



# HOW TO WRITE MEETING MINUTES:

Expert Tips, Meeting Minutes

Templates and Sample Meeting Minutes

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## Expert Tips, Meeting Minutes Templates and Sample Meeting Minutes

With everything that's at stake in today's challenging times, it's no wonder that employers prize accurate minute-taking skills more than ever before. Minutes serve as a permanent record of what was *decided*, what *actions* must be taken, *who* must take them and *when*.

Every day, key meetings are probably taking place in your office. And the decisions made as a result of those meetings can involve millions of dollars, and even change people's careers. That's why the role of the minute-taker is so important.

In this special report, *How to Write Meeting Minutes*, you'll learn tips and tools to take accurate, professional minutes and save time using meeting minutes templates. Whether you've never taken minutes before or you want to take your skills to the next level, *How to Write Meeting Minutes* will help you master the task.

So, the next time you're asked to take minutes at a meeting, you won't be wondering, "What do I write down? How do I know what's important?" Instead of panicking about the responsibility, you will actually *enjoy* assuming this vital role. It's a way to boost your value within your organization and become a key player on your team.

### 1. Pre-meeting preparation: 8 key steps

When just the thought of creating official meeting minutes makes your writing hand freeze, take note: Preparation starts well before the meeting.

In fact, 60% to 70% of a minute-taker's most effective time will likely be spent in the pre-meeting stage, as one meeting expert pointed out. The work you do during this phase lays a foundation that helps ensure your success upon entering the meeting room.

Follow these eight pre-meeting steps:

#### ***1. Choose your technology***

What tool will you use to capture information? While some minute-takers still use shorthand, more often nowadays people are using a laptop, which can be a real time-saver. You need to determine which method is going to work best for you.

Either way, you can use audio or video recordings as a back-up. Just be sure you get permission first to do that. Find out what the rules are, based on where you work and the meeting itself.

## ***2. Review previous minutes***

Before you start, it's a good idea to review the minutes from prior meetings. Notice the organization of the minutes—the amount of detail, phraseology and other characteristics.

## ***3. Obtain the meeting agenda, other pertinent materials***

The agenda for an **informal** meeting lists only the items the attendees will discuss during the meeting. But the agenda for a **more formal** meeting could list the times, the events, speakers, rooms and activities. Make sure you get a copy of the agenda beforehand, especially if you're not the one who helped prepare it.

Why are agendas important? They show the time frames for each segment of the meeting. They also make you aware of what you can expect from the discussion.

Other materials you might want to request: minutes of past meetings, handouts and glossaries of relevant subjects.

Ask the meeting chair or facilitator to copy you on all materials sent prior to the meeting and to send you an advance copy of any handouts that will be distributed.

## ***4. Speak with the chairperson in advance***

Go through the agenda together to establish the main topics and the group's goals. Then determine with the chairperson whether the meeting is going to be formal or informal. Oftentimes, that will dictate the type of notes you will have to take, as well as the format to use when writing up the minutes.

Also, decide on a signal to use during the meeting in case you will need clarification from the chairperson.

## ***5. Arrive early to check equipment, materials***

Of course, you'll want to check your audio or video equipment in advance, and make sure you have enough batteries and extension cords. If you will be using a laptop, make sure to bring every accessory you'll need.

Check your recording device prior to the meeting. Set your volume level by walking around the room and experimenting with audio. (During the meeting you may have to adjust the volume if one of the speakers is soft-spoken.)

Some additional materials to bring: sticky notes, highlighters, a red pen, a note-taking pad, extra pens, note pads for visitors, any necessary file folders and meeting handouts.

Make sure you have a copy of the agenda—and bring extra copies, in the event the meeting chair forgets to bring them.

### **6. Create a seating chart**

This is a good idea, especially if you don't know the attendees or have a large group—eight to 10 people—in the meeting. Before everyone arrives, draw a diagram of the table in your notes. Then, as each person takes a seat, write his or her name in the right position.

### **7. Determine your position at the table**

Ideally, you should sit next to the meeting leader or chairperson. That way, you can more easily signal the chair if you need clarification. The chairperson is likely to appreciate the strategic positioning as well. It's easier for him or her to say quietly something like, “Oh, did you capture that? What Bill just said was really important.”

