Guests make speak at this time)*

- At each meeting we will be giving a tip about Parliamentary Procedures/Meeting Room Etiquette.

Sister \_\_\_\_\_ moved to close the meeting  
2<sup>nd</sup> by Sister \_\_\_\_\_ **-Motion Passed**

The meeting adjourned at (time) by President \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)  
Chapter President