

Nancy Sylvester, MA, PRP, CPP-T

Agenda and Script Lead to Better Meeting Minutes

Unless you have had a tremendous amount of practice in writing minutes of a meeting, you most likely find minutes writing an arduous task that is excruciatingly painful. There are two documents that can make the task of minutes writing much easier and more accurate. Those two documents are directly interrelated to the minutes. They are the agenda and the meeting script.

The preparation process should proceed like this: The agenda is prepared. The meeting script is written with the headings from the agenda guiding what should be in the script and done in the meeting. The agenda and the script, as well as the actual meeting itself, should make the writing of the minutes much easier and more accurate.

If a meeting script is a new concept to you, let me explain it. Its purpose is to assist the presiding officer in running a smooth meeting. It follows the same organization as the agenda. For each item on the agenda it gives the verbiage that the presiding officer will be using. It also gives the wording of the motions that you know in advance will be made.

A script can range from a few thoughts per item to the actual words the presiding officer will be using for each item. The amount of detail is based on the presiding officer's experience at presiding and how comfortable the presiding officer is with the meeting subject and situation. For example, scripts are very useful to the brand new presiding officer and to the presiding officer who is about to preside at a meeting that he/she knows is going to be extremely controversial.