



Me? Take Minutes? SURE!

Rebecca Mills

Family & Consumer Sciences/4-H Youth Development Extension Assistant Professor

This fact sheet is one in a series of fact sheets dealing with life skills learned through common practices. Iowa State University Extension has developed an entire system around life skills called the “Targeting Life Skills Model.” They offer the following definition: “A skill is a learned ability to do something well. Life skills are abilities individuals can learn that will help them to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life.” (“Targeting Life Skills Model,” 2011.)

When working with youth or adults in committee or organizational settings, skills are often obtained along the way without the participant even realizing they are learning a valuable skill. These valuable skills are then transferrable to other aspects of life in work, school, or community, thus strengthening the individual’s ability to contribute. Within the 4-H Youth Development program, experiences help youth develop the skills needed (such as those described in the Targeting Life Skills model) to become confident, contributing members of society as adults. In fact, a study completed by the National 4-H Council in partnership with land-grant universities across 44 states, shows that youth who have participated in 4-H are three times more likely to become involved at the community level than those youth who haven’t participated in 4-H (Lerner et al., 2011)

This fact sheet series will offer background information, practical tools and applications, and resources for further study on a variety of life skills. This particular fact sheet will focus on the subject of: Taking Minutes at a Meeting.

Background

So, you’ve been asked the dreaded question at a 4-H meeting: “Would you mind taking minutes for us tonight?” And you’re sweating because you don’t think that you’re capable of such a daunting task. Well, guess what? YOU ARE! And this fact sheet is going to help!

First let’s talk about the reason we take minutes at a meeting. Minutes are recorded so that the important

decisions made and information portrayed in a meeting are on record for those who were not in attendance as well as for future accountability. By recording the actions of an organization there is a “checks and balance” created for that group. Minutes also help keep track of commitments made, projects accomplished, and ideas proposed over time. Minutes are a record of what was “done” at a meeting, not what was “said.”

There are several ways to take efficient meeting minutes and each individual will have his or her own comfort level and style. Personal style and preferences aside, there are a few “bare bones” items that should be in the minutes report. Consider these like the skeleton of the minutes.

First things first...start at the top – with a HEADING!

To begin writing the meeting minutes you first need **a title** and **a heading**. This should include information such as the name of the group that is meeting, the location of the meeting, the date and time of the meeting, and a list of those who are present at the meeting. The meeting agenda can be used as a guide for the rest of the headings in the minutes such as Committee Reports, Old Business, New Business, etc.

Next, the mid-section (commonly known as Old and New Business).

For the real “meat” of the business in the meeting we move on to the middle of the skeleton and the Old and New Business discussions including committee reports. In a 4-H club, this section of the meeting might also include an education/training segment or enrichment activity of some kind. Meeting minutes should be concise and to the point but it is also important to include enough detail to provide background for the decisions made and topics discussed. It is not necessary to record every comment made during a discussion period but if there are valid points made for or against a motion it would be a good idea to record these things. It is not appropriate to include personal opinion statements (example: statements like “It was a heated discussion”). It is also not necessary or appropriate to include direct quotes from individuals during discussion unless a motion is being made. **The most important items of information to record are the motions made or actions taken and the names of those making the motions or accepting responsibilities (such as committee assignments).**

Finally, the end of the meeting, or the FOOTer.

At the end of the meeting there needs to be a notation of when the meeting ended and when/where the next meeting will be (date, time and place). The minutes should be typed as soon as possible after a meeting so the meeting is fresh in your mind and signed “Respectfully submitted” with the name of the person who typed the minutes. The completed minutes can then be made available for review by members of the organization prior to the next scheduled meeting.

Practical Tools and Applications

The skill of taking minutes can be applied to other areas in life. It takes practice to be able to know how much information to record in order to provide enough detail but not too much while including the most important pieces of information. This skill can be applied to classroom situations where a student might take notes in a lecture, or even in a work/professional situation where an employee is taking directions on an assignment from a supervisor. Note taking is also a valuable job skill to have in entry level positions.

Example Meeting Agenda and Minutes

As mentioned earlier, the meeting agenda will offer a guide for the meeting minutes. The following Example Meeting Agenda and Example Meeting Minutes illustrate this idea.

Note: The following example agenda and minutes are from a fictional 4-H community club. The club is comprised of youth living in the same community but interested in different 4-H project areas (i.e., Livestock, Arts, and Foods). To allow for leadership and service opportunities the youth meet together, report on the work being done in the various project areas, plan service projects as a group, and practice for county contests together.

Agenda
Clover County 4-H Club
Saturday, March 22, 2012
Ms. Dugan's house

- I. Call meeting to Order
- II. Pledges
- III. Minutes from last meeting
- IV. Treasurers Report
- V. Old Business
 - a. Committee Reports
 - i. Livestock Club Committee
 - ii. Arts, Crafts, and Sewing Club Committee
 - iii. Food Club Committee
 - iv. Service Committee
 - b. Club T-Shirt design voting
- VI. New Business/Education Segment
 - a. Demonstration Practice
- VII. Adjourn

Meeting Minutes

Title: Minutes
Clover County 4-H Club
Saturday, March 22, 2012
Ms. Dugan's House

Heading:

I. President Jones called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Those members in attendance were ...Guests present were... *(NOTE: include first and last names in the attendance list; afterwards in the minutes individuals can be recognized by first name only or first name and the first initial of the last name if there are multiple people in the group with the same first name.)*

Mid-Section:

II. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Nick. The 4-H Pledge was led by Larry.

