



MEMORANDUM

Date: May 18, 2026

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Gerry Beaudin, City Manager 
Jocelyn Kwong, City Clerk

Re: Action Minutes for City Council Meetings

BACKGROUND

Beginning in 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, all public meetings of the legislative body were held virtually in compliance with State regulations. This led to the creation of expanded native digital records, including meeting agendas, minutes, and recordings.

In December 2022, the City adopted an administrative policy that set action minutes as the minutes format for City Council, commission, and committee meetings. This action was supported by extending the retention of legislative body meeting recordings, as well as those of commissions, by adoption of City Council Resolution No. 22-1340.

Prior to the policy, the City prepared verbatim meeting minutes. Action minutes focus on capturing the final action taken or the outcome of an item, primarily to memorialize decisions made by the legislative body. Meeting minutes are to remain objective, accurate, and consistent while minimizing misattribution, bias, ambiguity, errors, and the risk of challenges.

It is important to note that meeting recordings are available on-demand through the City's YouTube channel with automated transcription, as well as on the City's meetings portal (hosted by CivicPlus) with video indexing aligned with the agenda items. These remain available resources to supplement the meeting record and minutes.

CONSIDERATIONS

The following considerations were made in the decision to switch to action minutes as the standard meeting minutes format for meetings of the City's legislative and advisory bodies.

1. Staff Resources

Existing staff, including those who support commissions and committees, can be appropriately trained to prepare action minutes without incurring costs for contracted services. The record is completed more quickly, often saving several hours, and allows time to be dedicated to other tasks. Outsourced professional services still require staff review and proofing time upon completion of the draft.

2. Cost Savings

Rates for professional services preparation of minutes are typically charged based on time, which is directly correlated with the length of meetings. For this reason, costs are variable and subject to budget adjustments. In 2022, services were billed at \$165 per hour for City Council meetings and \$150 per hour for Planning Commission meetings. Based on services rendered in the years prior to 2023, the City paid an estimated annual average of \$30,620 in professional services contracts for minutes preparation of City Council, commission, and committee meetings across multiple vendors.

3. Meeting Recordings

The City continues to regularly use YouTube to provide public access to meeting recordings. City Council meetings are streamed live via the City's website and through TV30. Through Resolution No. 22-1340, any meeting recordings created are subject to a retention of 15 years for City Council meetings, 10 years for commissions, and 5 years for committees.

Additionally, in 2023, the City launched its first electronic agenda management system. This system is designed to support the full complement of meeting agenda creation and publication, minutes creation, live streaming of meetings, and on-demand video with indexing capabilities. These recordings are available for viewing on the City's website in the meetings portal, along with all other materials relevant to the meeting.

The above considerations remain, and staff recommends continuing the current policy, recognizing the City's ongoing budgetary and resource challenges.

ALAMEDA COUNTY CITIES

The following cities in Alameda County currently use action minutes for their City Council meetings.

- Dublin
- Emeryville
- Fremont
- Livermore
- Newark
- Oakland
- San Leandro
- Union City

CONCLUSION

The meeting recordings are available on-demand through the City's YouTube channel with full automated transcription functionality as well as on the City's meetings portal (hosted by CivicPlus) with video indexing in alignment with the agenda items. These will continue to be available resources to supplement the meeting record and minutes.