CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: September 6, 2005 **ITEM NUMBER:**

SUBJECT: **Action Minutes for City Council Meetings**

DATE: **August 23, 2005**

FROM: **City Manager**

PRESENTATION BY: **Steven E. Hayman, Assistant City Manager**
Julie Folcik, Deputy City Clerk

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie Folcik, Deputy City Clerk (714) 754-5221

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve an Action Minute format for the City Council meeting minutes.

BACKGROUND:

The minutes of the City Council meetings are prepared by the City Clerk's office, approved by the City Council, and serve as the official legislative record; a written account of that which took place at the meeting. The importance of the minutes and its accuracy is evident for historical purposes as well as informing the public on the general business of the decisions that are being made that affect them. The minutes are prepared as required by the state code. The following sections address this requirement

California Government Code Section 36814 reads as follows:

"The council shall cause the clerk to keep a correct record of its proceedings. At the request of a member, the city clerk shall enter the ayes and noes in the journal."

And California Government Code Section 40801:

The city clerk shall keep an accurate record of the proceeding of the legislative body and the board of equalization in books bearing appropriate titles and devoted exclusively to such purposes, respectively. The books shall have a comprehensive general index.

DISCUSSION:

What the above-mentioned requirements don't fully address is the format in which the minutes must be prepared. There are, therefore, several formats in which minutes are produced and they include action minutes (record the motions and actions taken), summary minutes (include a narrative of discussion along with the recorded motions and actions taken), and verbatim minutes, which is a script of the proceedings.

Currently, the minutes are prepared in a summary format providing a narrative of the proceedings and the evolution of the decisions, along with the formal actions that are taken by the Council. This format has been very helpful when staff or the public has had a need to research not only what the decision was that was made but also how it came to be.

In preparing the summary minutes subjectivity is often used to determine those comments that are to be included. The "General Rule of Thumb" is to include those comments that were germane to the motion made. With this type of format it requires staff to listen to the recording of the meeting and in some instances listening to portions of the meeting several times, in order to accurately capture the discussion or motion and encapsulate it in a summary.

The importance in providing information to the public and staff in a timely manner has brought about the current production of an "Action Agenda." This work product is prepared after the meeting has taken place, the details of the actions are reviewed and the final action taken on any item is then annotated on the agenda. Since it only lists that action that was taken, the turn-around is a matter of a couple of days. Generally speaking, the response from both the public and staff in other cities has been favorable since information regarding the outcome of a particular item is available almost immediately and can also be obtained from the City's website, again providing greater accessibility to the information.

At the meeting of August 16, 2005, City Council meeting the request for a "Web Streaming Media Solution" was approved. While video streaming will provide a live feed as well as replay opportunities of the Council meeting proceedings via the internet, the use of a product called Minutes Maker will allow the minutes and the documents to be linked to the video recording of the meeting. With this new technology becoming available it has provided opportunity to rethink an alternative to summary minutes preparation as this new approach would conveniently provide all the formats of information, often requested for review, at the publics' or staff members' fingertips. Thus providing convenient and efficient access to the full record of the meeting.

ANALYSIS:

Historically, the average Council meetings have been 4.6 hours in length and a set of minutes, approximately 13 pages. Preparation of the minutes may consume up to 30

hours of staff time and therefore, it has becoming increasingly necessary to evaluate the efficiency of our processes and workflow.

Action Minutes include: The item description, the motions, substitute motions, and the roll call vote, a list of individuals that spoke to the item, whether they were in support or were opposed but they do not include discussion points. They may include some comment when it is indicated by the Council Member that a comment is "for the record." For cities that have moved to the action minutes format, the completion time for a set of minutes has become a matter of days versus a matter of weeks.

With the technology that is being proposed it would assist in the preparation of the minutes by allowing the Deputy City Clerk or her assistant to synchronize the video with the minutes as the meeting is taking place, to enter the motion and the vote that would be added automatically to populate a minutes template, and to add additional notes. After review of the actions, speakers and additional notes, the minutes would be published to the website with a hyperlink to that moment in the video in which the item was considered, as well as a link to the staff documents that were submitted. This type of convenience would be of great assistance to the public and to staff who may review first hand what transpired relative to an item, at their own convenience.

The minutes are and will remain the permanent record and it has long been the preference to utilize summary for a fuller account of the meeting having taken place. However, since the advent of this technology it appears there is a more effective way of making this information available to the public, accurately and in a timely manner. Attached are samples of the various minute types described, including a sample of our own summary minutes along with how those same minutes would look in an action minutes format.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has reviewed the proposal to move to action minutes and has indicated that it is an acceptable, and in fact, a preferable method of record keeping.

CONCLUSION:

Opportunities exist to fully utilize technology, to reap the benefits of a more streamlined workflow while providing the information faster and conveniently not only to our public but to staff as well. It is requested that the Council give consideration to a change in the format of the minutes to that of Action Minutes.

JULIE FOLCIK	ALLAN L. ROEDER
Deputy City Clerk	City Manager

STEVEN E. HAYMAN
Assistant City Manager

DISTRIBUTION: City Council
City Manager
Assistant City Manager
City Attorney
Administrative Services

ATTACHMENT:

1. Costa Mesa City Council Summary Meeting Minutes for March 15, 2005.

2. Sample of proposed action minutes from City Council Meeting of March 15, 2005.