

CEMA
STEPS TO WRITING MINUTES
2017

FOR: All CEMA Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Minutes Writers.

Please review the attached memorandum before you write any minutes for which you are responsible.

The only long-term documents that the Association is required to maintain are the Minutes of Association Meetings. These are Public Records. Public record means public in every respect; e. g., a record report, which can be given out freely to any and all persons requesting it, including any investigators, for any reason.

Many of our minutes contain more detail than necessary. This is a luxury we do not need and cannot afford.

In addition, reference to a remark of some person at the meeting or to the specific position of a company or organization might be misconstrued or taken out of context by someone not familiar with the subject under discussion.

In view of this, unless there is a very valid reason for more detail, a minute item should cover:

- (a) A statement of the problem, or item, before the committee or group
- (b) A statement that the committee discussed this problem (no detail of discussion)
- (c) The decision of the committee, if any, and a brief summary of the reasons
- (d) If there are action items, people who have been appointed to complete them, and schedules for these actions to be accomplished, you should include that information.

There may be an occasion when you might want to spell out in a general manner the two (or more) points of view on the problem presented at the meeting, but no references to persons or companies should be made unless they request this in writing.

You will note in the enclosed example that particular emphasis is placed on the preparation of minutes in order that they reflect the decisions taken.

The minute writing example is a demonstration of how to cut unnecessary detail down to the essential elements of a minute item. This is by no means the only example and is designed only to illustrate a point.

EXAMPLES OF MINUTE WRITING TYPES

Here are two examples of minute items. Let us assume these are extracts from the minutes of USASI Committee XXX 17.76 on Punch-Bowl Ladles.

FIRST - THE UNNECESSARILY VERBOSE TYPE

Item #4 - The Requirement of Teflon Coating - The Committee secretary, M. Alexander A. Arbitrate, stated that he had received a letter dated August 12, 20XX and several telephone calls from Mr. Thomas T. Teffer of the Philadelphia Punch Bowl Ladle Company requesting that USA Standard XXX 17.76 on Punch Bowl Ladles be revised by adding the requirement that all punch bowl ladles be teflon coated to assure full utilization of the punch and to make them easier to clean. A copy of this letter is reproduced as follows:

(Inserted text)

There followed a long discussion on this matter. Mr. Cornelius C. Corning of the Glass Punch Bowl Ladle Company of Glassville, N. Y. objected strenuously, stating that it would be difficult for his company to teflon coat his glass punch bowl ladles. He said to accomplish this would crystallize the glass and present a safety problem to the consumer.

Miss Constance C. Consumption of the Central Consumer Congress stated that she felt the proposal would probably meet with the approval of the consumer as studies by the Tipster Testinq Tank Laboratories of Tifton, Tennessee had shown that not so much punch would be wasted in transferring it from the bowl to the cups. She pointed out, however, that she would have to clear this matter with her Board of Directors, most of who only consumed fruit punch.

Following the discussion and a lunch break, the Committee reconvened and the Chairman, Mr. Carlton C. Charlemagne, III of the Charlemagne Punch Bowl Company of Charlemagne, Connecticut asked the members of the Committee whether or not they were ready to vote on whether or not the requirement that all punch bowl ladles be Teflon coated be added to the other requirements of USA Standard XXX 17.76 on Punch Bowl Ladles.

There followed more discussion by other members of the Committee and Mr. Peter P. Ponchartrain of Peoria, Pennsylvania asked if anyone had checked with the Department of Navy which was the originator of the punch bowl ladle standard. Apparently no one had.

There followed a vote on the question. The vote was 3 for, 2 against, with 23 abstentions. In view of the lack of support, the proposal was dropped.

SECOND - THE PREFERRED METHOD OF MINUTE WRITING

Item #4 - The Requirement of Teflon Coating - The Committee next considered the question of whether the standard (XXX 17.76) be revised by the addition of a requirement that the ladles be Teflon coated.

After discussion, a vote was taken - 3 for, and 2 against, with 23 abstentions. In view of the lack of support, the proposal was dropped. The committee secretary will inform Mr. Teffer, by letter, of the committee decision.