### **8. Introduce yourself**

If you don't know some of the attendees, plan to introduce yourself and your role at the meeting. Remember to smile and be confident. It's good for people to get to know you.

## **2. During the meeting: 10 minute-taking tips**

Even after years of practice, taking minutes wasn't getting any easier for Terri Michaels. “I had become wordy, and the minutes were sometimes eight pages,” she says. “Each new director or company wanted them done differently.”

Finally, she enrolled in a workshop, where she learned that to take better minutes, “I had to adjust my *listening* skills and thinking patterns, and home in on what was really being discussed.”

Now Michaels uses these minute-taking best practices:

**1. Ask yourself, as you're taking notes,** “Will it matter in two days, two weeks, two months, two years?” If yes, include it. “I still find myself putting things in my draft that do not matter and later removing them,” Michaels says.

**2. Summarize.** Don't record conversations word for word.

**3. Do record motions word for word,** and indent them for easy scanning.

*Example:*

Mr. Hurst made a motion to approve the 2008 ranking list. Seconded by Mr. Goodhart.

MOTION CARRIED

**4. Use keywords vs. sentences.** *Tip:* Record minutes in a steno pad. On the left side, write keywords; on the right side, make short notations on the keywords. Want the notes to stick in your memory? Write on a color pad.

**5. Keep emotions out of the minutes**—yours and those of attendees. *Example:* “Mr. Smith, exasperated by the discussion, left the room.”

**6. Be an active listener.** “If someone makes a motion and you didn’t hear it clearly, interrupt the meeting and ask,” Michaels says. “If you don’t understand something being discussed, but you can’t interrupt the meeting, make a note on your pad to ask the chairperson about it later.”

**7. Reflect accurately the order of the discussion,** even if doesn’t follow the agenda. “These are legal, historical documents, and you are the one who took those notes,” she says. “You never know when you will be asked about a meeting.”

**8. Switch to using your laptop for minute-taking.** “Listening to the meeting while recording it and then listening to it again to complete the minutes was double duty,” she says. “Now I save time by typing keywords, short sentences and notations into the agenda.”

**9. Create bulleted lists when recording** a list of comments, suggestions or concerns.

**10. Streamline your sign-in sheet.** Michaels uses a three-column template: The first column lists all staff and attendees. Attendees initial the second column and mark their arrival times in the third column.

“Two days before the meeting, I ask staff if any guests are coming, and I add them to the sheet. The morning of the meeting, I put it by the door with a pen and a ‘Please sign in’ sign. At the start of the meeting, I ask the chairperson to announce for all attendees, including board members, to sign the sheet.”

**Tip:** View Michaels’ sample meeting minutes from a board meeting on page 15.



### 3. When confused at a meeting, speak up!

You're sitting in a meeting taking the minutes when you suddenly realize you don't understand what's being discussed. Speaking up to ask for clarification can be intimidating. Despite that feeling of discomfort, though, it's best to summon the courage, especially since you're the one charged with taking formal minutes.

Having a few useful phrases on hand can give you the confidence you need, says Jodi Glickman Brown, founder of communication consulting firm Great on the Job. She offers a few examples in a *Harvard Business Review* blog post:

√ “Forgive me if I’m behind the 8-ball here, but I’m a little confused about ...”

√ “Max, I believe this is what you said ... Is that correct?”

√ “I’m not entirely sure I’m following you. Could you please recap what you just mentioned regarding ...”

√ “I’m sure I’m supposed to know this already, but ...”

√ “I apologize if this is totally obvious to everyone here, but what does XYZ stand for?”

Joan Burge, founder and CEO of Office Dynamics, says if you're taking formal minutes or notes on behalf of the group, “Feel confident about the role you play because it will impact what is happening after the meeting. It just takes courage to speak up in that meeting. It's your tone of voice and your volume that convey confidence.”

Make it clear that you need clarification for the notes. “If you can't get a word in edgewise,” Burge says, “then write down what you thought you heard, and then afterward go to that person and ask about it.”

### 4. Conversation veers off track—now what?

You're taking minutes in a meeting when the conversation suddenly goes off topic. Or, two attendees begin to argue. To what extent should you capture the conversation?

“The problem with side conversations: Sometimes people just chitchat and say nothing of value, but other times they say something important,” Burge says.

