



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: April 4, 2006

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: Action Minutes for City Council Meetings

DATE: March 23, 2006

FROM: City Manager

PRESENTATION Allan Roeder, City Manager

BY: Julie Folcik, City Clerk

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

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve continued use of the Action Minute format for the City Council meeting minutes.

BACKGROUND:

At the meeting of October 4, 2005, the City Council authorized the use of the Action Minute format for the City Council meeting minutes and directed a six (6) month review of the format.

The minutes of the City Council meetings serve as the official legislative record. The importance of the minutes and its accuracy is for historical purposes as well as to give sufficient understand of the general business of the Council and the decisions that were made. The minutes are prepared as required by the state code, which stipulates that the Clerk shall maintain a record of the proceedings (California Government Code Section 36814).

Some concerns were raised relative to the apparent brevity in the recount of the discussion within the minutes and the format in which those discussions could otherwise be accessed. As the minutes are primarily meant as a record of the decision making proceedings of a legislative body, other methods in which one may obtain a fuller account of the deliberations were reported as:

1. **Video Tape** – Produced upon request. Recording time is in realtime.
2. **CD** – Produced upon request, audio only.
3. **DVD** – Produced upon request, includes video, linked documents, minutes, and is time stamped with the “jump to points.”

4. **Cable Television** – Channel 24 is available to Costa Mesa’s residents through their monthly cable subscription. The City Council meetings are recorded live on meeting nights and rebroadcast several times during the week.
5. **Web Streaming** – This capability is available free over the Internet and may be viewed (using windows media player) at the convenience of the end-user.
6. **Transcription** – Service provided by the City Clerk’s on request, at a cost of the hourly rate to prepare.
7. **Real-time Closed Captioning** – This is not currently an option that is provided. Transcription of the meeting in progress is scrolled at the bottom of the screen during broadcasting. This additional and contracted service. The script is searchable and printable.

DISCUSSION:

The action minutes provides an understanding of what took place, specifically those items addressed, the actions taken, indicates discussion points that were germane to the final disposition, and provides a record of those who addressed the City Council and their position on a topic.

In the last six months the Council and the public have had an opportunity to review the new action minutes’ format. The goal of this format was to take advantage of the technology available utilizing the Minutes Maker program that is used in conjunction with the Granicus streaming video system, while streamlining the minutes for better clarity and in providing them in a more expedient manner.

During the meeting the City Clerk utilizes the Minutes-maker program which permits meeting notes to be typed in, to record motions and votes, type in the names and comments of public speakers and to time stamp the video as the meeting is being recorded. This process provides much of the framework that is utilized in preparing the final minutes.

As with all new technology there was a period of “trial and error” in preparing the final product. Through software upgrades and formatting changes, it can be said that the new format and software has reduced the minutes’ preparation time and it has in many ways simplified the process.

The end product has produced a concise set of minutes that is descriptive of the events that took place at the meeting.

ALTERNATIVES

Council may consider to return to the former summary format or to consider another format of minutes as listed below:

1. **Modified Action Minutes** – Action minutes with expanded discussions (summary) for Public Hearings.
2. **Summary Minutes** – Summary of the proceedings and includes paraphrasing of comments by public as well as City Council and staff.
3. **Verbatim Transcripts** – A complete transcript of all City Council, public and staff comments.

CONCLUSION:

It is required by State code that a written account of the meetings be maintained by the City Clerk. The action minutes document the proceedings of the meeting and do indicate those comments that are germane to the disposition of the items. It is the goal of the City Clerk's office to keep the public informed of the Council's activities through resources such as, the agenda, action agenda, the minutes, the staff reports, the video and audio recordings and to do so in a timely fashion. It is therefore respectfully requested that the Council maintain the use of the Action minute format for the City Council minutes.

JULIE FOLCIK

City Clerk

ALLAN L. ROEDER

City Manager

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ATTACHMENTS: 1. [Staff Report from the October 4, 2005 Council Meeting](#)