



Affiliate *Link*

SUMMER 2006



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Minutes Matter: Recording the Details

Taking minutes is a necessity in order to have a final accurate record of what transpired at a meeting. It does not have to be a difficult task. If you have been designated to take minutes at your meeting, the following suggestions should make your job as recording secretary easier.

What to Include:

- Name of the organization or committee.
- Place, time and date of the meeting.
- Names of committee members present.
- Names of committee members excused/absent.
- List of guests or non-members.
- A statement that the minutes of the prior meeting were approved, revised or not read.
- Announcements or issues for discussion.
- Items discussed in order listed on the agenda. Briefly describe main points discussed and state actions taken. A transcript of the discussion is not necessary, but include actions, votes, resolutions, motions, etc.
- Keep the minutes to the point.
- Minutes should always be objective and impartial. They should be factual and devoid of editorial opinions and comments.
- If a member of the committee is assigned a task or volunteers for an assignment, state clearly that person's name and the responsibility accepted.
- The time the meeting was adjourned and the place, time and date of the next meeting.
- The recording secretary's signature and typed name.

Guidelines for Running a Good Meeting

Services

While on the surface running a meeting may seem like a simple task, like most things, there is an art to running a good meeting. It takes lots of practice and a little finesse to make a truly great one. These days many people feel like life consists of an endless stream of meetings, so it is especially important to make them efficient and productive. Whether it's a gathering of 100 people or a board meeting for 15, there are certain basic guidelines that should help improve your meetings.

Start on time. This is a courtesy to those who arrive at the appointed time and sets a tone from the start that your group means business.

Begin with introductions. This will help people—especially new people—know who is at the meeting. The purpose should be to get people to feel comfortable and involved.

Review the agenda. Every meeting—even an impromptu meeting among a handful of people—should have an agenda. An agenda keeps a meeting focused and allows the chair to stop an unrelated discussion.

Make sure each person has an opportunity to participate. If you don't plan for this, folks will either break in and disrupt the proceedings, or will leave feeling that they were merely spectators, which could make them much less likely to come to the next meeting. Allow time for people to "testify" about the topic by sharing their experiences and ideas. However you accomplish it, plan for people to participate.

Set an ending time, and stick to it. If the meeting is running late and there are still topics to cover, ask the group if they prefer to add a specific amount of time to the meeting or take up the items at another time. It is important to respect the obligations attendees may have beyond the scheduled meeting time.

Make some rules, and follow them. Understand that a rule, which is not followed once, loses its force. The best example of this is the quorum: a group with a specific number of members sets a quorum to prevent a small, unrepresentative portion of its members from making the decisions. While the number may vary, it should be set and adhered to.

Allow the chair to facilitate the discussion. Chairs do not make decisions—they just make sure decisions get made. Chairs do not control the outcome of the meeting, but they are responsible for ensuring that the meeting has an outcome that everyone understands clearly. The role of chair involves listening closely to those who are talking and being aware of those who are silent. It requires the self-control to stay out of a discussion on the merits of the topic, the boldness to interrupt the speechmaker if his or her time is up, and the ability to clearly summarize the discussion.

Finish one topic and then move on to the next. The chair should summarize each agenda item, then move the meeting on to the next item. There are only three

possible actions you can take on any topic requiring a decision: adopt the proposal, reject the proposal or decide at another time. If the proposal is adopted, it should be made clear who is responsible for carrying it out and when. If it is rejected, this should be clearly understood. If there needs to

be more work before a decision, the chair should get the group to define what is needed and decide who is going to do that work.

Confirm the next meeting date before adjourning. This should be the last item on any agenda. It creates a sense of continuity and makes deadlines easier to set.

Robert's Rules of Order is an excellent resource for both meeting and minute-taking information. It will help to familiarize you with the format for making, seconding and amending motions. Check it out at www.robertsrules.com.

Did You Know?

LGC processed 2,255 individual registrations for Affiliate Group events in the months of April, May and June 2006. This number represents meetings, workshops and events from just 13 of our Affiliate Groups!