She offers these tips for turning meeting conversations into a valuable road map—even when the conversation is difficult to track.

**Situation: The conversation goes off topic.**

*What to do:* Listen for an action, a clarification or a requirement.

“For example, this comes up when I’m working with a new client,” says Burge. “I’m on the phone with them, and they are rattling off tons of information to me. So I’m always listening for *keywords* and phrases that have to do with an action or viewpoint.”

**Situation: Two attendees begin to argue.**

*What to do:* What you’ll need to capture isn’t “Bob was really upset about the new project,” explains Burge. “Rather, you should be capturing Bob’s comment about the project: that he feels it’s going to be too big of an investment, or that the company won’t get a return on its money.”

**Situation: A subgroup is having a side conversation.**

*What to do:* Say something like, “Excuse me, but is this really good information that I should be capturing?” or “Do you have something you would like to share with me that I need to write down?”

Otherwise, you won’t know whether they’re saying something important.

**Situation: Attendees are using an acronym you don’t understand.**

*What to do:* Ask the person who is using the term if he could please repeat it or spell it for you. If it’s an acronym, ask, “What does that acronym stand for? I need to put that in the meeting minutes.”

## 5. Use a meeting minutes template to save time

At her company meetings, senior administrative assistant Amy Finelli uses a meeting minutes template. That way, she can quickly send out notes after the meeting “because I don’t have to figure out how to organize the topics. And it looks the same each time I send it out,” she says.

Another “power tool” Finelli uses: She keeps an MS Word template for creating nameplates, which she provides to all meeting attendees. If it’s a large meeting or if anyone is new, she says, “it’s helpful to have nameplates for all employees so everyone knows whom they’re talking to.”

Finelli isn't the only one using time-saving tactics like minute-taking templates. Some people spend eight hours a day in meetings, so any tip that helps speed up front-end or back-end work can be a lifesaver.

**Tip:** Want to stop reinventing the wheel every time you take minutes? On pages 11–12 you'll find two minute-taking templates provided by Patricia Robb, an executive assistant and renowned expert on minute-taking, who presented the popular webinar, [Taking Effective Meeting Minutes](#), to the readers of our *Administrative Professional Today* newsletter.

## 6. Turn meeting minutes into action plans

After a meeting is over, everyone will scurry back to their desks to check email messages and resume work. They may quickly forget about the action items they just took on.

Your mission? To produce minutes that remind everyone what needs to happen next, and assure them that their meeting time was well spent.

At Marilyn Halsall's workplace, "action minutes" are the solution.

Streamlined and informal, action minutes record little, if any, discussion. They record only decisions and who will do what by when. That makes it easier for people to note what they actually accomplished in the meeting.

"People don't take time to read the full minutes," says Halsall, an HR administrator at a Canadian college. "They want to quickly see 'What do I have to do before the next meeting?' or 'What decisions did we make?' That's why so many people find action minutes useful."

Since Halsall introduced the new format, it has received rave reviews from meeting attendees.

These five suggestions will help you prepare to write minutes that yield results:

- 1. Use a consistent format.** People refer to minutes to remember what the group decided and who's in charge of doing what next. Help that information pop out with a consistent format that people will see each time.
- 2. Include discussion recaps,** and key them to the agenda topic they match. No need to give a word-for-word account (see exception in No. 3), nor should you editorialize.



*Example:* “Bob feels we need to look into industry averages, as well as our company’s numbers for the past few years, before finalizing our sales goals.”

**3. Be specific when it really counts.** If the group makes a major decision, include synopses of the discussion’s debates and conclusions. A vague account will make your minutes less valuable.

**4. List complete names and titles** under an “Attendees” headline at the start of your minutes. Should someone refer to your minutes two years later, he might not know who “Bob” was.

**5. Present action steps and deadlines** clearly by using bullets, underlining or bolding keywords. Make sure attendees can see at a glance what’s expected of them.

## 7. Post-meeting: Closing the minute-taking loop

When it’s time to produce your meeting minutes, follow these steps:

### ***1. Gather your materials***

Pull together the agenda, your notes, any reports or documents that were distributed at the meeting, and verbatim copies of motions and resolutions.

### ***2. Create a draft within 24 hours, while the information is fresh in your mind***

If you used your laptop to take notes, it won’t take a lot of time to type your draft.

