

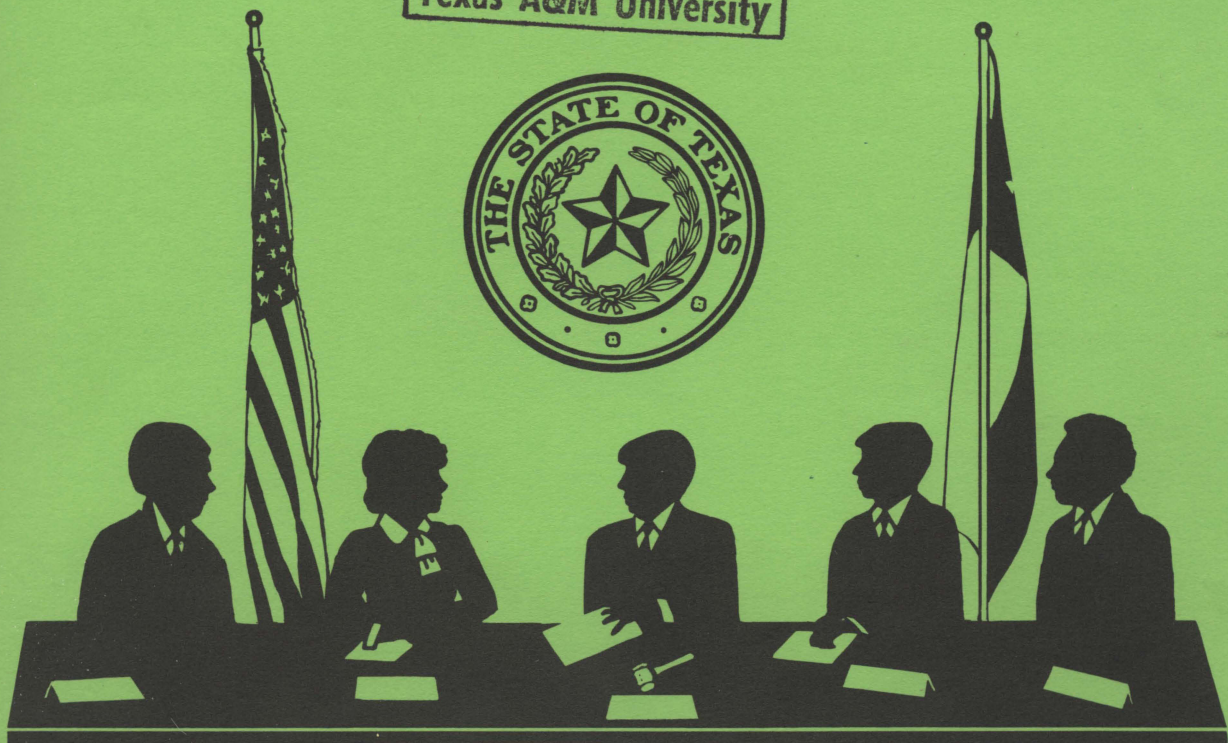
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**Effective Meetings for County Officials:  
Using Parliamentary Procedure  
and Other Practices**

The V. G. Young Institute of County Government gratefully acknowledges Ruth McLeod, Administrative Assistant to the Brazos County Commissioners Court, for her assistance in the development of this publication.

# Effective Meetings for County Officials: Using Parliamentary Procedure and Other Practices

Joe M. Rothe and John A. Gilmartin\*

As leaders and decision makers in local government, county officials find a substantial amount of their time involved in meetings. Such meetings can range from serving on community service committees to participation in Commissioners Court. When conducted properly, meetings serve an important function by allowing two or more persons to exchange and evaluate information and ideas in an effort to solve a problem. Their efforts may be directed toward a better understanding of the problem or toward the development of a program of action relative to the problem. However, meetings can become a burden and actually hinder progress if not conducted properly. Surveys indicate that some managers spend up to 80 percent of their time in meetings. An even more

alarming statistic is the number of people who find meetings to be unproductive. Mr. Alec Machenzie, a recognized authority on time management, has found during each of his seminars that three-fourths of the participants believe half of their time spent in meetings is wasted. So how can we insure that meetings are a productive use of our time?

It is the purpose of this publication to familiarize the county official with some basic procedures and rules necessary for conducting an effective meeting whether it be a large formal assembly or a small informal committee meeting. The publication will conclude with a discussion of one of the most important meetings in the courthouse — Commissioners Court.