New Hampshire Local Government Center Contact Information:

Toll Free: 800.852.3358
Local: 603.224.7447
Fax: 603.224.5406
Web Site: www.nhlgc.org

Affiliate Link Coordinator:
Elaine Dawson
800.852.3358, ext. 153
edawson@nhlgc.org

Affiliate Link Editor:
Eleanor Baron

Our Mission: To provide programs and services that strengthen the quality of member governments and the ability of their officials and employees to serve the public by being a catalyst for dialogue and action, an advisor on problems, a provider of benefits and risk-management services, an educator/trainer in skills and a resource for information.

Affiliate Link is a quarterly publication of the New Hampshire Local Government Center (LGC) for board members and officers of LGC's affiliate groups. For more information about LGC's Affiliate Group Services Program, contact either Director of Communications Eleanor Baron by phone at 800.852.3358, ext. 137 (e-mail at ebaron@nhlgc.org) or Communications Manager Jeni Eldridge at ext. 118 (e-mail at jeldridge@nhlgc.org). For more information about LGC, visit us online at www.nhlgc.org.

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Spotlight On New Hampshire Coalition for Community Media

Who is PEG and Why Should You Get to Know Her?

By Dottie Grover

There is a preponderance of acronyms out there—many we really don't need to know about, but some that can affect our every day lives in a profound way. PEG is one of the latter. PEG—public, educational and governmental—access television can work to the benefit of your community every single day.

The government access channel can help you to establish a more informed citizenry. Televising your meetings and you will be amazed at how many people really do watch! They are fascinated by the decision making process of their government officials. They will also enjoy finding out more about the various departments in town, and the issues that their elected and appointed officials are dealing with every day. Educated citizens become very connected to and supportive of their local government.

The educational access channel provides a wonderful outlet for all things related to the school district. From school concerts and plays to school board meetings and annual voting, use this resource. If it involves their children, people will watch. They will feel included in the day-to-day operations of their children's school life. Too many parents feel disconnected because their jobs don't allow for them to participate in daytime activities, but they can certainly tune into the taped events in the evening and will appreciate the opportunity to do so.

And then there is public access television. While this channel was the cornerstone for the other two, this is the one that always worries the elected officials. All the "what ifs?" that surround the concept of public access can sometimes work to keep the public off the air by not even providing them the opportunity to have a public channel. Do not be concerned. Although the media has picked up on a couple of outrageous programs over the years, that is not the norm by far. Most public access programs involve community members who are sincerely interested in local issues. People also like to share their hobbies, their areas of expertise or just be entertaining. There are thousands of hours of programming produced locally all over the country every single week, and less than 1 percent of all programming is ever controversial to any degree. Public access television offers one more avenue to help your residents feel more connected as a community.

The New Hampshire Coalition for Community Media (NHCCM) is a nonprofit organization that exists to help you acquire or foster PEG in your community. Our membership is ready and eager to assist you. We hope that you will contact us and visit our Web site at www.nhccm.com. PEG access television is our passion!

Dottie Grover is the president of the NHCCM and invites you to contact her anytime at dgrover@londonderrynh.org.

Local Government Center Goes Wireless!

The New Hampshire Local Government Center (LGC) is pleased to announce the debut of a new wireless broadband network in our conference rooms. Any visiting Affiliate Group member who has a laptop with a wireless card will be able to log into the LGC wireless network from our conference rooms and access the Internet at broadband speeds. Upon entering a room equipped with wireless access, your laptop should automatically detect the network and display a notice in your system tray at the bottom of the screen. Open up the wireless network window by double-clicking

on the wireless icon in your system tray and then double-click the network named "nhlhc." You will be prompted for a 10-digit access code, which can be obtained from the receptionist at the front desk. Once you enter the code, you are connected and are free to roam wirelessly with your Internet access. This new service will open new opportunities for Web-based presentations and communications while meeting at LGC.

