



CITY OF WASILLA

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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM NO. 97-25

FROM: Clerk's Office

DATE: May 13, 1997

The following information was created originally under CP. No. 97-04 on April 7, 1997 to explain the reasons behind the minute format. CP. No. 97-04 Substitute #2 was adopted by the Wasilla Council on May 12, 1997 and the information below is not a part of that Council Policy. This information memorandum is being created to preserve this information for the future reference. A copy of CP. No. 97-04 Substitute is also attached for information.

TITLE: Minute Format

Minutes are the official written record of what transpired during a meeting. Minutes serve the important function of being a permanent record of the subjects discussed, conclusions reached, actions taken and assignments given. Minutes also inform those absent from the meeting of action taken. Minutes are often consulted for purposes of verification of action taken and are frequently examined by auditors. Many other documents are part of the complete record of the meeting and are provided at meetings giving information on issues discussed. These documents are tracked through the Clerk's Office in the form of Ordinances, Resolutions, Council or Information memoranda. Meetings are also taped and tapes are retained for seven (7) years (statute of limitation). If action of the Council resulted in a court case, documents are easily located and those sections of the meeting tape can be transcribed verbatim. Because minutes are of a permanent and legal nature, they are prima facie evidence of what transpired at a meeting and are accorded evidentiary weight by courts. Individual Council Members may ask for specific items to be added to the record.


There are three distinctive styles Action, Discussion & Verbatim. After many years of debate on the issue, the City of Wasilla has elected to utilize the style of Action Minute taking. This style is the most efficient manner in which to convey what business was transacted and what actions were taken, a summary covering points to be remembered.

Discussion Minutes are not recommended due the fact that the secretary is left with trying to summarize each point made and there is much room for misinterpretation. Many times when we make statements, we have a specific intent in mind however, some of the meaning may be lost or again, be misinterpreted.

The final style is Verbatim. This is a "word for word" account of what has taken place, which does include all of the, ah, um, etc., sounds made. This is an extremely time consuming process. The recording system picks up all discussion and comments made by Council Members whether it is meant for the official record or not. When verbatim minutes are used the secretary must type every word exactly as it is on the tape recording of the meeting and does not have the editorial license of correcting any grammar.

Recommend that minutes of Council meetings:

1. remain in an action minute format;
2. Persons To Be Heard, Commission and Staff Reports remain in summary form;
3. Audience Comments remain un-summarized; and
4. Council Comments be summarized only when it is stated "for the record".
5. Establish a policy on Persons To Be Heard with a 5 minute time limit and that any requested action would be placed on the next agenda schedule for consideration of the requested action or referred to staff, committee or commission.



Marjorie D. Harris, CMC
City Clerk

COUNCIL POLICY NO 97-04 SUBSTITUTE

Title: Council Meeting Minute Format

In accordance with WMC 2.12.040, Minutes, the City Council hereby adopts the following policy.

Written minutes are the official permanent record of what transpired during a Council meeting or Council worksession. Meetings and worksessions are also taped and these tapes shall be retained for seven (7) years.

The Council has elected to utilize the expanded action style minute taking as this style is the most efficient manner in which to convey what business was transacted, what actions were taken and a summary covering points to be remembered. Persons to be Heard, Commission and Staff Reports, Audience Comments and Council Comments shall remain in summary form.

The Council, by motion, may insert verbatim transcriptions to the minutes of specific agenda topics, as appropriate.

Adopted this _____ day of _____ 1997.

SARAH H. PALIN, Mayor

MARJORIE D. HARRIS, CMC
City Clerk

*Failed
4/28/97*

Council Policy No. 97-04 (Substitute #2)

Title: Minute Format

Minutes are the official written record of what transpires during a council meeting. Minutes shall be taped and tapes retained for a minimum of seven (7) years. In those cases where Council action resulted in court action, the tapes shall be retained for seven (7) years beyond the last date of court action. The minutes shall be summarized by the clerk from the tape, using the Action Minute style of summary, and shall be submitted to the council for approval at the next regular council meeting.

Persons To Be Heard, Commission and Staff Reports shall be in summary form.

Audience Comments and Council Comments shall remain un-summarized unless it is stated that the comment is to be "on the record".

Requests for verbatim transcripts of meetings or portions thereof shall be authorized by vote of the Council.

Adopted (etc.etc.)