III. The following changes were made to last month's minutes: Janie noted that the dates listed in the minutes for sheep/swine tag-ins were incorrect - instead of May 12th it should be May 13th. The correction was noted. Susan motioned to approve the minutes as corrected. Luke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the minutes were approved as corrected.

-or- (if no changes were needed)

Minutes of our last meeting were read and approved.

IV. Treasurers Report: Penny reported that the club fundraiser was very successful and the bank account has a balance of \$324.50. President Jones reminded everyone that our goal was to raise \$250 to be used toward our club service project this year and if we raised more than that it could go toward the cost of the club t-shirts as decided at the February meeting. The balance of \$74.50 will be split evenly among those that help with the service project and the fundraiser to offset the cost of their shirts. President Jones thanked everyone for their help in the fundraiser.

V. Old Business:

a. Committee Reports

i. Livestock Club Committee: Steer tag-ins went well. A Market Animal Selection Clinic was held to prepare the sheep and swine members in choosing their market animals. Sheep and Swine tag-in dates will be May 23, 2012.

ii. Arts, Crafts and Sewing Club Committee: Several members recently attended a Fabulous Friday Activity sponsored by the Extension Office where they made Spring crafts. The group also took a tour of a local fabric store and had a lesson on different types of fabrics and their uses. Members are working on items for the Fashion Revue.

iii. Foods Club Committee: This month the group took a tour of a local grocery store bakery and learned how they make and decorate their cakes.

iv. Service Committee: The Club's annual service project is in May. The committee narrowed the ideas down to three things for a vote. The options were: 1) purchase the supplies for a couple new display stands then build the displays and donate them so 4-H can use them at the Fair; 2) purchase supplies and assemble hygiene kits for the homeless shelter; 3) donate funds to the veterans memorial fund then help put out flags for Memorial Day at the county cemetery.

There was a lot of discussion about the pros and cons of each option. Concerns expressed revolved around issues like making the biggest difference for our money, how we can make a positive public impact in the name of 4-H, and where the most need is. After much discussion Roger made the motion that "the club purchase necessary supplies with club funds, not to exceed \$250.00, to assemble hygiene kits that will then be donated to the homeless shelter". Janie seconded the motion. The results were 12 yes votes and 4 no votes with Duke, Penny, Larry, and Susan voting against the motion. The motion passed. More details will be determined at the April meeting.

The County 4-H office has also asked that our club help with Summer Club Enrollment day by providing a few games for kids to play while parents fill out paperwork. Josie, Duke, Kami, and Roger volunteered to lead games – they attended a statewide conference last summer where they learned several games they thought kids would like.

b. Club T-Shirt Voting:

Jim, Larry, and Vanessa each submitted original designs for the club t-shirt this year. A vote was taken and the design submitted by Vanessa will be screen printed on our t-shirts this year. Ms. Dugan will order the shirts next week and they will be here in time for our April meeting. She would like us to wear them when we give our Demonstrations at the Demonstrations Contest in May.

VI. New Business/Education Segment

Demonstrations Practice: Four members presented their demonstrations to the group and received feedback. Dates for the Demonstration portion of County Contests are May 2-3 at the Extension Office. Members are encouraged to sign up early and also come to support other club members.

Ending:

VII. Adjourn

Having no further business or announcements a motion was made by Jamie and seconded by Megan that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Refreshments were provided by the Refreshment Committee.

The next meeting will be Saturday, April 24, 2012, at 7 p.m. at Ms. Dugan's house.

Respectfully submitted by Susy Secretary

Practical Application Review

Note how the agenda headings are also the headings in the minutes. This helps keep things organized and easy to reference. For the sake of the example, there were things mentioned in these minutes about business items from previous meetings. When an organization has regular business meetings with detailed minutes on record it isn't necessary to be too detailed when mentioning past meeting business, in which case it would be adequate to make a reference such as: "See February minutes" or something similar. Lastly, business matters of the Clover County 4-H Club meeting were conducted using Parliamentary Procedure under Robert's Rules of Order. 4-H clubs are not required to use this system, but it can be helpful to keep order in a club meeting where decisions need to be made. More information on how to use Parliamentary Procedure can be found at <http://www.parlipro.org>.

Resources for Further Study

Many resources are available for further study on the topic of Taking Minutes including, but not limited to, those listed below. As with any life skill, though, it is through practice that confidence, learning, and mastery take place.

Additional resources and tips on how to take minutes at a meeting:

4-H Secretaries Book. Reprinted 2007. Oregon State University Extension Service. Publication number: 4-H 036. Retrieved from: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/4h/4-h036.pdf>

Iowa State University Extension. 2011. Targeting Life Skills Model. Retrieved from http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/explore/life_skills.htm

Lerner, R. et al. 2011. Waves of the future - 2009: Report of the findings from the first six years of the 4-H study of positive youth development. Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development, Tufts University. Retrieved from: http://www.4-h.org/uploadedFiles/About_Folder/Research/Tufts_Data/4-H-Positive-Youth-Development-Study-Wave-6.pdf

Other Internet Sources:

<http://careerplanning.about.com/cs/communication/a/minutes.htm>
<http://www.mftrou.com/meeting-minutes.html>
<http://www.wikihow.com/Take-Minutes>
<http://www.howtobooks.co.uk/business/reports/taking-minutes.asp>
<http://parlipro.org>

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