



Town of Hamilton Policy

RE: **Law and Policy Regarding Meeting Minutes**

Affected: (X) All employees (X) Boards (X) Committees (X) Elected
(X) Appointed (X) Town Wide

Issue Date: September 24, 2018

Effective Date: November 1, 2018

Policy Type: (X) New () Amendment

All board and committee members are required to be informed of the requirements of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25 and the Attorney General's regulations, 940 CMR 29.00. The Board of Selectmen is concerned that the law is not being uniformly applied. In addition, adoption of across-the-board conventions will assist the Town in filing, locating, and producing minutes as needed. This policy summarizes legal requirements applicable to meeting minutes and supplements those requirements.

Every multiple-member board, commission, committee, or subcommittee within town, however created, elected, appointed, or otherwise constituted, established to serve a public purpose is a "public body" and must conform to the Open Meeting Law. Among other obligations, that means that each public body must create, approve, and maintain meeting minutes.

Each public body shall nominate someone to be responsible for ensuring that accurate meeting minutes are created, typically a Secretary. Some public bodies will have a professional minutes secretary hired by the Town to keep minutes. For those public bodies that do not have access to such a person, a member of the public body must create the minutes.

Meeting minutes must include the following information:

- The date, time, and place of the meeting
- Identification of all members present and absent
- A record of all decisions made and actions taken
- A record of all votes
- A summary of the discussion on each subject. Note: a transcript is not required
- If any vote is taken in executive session or while a member participates remotely, the vote must be by roll call and the minutes must reflect the roll call vote
- If a member participates remotely, the name of the remote participant and the reason under 940 CMR 29.10(5) for the remote participation
- A list of the documents and other exhibits used at the meeting. These records must be maintained, but need not be physically attached to the minutes
- The results of any review of executive session minutes as to whether they will continue to be withheld from public disclosure or released to the public.

Minutes must be created and approved in a timely manner. The law does not define what is timely, but public bodies should use their best efforts to ensure that minutes are approved within two subsequent meetings.

Open session and executive session minutes should be separate documents. Once approved, the Secretary signs those minutes, which become part of the official records of the Town. The open session minutes are available to the public and should be posted on the Town website. Executive session minutes should be maintained in a confidential file and only posted on the Town website when the reason for the executive session no longer requires that the minutes be withheld from disclosure.

The public body or its chair or designee shall periodically review the minutes of executive sessions to determine if the minutes should still be exempt from public disclosure. The determination must be announced at the next meeting of the public body.

Liaisons and File Naming Conventions

Each public body shall have a town employee as a liaison. A list of liaisons is included below.

The liaison is responsible for:

- Ensuring agendas, minutes of open sessions, and open session handouts are posted to the Town website in OCR (Optical character recognition) Format
- Ensuring that copies of approved meeting minutes are filed with the Town Clerk
- Ensuring Executive Session meeting minutes are posted to the Town website when authorized or required
- Maintaining contact information for all members.

The liaison will ensure that all agendas, minutes, and records used in meetings are maintained on the Town server in accordance with the file naming convention. A file name is the chief identifier for a record. File naming conventions are key to maintaining well-organized electronic directory and drive structures. This will assist Records Access Officers when responding to public records requests.

Benefits of consistent file and folder naming are:

- Files are easily distinguished one from another
- File names are easier to browse
- Retrieval is facilitated for all users (not just the file's creator)

The Town's file name convention is:

1. Keep file names short and relevant.

2. Use the format Year-Month-Day (four digit year, two digit month, two digit day): YYYYMMDD to start all agenda, and meeting files. This will maintain chronological order.

Examples:

Conservation Committee Agenda March 6, 2017
Conservation Committee Agenda March 6, 2007
Maple Street ANR dated 07/8/2018
2016 Annual Report

Use this Format

20170306_CC_Agenda
20070306_CC_Agenda
20180708_MapleSt_ANR
2016_Annual Report

Versions

- ✓ The version number of a record should be indicated in its file name by using “v” followed by the version number.
- ✓ Use the letter “d” to indicate a draft.

THIS: 2018OrgChart_v02

NOT THIS: Org Chart 2018 rev

THIS: 2018OrgChart_d

NOT THIS: Draft Org Chart 2018

**Town of Hamilton
Recommended Board/Committee Employee Liaison List**

Board/Committee/Agency	Employee Liaison
Board of Assessors	Director of Assessors
Board of Health	BOH Administrative Assistant
Board of Selectmen	Assistant to the Town Manager
Chebacco Woods Management Committee	CC Coordinator
Community Preservation Committee	CPC Coordinator
Conservation Commission	CC Coordinator
Council on Aging	COA Director
Finance and Advisory Committee	Assistant to the Town Manager
Hamilton Affordable Housing Trust	CPC Coordinator
Hamilton Development Corporation	CPC Coordinator
Hamilton Foundation	Assistant to the Town Manager
Hamilton Housing Authority	CPC Coordinator
Hamilton Wenham Cultural Council Committe	Assistant to the Town Manager
Hamilton Wenham Public Library Trustees	Library Director
Hamilton Wenham Recreation Board	Recreation Director
Historic District Commission	CPC Coordinator
Planning Board	Director of Planning and Inspections
Veterans Services	Veterans' Agent
Zoning Board of Appeals	Director of Planning and Inspections
Waste Reduction Committee	Director of Public Works
Open Space Committee	CC Coordinator
Town Hall Building Committee	Director of Public Works

**Adopted: September 24, 2018
By vote of the Board of Selectmen**