## PLAN EACH MEETING WELL

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Good planning and preparation for each meeting will do much to increase satisfaction of participants and also provide opportunities for capitalizing on their talents and special interests. Well planned meetings will increase overall effectiveness of the county, build good public relations, develop leadership and eliminate the needless waste of time, money and energy.

Successful meetings require time and effort on the part of the president, chairperson, presiding officer or whoever is responsible. Early planning should establish the purpose of the meeting, identify needs, assign responsibilities and arrange for the many details that will require attention.

### Select the Best Possible Meeting Place

1. If your organization meets regularly, find the best possible meeting place. Check with local hotels, restaurants and other establishments that cater to meetings. Avoid places where outside noises are distracting.

2. Select a place that is easily accessible to members with adequate parking. If the meeting is to be attended by mostly out-of-town participants, try to select a central location and insure that transportation

to the meeting place is available for those who travel by air.

3. The meeting room is not everything, but it can make or break the program. Choose a room of suitable size with good acoustics, good lighting (but with darkening capabilities), adequate heating and cooling, and if possible, one with a built-in public address system.

4. Have easy access to rest rooms and drinking fountains.

5. If refreshments are to be served, select a place that offers good food and good service at the price agreed upon.

6. Arrange the room according to the needs of the meeting. Small meetings, consisting of ten or fewer people, can be conducted around a single table. Make sure that participants are not cramped for space and that adequate surface area is available for writing. The person conducting the meeting should be seated at one end of the table in full view of the other participants. Large meetings may require a separate head table for the chairperson or presiding officer. The participants can be seated in a semi-circle or in rows facing the head table. A standing microphone should be centrally located in the audience so participants can hear the questions and comments raised from the floor.

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7. Prior to the meeting, determine what special equipment is needed for the program and have it set up and checked out ahead of time.

8. If possible, always seat the audience with their backs to the entrance. Windows with distracting views should be covered.

### **Provide An Agenda**

A group of educational administrators in a large school system determined the cost of a typical meeting. They were shocked to find out that with a full staff present, the cost was \$50 per minute. The old saying "time is money" certainly applies to the meeting place. A well planned agenda provides organization and promotes efficiency. An agenda is essentially an organized list of matters to be taken up at a meeting.

Planning the agenda is a shared responsibility, but the presiding officer or chairperson has more than a "share" of the responsibility. The presiding officer, along with the other officers or executive committee, develops the agenda for each meeting. Minutes of the previous meeting, a list of items which officers and members want to discuss, plus the accepted order of business, become the agenda's framework. Those developing the agenda should consider the items to be included and the order and time for each item.

The presiding officer or chairperson should send out copies of the agenda prior to the meeting. This will allow everyone an opportunity to review the agenda, gather their thoughts and be more constructive during the meeting. This also gives participants an opportunity to determine if other business should be included on the agenda.

The most successful meetings are organized to fit the group. Usually, issues which require imagination,

innovativeness and creativity should be placed early (or first) on the agenda. Issues such as new projects, redefining objectives and resolving existing problems require clear heads and fast thinking. It is better to cover these issues early in the meeting while the group is alert.

The presiding officer or chairperson should also put at the first of the agenda items which might be called "uniting items." These items would be issues which are fairly non-controversial, can be agreed upon quickly with little debate or dissension and set the stage for a productive meeting. More controversial issues could be reserved toward the end of the agenda to give participants time to organize their views and prepare for possible "heated" discussion. The presiding officer or chairperson should be prepared to deal with such a discussion and keep the group's emotions under control. Diplomacy on the part of the chairperson and participants cannot be overemphasized here. The chairperson or presiding officer is responsible for insuring that no one individual dominates the discussion and that each person participating in the meeting is given an opportunity to express his or her views. Also, the chairperson can help ease tension by speaking in a calm voice.

One of the most important factors in conducting a meeting is staying on schedule. Therefore, the agenda should have a starting and ending time. If many issues are to be covered in a short time, it may be beneficial to assign a certain length of time to each topic. By putting an ending time on the agenda, the group will be reluctant to prolong matters which can be taken care of quickly. This, combined with putting the most important and controversial issues last, will encourage the group to be conscious of time and stay on schedule.

