



Town of Carlisle

MASSACHUSETTS 01741

Office of

TOWN CLERK

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Carlisle Office of the Town Clerk

Agenda and Minutes Style Guide

To improve the efficiency and efficacy of the business of the Office of the Town Clerk, we request all Boards and Committees standardize their submissions for posting as described here.

Agendas:

- File naming the document:

- Your group's name/abbreviation, followed by the date, and the word "agenda."
 - Example: The Carlisle School Committee Meeting agenda for 1/1/2020 would be saved as "CSC 1.1.2020 Agenda"
- Save as a PDF document and send as an attachment to townclerk@carlislema.gov
- If the agenda is more than one page, please include page numbers, in the form of "Page x of y" where "x" is the current page and "y" is the total pages.
- If you need to send a **revised agenda**:
 - Name the document as above, adding "Rev" and number revisions.
 - Ex: "CSC 1.1.2020 Agenda Rev 1"; if there is a revision after that: "CSC 1.1.2020 Agenda Rev 2"

- Submission deadlines:

- Must be posted **48 hours** before the scheduled meeting time to comply with Open Meeting Law (only business days are counted).
- Submit to townclerk@carlislema.gov **with appropriate time for the office to post.**
- For a morning meeting, agendas need to be submitted before close of business (3:00pm) **three days** before the meeting. As the office doesn't open until 9:00am, we can't guarantee getting to your email and posting the meeting before the 48 hour deadline if the meeting is scheduled before 12:00pm.
 - Ex: Municipal Facilities Committee is meeting at 8am on Thursday. We need the agenda before 3pm on Monday, as we won't be in the office until after the 48 hour deadline.
 - Ex: School Committee is meeting 9:45am on Monday. We need the agenda before 3pm on Wednesday because we need enough time to get to the email submission and post it.
- For an evening meeting, agendas need to be submitted before close of business (3:00pm) two days before the scheduled meeting.

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- Ex: Finance Committee is meeting at 7pm on Tuesday. We need the agenda before 3pm on Friday.
- Please keep to the 48 hour rule when possible. Posting an agenda or revised agenda after the 48 deadline is a gray area and may introduce issue for you with OML.
- **Required content of an agenda:**
 - Full name of the Board or Committee (no abbreviated names)
 - Date, time, and location of the meeting
 - Topics anticipated at the time of calling the meeting

Minutes:

- **File naming the document:**
 - Your group's name/abbreviation, followed by the date, and the word "minutes."
 - Example: The Carlisle School Committee Meeting Minutes for 1/1/2020 would be saved as "CSC 1.1.2020 Minutes"
 - Save as a PDF document and send as an attachment to townclerk@carlislema.gov
- **Required content of the minutes**
 - Date and time of the meeting on the first page.
 - Location of the meeting on the first page.
 - The full group name (no abbreviated names) and the meeting date on each page.
 - Page numbers in the form of "Page x of y"
 - Time the meeting adjourned
 - First and last names of the members present, and names of the members absent.
 - Date Minutes were approved
 - Name of individual submitting Minutes
 - Description (summary) of any discussion that takes place during the meeting that reflects the nature of deliberations (transcript is not required)
 - Description of any public participation during the meeting, including the name and address of the individual participating
 - Subjects acted upon, votes taken (including individual votes of members) and any other actions taken
 - Supplemental information and supporting documents, including reports to the Board/Committee or prepared by the Board/Committee, do not legally need to be submitted with the Minutes. However, they do legally need to be accessible to the public within 10 days and retained in accordance with state schedules. It is the opinion

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of this office that filing these documents with the Minutes will make it easier to comply with Open Meeting Law.

- **All supporting documents need to be saved with the Minutes in one PDF document.** Please do not send supporting documents separately from the minutes. The web system does not allow for more than one Minutes file to be posted. Multiple files also make it more difficult to organize electronically by meeting.

- **Submission deadlines:** The Open Meeting Law requires public bodies to create and approve minutes in a timely manner. A “timely manner” is within the next three public body meetings or 30 days from the date of the meeting, whichever is later, unless the public body can show good cause for further delay. **The Attorney General encourages minutes to be approved at a public body’s next meeting whenever possible.** The law requires that existing minutes be made available to the public within ten days of a request, whether they have been approved or remain in draft form. Materials or other exhibits used by the public body in an open meeting must also be made available to the public within ten days of a request.

Why are you being asked to do this?

- The law still requires we keep physical records of agendas and minutes in addition to our electronic files.
- There are consistently over 50 Boards, Committees, and Working Groups that meet in Carlisle, with the required agendas and minutes. Conforming to this Style Guide will save the office time; we will not need to rename every agenda and minutes document that comes in and will streamline digital and hard copy organization.
- Including the group name, meeting date, and page numbers makes it possible for multi-page minutes to be identified, filed correctly, and to ensure pages are not missing or removed when the public or another Board reviews the files. The public has access to all agendas and minutes that are on file in the Parlin room.

While not necessary for efficiency or efficacy, pleasantries in communication are always appreciated.