

Public Body Checklist for Creating and Approving Meeting Minutes

Issued by the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General's Division of Open Government
November 2024

Accurate minutes must be created and maintained for all public body meetings, both open session and executive session. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a).

- ☐ Minutes must accurately set forth the date, time, and place of the meeting, and list the public body members present or absent. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a).
- ☐ Minutes must include an accurate summary of the discussion of each subject, including unanticipated subjects. See G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a). The summary does not need to be a transcript but must provide enough detail so that a member of the public who did not attend the meeting could read the minutes and understand what occurred and how the public body arrived at its decisions. In general, it is insufficient for meeting minutes to simply state that a discussion about a particular topic occurred; instead, the minutes must actually summarize the discussion.
- ☐ The minutes must include a record of all the decisions made and the actions taken at each meeting, including a record of all votes. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a). If a vote is taken by roll call, the minutes must record the vote by roll call, even if the result was unanimous.
- ☐ The minutes must include a list of all of the documents and other exhibits used by the public body during the meeting. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a). Documents and exhibits used at the meeting are part of the official record of the session, but do not need to be attached to the minutes. See G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(d), (e).
- ☐ If one or more public body members participates remotely in the meeting, the minutes must include the name(s) of the individual(s) participating remotely. 940 CMR 29.10(7)(b).
- ☐ If one or more public body members participates remotely in the meeting, all votes must be taken by roll call and the minutes must record the votes by roll call, even if the results are unanimous. 940 CMR 29.10(7)(c).
- ☐ Executive session minutes must include the same level of detail as is required for open session minutes.
- ☐ When meeting in executive session, all votes must be taken by roll call and the minutes must record the votes by roll call, even if the results are unanimous. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(b).
- ☐ Open session minutes must be approved in a timely manner. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(c). A “timely manner” will generally be considered to be within the next **three** public body meetings or within **30 days**, whichever is later, unless the public body can show good cause for further delay. 940 CMR 29.11(2). Executive session minutes must be “create[d] and maintain[ed]” and “review[ed]” “at reasonable intervals” to determine whether continued nondisclosure is warranted. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a), (g)(1); OML 2024-158; OML 2024-29.

Note that this checklist is intended as an educational guide, and does not constitute proof of compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Checklists are updated periodically, so please confirm that you are using the most current version. For questions, please contact the Attorney General's Division of Open Government at 617-963-2540 or via email at openmeeting@mass.gov. For more information on the Open Meeting Law, please visit www.mass.gov/ago/openmeeting.