TOWN OF PALM BEACH Information for Town Council Meeting on: February 13, 2018

TO:	Mayor and Town Council	
VIA:	Thomas G. Bradford, Town Manager	
FROM:	Kathleen Dominguez, Town Clerk	
RE:	Formatting of Town Council Meeting Minutes	
DATE	February 5, 2018	

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Town Council provide direction on the desired format of the meeting minutes.

GENERAL INFORMATION

During the January 9 Town Council meeting, there was a discussion about exploring other options for the format of the Town Council meeting minutes. I have provided an overview of the current format of the meeting minutes, and other possible formatting options and recommendations for your consideration.

CURRENT METHOD- ACTION AND DISCUSSION/SUMMARY MINUTES

In 2008, the Town Council voted to switch from verbatim minutes to discussion/summary minutes. Currently, the Town Clerk's Office prepares two sets of minutes after each Town Council meeting. The first set is an action report that focuses on motions and approved action items. The second set is the formal set of minutes, which are called discussion-summary minutes. These minutes contain a brief narrative of the main topics that led to the final decision, as well as the official motions taken and the vote of each motion. They also include date and location of the meeting, start and end times, names of attendees and those absent, names of and summaries of presenters and their presentations, public comments and the names of the speakers, and recess break times and adjournments.

Summarizing the meeting discussions takes a considerable portion of staff time to prepare due to the complexity of the subject matters, duration of the meetings and the number of speakers involved. On average, it takes an experienced clerk two to three hours to summarize one meeting hour. The average duration of the regular Town Council meetings are 8 hours long.

VERBATIM MINUTES

Verbatim minutes are a transcript of every word said at the meeting. A few of the Council members

have expressed an interest in the possibility of switching to verbatim minutes by utilizing voice recognition software or by hiring a transcriptionist.

Currently, the only multi-voice recognition device in existence is the Ghost Writer 3. The GW3, which runs for 1,400.00, is a recording device that can pick up multiple voices during meetings and transcribe the recording to a text document using Dragon software. Although this may seem like a viable option, the GW3 recorder can only recognize 1 to 6 voices at a time. More information about this product is attached as **Exhibit A**.

The estimated cost for transcription services is \$1,500 per meeting. Since the Town Council meets twice per month for 12 months the annual cost would be approximately \$36,000. Translation service cost quotes are attached as **Exhibit B**.

Verbatim minutes are rarely necessary except in legal proceedings. They also present potential drawbacks such as:

- Transcribed minutes will need a lot of editing by staff to ensure that they are readable, that speakers' names are correct and the motions are bolded.
- The minutes may be too long and tedious for the public to read.
- Contentious discussions will be recorded "word-for-word" in the minutes, which may lead to embarrassment and limit future participation in discussions.
- A considerable amount of paper would be used to print the meeting minutes for approval and extra storage space would be needed in order to store the larger documents since these are permanent records. For example, an 8-hour meeting would be approximately 500 pages of transcribed minutes.

Furthermore, Sec. 2-86 of the Town Code states:

"In all cases involving points of parliamentary law, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, the latest edition, shall be the book of reference. Such rules, so far as they are applicable and not in conflict with the provisions of the Charter, the general laws of the state, this Code, and town ordinances, shall be the rules of the town council."

Meeting minutes are included within parliamentary law; and, per Robert's Rules of Order, meeting minutes generally include only what was done, not what was said.

ACTION-ONLY MINUTES

Action minutes record the motions voted on and the approved actions to be taken by staff, and do not include the discussion that went into making the decisions. They are legally compliant as F.S. 286.011 only requires that the minutes of a meeting shall be promptly recorded and open for public inspection. No specific format is specified in the statutes.

With the existence of the Town's online audio streaming program, including "jump to" points for listening to specific agenda items, interested parties have easy access to what exactly was discussed at the Council meetings. Other municipalities in Palm Beach County that utilize an action minutes format include Palm Beach Gardens, South Palm Beach, West Palm Beach, Highland Beach, and the City of Atlantis – see **Exhibit C**.