## **USING EFFECTIVE PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

When the group is fairly large (30 people or more) and especially when the agenda calls for discussing and making decisions, it may be expedient to adopt certain rules of procedure. In these more formal situations, parliamentary procedure is often used. As the group becomes smaller, it is usually desirable to become more informal, even when definite decisions are to be made. Although it is sometimes necessary to have a vote in order to settle a particular issue, consensus is often achieved through mutual understanding and agreement. The chairperson must decide upon the proper degree of formality to employ in a particular situation, keeping in mind that it may be undesirable to become too formal, just as it may be unwise to become too informal.

Parliamentary procedure enables groups of people to reach conclusions and to plan work in a short time

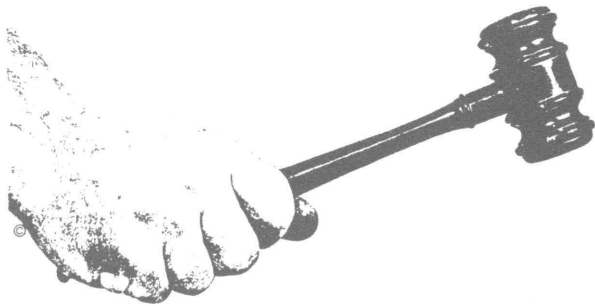
and without confusion. It should be applied to determine the will of the majority and to also protect the rights and privileges of the minority. To achieve these purposes, these principles of parliamentary procedure should be considered:

- Only one subject may claim the attention of the group at one time.
- Each proposition presented for consideration is due full and free debate.
- Every member has rights equal to every other member.
- The majority's will must be carried out, and the minority's rights preserved.
- The personality and desires of each member should be merged into the larger organizational unit.



## Order of Business

The order of business to be conducted during a meeting can vary from one organization to the next and may be specified in the bylaws or standing rules of a particular organization. The order of business helps the presiding officer provide structure to the meeting and is used in developing the agenda. The procedure listed below is one used most often by various organizations and associations.



### 1. Call to Order

The chairperson raps the table and says, *"The meeting will please come to order."*

### 2. Roll Call

The chairperson says, *"The secretary will call the roll."* The secretary calls roll and reports whether or not a quorum is present. Sometimes it is well to take the roll silently and report to the chairperson that a quorum is present.

### 3. Reading and Approval of Minutes

Unless there is an invocation, roll call or other means of opening the meeting, reading minutes of the previous meeting is the first item of business. If several sets of minutes are to be approved, they are handled in chronological order.

Every organizational meeting has a secretary or clerk who keeps the minutes, which are an exact record of decisions or results of discussion. Minutes are only prima facie evidence of what was transacted at a meeting. Once the minutes have been read and approved, they become the official record of transactions.

The chairperson says, *"The secretary will read the minutes of the last meeting."* The secretary reads the minutes. When minutes have been read, they are corrected, if necessary, and approved.

The chairperson says, *"You have heard the reading of the minutes. Are there any corrections?"* (pause) If there are no corrections the chairperson says, *"The minutes are approved as read."* If the minutes are corrected, the chairperson will state, *"The minutes are approved as corrected."*

With the consent of the membership, the chairperson may decide to dispense with the reading of the minutes if time is limited.

## 4. Reports of the Officers

Depending upon the type of meeting being held, officers may not be a part of the group and these reports could be deleted. If the reports are to be given the chairperson will say, *"We shall now hear the reports from the officers. First, the president's report."*

- a. **President's Report** - This report deals with administrative matters and general policy; for example, time and place of the next meeting, type of program and other information of importance to the group. Most often, the president of an organization or association will be the person presiding. At the conclusion of the president's report, the chairperson says, *"Are there any questions about the president's report?"* (pause) *If not, the report stands as read."*

The chairperson then turns to the vice president and says, *"Does the vice president wish to make a report?"*

- b. **Vice President's Report** - This officer very seldom gives a report; however, if he or she does, the chairperson should acknowledge the report with the statement, *"Are there any questions regarding the vice president's report?"* (pause) *"If not, the report stands as read."*

The chairperson then says, *"We will now hear the treasurer's report."*

- c. **Treasurer's Report** - The treasurer of an organization holds the funds delivered to him or her and with proper authorization, disburses the money on demand. The treasurer must be prepared to give a formal report on receipts and disbursements at intervals fixed in the bylaws and at any other times set by the organization's vote or custom. After reports are presented, they are usually referred to an audit committee that examines and certifies as to correctness by signing a statement at the bottom of the report.

