



For Residents, By Residents

## Supporting Your Residents' Council: Minute Template Tips and Hints



Ontario Association of  
Residents' Councils  
194 Eagle St, Suite  
3105, Newmarket, ON  
L3Y 1J6, Canada

Toll Free: 1-800-532-  
0201  
Telephone: 905-731-  
3710  
Fax: 905-731-1755  
Email: [info@ontarc.com](mailto:info@ontarc.com)  
[www.ontarc.com](http://www.ontarc.com)



Updated February 2016

This document was created to help Residents' Councils go through the Minute Template step-by-step. If you are interested in the legislation that corresponds to sections of the template, please consider reviewing, OARC's companion document "Understanding Our Law and Residents' Councils: Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007" located at [www.ontarc.com](http://www.ontarc.com). Remember that OARC staff members are available to help. We would love to assist you if you get stuck, or if you have any questions or comments.

### Wherever your Council is right now, is ok

Resist the urge to feel overwhelmed. As you use these resources, you will see areas/topics that you will like to change. Discuss in your meetings, and choose one or two items at a time, become comfortable with the changes, then move on.

### Maximize resident engagement & discussion

The tools are geared towards maximizing resident engagement and discussion. A successful Residents' Council meeting is not defined by the completion of all of the discussion points on the agenda. If robust and engaged discussion has occurred, giving residents the forum to speak freely, then your meeting was a success.

### Share the tools and the minutes

Share these tools with your Administrator for his/her information. When information is shared freely, a heightened sense of teamwork develops. Residents' Councils utilize the Approved Minutes as the tool/document by which the Administrator is made aware of recommendations and or concerns.

OARC suggests that the minute template be kept intact. Most elements are referenced in our legislation and collectively, they serve as a reminder of the full scope of influence the Residents' Council has within the LTC home.

The purpose of taking minutes is to accurately reflect the intent of the discussion. Not all residents attend Council meetings but may be interested in the discussions (residents reading minutes that are posted vs. attending a meeting).

[Not all text boxes will have information typed into them.](#)

It is possible that for various reasons, some will be left blank:

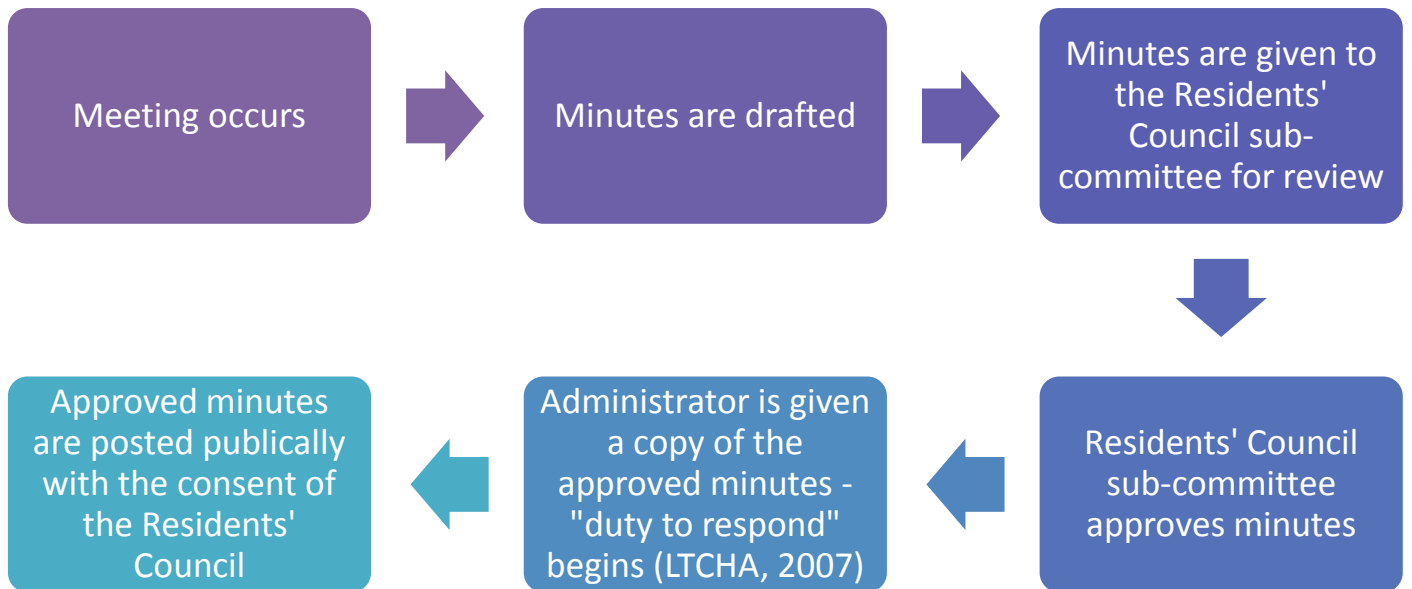
- Topic may be present as a reminder of upcoming annual/quarterly discussion
- Item was not discussed
- No action is required, therefore the 'assigned' to box is left blank

### [Robert's Rules of Order](#)

Residents' Councils follow Robert's Rules of Order (Henry M. Robert III, 2011) a set of rules and customs commonly recognized as the authority for parliamentary procedure. These rules provide direction to groups of people who gather together to express concerns and make collective decisions on actions and or recommendations which aligns with the purpose of Residents' Councils.