Staff's preference is that the Town Council switch to Action only minutes and only provide verbatim transcripts for items that the Town Council determines to be appropriate to be transcribed or at the recommendation of the Town Attorney. Additionally, staff can add time stamps to the discussions and motions for each agenda item after the meeting.

Switching to an "action minutes" format would eliminate the need for two sets of minutes per meeting, put the Town in compliance with Robert's Rules of Order, significantly reduce the amount of Staff time required, and negate the need to purchase additional hardware and software or transcription services. Special consideration should also be given to the fact that the Town Clerk's Office is short by one full-time member and it is questionable whether that position will be filled due to budget cuts and attrition.

If the Town Council approves the use of action minutes, then Staff recommends that the change be applied to all boards, commissions, and committees for consistency.

FUNDING/FISCAL IMPACT

If action minutes are approved, there will be no fiscal impact. Should the Town Council decide to move forward with verbatim minutes then there would be a need to purchase additional hardware or a transcriptionist.

TOWN ATTORNEY REVIEW

This item has been reviewed by the Town Attorney.

Cc: John C. Randolph, Town Attorney Department Directors

Attachments

Worlds First Multiple-Voice Recognition Recorder conferences\meetings automatic Voice to Text System - Martel Electronics



http://www.martelelectronics.com/worlds-first-multiple-voice-recognition-recorder-conferences-meetings-automatic-voice-to-text-system/

option.

ONLINE - Click here to chat



Automatic Multiple-Voice to Text Transcription of your meetings, GHOST WRITER 3 and voice recognition software

If you are tired of trying to type the minutes of a meeting, interview, or a conference by hand, Ghost Writer 3 can help you automate this process.

Limitations of Voice Recognition Technologies for multiple voices at this point in time.

GHOST WRITER 3 hardware segmented multi-party speech recognition algorithm particularly searches for multiple voices, separating them one by one. This GHOST WRITER 3 is rated for maximum 1-6 voices for now.

Multi-Speaker Voice Recognition Automatic Transcription System is Revolutionary.

Ghost Writer 3 is designed to do verbatim transcription of multispeaker recordings involving up to 1-6 people. The recordings it transcribes include: interviews, police interrogations, government witness statements, administrative hearings and many more. These recordings are often confidential or sensitive in nature and need to be returned reliably and accurately.

meeting minutes voice recognition, transcription software for multiple voices, transcribe meetings to text voice recognition Features:

Recognizes up to 1-6 voices at a time.

Turns voices from meetings into text without a typist.

Stores the recording onto a hand held voice recorder before uploading to a pc.

30 hours of rechargeable battery life for recorder.

Designed for voice recognition for government meetings and conferences

Automation Voice to Text transcribing of your meetings using revolutionary GHOST WRITER 3 and Multi-person voice recognition software.

Deep learning algorithm from GHOST WRITER 3 continually learns and trains itself.

Warnings: Since this voice recognition is cutting edge technology that is only available from Martel, your results may vary. Martel makes no claims to the actual accuracy of your group, due to the wide variety of accents and speaking abilities.

Complete Package Includes:

- GHOST WRITER 3 Digital Conference Recorder & Multi person voice recognition system
- 2 Martel Proprietary Worlds Only Multiple Voice Speech Recognition Microphone Array
- 8 Gigabyte SD Card
- USB Cradle
- Rechargeable Battery Pack
- AC Adapter
- USB Cable
- Case
- Professional Voice Recognition software on CD
- Instruction Manual
- Quick Reference Guide

- 1-Year Limited Warranty
- Martel Support & Installation via computer to computer professional installation
- Martel Electronics is the only place in the world you can buy a multiple voice recognition conference recording solution

The Ghost writer package includes software and custom items and is non-returnable

