



Simplify Your

WORK LIFE

*An Efficiency Guide for Managing
Public Meetings*



Real Advice from Meeting Managers

For municipal clerks, the clock is enemy No. 1.

Each day, you find yourself searching for more time to complete your full slate of responsibilities – from ensuring compliance with regulations to fielding citizen requests.

But perhaps the most time-consuming process you manage is the execution of public meetings. Whether you're preparing agendas, counting votes, or distributing minutes, the work you do touches every facet of the public meeting process from beginning to end.

We asked this question to meeting managers around the country and have compiled their responses on this step-by-step guide to maximize your time. You might call yourself a clerk, board secretary, or an assistant to the board, but if you have the job of managing meetings, this advice is for you.

Did you miss the chance to provide your time-saving tips? It's not too late! [Take the survey here](#) and your advice could be shared in an upcoming content piece for municipal meeting managers.



With limited time in the work week, what meeting-related tasks can you expedite to save time and become even more productive?



Before the Public Meeting

The pre-meeting phase can be the most critical to ensuring a public meeting runs smoothly, but it can also take up the most time with all the steps needed to prepare. Here are time-saving tips to increase efficiency in the pre-meeting process.

01

Before the Public Meeting



Set Firm Deadlines

The most common time-saving tip in the pre-meeting phase is to set deadlines for agenda items and report submissions. Holding staff accountable for these deadlines will help ensure that you aren't handling last minute requests and needing to re-distribute various versions of the meeting's agenda. Having good internal deadlines practices can make an enormous difference in the agenda creation process.



REAL
ADVICE

"Stick to the schedule of item submission. If staff gets comfortable with you allowing items to be submitted late you will always get late items."

– Melissa McCain, City Clerk at Flowery Branch, GA

02

Before the Public Meeting



Digitize the Agenda Creation Process

The number of agenda items you manage can reach into the hundreds and are often accompanied by supporting documents. That leaves many stuck in an agenda compilation conga-line, where they spend an afternoon walking around a large table while putting individual pieces of paper together to eventually complete a single meeting packet. By going digital, agenda items can be created and tracked all the way from their genesis to the point that they're added to the agenda. And with a push of a button, the solution can automatically create the meeting's agenda packet.



REAL
ADVICE

"Create a database of agenda files, and use it with rigor. This will help coordinate the necessary actions required by the Records Specialist, especially for preparation of Advertising Public Hearings and assembly of documents for signature."

– James B., Pinellas County, FL

03

Before the Public Meeting



Delegate Tasks Where You Can

Try to forget the old adage “If you want something done right, do it yourself.” Managing the public meetings process can be a heavy lift, and it’s important to delegate tasks wherever you can. If you’re fortunate to have staff support, ask for them to help set up the meeting room and tech checks.



REAL
ADVICE

“Is it possible to delegate some tasks. Microphone checks, technology checks (IT) Beverage set-up (admin staff).”

– Susanjoy Wright, City of Gresham

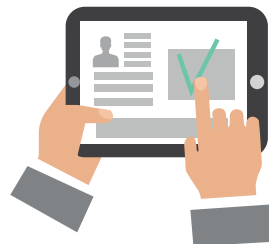


During the Public Meeting

Now it's time for your public meeting. As the meeting manager, it's your job to ensure all procedures are followed based on established guidelines, and that there is enough time for productive dialogue. Running an efficient public meeting is an art; here are the tips on how to ensure time is maximized for success.

01

During the Public Meeting



Have Supporting Documents Ready

The ability to hold the meeting to the agenda is one of the most challenging roles. Having an accurate agenda and ensuring staff has the correct documents will save valuable time during your public meeting.

By digitally creating the meeting agenda, you can ensure improved version control and be confident that all supporting documents are available during the meeting.



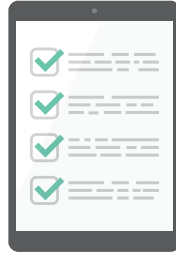
REAL
ADVICE

"Make sure your agenda is accurate and that staff has updated documents."

– Carol Cunningham, Accounts Administrator at Henry County, GA

02

During the Public Meeting



Record Action Items as a Checklist

As your meeting gets underway, the list of action items will grow. One tip we heard from meeting managers was to organize the list of action items on the agenda itself in real time. We heard that some clerks prefer to use checklists for action items, which helps them stay organized and efficient in the post-meeting follow up items.



