

minuteTakers

13795 Chinguacousy Road, Caledon, ON L7C 3H4

EFFICIENT MEETING POINTERS

The Chair (usually the President) must understand the fundamentals of running a meeting to avoid inefficiency and chaos. A review of Roberts Rules of Order (or similar protocol such as Wainberg's) will provide a good basis; however, there is no need for undue formality. Keep it simple.

All members should recognize the primary purpose of Board meetings and focus on their collective responsibility: the conduct the business of the corporation and to make decisions in the best interests of the corporation.

Board meetings are not a forum for promoting personal agendas or a soapbox for airing individual opinions. Discussions should clearly focus on the issue at hand with decisions to be arrived at by majority vote. If a decision cannot be reached within a reasonable time frame, the chair should direct attention to what is still required to facilitate a good decision, i.e. is more information required? Should the matter be referred to a committee for review and recommendation? This would then be noted in the minutes as the action item, on the premise that a decision can then be finalized at the following meeting.

1. **Call to Order** – After confirming that a quorum is present, the Chair formally calls the meeting to order, which signals that a meeting is open for the discussion of official business.
2. **Agenda** – If a review of the previously-circulated agenda is the normal practice of the assembly, the Chair should ask whether there are any additions or amendments to the made to the agenda. The Chair will then call for a Motion to accept the agenda as presented, or amended.
3. **Previous Minutes** – The Chair should ask whether there are any errors or omissions in the minutes of the previous meeting. Good minutes should concisely capture the issues/business transacted and their related outcomes/decisions. Any changes that are proposed should consist of such amendment as is deemed by the majorityof the Board to be necessary to ensure the accuracy of the Minutes of a record of the business that was transacted by the Board at that meeting; minor issues relating to grammar, editorial preferences, added detail etc. are not material to the accuracy of the minutes as a corporate record. The approved amendments are then documented in the next Minutes (this ensures transparency and evidences proper authorization of the changes that were agreed to). If a question regarding an item on the previous minutes does not relate to an amendment, it should be deferred for discussion under “Business Arising from the Minutes”.

4. **Management/Committee Reports** – Prior to the meeting, all members should have done their individual due diligence in reviewing the reports that were provided in advance. As such, there is no need to “re-hash” each item on the report. The Chair can simply ask the manager or committee chair to highlight items requiring decision or to make special note of pertinent information, particularly if Board direction in terms of further action is required.
5. **Conducting Business** – The Chair should ensure that every item is properly concluded; either in the form of an Action, Decision/Motion, or simply noted as completed. If a discussion has become complex or lengthy, it is good practice for the Chair to briefly summarize the outcome to ensure clarity.
6. **Motions** – Although the Chair is entitled to express an opinion on a matter, it is generally good practice for a Chair to maintain neutrality as far as possible. To bring a matter to a conclusion, the Chair can ask for a Motion to be proposed; however, it is advisable for someone other than the Chair to actually make or second a Motion. If the Chair is a director, in most cases he/she is permitted to vote and can sometimes act as a tie-breaker. The recording secretary is trained in formulating motions; however, depending on the complexity of the matter, in some cases it may be prudent to request the recording secretary to read back a Motion to ensure that it accurately captures the outcome.
7. **Other Business** – The Chair will allow each member of the assembly to table an item for information or for further discussion (in such cases, it should be noted that the item will be added to the next meeting’s agenda). If a decision is requested, the Chair should only entertain it if it is clear that the assembly is in a position to make a ruling on the issue at that time; otherwise, the matter should be tabled.
8. **Date of Next Meeting** – This is important for the purpose of providing proper notice of the next meeting, the Chair should ensure that this date is confirmed so that all present have an opportunity to make a note.
9. **Meeting Conclusion** – It is important for the Chair to keep track of the time in an effort to conclude the meeting within a 2-hour time frame. After this length of time, good decision are not typically possible, due to fatigue, etc.