COMPANY INFORMATION

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Court Reporters Microphones

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FREE Technical Support Fast Shipping Largest Product Selection Low Prices EVERYDAY Leading Supplier in U.S.A. We Guarantee Our Products 58 Years in business Since 1957

EXHIBIT A

Kathleen Dominguez

From:	CS DTR <cs-dtr@veritext.com></cs-dtr@veritext.com>
Sent:	Thursday, February 01, 2018 12:28 PM
То:	Carolyn Derrico
Cc:	Kathleen Dominguez
Subject:	RE: Translation Service for the Town of Palm Beach, FL

Here is the quote for the reporter:

Meetings		\$200/1st hr, \$75/add'l hr	
	Overtime (Before 9, After 5)	\$250/1st hr, \$112.50/add'l hr	
	Saturday/Sunday	\$250/1st hr, \$160/add'l hr	

	Meeting/Audio Transcription			
	0&1		Сору	
Standard	\$	8.00	\$	3.50
5-Day	\$	10.00	\$	4.90
3-Day	\$	12.00	\$	5.60
Next Day	\$	14.00	\$	7.00

Thank you,

Melissa Clement Client Services Manager – FLO/Downtown

VERITEXT LEGAL SOLUTIONS

305-371-6677 – Friedman Lombardi & Olson 954-522-3376 - Downtown Reporting 561-284-8151 - Direct www.veritext.com

From: Carolyn Derrico [mailto:cderrico@TownOfPalmBeach.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 01, 2018 12:03 PM
To: CS DTR <cs-dtr@veritext.com>
Cc: Kathleen Dominguez <KDominguez@TownofPalmBeach.com>
Subject: RE: Translation Service for the Town of Palm Beach, FL

This would be for court reporter services.

Thank you!

From: CS DTR [mailto:cs-dtr@veritext.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 01, 2018 11:44 AM
To: Carolyn Derrico <<u>cderrico@TownOfPalmBeach.com</u>>
Cc: Kathleen Dominguez <<u>KDominguez@TownofPalmBeach.com</u>>
Subject: RE: Translation Service for the Town of Palm Beach, FL



I'm so sorry, I probably misunderstood your below email. Is this for a court reporter or is this to transcribe an audio?

Thank you,

Melissa Clement Client Services Manager – FLO/Downtown

VERITEXT LEGAL SOLUTIONS 305-371-6677 – Friedman Lombardi & Olson 954-522-3376 - Downtown Reporting 561-284-8151 - Direct www.veritext.com

From: Carolyn Derrico [mailto:cderrico@TownOfPalmBeach.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 01, 2018 11:10 AM
To: CS DTR <<u>cs-dtr@veritext.com</u>>
Cc: Kathleen Dominguez <<u>KDominguez@TownofPalmBeach.com</u>>
Subject: Translation Service for the Town of Palm Beach, FL

Good Morning,

Please let us know the fees associated with having our Town Council meeting minutes translated verbatim. Please see our meeting parameters for the following two meetings below:

- (1) Town Council Regular meetings: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 9:30am –5:00 pm (12x/year) Location: Town Hall Council Chambers, Town of Palm Beach, 360 S. County Road, Palm Beach
- (2) Town Council Development Review meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month from 9:30am 5:00pm (12x/year) Location: Town Hall Council Chambers, Town of Palm Beach, 360 S. County Road, Palm Beach

Both sets of meetings are comprised of 5 Town Council members, Mayor, Town Attorney, Town Manager, Town Clerk and the public.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,

Carolyn Devrico Administrative Assistant

Town of Palm Beach Town Clerk's Office 360 S. County Road Palm Beach, FL 33480 561-838-6340 (Direct)

Please be advised that under Florida law, e-mails and e-mail addresses are public records. If you do not want your e-mail address released in response to a public records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact the Town of Palm Beach by phone at (561) 838-5400, or in writing: 360 S. County RD, Palm Beach, FL 33480.

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.