## Process of approving minutes

OARC recommends that the entire process of approving minutes be completed within 2-3 days from the meeting, and is delegated to a sub-committee or the executive board so that the minutes become the official and legal record quickly.



The following tips are designed to guide you through the minute template in specific areas.

## 1.0 Call to Order, Welcome, Adoption of Agenda

- Opening guidelines are important in framing the meeting. They set the ‘tone’ for supportive discussion and lay the ‘ground rules’ for respectful participation in the meeting. To assist in building the sense of inclusion, perhaps the Council wishes to rotate this responsibility, giving various residents the opportunity to read these important guidelines as the meeting begins. Consider customizing and laminating the opening and closing guidelines to be read monthly. An example of opening guidelines can be found in the Appendix section of OARC’s “Supporting Your Residents’ Council: A Resource for Residents’ Councils Leadership Team and Staff Assistants” or on [www.ontarc.com](http://www.ontarc.com)

## 1.1 Review of Previously Approved Minutes

- When minutes are read from the previous meeting, focus on highlights only, to give perspective and remind Council members of content. The minutes were previously approved, so this time in the meeting is for information sharing only.

## 1.2 Business Arising from Previous Minutes

- Enter the topics from the last meeting minutes that need to be addressed in the current meeting. These may be items that the group didn’t have time to discuss and have been carried forward. The discussions will be captured in the appropriate sub-heading in 2.0, “Regular Business.”

## 2.0 Regular Business

- This section (2.1 – 2.5) captures the regular discussions that typically take place during a regular Residents' Council meeting. They form the 'core' of a regular meeting.

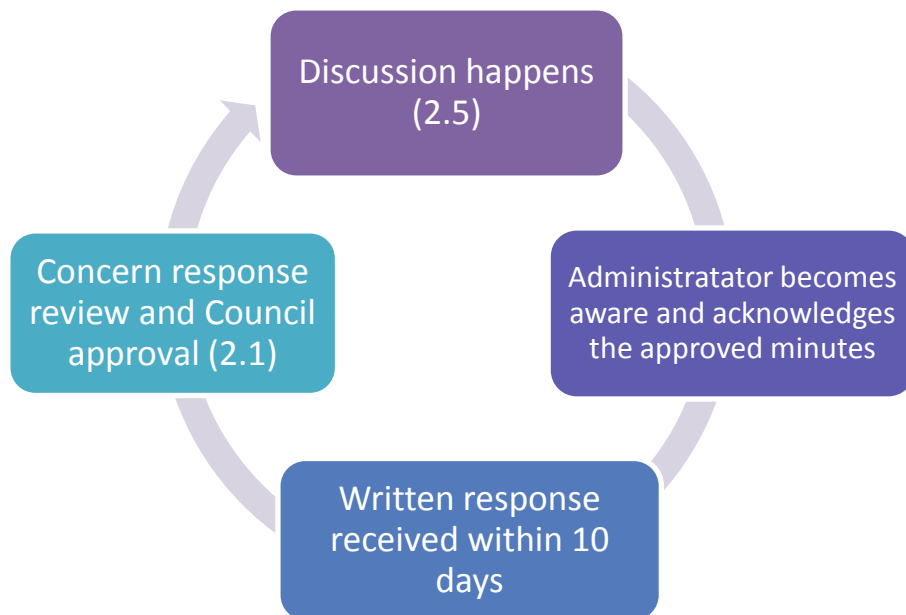
### 2.1 Concern / Recommendation Response Review

- The issues or concerns or recommendation noted here are taken from the Home Area's Updates and Discussions (section 2.5). All items that were to be followed up on from last time should be noted here, and as per the LTCHA, 2007 (Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007), a written response should have been given to Residents' Council leadership within 10 days of receiving the information from the last meeting.
- Use a separate row for each issue or concern or recommendation. To create a new row on the electronic version, place the cursor on the last box of the last row (right hand side) and press the 'tab' key. A new row will appear.
- List the basic concern or recommendation, not the comprehensive discussion that took place last time.
- The 'Action Taken' column captures the action plan that was outlined in the written response from the Administrator who was responsible for addressing the concern or recommendation and reporting back to Residents' Council. Attach the written responses to the copy of the minutes to ensure a complete record of correspondence is maintained.
- Each response detailing an action plan is discussed at the meeting, and the Residents' Council members decide if they will approve the response or not. It is important to remember that not all issues can be resolved in 10 days, but the

residents in the meeting should have confidence that appropriate action is being taken and opportunities to work together are expressed, to bring resolution to the identified concern. All responses that are not approved by Residents' Council or yet resolved by the home should be carried forward to current minutes, so that further discussion occurs between the Residents' Council and the management of the home.