### ***3. Double-space your minutes***

That way, handwritten corrections can be easily and clearly inserted.

### ***4. Make sure to include any attachments***

### ***5. Send a draft to the meeting leader***

Ask the leader to review the minutes before you send them out to attendees. This gives him or her the chance to clarify anything, or to add an important point.

### ***6. Prepare to make corrections***

After you’ve spruced up your notes and formatted the document, you’ll need to make sure all corrections are made to the final version before filing it as a formal record.

At the group’s next meeting, you may hear corrections to the minutes, says Joan Burge. “Follow the legal requirements of your organization in correcting the minutes,” she says.

If no special requirements are indicated, Burge recommends following this procedure:

√ **Draw a red- or black-ink line through the incorrect wording.**

Write the correction in ink above the line, and specify in the margin at which meeting the correction was made. Include the initials of the person making the correction, as well as the meeting date, in the margin.

√ **Use a separate page for large corrections.**

If attaching a separate sheet, write that information in ink in the margin of the minutes. The corrections will need to be signed by the secretary, chair or meeting leader.

√ **Store them in a master book.**

Keep minutes in chronological order, and store them in a place that others can access. Or, if they need to be locked, make sure stakeholders know where the key is.

√ **Keep an index.**

Maintain an index of everything in one place. When you are filing the minutes, make sure to include all handouts and the agenda.

For visual presentation, keep it simple. A straightforward style is more attractive than pages marked with repetitive asterisks and underscores. It's the information that people are interested in.

**Sample meeting minutes:** View examples of the finished product, from attendees to covered business to items requiring action, on pages 13–20.

Meeting Minutes Template: Example 1

**FORMAL MINUTE-TAKING TEMPLATE**

*[Note: By preparing your template ahead of time as shown here, you are making your job much easier since many portions of the minutes can be prepopulated.]*

**MINUTES OF THE [INSERT NAME] BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Date, Location, Time

**PRESENT:**

<p><b>BOARD MEMBERS</b>                  [Insert name], Chair                  [Insert name]                  [Insert name]                  [Insert name]                  [Insert name]                  [Insert name]  <b>EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS</b> <i>[it will depend on your Board's by-laws, but ex-officio members are normally non-voting members]</i></p>	<p><b>STAFF MEMBERS:</b>                  [Insert name] – Chief Executive Officer                  [Insert name], Recorder</p> <p><b>REGRETS:</b>                  [Insert name]</p> <p><b>ABSENT:</b>                  [Insert name]</p> <p><b>GUESTS:</b>                  Director of Finance <i>(for Finance portion only)</i>                  Alumni Chair <i>(for Alumni Report only)</i></p>
<p>An in-camera meeting was held prior to the regular Board meeting.</p>	
<p>The meeting was called to order (or convened) at 9:30 a.m.</p>	
<p><b>1. Approval of Agenda.</b>                  MOTION # 01-06-10: That the Board accepts the Agenda for the meeting of June 28, 2010, as presented.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">                     Moved: [Insert name]                      Seconded: [Insert name]                      CARRIED                 </p>	
<p><b>2. Approval of Minutes</b>                  MOTION # 02-06-10: That the Board accepts the Minutes of the meeting of March 4, 2010, as presented.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">                     Moved: [Insert name]                      Seconded: [Insert name]                      CARRIED                 </p>	
<p><b>3. Adjournment</b>                  There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2 p.m.</p>	
<p>NOTES APPROVED BY:</p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>[Name], Chair</i></p>	<p>_____</p> <p><i>[Name], Corporate Secretary</i></p>

Meeting Minutes Template: Example 2

## Minute Taking Template

<b>MINUTES</b>			
Senior Leadership Team [Insert Date and Time] [Insert Location]			
<b>Participants:</b>	<b>Regrets:</b>	<b>Absent:</b>	<b>Guests:</b>
[Insert Names] Recorder: Patricia			

The meeting was called to order at [Insert Time].

