

October 3, 2011

Re: Study Guide for NJ Municipal Clerks (v2004) - page 3-27,28

The minutes of public meetings are an essential record of the actions of your elected and appointed public officials.

The Board Secretary must follow the requirements of the NJ Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) when preparing and distributing these meeting minutes.

On the following pages you will find pages 3-27,28 of the *2004 Study Guide for Municipal Clerks* - a guide that all public Board Secretaries AND local officials should become familiar with to make sure they are in compliance with OPMA.

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Book
2004

SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNING BODY

VI. MINUTES

- A. Each public body shall keep reasonably comprehensible minutes of all its meetings showing the time and place, the members present, the subjects considered, the actions taken, the vote of each member, and any other information required to be shown in the minutes by law, which shall be promptly available to the public to the extent that making such matters public shall not be inconsistent with *N.J.S.A. 10:4-7* (Legislative Findings and Declarations)

Note - Minutes as outlined above pertain to all meetings: Regular, Special, Emergency and Closed Sessions.

- B. Minutes of every meeting must be prepared in writing as soon as possible after the conclusion of the meeting. The definition of meetings include both regular/ action meetings and conference/agenda sessions, and any special meetings. Executive session minutes must also be prepared in writing.
- C. All minutes must be listed on the next agenda for approval by the Governing Body. Approval of the minutes, and any corrections to the minutes, must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which they are considered for approval.
- D. Closed session minutes should be confidentially circulated, listed separately for approval and maintained in a separate binder from the open session minutes, and approved in the same manner as open session minutes. They should be reviewed periodically with the Municipal Attorney for release to the public.
- E. Minutes are defined in Roberts Rules of Order as a record of what is done at the meeting and not what is said. They should include sufficient detail so that a person reading the minutes at some point in the future can understand what took place at a given meeting.
- F. Resolutions must be spread in full in the minutes, including the motion and roll call vote.
- G. Some municipalities maintain resolutions, ordinances and bill lists (vouchers and warrants) in separate volumes and refer to them by title or number in the minutes. (Consult with your Auditor before deviating from the process of spreading these in full in the minutes.)
- H. The Municipal Clerk must sign minutes in all municipalities. In Faulkner municipalities, the minutes must be signed by the Municipal Clerk and the Mayor or Presiding Officer.

SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNING BODY

- I. Minutes, except closed session minutes which have not been authorized for release to the public by the Governing Body, must be accessible to the public. If a member of the public requests a copy of the minutes before they are approved by the Governing Body, mark the minutes "Draft Copy, subject to approval of the Governing Body."
- J. Fee may be charged for copies of minutes. See Chapter 4, Section XIII D for information on fees.