After the treasurer gives the report, the chairperson responds with, *"Are there any questions?"* (pause) *If not, the report will be received as read and filed with the secretary to be audited at a later date."*

The chairperson turns to the secretary and says, *"We will now hear the secretary's report."*

- d. **Secretary's Report** - This report does not refer to the minutes. It includes a summary of any important letters that have been sent or received and statistics about the growth of or changes in membership.

At the conclusion of the secretary's report the chairperson asks, *"Are there any questions about the secretary's report?"* (pause) *If not, it will stand as read."*

## 5. Committee Reports

Reports are given first by permanent standing committees. However, members of these committees are elected to serve for a certain period of time, usually one year. Examples of such committees are: membership, auditing of accounts, legislation, public relations, etc. Reports can also be heard from select or special committees which are formed temporarily to perform specific tasks such as research.

If a committee has a report, its chairperson should notify the president or presiding officer to place the report on the agenda. Generally, committee reports need not be adopted (accepted) unless definite action is required. If a report contains a recommendation, the reporting member should move its adoption. Otherwise, the report is filed.

The procedure for calling reports is the same for both standing and special committees. The chairperson says, "*Committee reports are now in order. First, we will hear from the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee.*" After the report has been given, the chairperson responds by saying, "*Thank you. Are there any questions about this report? (pause) If not, the report will be received as read.*" If something in the report must be approved, the person giving the report can make a motion that it be adopted. Anyone except the chairperson and the maker of the motion may second it. The motion is then opened for discussion and put to a vote. More information on making motions will be covered later in this publication.

## 6. Unfinished Business

"Unfinished business" is any business which was pending but not disposed of at a previous meeting. A matter is old business if at a previous meeting, instead of being defeated or approved, it was laid on the table, postponed, or left pending because of a motion to adjourn. However, to renew a matter which was settled before is new business, even though the subject is old.

The chairperson opens discussion of unfinished business by saying, "*Unfinished business is now in order. The first item is that of \_\_\_\_\_.*" The chairperson takes up each item as listed on the agenda. After completion of all unfinished business, the chairperson moves on to new business by saying, "*That completes the unfinished business; the chair will now receive any new business.*"

## 7. New Business

Members may introduce new items of business. If a member wishes to bring up an item settled in a previous meeting, it should be done at this time. Correspondence which requires action should be brought up as new business.

## 8. Adjournment

If there is no further business, the chairperson will receive a motion to adjourn. The chairperson simply states, "*Do I hear a motion to adjourn?*" A member can make the motion by saying, "*I move that we adjourn.*" The motion is seconded by another member and voted on but is not discussed. After the

vote the chairperson responds with, "*The motion carried and the meeting is adjourned.*"

## Motions

The primary responsibility of any business meeting is to make decisions. Any member may propose that some action be taken. Such a proposal is referred to in parliamentary procedure as a motion. There are four classes of motions.

### 1. Main Motions

A main motion is any motion that brings an item of business before the assembly. It requires action of the assembly. Only one main motion can be pending (i.e., undecided or awaiting decision) at any one time. Any person who tries to make a main motion before disposing of a pending main motion is out of order.

### 2. Subsidiary Motions

These motions are for the purpose of modifying or disposing of the main motion under consideration. Examples of subsidiary motions are to postpone a main motion indefinitely or refer it to a committee.

### 3. Privileged Motions

These have no direct connection with the main motion that is before the assembly but are of such urgent importance that they are entitled to immediate consideration. A privileged motion could pertain to the disorderly conduct of someone in the meeting or to call for a recess.

### 4. Incidental Motions

These are miscellaneous motions which arise incidentally out of the business during the assembly. Incidental motions can be used to appeal a chairperson's decision that has been made in error or to divide a main motion into several parts for convenience of discussion and voting.

To make a motion is the equivalent of saying, "I propose that" or, "I think we should do . . ." It is assumed that you are in favor of the motion you make so you are not allowed to speak against it. However, since discussion may change your mind, you can vote against it.