#	Topic and Discussion	Decision/Action	Responsible	Key Date
1.	Adoption of Agenda			
	The agenda was adopted [as presented /as corrected].			
2.	Adoption of Previous Meeting Minutes			
	The minutes were adopted as amended.	<i>Action:</i> Amend Minutes	Patricia	
3.	Review of Financial Statements			
	The Director of Finance provided a summary of the Financial Statements.	<i>Decision:</i> The Financial Statements will be reviewed monthly.		
4.	[Insert Items in Order of Agenda]			
	This item was deferred to the April 8 meeting.	<i>Action:</i> Add to April 8 agenda.	Patricia	

Meeting was adjourned at [Insert Time].

Sample Meeting Minutes: Example 1

## SAMPLE MEETING MINUTES

[An example of the finished product, from attendees to covered business to items requiring action]

**Nominations & Governance Committee Meeting**  
**June 9, 2011, at 1 p.m. EST**

*By teleconference* [Insert Dial in information and participant code]

**PRESENT:**

B. Brown, Chair

R. Bradley

J. T. Franks

S. Steal

**STAFF:**

M. Pound - Chief Executive Officer

P. Robb – Executive Assistant, Recorder

**REGRETS:**

E. F. Bradson, Jr.

The meeting was convened at 1 p.m.

**4. Approval of Agenda**

MOTION #01N-06-11

To accept the agenda of June 9, 2011, as presented.

Moved: J.T. Franks                      Seconded:      S. Steal

CARRIED

**5. Approval of Minutes**

MOTION #02N-06-11

To approve the Minutes of March 28, 2011

Moved: J.T. Franks                      Seconded:      S. Steal

CARRIED

**6. Board Vacancy**

It was noted that Mr. Bradson's last term will end on June 20, 2011. He is to be recognized at the Board dinner on June 13 and presented with a bronze statue.

The Committee reviewed the list of interested candidates for the Board vacancy. Discussion ensued. Interviews will be scheduled as soon as possible with the intent to appoint a board member by the meeting in the fall.

**ACTION**

To proceed with scheduling back-to-back interviews with the successful candidates and notify those who were unsuccessful.

(P. Robb)

**7. Committee Membership**

S. Steal agreed to sit on the Audit Committee until the full complement of members is appointed to the Board. At that time this item will be brought to the Chair of the Audit Committee in order that it is dealt with quickly.

**8. Maternity Leave Policy**

The Maternity Leave Policy was brought to the Committee for its annual review. It was noted the Board approved the policy in June 2010 as amended to include adoption benefits and this benefit has been well received by staff.

**Other Business**

No further items were brought forward for discussion.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

**[A motion is required to adjourn a meeting if not all the business was dealt with, otherwise no motion is required. Please consult your own meeting rules for further clarity]**

MINUTES APPROVED BY:

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*B. Brown, Chair*



## Sample Meeting Minutes: Example 2

### MINUTES OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE BOARD'S MEETING

February 23, 2010

**Present:** Mr. Gene Garber (Chair),  
Mr. Jeffrey Frey (Vice Chair)

#### **Mr. Daniel Zimmerman**

Mr. Roger Rohrer  
Mr. Richard Hurst

Ms. Terri Michael (Recording Secretary)

**Absent:** Mr. Edward Goodhart, III

#### **Commissioner Dennis Stuckey**

Mr. David Zimmerman  
Mr. Matthew Young

**Staff Members in attendance:** Mr. Matt Knepper, Director  
Ms. Nancy Ambler, Farmland Preservation Specialist  
Mr. Kevin Baer, Farmland Preservation Specialist  
Mr. Bill Jones, Farmland Preservation Specialist

**Guests in attendance:** Mr. Justin Evans, LCPC Senior Community Planner  
Mr. Dean Severson, LCPC Agricultural and Rural Lands Specialist  
& Planning Analyst

Mr. Jeffrey Swinehart, Deputy Director, Lancaster Farmland Trust (LFT)

#### ***I. Call to Order and Recognition of Guest***

Mr. Gene Garber called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. The meeting was held at the Lancaster Administrative Building, 150 N. Queen Street, Room 102, Lancaster, PA 17603.

