



**RURAL
SERVICES**
A Division of
FNSB Public Works



HAT IT TAKES TO HAVE A

SUCCESSFUL COMMISSION

Fairbanks North Star Borough
Rural Services Division
3175 Peger Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709



WHY TAKE MINUTES?

- Minutes are the permanent record of your service area's meeting.
- As a permanent record, consideration should be made to insure the minutes are legible, and accurately reflect the proceedings at your meeting.
- At the same time that your commission determines which commissioner is to be the chairperson, the commission should also appoint a secretary, whose responsibility it is to take the minutes.
- It is also acceptable for your service area to hire a professional service to attend your meeting and take the minutes. However, your secretary is still responsible for reviewing their accuracy.
- Following your meeting, the minutes must promptly be submitted to the Rural Services office.
- Rural Services will retain a copy of your minutes in our office for public inspection, and forward the original minutes to the Borough Clerk's Office for permanent storage.

State law requires that every service area meeting be properly noticed. Borough Code requires that service areas hold at least one meeting every calendar quarter, and that proper notice of the meetings be advertised through the Borough Clerk's Office.

COMMISSIONS 101

We have received numerous questions regarding requirements for service area meetings. While your Commissioner Training Handbook provides information under Tab 1, Service Areas/Commissions, we will try to provide some suggestions to help you organize your commission and structure your meetings.

Organizing Your Commission

Each service area must have a Chairman and a Secretary elected by the commission. The Chairman and Secretary must be commissioners. The Secretary is responsible for taking meeting minutes and providing the minutes to Rural Services.

Most of our commissions consist of 3 commissioners and one alternate. The state's Open Meetings Act prohibits any two commissioners in these service areas from discussing service area business outside of a properly noticed public meeting. Because of this it is important, as part of the organization of your commission, to delegate authority for the service area's ongoing maintenance operations to individual commissioners. Designate who has authority to have maintenance work performed by your contractor or who can approve invoices for payment. It is also important to designate who can act in the absence of that person. Some service areas divide this work between summer and winter to share the workload between commissioners.

Sample Agenda

Call to Order
Approval of Agenda
Approval of Minutes
Information and Reports including Financial Report
Old Business
New Business
Public Comments
Commissioner Comments
Next Meeting date and time
Adjournment

Suggested Meeting Topics

- First Quarter (January to March)
Next fiscal year budget
Maintenance/construction plans for summer
Renewal of maintenance contract
- Second Quarter (April to June)
Breakup problems / repairs
Summer maintenance
- Third Quarter (July to September)
Election of commission officers
Preparation for winter
- Fourth Quarter (October to December)
Tax cap adjustment
Grant project requests

QUARTERLY MEETINGS ARE MANDATORY

The general provisions detailing the operations of your service area were established by Title 14 of the FNSB Code of Ordinances included as Appendix H in the Service Area Commissioners Training Handbook. FNSBC 14.01.141(A) states that "every commission shall hold at least one regular meeting per calendar quarter." FNSBC 14.01.151 further states that one of the duties of commissioners is to encourage and communicate with residents and property owners. Meetings provide for an exchange between commissioners and residents/property owners so those represented have a voice as to how the service area is being run, and commissions can gather input they need to best meet the needs of their service area.

The key element of a meeting is its being advertised properly. FNSBC 14.01.141(A) states that "the borough clerk shall publish public notice of all meetings of each commission, and all such meetings shall be open to the public." While posting signs around the service area, placing public information ads with local radio stations and door-to-door invitations may be useful, and will not be discouraged, these do not comply with borough code. The Rural Services office will coordinate advertising of your meeting with the Clerk's Office, but contact with our office needs to be made at least two weeks prior to when the meeting is to be held due to Clerk's Office and newspaper deadlines.

Prior to the start of your meeting, prepare a sign-up sheet and have attendees sign in upon arrival. The commission secretary should take minutes during the meeting, noting what commissioners are present, whether previous minutes were approved, what discussions took place, the results of any polls of attendees and how each commissioner voted on each issue decided.

Following your meeting, the sign-in sheet and minutes should be forwarded to Rural Services. Approval of the minutes at the following meeting is required.