The procedure for making a motion is to obtain the floor by rising (not necessary in an informal meeting) and addressing the chair by saying, "*Madam,*" or "*Mr. President,*" or "*Chairperson.*" Once you have been recognized by the chair you can make the motion by saying, "*I move that the county should \_\_\_\_\_.*" All ordinary motions must be seconded, to prove that at least two persons want the subject discussed. The person seconding the motion does not have to be recognized first by the chair. In a small group you do not rise or address the chair, but simply say, "*I second the motion.*" In large meetings it is proper to rise and say, "*Mr. Chairman, I second the motion.*"

If there is no second, the chairperson may say, "*Is there a second?*" If no one thinks the subject should be discussed and there is no second, the chairperson says, "*The motion is lost for want of a second.*"

When a motion is seconded, the chairperson repeats

the motion clearly so everyone will understand exactly what is proposed and then opens it up for discussion by simply saying, "Is there any discussion?" When all members who wish to do so have spoken or when the chairperson thinks that all sides of the question have been discussed, he or she may say, "The question is on the motion that the county \_\_\_\_\_." Both affirmative and negative votes must be taken. The chairperson says, "All in favor of the motion say aye; those opposed say no." The chairperson then announces the results. "The ayes have it and the motion is carried" or "The nos have it and the motion is lost."

## Minutes

Perhaps the most glaring time waster after a meeting is the failure to prepare concise minutes recording the actions taken. Although often viewed as a time consuming requirement, well-written minutes disseminated soon after the meeting prevent misunderstandings and save time in follow-up.

The form of minutes can vary with different organizations and associations. However, minutes are a formal summary of the proceedings. They should answer five basic questions: Who? What? When? Where? and Why?



Minutes, regardless of the organization to which they apply, should contain the following:

- Kind of meeting, regular or special
- Name of organization
- Date and place of meeting
- Presiding officer and secretary or names of substitutes
- Whether minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved (or mailed)
- All reports and action taken

- All main motions carried or lost (omit those withdrawn)
- All other motions carried which contain information needed at a future meeting
- Adjournment
- Signature

Minutes are a record of motions introduced, reports made, actions taken and votes cast. Every motion and the name of its proposer should be recorded, whether it passed or failed. A withdrawn motion need not be recorded. It is not necessary to record the name of the person seconding a motion unless this is a custom of the organization. A record of the discussion need not be made.

When a vote is taken, the number voting on each side is recorded.

Complete written reports of officers and committees generally are not included in minutes. They are summarized or attached in full to the minutes. When they are attached, a statement is made that a copy is attached. Oral reports are summarized.

Minutes should not contain personal opinions, interpretations or secretary's comments. Such phrases as "an outstanding speech," or "a brilliant report" are out of place. Also, members of the group should be referred to by their titles, if any, or by their surnames.

The secretary's minutes provide a true record of group discussions. They are usually checked for accuracy by being submitted for approval to the group which took the action. The traditional method is to begin a meeting with the reading of minutes of the previous meeting. Occasionally, a member will note an error and at the end suggest a correction. If the secretary accepts the change, no further action is necessary. If the secretary disagrees, the group decides by vote how the record shall read. After the minutes have been approved, the secretary writes the word "approved" with the date, and signs or initials the minutes. The chairperson or presiding officer may also countersign the minutes.

The usual lack of interest in minutes raises the question as to whether the custom of reading them at the beginning of a meeting should be retained. Reading of minutes serves the double purpose of verifying their accuracy and of reminding the group of any unfinished business. For these reasons, the secretary should mail copies of the minutes to participants if the group elects not to read the minutes.

If it is not necessary to read the minutes, a motion can be made to "dispense with the reading." This motion must be seconded and requires a majority vote.

If the chairperson knows in advance that some urgent business must be attended to before the reading of the minutes, he or she can postpone the reading by saying, "If there is no objection, the minutes will not be read at this time." If no objection is made the chairperson says, "Hearing no objection,



*the minutes will not be read.*" The reading of the minutes is then postponed until later in the meeting when no business is pending.

## Resolutions

A resolution is a formally written motion. The resolution is used by organizations as a means of taking a formal stand or position on a matter. It may define an important policy within the scope of the organization's aims and objectives or in relation to policies of other groups with similar objectives.

Most organizations have a policy on how resolutions are to be handled. The resolution carries a certain formality that requires more thought and careful investigation than is likely to occur if submitted directly to the voting body. Therefore, policies of most organizations such as county government associations require that resolutions be submitted through a resolutions committee. This committee can:

- Help those who propose resolutions to draft them in proper form and terminology.
- Prevent resolutions from coming before the assembly if they conflict with the organization's policies and objectives.
- See that at least one voting member has signed the resolution and is prepared to give information before presenting it for action.

Two forms of resolutions are commonly used — the short form and the long form. A short form resolution is a single paragraph beginning with the word "Resolved." For example:

Resolved, that the County Judges and Commissioners' Association of Texas supports legislation that will allow the adoption of ordinance-making authority for counties on a local option basis.