#### ***II. Review of Mission Statement***

*"To forever preserve the beautiful farmland and productive soils of Lancaster County and its rich agricultural heritage; and to create a healthy environment for the long-term sustainability of the agricultural economy and farming as a way of life."*

**III. Minutes of the meeting from January 28, 2010**

The following amendments were made to the January 28, 2010 minutes: VI. Old Business, Item A., third bullet, insert the road name, Hilltop Road; VI. Old Business, Item B., fourth bullet, modify the sentence to read "APB will continue current position, which is to instruct that the encroachment be removed;" Concerns/Comments from the Board, delete extra line between first and second bulleted item; VII. New Business, Item C., Questions from the Board, first bullet, rephrase the question to read "Since the program is for plain sect, does that mean they need to be the owner or operator to sign?"; VII. New Business, Item D., Concerns/Comments from the Board, first bullet, correct the spelling of "Goodhart;" second bullet, second line, remove the word "and" following the parenthesis; last paragraph under 2010 Funding, first line, replace the word "hear" with the word "near", insert the word "to" following the comma, rephrase the second line to read "Invitees will be Mr. Bob Rose, ..."; Item E. 2009 Ranking, format bullets.

**Mr. Jeffrey Frey made a motion to approve the minutes of January 28, 2010 with the above noted changes/modifications. Seconded by Mr. Daniel Zimmerman.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**IV. Announcements**

- The joint meeting with Lancaster County Planning Commission (LCPC) will be scheduled during the month of May, details to follow
- The founder of the Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board, Mr. Amos Funk, passed away on February 14, 2010. Commissioner Stuckey has requested the Boards input on an acknowledgement of his work. The standard acknowledgment letter from the County Commissioners could be presented. The Board would like to do something permanent to acknowledge him and his work;
  - Proclaim a certain day to be Mr. Amos Funk day
  - Preserve a farm in his name
  - Place a plaque at the Farm and Home Center
  - Name a challenge grant after him

Lancaster County Conservation District and Lancaster Farmland Trust will be contacted for possible input. Lancaster County Commissioners will acknowledge Mr. Amos Funk at a public meeting.

**V. Executive Session**

Mr. Gene Garber called the meeting into Executive Session. During this time, the Board discussed financial and real estate matters. After some discussion, Mr. Gene Garber ended the Executive Session and opened the meeting to the public.

**VI. Old Business**

Nothing new to report at this time pertaining to the two encroachment issues (Wentworth and Bowlan)

**VII. New Business**

**A. Requests for Subdivision**

- 1). APB has received a request from Mr. Harold M. Shellenberger, East Donegal Township, 84.47 acres. Mr. Harold Shellenberger has requested a preliminary approval for an agricultural lot subdivision/add-on of 26.0 preserved acres to an adjacent preserved farm of 96.2 acres. After completion of the subdivision/add-

on, the resulting acreage for the parent tract would be 58.47 acres and the receiving tract would be 122.2 acres. The proposal meets the Board's subdivision guidelines, however, Lancaster County Planning Commission (LCPC) and East Donegal Township have yet to review and approve the proposal. The additional residential right has not been assigned on the proposal (required by the subdivision guidelines).

Concerns/Comments from the Board:

- Landowner could subdivide the 122.2 tract in the future
- Possibly setting restrictions for potential future subdividing

Staff recommendation is to grant preliminary, conditional approval; final approval after LCPC and East Donegal Township have reviewed/approved and the location of the additional residential right is assigned.

**Mr. Daniel Zimmerman made a motion to grant preliminary conditional approval. Final approval may be granted after review and approval by LCPC and East Donegal Township. The location of the additional residential right must be indicated on the proposal as required by the subdivision guidelines. Seconded by Mr. Richard Hurst.**

**MOTION CARRIED**

*B. Requests for Rural Enterprise*  
None

*C. 2010 Funding*

- Overall State funding is \$20 million, which is a decrease from the estimated \$22 million
- Approximately 30 farms will be preserved in 2010
- Six farms offered 50%, 30% of the applicants offered some type of bargain sale
- Average \$3,100/acre, 90% of easement value (decrease)

Lancaster Farmland Trust (LFT):

- Estimates 25-30 farms to be preserved this year
- Average \$800/acre
- Preserves more farms in the eastern end of the county
- Challenge grant has received tremendous response from the plain sect
- In 2010, there will be six joint projects with APB
- Has experienced a decrease in some donations

Mr. Jeff Swinehart, Deputy Director, Lancaster Farmland Trust (LFT) reviewed the steps LFT takes to preserve a farm and a per acre amount:

