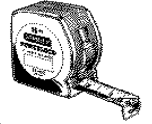




toolbox





On taking effective minutes

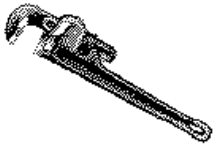


In most community groups having a record of meetings is a vital part of being effective. The group's recorder holds the responsibility of making sure the minutes accurately reflect the course of the meeting by recording discussions, decisions and actions, and task assignments.







Taking minutes for a group meeting can be a difficult task, from deciding what is pertinent to be recorded to making sure the facts are straight. In our own hometown, Brushy Fork found the answers to some of the questions we've been asked about taking minutes. The Berea Community School's Committee on Committees compiled a list of suggestions to other school committees about what to include in minutes. This list was designed to fit the situation at the school, so not all the suggestions are pertinent to community groups. But these ideas will provide a good start for recorders who may be unclear on how to go about taking good minutes.

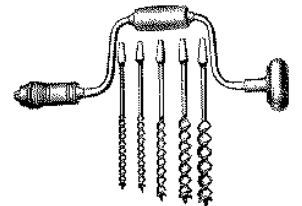
The minimum:

-  Committee name
-  Date of meeting
-  Names of committee members present
-  Any decisions made







Good to include:



-  Time the meeting began and ended
-  Names of others present, if they chose to introduce themselves
-  Summary of major points made in reports and discussions
-  Names of people who presented reports
-  Attachments of documents relevant to the committee's discussions
-  Follow-up summary: who agreed to do what

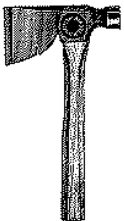


Avoid:

-  Point-by-point account of discussions
-  Specifying who said what in a discussion
-  Reports on off-track discussions
-  Optional items that could embarrass someone

Other considerations (added by Brushy Fork):

-  The minutes should be approved at the next meeting
-  Copies of minutes should be sent to all group members (especially helpful to inform those who were not present!). The group might choose to send minutes to anyone else they want to keep informed of their work, such as local officials or stakeholders in the group's efforts.



—adapted from a handout designed by
Berea Community School Committee on Committees



Brushy Fork Institute

Appalachian Leadership and Development

www.berea.edu/brushyfork