



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 02/24/2026

ITEM NO: 2

DATE: February 24, 2026
TO: Council Policy Committee
FROM: Chris Constantin, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Review and Provide Direction on the Current Practices for Meeting Minutes

RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss and review the current resolution regarding the format of Town Council minutes, including the summarization of public comment, and provide direction to staff as appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

The Policy Committee and Town Council have discussed the style and format of Council meeting minutes on several occasions, most recently in 2022. On each occasion, both the Policy Committee and the Town Council confirmed the continued use of action minutes.

Action minutes are intended to document:

- The official actions taken by the Council;
- Motions, votes, and outcomes; and
- Direction provided to staff.

They are not intended to serve as a transcript or detailed narrative of discussion.

The Town's use of action minutes is supported by three primary considerations:

1. **Supplemental Verbatim Record:** Complete video recordings of Council meetings are publicly available on YouTube and on the Town's website. These recordings serve as the verbatim record of proceedings. While action minutes capture official actions and direction, the video recording is available to any member of the public who wishes to review exactly what was said.
2. **Statutory Requirements:** State law requires that actions taken and votes be publicly reported. While the Brown Act does not mandate that minutes be prepared, they are typically created to document official actions and ensure compliance with open meeting

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Town Clerk

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, and Town Attorney

requirements. There is no requirement to transcribe or summarize oral remarks by Council Members, staff, or speakers.

3. **Staff Resource Considerations:** Preparation of the current minutes requires approximately four to six hours per meeting, plus additional time for management review. A significant portion of this time is devoted to summarizing and reviewing public comment and discussion of motions.

DISCUSSION:

Recently, questions have arisen regarding the summarization of public comments in the minutes. Under the current practice, public comments are summarized for all agenda items and non-agenda items. This approach provides more detail than is required for action minutes and goes beyond what is specified in the adopted resolution, which only requires a brief summary of speakers' comments made during the public hearing items.

There have also been requests made to provide additional information in the minutes, including expanded summaries of discussion and public comment. These requests would move the minutes away from the action-focused format toward a more detailed, narrative style.

Providing additional details beyond actions and direction would not be aligned with the traditional definition of action minutes previously affirmed by the Council. Expanding summaries would also increase staff preparation time and management review time and could introduce greater subjectivity in how comments and discussion are characterized.

Given the renewed interest in this topic, the Policy Committee may wish to evaluate whether the existing resolution and current practice remain aligned with Council expectations, transparency goals, and staff resource considerations.

Staff conducted an informal poll of other cities within Santa Clara County to better understand regional practices regarding meeting minutes.

Of the 14 cities:

- Seven cities do not summarize public comment for agenda items and instead list only the names of speakers.
- Of these seven cities, four provide brief summaries of comments for non-agenda items, while the remaining three list only the names of speakers.
- The remaining seven cities provide more than a name-only listing for agenda items. Of these, one uses transcription services, two indicate the names of speakers along with whether they were in favor or opposed, and the remaining four provide summaries of varying detail, though most are brief.

The survey indicates that the Town's current practice of summarizing public comment for all items is more detailed than the approach used by a majority of responding neighboring cities.

In reviewing the resolution and current practice, the Policy Committee may wish to consider:

- Alignment between the adopted resolution and current implementation.
- Transparency and accessibility, given the availability of full video recordings as a verbatim supplemental record.
- Consistency with regional practices.
- Staff workload and efficient use of Town resources.
- Clarity, objectivity, and potential risk associated with summarizing public comment.

Any modification to the minutes format that reduces or eliminates the summarization of public comment would reduce staff time associated with minute preparation and management review. Retaining the current format would maintain the existing workload of approximately four to six hours per meeting, plus review time.

Should more detailed summaries or verbatim minutes be desired for particular meetings or agenda items, the Council retains the discretion to direct staff to pursue options, such as contracting for transcription services or using AI-assisted tools.

CONCLUSION:

The Town adopted a resolution in 2001 confirming that "action-only" minutes are the preferred form for regularly scheduled Town Council meetings, and has consistently affirmed the use of action minutes, most recently in 2022. The Town's current practice exceeds the resolution by summarizing public comments for all agenda and non-agenda items. Requests to include additional detail would represent a further departure from the action-only standard established by the resolution and would require additional staff resources.

The Policy Committee may provide direction on whether to:

- Draft a revised resolution reconfirming action-only minutes and removing the requirement to summarize public comment for public hearings;
- Confirm minute format as listed in the current resolution and align current practices accordingly;
- Maintain the current practice which would require revising the existing resolution to clarify expectations regarding public comment summaries;
- Rescind the current resolution and develop a formal Council policy providing detailed guidance on preparation of minutes, including options for expanded or verbatim documentation if desired; or
- Modify the current minutes format to more closely align with the adopted resolution (this can be done independently of revising the resolution or creating a policy).

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COORDINATION:

The preparation of this report was coordinated with the Town Manager's Office and the Town Attorney.

Attachments:

1. Resolution