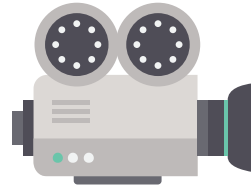
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ADVICE

"I use my agenda to make sure I disseminate information to all departments."

– Cynthia Ege, City Clerk at Lambertville, NJ

03

During the Public Meeting



Record Meetings for Minute Creation

It's likely that you have citizens who attend every public meeting to voice an opinion, but there are also citizens who have never participated in civic discussions who you can connect with by providing options. [Recording and live streaming meetings](#) are important for increased access and transparency, but it can also facilitate additional time savings when it's time to prepare minutes after the meeting.



REAL
ADVICE

"Recording the meeting is also helpful for minutes preparation. The quicker your minutes are prepared after the meeting the better."

– Danielle, Count Clerk for Barrow County, GA

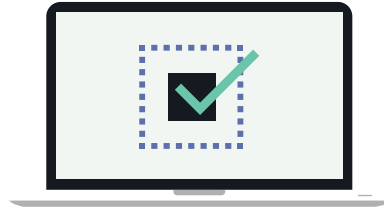


After the Public Meeting

At the end of every public meeting, there is a brief moment of satisfaction. Not long after that, it's time to get to the tasks at hand. For many meeting managers, the work begins right away. Here's what we heard from clerks on ways to ensure efficiency in the post-meeting workflow.

01

After the Public Meeting



Don't Wait to Tackle Your Action Items

As the list of action items grows during the public meeting, the number of steps you need to take depends a great deal on the tools you use to complete them. By using platforms that allow for inputting *motions and votes on agenda items*, you'll be able to better manage the list of to-dos.



REAL
ADVICE

"Using our legislative management system, I am almost always able to finalize Council's actions immediately following the meeting and can refer anyone with questions to a document which we call a "Notice of Action" which is simply the votes of Council on agenda items. Some localities call this 'Action Minutes.'"

– Katherine Glass, Clerk of Council at Hampton, VA

02

After the Public Meeting



Compile Minutes While They're Fresh

More than any other advice from clerks, compiling minutes immediately after the meeting was the top time-saving tip. By taking notes and recording votes alongside the agenda in Votecast, you can significantly cut down on the process of compiling minutes later. If you live streamed your meeting using [Granicus Video](#), the minutes you produce can be timestamped to allow users to quickly jump to segments they want to watch on demand.



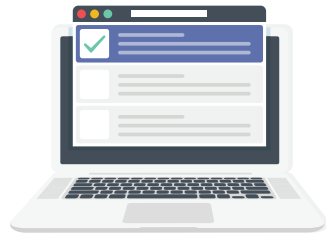
REAL
ADVICE

"Compile minutes ASAP!"

– Linda, Clerk at St. Vincent- St. Stephen's-Peter's River, Canada

03

After the Public Meeting



Post Information to Your Website

Your website is likely your primary access point for citizens to engage with you after your public meeting. By posting information from the meeting including meeting minutes, voting records, and links to the recording, interested citizens and stakeholders will be able to use keyword search to find the information they need. Of course, the more *modern and user-friendly your website* is, the more likely it is that citizens will find what they need easily which will encourage future engagement in your public meetings.



REAL
ADVICE

"Have as much information available on your website as you can."

– Vicki Scaman, Village Clerk at Village of Oak Park, IL

Do More With Less

Managing public meetings is at the core of a clerk's duties. But as resources dwindle and citizens continue to demand more from government, clerks will need to find creative ways to get more done with less. By following these best practices and tips, you can increase efficiency during your meetings while improving processes – leading to significant time and resource savings.

Using online tools can greatly increase your chances of beating the clock. Take the first step to winning back your work week by contacting us at info@granicus.com to discuss your meeting automation needs.



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About Granicus

Granicus provides technology and services that empower government organizations to create seamless digital experiences for the people they serve. By offering the industry's leading cloud-based solutions for communications, content management, meeting and agenda management, and digital services to over 4,000 public sector organizations, Granicus helps turn government missions into quantifiable realities. By optimizing decision-making processes, Granicus strives to help government see better outcomes and a greater impact for the citizens they serve.

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