



# Memo

**Date:** November 11, 2019  
**To:** Chancery employees  
**From:** Deacon Dennis Dorner Sr., Chancellor  
**Re:** Meeting minutes for archdiocesan committees, boards and councils

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As the official repository for the Archdiocese of Atlanta's permanent records, the Office of Archives and Records is responsible for collecting and maintaining the official meeting minutes for all archdiocesan committees, boards and councils.

Preserving the final approved meeting minutes allows future authorities, researchers and Chancery employees to easily find the correct information about the decisions made by the many committees, boards and councils that help run the Archdiocese. Meeting minutes document the business of the Catholic Church and, as a 501(c)3 corporation, are to be preserved permanently.

Attached you'll find two documents that the Office of Archives and Records has created for your reference and use:

- Best Practices for Maintaining Meeting Minutes—this document gives an in-depth explanation about how to maintain meeting minutes, which part of the meeting packets should be sent to the archives and instructions on when they should be transferred to the archives.
- Meeting Minutes Infographic—this is a simplified, visual version of the best practices guide that is easily printable and can be displayed or shared widely.

If you have any questions about sending your meeting minutes to archives, whether paper or digital, please contact the Office of Archives and Records at [archives@archatl.com](mailto:archives@archatl.com).

# *A Quick Guide to* **MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting minutes provide quick and easy to access information on the more important decisions and discussions of the organization.

## *Who?*



If you're a committee or council that makes decisions that may affect the Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta, the Archives wants your minutes! Some suggested committees would be:

- Pastoral Council
- Finance Council (and subcommittees)
- Catholic Schools Advisory Board
- Council of Priests
- College of Consultors
- Lay Advisory Board
- Secretariat

According to Georgia's laws on records retention, meeting minutes are considered the official record and contain all the information needed to fulfill our legal and record keeping obligations. All accompanying documentation is considered to be under the discretion of the organization, in accordance to their pre-determined records retention schedule.

## *What?*



### Send!

Concise, detailed, and dated minutes that show topics discussed, decisions made, and who attended.

### Keep!

All accompanying paperwork, including agendas, presentations, graphs, and handouts, for the appropriate retention period.

## *When?*



Only send the **finalized** and committee **approved** minutes to the Archives.

- **Preferably right after the next meeting and once they've been approved.**
  - Due to the numerous changes and amendments to the minutes, it is important that we only retain the final and most complete copy in our archives.
  - Allows future authorities, researchers, and Chancery employees to easily find the correct and full information without sorting through prior copies.

We are here to help and we are more than happy to go over your documents and policies with you.

## *Contact Us*

### **Office of Archives and Records**

Email: [archives@archatl.com](mailto:archives@archatl.com)

Phone: 404-920-7690



## BEST PRACTICES FOR MAINTAINING MEETING MINUTES A RECORDS MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

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### Why do we keep meeting minutes?

IRS Form 990 requires each nonprofit organization to provide certain information about its governance practices. In particular, Item 8 of Part VI requires the nonprofit organization to disclose whether it “contemporaneously document[s] the meetings held or written actions undertaken during the year by the board of directors and any committee authorized to act on behalf of the board.” The IRS has indicated that if a nonprofit organization is unable to answer affirmatively to questions such as Item 8, its management controls may be suspect, and it will be more likely to be audited. What’s more, an organization that follows best practices with respect to the keeping of minutes is also ensuring that it has documentation of corporate actions. (National Council of Nonprofits & IRS Form 990, Part VI, Section A, line 8)

Meeting minutes provide quick and easy to access information on the more important decisions and discussions of the organization. By preparing this simple paperwork, you will have prepared a paper trail of important corporate decisions, which should give your corporate records book enough girth to help satisfy the courts, the IRS, and others that you attended to the necessary legal and tax niceties. (The Corporate Records Handbook, Attorney Anthony Mancuso)

### What about the rest of the packet?

According to Georgia’s laws on records retention, meeting minutes are considered the official record and contain all the information needed to fulfill our legal and record keeping obligations. All accompanying documentation is considered to be under the discretion of the organization, in accordance to their pre-determined records retention schedule. (Records and Information Management by Dr. William Saffady, in partnership with ARMA International)

All accompanying paperwork, including agendas, presentations, graphs, and handouts, are currently being retained as individual stand-alone documents. Agendas, for example, are given a one year retention period on our retention schedule. We would not want to include that agenda with the meeting minutes as it would mean constantly going through our own records to purge expired documents. For this reason, we separate the permanent meeting minutes from the documents that have shorter retention schedules. The accompanying documents should also exist in other places, such as the records of the employee who created it, making the ones contained in the meeting packet copies of originals that are already being managed by the retention schedule.

Records should not be kept if they are no longer needed for the operation of the business or required by law. Unnecessary records should be eliminated from the files. The cost of maintaining records is an expense which can grow unreasonably if good housekeeping is not performed. A mass of records also makes it more difficult to find pertinent records. (Winston & Strawn LLP, a legal organization partnering with the National Council of Nonprofits)

### Why only the final meeting minutes?

Due to the numerous changes and amendments to meeting minutes during the course of their lifecycles, it is important that we only retain the final and most complete copy in our archives. This will allow future authorities, researchers, and Chancery employees to easily find the correct information without sorting through various prior copies. It will also ensure that the retained copy is considered the approved official record of the committee’s activities.

Most departments and offices produce many copies of minutes and agenda. Departments and offices should determine which copy is the official copy and manage it accordingly. All other copies are unofficial copies and should be managed accordingly. (Georgia’s State Records Policy) Please contact the Office of Archives and Records at [archives@archatl.com](mailto:archives@archatl.com) for assistance.