A short form resolution usually is presented to the assembly by the chairperson of the resolutions committee in this manner: "*Here is a resolution and I move that it be adopted.*" The chairperson reads the resolution and it is then acted on as if it were an ordinary motion.

There are several variations of the long form but the one most often used in county government begins with a prologue consisting of one or more statements beginning with the word "WHEREAS." This word is followed by a comma with the first letter of the word immediately following capitalized. Periods are not used anywhere in the prologue. A semicolon is placed at the end of each prologue idea. The word "and" without any punctuation mark follows the semicolon, except for the last line of the prologue. The "resolving" clause begins with the words "THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED" and is concluded with a period. Here is an example of a resolution using the long form:

WHEREAS, The complexity of county government is increasing at a rapid rate; and

WHEREAS, Large and rapid increases in population have brought "city problems" to unincorporated areas; and

WHEREAS, This creates an increased need for ordinance making powers in county governments;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County Judges and Commissioners' Association of Texas strongly requests the Legislature to enact legislation giving counties ordinance making powers on a local option basis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and every member of the State Senate and House of Representatives.

DULY PASSED this 10th Day of October, 1986.

The chairperson of the resolutions committee presents the resolution to the body of the association by reading it aloud and following with the statement, "*I move this resolution be adopted,*" or words to that effect. Then someone will usually second the motion. Time is allowed for any discussion, and the resolution is voted on by the association.

The chairperson can use a more detailed approach in getting a resolution adopted by having the body of the association vote on each resolving clause. The example above has two resolving clauses; therefore, two separate votes would be taken. Then the prologue is handled in the same manner, clause by clause, starting with the first prologue clause.

Once a resolution has been adopted it is signed by the chairperson of the resolutions committee.

## COMMISSIONERS COURT MEETINGS

One of the most important meetings in the courthouse is Commissioners Court. The Commissioners Court holds its regular term meetings on the second Monday of each month throughout the year. However, the court is not limited to one meeting per month. Special meetings may be called by the county judge or three of the county commissioners and may continue until business is completed. An emergency meeting can be called if there is an imminent threat to public health and safety or an unforeseeable situation which requires immediate attention.

### Preparing the Agenda

An outline of county business to be discussed during a Commissioners Court meeting should be prepared by the County Judge. The County Clerk in some counties may assist the judge with this responsibility. It is also a good policy to get input of other members of the Commissioners Court in organizing the agenda.

## Posting Notice

Prior to a regular session of the Commissioners Court the County Clerk should prepare a public notice detailing the date, time, place and subject matter to be discussed. The notice is to be posted at least 72 hours preceding the scheduled time of the meeting. The notice can be posted in the courthouse and may also be published in a local newspaper. Only two hours of notification are required of an emergency meeting.

Article 6252-17, section 4(a) of Vernon's Annotated Texas Statutes provides that any Commissioners Court conducting a regular or special session without public notice is in violation of the Open Meetings Act and is subject to individual fines of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 or imprisonment in the county jail for not less than one month nor more than six months, or both.

## Taking Minutes

Article 2349 of Vernon's Annotated Texas Statutes provides that the County Clerk shall be responsible for recording the minutes of each Commissioners Court meeting. These minutes are to be read by the clerk and approved by the Commissioners Court. A Statement of Approval should be signed by at least a majority of the court. This statement should be filed behind the minutes in the record and should show the date of the meeting and which members of the court were present. Format of the minutes will vary at the preference of the clerk, but all minutes for a particular meeting should be recorded on consecutive pages of the record book. The clerk will probably be asked to reproduce the minutes for distribution to various county offices and other interested parties.

Good minutes should leave no doubt in a reader's mind as to exactly which items have been considered by the Commissioners Court and what action has been taken on each item. The following procedures will help insure that accurate minutes of a court meeting have been taken.

- There should be a short summary of each topic taken under consideration which may include pertinent comments or points made by individual members of the court.
- All motions for action should be recorded exactly as they were put forth and not paraphrased.
- The County Clerk should record the name of the person making the motion, the name of the person seconding, and the vote of each member of the court.
- Items such as contracts, special bills, records of payment and proclamations will also be recorded in the minutes. The County Clerk should either collect these documents at the meeting or make a note of where they will be filed to facilitate subsequent recording.
- Prior to recording, the minutes should be compared to the agenda and any notes of the meeting to insure that the minutes are complete.
- All documents and instruments to be recorded as minutes should be examined for proper seal and signature where either is required.