EXHIBIT B

From:Carolyn DerricoTo:Kathleen DominguezSubject:FW: Court Reporting Request from Town of Palm BeachDate:Thursday, February 01, 2018 5:02:28 PM

FYI...see below. (I also printed this out.)

From: depos [mailto:depos@floridacourtreporting.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 01, 2018 4:03 PM
To: Carolyn Derrico <cderrico@TownOfPalmBeach.com>
Subject: RE: Court Reporting Request from Town of Palm Beach

Appearance fee for 9:30 to 5:00 is \$250

Transcripts are \$7.00 per page.

Thank you for considering Florida Court Reporting.

Claudía Príce Witters Owner/Office Manager Florída Court Reporting 2161 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd. Suíte 302 West Palm Beach, FL 33409 Phone: 561-689-0999 <u>Claudia@FloridaCourtReporting.com</u>

From: Carolyn Derrico [mailto:cderrico@TownOfPalmBeach.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 01, 2018 3:46 PM
To: depos <depos@floridacourtreporting.com>
Subject: RE: Court Reporting Request from Town of Palm Beach

Meetings are not televised, only audio taped.

From: depos [mailto:depos@floridacourtreporting.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 01, 2018 3:10 PM
To: Carolyn Derrico <<u>cderrico@TownOfPalmBeach.com</u>>
Subject: RE: Court Reporting Request from Town of Palm Beach

Are your meetings televised so that we can obtain recordings?

Claudía Príce Wítters Owner/Office Manager

EXHIBIT B

Florída Court Reportíng 2161 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd. Suíte 302 West Palm Beach, FL 33409 Phone: 561-689-0999 <u>Claudia@FloridaCourtReporting.com</u>

From: Carolyn Derrico [mailto:cderrico@TownOfPalmBeach.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 01, 2018 10:50 AM
To: depos <depos@floridacourtreporting.com>
Cc: Kathleen Dominguez <KDominguez@TownofPalmBeach.com>
Subject: Court Reporting Request from Town of Palm Beach

Good Morning,

Please let us know the fees associated with having our Town Council meetings translated verbatim. Please see our meeting parameters for the following two meetings below:

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Location: Town Hall Council Chambers, Town of Palm Beach, 360 S. County Road, Palm Beach

(2) Town Council - Development Review meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month from 9:30am - 5:00pm (12x/year)
 Location: Town Hall Council Chambers, Town of Palm Beach, 360 S. County Road, Palm
 Beach

Both sets of meetings are comprised of 5 Town Council members, Mayor, Town Attorney, Town Manager, Town Clerk and the public.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Thank you,

Carolyn Derrico

Administrative Assistant

Town of Palm Beach Town Clerk's Office 360 S. County Road Palm Beach, FL 33480 561-838-6340 (Direct)

EXHIBIT C

Municipality	Minutes Format		
Palm Beach Shores	Action and Summary		
Lake Worth	Action and Summary		
Lake Park	Action and Summary		
Village of Golf	Action and Summary		
Ocean Ridge	Action and Summary		
West Palm Beach	Action and Summary		
Village of Palm Springs	Action only		
Town of Highland Beach	Action only		
South Palm Beach	Action only		
Palm Beach Gardens	Action only		
Atlantis	Action only		
Royal Palm Beach	Discussion/Summary		
Jupiter Island	Discussion/Summary		
Delray Beach	Discussion/Summary		
Boca Raton	Discussion/Summary		
Lake Clarke Shores	Discussion/Summary		
Jupiter	Discussion/Summary		
Belle Glade	Discussion/Summary		
Tequesta	Discussion/Summary		
Jupiter Inlet Colony	Discussion/Summary		
Town of Cloud Lake	Discussion/Summary		
Town of Loxahatchee Groves	Discussion/Summary		
Village of Golf	Discussion/Summary		
Briny Breezes	Discussion/Summary		
Boynton Beach	Discussion/Summary		
Tequesta	Discussion/Summary		
Riviera Beach	Verbatim		