

Presbytery of New Hope

**Handbook
For Clerks of Session**

January 2013

Examples of Minutes Formats

Paragraph format:

The monthly stated meeting of the session of First Presbyterian Church was held at the church at 7:00 pm on Thursday, April 4 with the following members (constituting a quorum) in attendance: Sarah Bellum, Guy Wire, Angie O'Plasty, and Sandy Beach. Elder Steve Smith was excused.

The meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev. Manny Words, Moderator, after which the minutes of the session meeting of March 3 were read and approved.

The following committee reports were given:

Sarah Bellum, Chairperson of the Christian Education Committee, presented a report regarding Vacation Bible School with the following recommendations:

Outline format #1:

The session of First Presbyterian Church met at 7:00 pm on April 4 for its monthly meeting, with prayer by Moderator the Rev. Manny Words.

A quorum was present.

Members present:	Sarah Bellum Guy Wire Angie O'Plasty Sandy Beach
Members excused:	Steve Smith
Visitors present:	none
Previous minutes:	approved as read
Committee reports:	Christian Education 1. VBS 2. Sunday Adult Study

Examples of Minutes Formats, cont'd

Outline format #2:

September 14, 2006 Session Meeting of First Presbyterian Church			
Members Present: Excused: Others Present: Quorum Present: (yes or no)	Agenda: 1. Open with prayer 2. Minutes approval 3. Clerk's report and correspondence 4. Mission report 5. Treasurer's report (etc.)	Meeting Opened: 7:05 pm Meeting Adjourned: 8:55 pm Location: church basement Moderator: Clerk:	
Topic	Discussion/Conclusions	Action	Responsible Party
1.	Session meeting was opened with prayer at 7:05 pm by Pastor Blaster. Minutes were corrected by changing the date of the last meeting.	MSC	Session
2.	Motion made to approve Sarah Bellum as Clerk of Session	MSC	Session

Modified outline/paragraph format:

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CALVINVILLE

Session Meeting

September 14, 1002, Church basement

The monthly stated meeting of the session was called to order with prayer at 7:05 pm by Moderator Pastor Blaster	Called to order with prayer
The following committee reports were given:	Committee reports
Christian Education: VBS will be held June 3-7 at the church.	Christian Education

Taking Minutes

Accuracy is essential

- Minutes must reflect the exact truth of what was said and done
- Minutes are an historical record meant to preserve the record of the Session's and congregation's work throughout time
- Future generations (and sometimes the courts) will refer to them
- The clerk, or a substitute, must be present at all regular and special meetings, to take note and later inscribe them accurately in the permanent record

Tips for taking minutes

- Record only that which is vital to the transaction of the business: minutes should be as brief as possible, but long enough to tell the story
 - As soon as possible after the meeting, send copies of the minutes to the pastor or moderator, as there may be items of unfinished business that require thought and preparation before presentation at the next meeting
 - All motions that are passed should be recorded, using the exact wording of the motion as it was proposed
 - It is not necessary to record the names of those making or seconding motions
 - It is not necessary to record the number of votes for or against a motion, except in rare occasions
 - Motions that are lost are not recorded, except in rare occasions
 - Avoid descriptive terms, whether complimentary or otherwise, as minutes should not reflect any opinion or promote any particular view of events
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Checklist for Session Meeting Minutes

To be included in each meeting's minutes:

- _____ Name of Session; date, time, place of meeting
 - _____ Stated (or special) meeting called to order with prayer, by (name of Moderator) at (time)
 - _____ If special meeting, state purpose for meeting as it was presented to members
 - _____ Roll of members, pastor, guest(s); record of the presence of a quorum (1/3 of the elders, but no less than 2)
 - _____ Reading and approval of the minutes of previous meeting(s); corrections noted, when necessary
 - _____ Reading or highlighting of correspondence received; referral of correspondence noted (*any actions taken as a result of correspondence will be handled under Old or New Business*)
 - _____ Clerk's report, including weddings, baptisms, funerals, communion served (including to the homebound and hospitalized) and which elders were involved. Baptisms held outside of regular congregational worship should be noted, including the names of elders and ministers participating
 - _____ Motions passed, and also motions not passed that involved a great deal of discussion.
 - _____ Committee reports, briefly summarized
 - _____ Treasurer's report, and action taken to receive the report
 - _____ Motions to adjourn, closing prayer, date and place of next meeting
 - _____ Signature of clerk
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Checklist for Congregational Meeting Minutes:

- _____ Name of congregation; date, time and place of meeting
 - _____ Annual (or special) meeting convened with prayer by (name of Moderator)
 - _____ If special meeting, state purpose for meeting as it was presented to members
 - _____ Certification that a quorum was established
 - _____ Record (in summary) of reports received from the Session and other boards and organizations
 - _____ Election of officers
 - _____ The adequacy of the compensation of the pastor(s) salary(ies) was reviewed
 - _____ The minutes have been signed by both the Moderator and the Clerk
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How Long to Keep Records

Administration:

Annual Reports	Permanent
Bylaws/Charters	Permanent
Contracts	3 years beyond currently active
Incorporation Records	Permanent
Legal Cases	Permanent
Minutes	Permanent
Personnel Records	Duration of employment
Property Records	20 years after sale

Financial:

Accounts payable invoices	3 years
Accounts payable records	7 years
Accounts receivable records	3 years
Audits, annual	Permanent
Bank deposit slips	3 years
Bank statements	7 years
Budgets, annual	Permanent
Cancelled checks	7 years
Cash receipt records	3 years
Expense reports	7 years
FICA/W- records	7 years
Financial records, year-end	Permanent
Financial statements, periodic	2 years
Loan agreements	20 years after satisfaction
Petty Cash Records	7 years
Receipts of purchases	7 years
Wills, bequests	Permanent

Other:

Correspondence, general/routine	3 years
Newsletters	Permanent
Mailing lists	Active/current
Photographs	Permanent
Resource files	Active/current