- Each page of the minutes should be assigned a volume and page number in the permanent record.
- A copy of the minutes should be bound into the permanent record.
- The original minutes should be filed in an appropriate place after returning any instruments or documents not to be kept in the County Clerk's office.

The County Clerk should maintain a record book entitled *Index to Commissioners Court Minutes* to facilitate access to the minutes. To provide a useful index, many County Clerks have adopted the keyword method of indexing. In this system, each motion, instrument or document will be cross-indexed under every meaningful or key word in its title. Take, for example, a motion to "Advertise for bids to pave Woodcrest Street." The County Clerk may select "advertise," "bids," "pave" and "Woodcrest" as key words which would lead an interested party to the particular minutes.

The index is kept alphabetically by key word and includes:

1. The keyword
2. Full title of motion, instrument or document
3. Volume and page number of the minutes
4. Date of Commissioners Court action

In addition to maintaining minutes for public meetings, the Commissioners Court must make provisions to record closed or executive sessions. Article 6252-17 Section 2A of Vernon's Annotated Texas Statutes as amended 1987 requires a governmental body to keep a certified agenda of the proceedings for a meeting closed to the public. The certified agenda must identify the date and time (beginning and ending) of the meetings, state the subject matter of each deliberation and include a record of any further action to be taken. It is the responsibility of the presiding officer of the closed meeting to certify that the agenda is a true and correct record of the proceedings. The certified agenda is made available for public inspection only upon a court order.

In lieu of a certified agenda, the governing body may make a tape recording of the proceedings. The tape or certified agenda should be preserved for at least two years after the meeting.

## Quorum

As the governing body, the Commissioners Court must make certain decisions for the county. These decisions are made through the democratic process of voting. However, before a vote can be made, there must be a quorum present. Any three members of the Commissioners Court may constitute a quorum for the transaction of all business with the exception of levying county taxes. Therefore, any three Commissioners or the County Judge and two Commissioners may transact most county business as a quorum. Four members of the Commissioners Court are required to constitute a quorum when county taxes are being levied.

## Conducting Commissioners Court

No two counties conduct Commissioners Court in exactly the same manner. However, most counties have an established procedure for conducting their meetings and use some variation of parliamentary procedure. Listed below is one example of the procedure for conducting Commissioners Court in a typical Texas county:

1. The County Clerk greets all persons attending the meeting and asks them to sign a roster which is used in the preparation of minutes of the meeting.
2. The County Judge calls the meeting to order and notes any court member who may be absent.
3. The County Judge announces any variation from the posted agenda.
4. The minutes of any previous meetings (which have been prepared and distributed to the members of the Court) are considered for approval. The County Judge asks for any additions, deletions or corrections. Any changes are recorded and the minutes are approved or rejected as submitted.
5. The County Judge reads each agenda item and calls for discussion on the matter. After all persons have had an opportunity to speak, the County Judge calls for a motion, a second and a vote. The County Judge announces if the motion has carried or failed.
6. After all agenda items are considered and approved, rejected or tabled, the County Judge asks if

there are other matters for discussion. This is for discussion only, with no action to be taken.



7. If there is to be a closed executive session which has been properly posted, the County Judge announces the time of the meeting and that it is closed to the public. All visitors are asked to leave the courtroom. At the end of the closed session, the meeting is reopened to the public, the time is stated and the County Judge announces any action to be taken on the closed session. If there is no action to be taken, he so states and adjourns the meeting.

8. If any of the posted agenda items cannot be considered on this date but will require action prior to the next meeting date, the meeting is recessed. If all matters on the final agenda have been discussed, the County Judge announces the meeting adjourned.