1. The Board sets the policy as what they are willing to pay per acre
2. Board establishes criteria to evaluate the property (Similar criteria to APB)
3. The criteria doesn't prioritize the projects, and currently, farms are on a first come first served basis

4. Farm is visited by LFT staff and landowner is presented with a "Letter of Intent," which is their indication they desire the Board to take action
5. Land Preservation Committee reviews farm and ranking and recommends to the Board the per acre amount
6. Board approves or does not approve to preserve at that per acre amount

**D. 2009 Ranking**

- Three farms offered 60% (receives same point value as 50%)
- Eight farms offered 70%
- 22 farms offered 80%
- 26 farms offered 90%

Conservation Plans:

- 121 farms out of 220 farms provided a copy (receive maximum points)
- 49 farms have a plan on record, but no copy provided (receive partial points)
- 50 farms have no plan, no record of a plan and no copy provided (receive no points)
- 77% of the farms ranked in 2009 have some type of conservation plan on the farm or provided a copy
- Twice a year all applicants are reminded to provide a copy of their conservation plan before ranking
- A new plan is required if practices have changed
- 78 acres are the average size that was preserved last year
- An average of \$3,045/acre

**C. 2010 Funding (continued discussion)**

Budget for administration purposes has changed in 2010:

- Increase from \$267,000 in 2000 to \$462,000 in 2009 (six full-time staff)
- Increase does not include contracts with outside agencies
- In 2005 budget was \$530,000
- Staff salary and benefits is 85% of the budget
- Each Board of Commissioners handle the departmental budgets differently; can set a percentage to be cut for departments or departments can submit the same budget from prior year with few changes
- Monitoring process will increase on a yearly basis as more farms are preserved
- Clean and Green rollback taxes, varying from year to year, are used for some monitoring expenses and easement purchases
- Contract costs with LFT to monitor 300 farms/year; if potential violations the farm is referred APB

Concerns/Comments from the Board:

- Legislative action is required to change the State mandated yearly monitoring visits

- Possibly implementing a fee for applications received from preserved farms for a rural enterprise, an agricultural subdivision or a residential subdivision; offset costs incurred by APB
- Suggested fee of \$250

**Mr. Roger Rohrer made a motion to apply an application fee of \$250.00 for a rural enterprise, an agricultural subdivision or a residential subdivision received from a preserved farm. Seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Frey.**

Comments from the Board:

- Fees would help offset costs incurred administratively and monitoring costs
- Legal aspect

**Mr. Roger Rohrer made a motion to amend the above motion to state, the Board recommends for staff to research, Board approve, and implement on or before January 1, 2011 a fee, to be titled later, for applications from preserved farms for a rural enterprise, an agricultural subdivision or a residential subdivision. Seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Frey.**

Concerns/Comments from the Board:

- How are other counties handling these costs
- Proposed fee does not come close to the costs APB incurs to process the proposed applications
- No profit is gained by APB if implemented
- APB pays for items that other counties do not
- APB does not charge a fee for the conservation easement application, other counties do
- LFT requires a 5% but nothing less than \$2,000 donation to their stewardship fund when a farm is preserved, helps with on-going monitoring expenses
- Board suggested to APB to research a stewardship fund similar to LFT

**MOTION CARRIED**

Suggest a sub-committee to research the fee concept

- Would it be permitted by the State
- Noted in the County program
- May need an amendment
- Stewardship fund possibility
- Splitting costs of surveys since approximately 30% of the farms need surveys
  - A percentage paid by the landowner (negotiable)

Staff is to provide information to the Board by the March 25, 2010 meeting.

**D. 2009 Ranking (continued discussion)**

- An average farm size preserved last year was 78 acres
- Per acre average was \$3,045
- Did not exceed \$3,200/acre average in a year's time period
- In 2004-\$2,700/acre (average)
- In 2006-\$3,100/acre (average)
- In 2010-\$3,100/acre (approximate average)
- Ranking changes have affected the cost per acre
- Appraisal amounts per acre have not changed much

**E. Easement Purchase Price Cap**

Not discussed at this meeting

**VIII. Open Discussion**

The ID badges Board members have do not open the front doors to the Lancaster County Office Building as was indicated earlier. Staff will continue to provide access for the monthly board meetings.

**IX. Business from Guests**

Nothing at this time

**X. Adjourn**

Adjournment at 9:45 a.m.