

CD MEETING MINUTE FACT SHEET

CD MEETING MINUTE STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Conservation districts (CDs) are subject to statutory requirements for submitting meeting minutes. CDs are required by law to submit meeting minutes to their County Clerk and Recorder and DNRC to be in compliance with the law. The statutes are available in the [Accountability Assessment](#) and as follows:

76-15-315. Administrative functions of supervisors (3) The supervisors shall furnish to the department copies of ordinances, rules, orders, contracts, forms, and other documents that they adopt or employ and other information concerning their activities that may be required in the performance of their duties under this chapter.

76-15-324. Minutes. The board of supervisors shall submit the minutes of its proceedings for electronic storage within 30 days after the minutes have been approved by that body for electronic storage and retention in accordance with the provisions of Title 2, chapter 6, part 12. The board of supervisors shall submit the minutes for electronic storage to the county clerk and recorder of each county within the jurisdiction of the district.

Submit copies of the minutes to DNRC through its online CD meeting minute portal here: https://mtdnrc.formstack.com/forms/conservation_district_meeting_minutes_submission_form.

MEETING MINUTE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Meeting minutes are more than a summary of actions; they are a permanent historical document describing all conservation district business and events. Minutes record decisions made, projects accomplished, policies set, and the people involved or affected. Minutes also provide documentation that a CD conducted business according to the laws and rules they are required to follow.

The public participation in governmental operations section of the law (2-3-212, MCA) states those minutes shall be kept and made available for inspection by the public. *According to the law, minutes shall include, without limitation, the following:*

1. The date, time, and place of the meeting.
2. A list of individual members of the public body, agency, or organization in attendance.
3. The substance of all matters proposed, discussed, or decided.
4. A record of votes taken by individual members if requested.



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MEETING MINUTE GUIDELINES AND TIPS

- CDs should not discuss official business without a quorum. Minutes should reflect whether a quorum was present, when the meeting started, and when the meeting adjourned.
- List names (first and last names) of all of those in attendance and whom they represent.
- Official action (items voted requiring a vote) must be documented in the minutes.
- Minutes should be on letterhead, if available, and should include the date and type or purpose of meeting.
- Each page of the minute should be numbered, and the date of the meeting should be included on each page, preferably at the top.
- Record all motions or action with special attention stating exactly what motions were made and their disposition (carried, defeated, tabled, etc.).
- Document approval of the previous month's minutes.
- Document approval of the financial report and the approval to pay bills.
 - MCA 76-15-526 states that "the treasurer shall report in writing at each regular meeting and as often at other times as the supervisors may request the amount of money on hand and the receipts and disbursements since his last report. Such report shall be verified."
- Record all old business even if there is additional follow up in progress on old or unfinished business.
- Record reports by partner organizations and other groups. Describe the discussion generally rather than merely stating that "So and so from XYZ Organization gave a report."
- There is no need to record discussions verbatim, but don't waste ink on a general statement like "discussion held," "board discussed the issue at length." Generally, describe the essence of the discussion and include the outcome of the discussion or leave it out.
- The minutes don't necessarily have to be written in chronological order. If using subheads or rearranging the order makes the minutes clearer, do it.



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- Since minutes are open to the public, keep confidential information out of the minutes. CD employee wages are open to the public. Reasons for personnel action are not necessarily open to the public.
- Public comments. Document the names of those making comments and a summary of what was said.
- Don't editorialize. Statements such as a "a lengthy discussion" or "lively discussion" or "we listened to an excellent presentation on ..." should be omitted. Minutes should not include the writer's opinion— just the facts.
- Note the time and date of the next scheduled meeting date and timep.

Any of the elected board members can sign, but it is best practice to appoint a secretary who is charged with signing minutes and ensuring they are distributed to the board and approved at a subsequent meeting. Otherwise, minutes approved by a quorum of the board can be signed by any elected supervisors.

When at all possible, board meeting minutes should be completed and reviewed/approved by the CD chairperson within one week of the board meeting. Recording minutes while the information is fresh in your mind is important. And, after having the Chairperson review and approve, distributing the board minutes to the full board of supervisors in a timely manner is also important, especially with pending directives. The draft minutes must then be officially approved at the next board meeting.

Copies of signed official minutes must be submitted to your County Clerk and Recorder and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's Conservation Districts Bureau.

Copies can also be sent to the Montana Association of Conservation District and other partners and interested parties as a courtesy.

NOTE: Electronic copies are kept on file for up to four years and then they are forwarded to the Montana Historical Society for storage and/or disposal.

Disclaimer: This information is provided for general information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. The information provided should not be used as a substitute for a legal opinion from your county attorney or otherwise retained and qualified legal counsel. If you need advice regarding a specific legal situation, contact your legal counsel.