**EXAMPLE OF TYPICAL PUBLIC NOTICE**

NOTICE OF MEETING  
 COMMISSIONERS COURT OF CHAMBERS COUNTY, TEXAS

Notice is hereby given that a Regular Meeting of the Chambers County Commissioners Court will be held on the 14th day of January, 1985, at 9:30 a.m. in the County Courtroom, Courthouse, Anahuac, Texas, at which time the following subjects will be discussed, considered, passed or adopted, to-wit:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Administrative                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 County Judge to call meeting to order</li> <li>1.2 J. P. Reports                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. J. P. 1 - November, 1987</li> <li>b. J. P. 2 - December, 1987</li> <li>c. J. P. 3 - December, 1987</li> <li>d. J. P. 4 - December 1987</li> </ol> </li> <li>1.3 Selection of Public Members to Salary Grievance Committee</li> <li>1.4 Give Notice to receive applications for County Depository Banks (County Funds, School Funds and Trust Funds)</li> <li>1.5 Set annual salaries of the elected officials for 1988, effective January 1, each salary to be paid in 12 equal monthly payments</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Financial                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Claim Docket</li> <li>2.2 Hospital Claim Docket and request for advancement</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Road and Bridge                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Consider request of Sam Jones to cross county property with water line (between 7th &amp; 8th Street, Winnie)</li> <li>3.2 Consider abandonment of the old right of way of Cotton Lake Road off of F.M. 2354 - Hank Sims, U. S. Steel</li> <li>3.3 Consider preliminary plat of Carriage Trails</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Parks and Buildings                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 Consider heating and cooling system - Courthouse</li> <li>4.2 Consider quote on water well and sewer plant and estimate on parking lot - Cedar Bayou Community Building</li> <li>4.3 Consider request of Optimist club for use of Winnie-Stowell Park on April 19 &amp; 20 for street dance, rodeo and chili cook-off</li> <li>4.4 Consider request of Mid County 4-H to plant trees in the Fort Anahuac Park</li> </ol> </li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Health and Welfare                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1 Consider setting fee schedule for services performed by Health Department</li> <li>5.2 Discuss Winnie-Stowell Fire Department - Steve Fitzgerald</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. Mosquito Control                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1 Let bid on aerial contract for mosquito control</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. Library and Historical                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.1 Appointment of Chambers County Library Board</li> </ol> </li> <li>8. Law Enforcement                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.1 Consider continued participation in the Jefferson County Regional Crime Laboratory for laboratory services</li> <li>8.2 Consider approval of Official Bond and Oath of W. P. Hicks, Jr. as Reserve Deputy</li> </ol> </li> <li>9. Personnel                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9.1 Notice of Employment - Kay Reagan, Clerk in County Clerk's office</li> <li>9.2 Consider Golf Pro Contract</li> </ol> </li> <li>10. Miscellaneous                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10.1 Acknowledge receipt of letter from Texas Center For The Judiciary, Inc. advising completion of 16 hours of judicial education by Alma L. Turner, County Judge</li> <li>10.2 Authorize readvertising for the leasing of the Solid Waste Landfill Site for farming and grazing purposes</li> <li>10.3 Travel Request - All Constables to attend Civil Process School in College Station, February 19th</li> </ol> </li> <li>11. Executive Session                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11.1 Personnel - Sec. 2(g), Art. 6252-17 V.T.C.S.</li> <li>11.2 Litigation - Sec. 2(e), Art. 6252-17 V.T.C.S.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |
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Dated this the 10th day of January, 1985.

COMMISSIONERS COURT OF CHAMBERS COUNTY, TEXAS

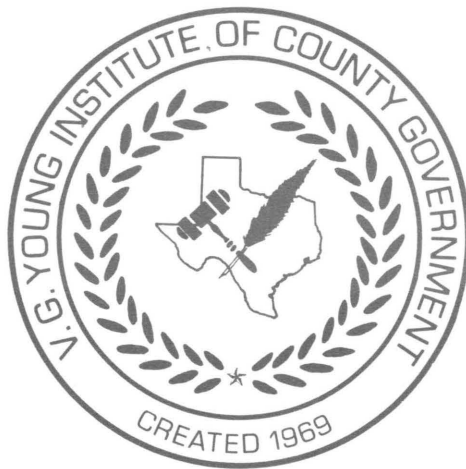
By: Alma L. Turner  
 Alma L. Turner, County Judge

I, the undersigned, County Clerk, of the Chambers County Commissioners Court, do hereby certify that the above Notice of Meeting of the Chambers County Commissioners Court, is a true and correct copy of said Notice, and that I received and posted said Notice on the Courthouse Doors and the bulletin board at the Courthouse of Chambers County, Texas, at a place readily accessible to the general public at all times on the 11 day of Jan, 1985, at 9:19 a.m., and said Notice remained so posted continuously for at least 72 hours preceding the scheduled time of said Meeting.

Dated this the 11 day of Jan, 1985.

Norma W. Rowland, County Clerk  
 Chambers County, Texas

By: Barbara Herman  
 Deputy



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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Zerle L. Carpenter, Director, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, The Texas A&M University System.