New Hampshire Local Government Center Affiliate Groups

Fire Instructors and Officers Association of NH
Municipal and Governmental Law Section of the NH Bar Association
NH Association of Assessing Officials
NH Association of Conservation Commissions
NH Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
NH Association of Fire Chiefs
NH Association of Housing Authorities
NH Association of Regional Planning Commissions
NH Association of School Business Officials
NH Building Officials Association
NH Cemetery Association
NH City and Town Clerks' Association
NH Coalition for Community Media
NH Economic Development Association
NH Excellence in Education
NH Fire Prevention Society
NH Government Finance Officers Association
NH Health Officers Association
NH Library Association
NH Library Trustees Association
NH Local Government Information Network
NH Local Welfare Administrators Association
NH Municipal Management Association
NH Municipal Secretaries Association
NH Planners Association
NH Public Works Association
NH Public Works Mutual Aid Program
NH Public Works Standards and Training Council
NH Recreation and Park Association
NH Road Agents Association
NH State Firemen's Association
NH Tax Collectors' Association
NH Water Pollution Control Association
Northeast Resource Recovery Association
Tri-State Association of School Business Officials
Working Dog Foundation

Organizations listed in red indicate participation in the Affiliate Group Services Program.

Update on AGSP Contract Meetings

At this time, Jeni Eldridge and Eleanor Baron are in the process of meeting with the presidents or chairs of LGC's 26 Affiliate Group Services Program groups. A new step in the annual contract (Agreement of Understanding) renewal process, we're taking the time this year to meet with each group to review details of the service agreement, talk about new services and discuss how we're doing in general. Group needs change from time to time, and faces—with groups and with LGC staff—change often. It's helpful to take this time in person for questions and it's important for us to know how the services are working. With 26 groups taking part in this program, and more than a dozen LGC staff participating in service delivery, communication is critical.

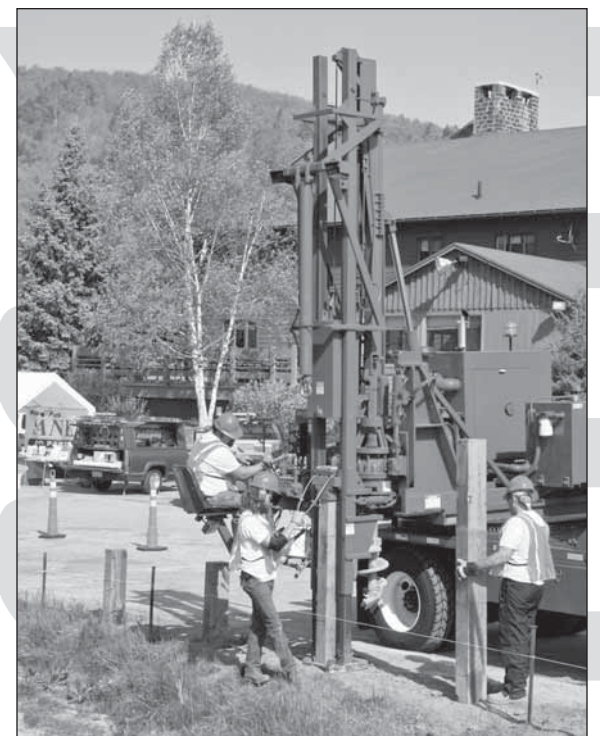
If your group hasn't met with us yet, please call Christian Pearsall at ext. 104 as soon as possible to set up an appointment. We can't begin serving you without a new contract in hand!

Affiliate Group Event Highlights

Spring is always a busy season for many Affiliate Groups, with a variety of annual meetings, conferences and events held around the state. Here are two event highlights:



New Hampshire Excellence in Education presented the 13th annual 'ED'ies Awards event on June 10 at the Radisson Hotel in Manchester. Several hundred attendees joined in the celebration as the 'ED'ies honored 36 individuals, three schools of excellence (and seven finalists), and presented two special awards.



The New Hampshire Road Agents Association held the 19th annual Mountain of Demonstrations on May 25 at Gunstock Mountain Resort in Gilford. Attracting more than 700 attendees this year, the event serves as a one-stop shopping opportunity for public works personnel and municipal officials from all over New England, and provides Gunstock Resort with a face-lift during the many live presentations!