- If the item is not approved or yet resolved, please see 2.5 to record the reasons why the Residents' Council is not satisfied and wishes further discussions.

## Process of Response Review



## 2.2 Residents' Bill of Rights

- OARC recommends that prior to the meeting, the leadership team of the Residents' Council, in partnership with the Assistant, decides on 2 to 3 rights they would like to discuss. Each right can be read by a different person if desired, which further adds to the sense of inclusion within the meeting. Each person taking responsibility for a specific right, comes prepared with a 'real life' observation or example of how that right was evidenced or not, in their home. Consider using the booklet titled, "Every Resident" published by CLEO (Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO), 2015).
- If action is required on any of the discussion items please enter them in the appropriate program area, see 2.5. Be sure to utilize the "Assigned To" column if applicable.

## 2.3 Treasurer's Report

- Initiate discussion on a list of ideas of how the funds could be spent to enhance resident experience. The funds belong to the Residents' Council, not the long-term care home.
- The law specifies that Residents' Councils have power to sponsor and plan activities and are able to collaborate with community groups and volunteers concerning activities. In order to do this Residents' Councils must have access to their own funds, i.e. have opportunities to raise funds, establish goals and priorities, and decide how and when to spend funds.



## 2.4 Committee Reports

There are two types of committees in a long-term care home.

- 1) Long-Term Care Home Committees (LTCH Committees)
- 2) Residents' Council Sub-Committees

The LTCH Committees are part of the organizational structure of the home, are sometimes required through our legislation, and typically led by employees of the long-term care home. LTCH Committees include a Continuous Quality Improvement Committee, Education Committee, and Palliative Care Committee.

Residents' Council Sub-Committees are formed as residents discuss issues and decide to form a group, separate from the Residents' Council meeting, through which certain topics are explored. The creation of sub-committees allows for reports to flow back through the Residents' Council for approval and follow-up as required. Examples of Residents' Council Sub-Committees include a Dietary Committee, Memorial Committee, and Welcome Committee.

OARC suggests that both types of committees provide excellent avenues for residents to participate in their home at significant levels. Whether residents are involved in either/both types of committees, section 2.4 provides a time during a regular meeting for a committee representative to update the Residents' Council on key issues, and decisions made through the various committees.

- At this point in the meeting, a representative member of the Committee gives a brief report (not a full discussion of the happenings within that committee).

**EXAMPLE:** When the Dietary Committee reviews a menu cycle change and has recommendations, the following steps would ensue:

1. The committee report is logged in 2.4 or minutes attached
2. Recommendations are reviewed by Residents' Council in the appropriate program area in 2.5

## 2.5 Home Areas Updates and Discussion

- Updates from departments are entered here as well as recording residents' experiences, concerns, recommendations and celebratory comments in each area. OARC encourages open discussion regarding department managers; are residents satisfied with how the department is functioning and supporting their quality of living? Remember to celebrate what is working well and consider capturing compliments addressed to managers and staff in the minutes.
- Begin each program area by giving a brief definition of the area plus identify the person who is associated with that department (likely the manager). **EXAMPLE:** You might say, "Environmental Services is the program area that deals with laundry service, and the upkeep and cleanliness of your home. Frank, the man with dark hair and a mustache is the Manager"

- Reframe the question. Rather than asking, “Does anyone have any [concerns](#) with the Environmental Services area?” think about asking, “Does anyone have anything [to share](#) pertaining to Environmental Services? Anything to celebrate?” The language changes the tone of the question, and opens the communication style to include positive items, not just those issues that are problematic.

Administration: The LTCHA, 2007, describes the expectations for the relationship the Administrator has with the Residents’ Council. The structure of the relationship is to be one of reciprocal support, open communication, consultation and collaboration.

Further, the legislation states that the Administrator “shall not interfere” with the business of Residents’ Council, or “hinder” or “obstruct” the Assistant from carrying out Residents’ Council duties. This portion of the meeting is designed to speak about the condition of the relationship between the Residents’ Council and the Administrator. Consider asking:

“Does anyone have anything to share about the way our Administrator supports the Residents’ Council?”

(Example: Does the Administrator help to maximize attendance, effectiveness of meeting, supporting the Assistant in their duties, etc.)

- Volunteers: OARC reminds Residents' Councils that they have the power to collaborate with community groups and volunteers concerning activities (see section 2.3)
- Recreation and Social Activities: OARC reminds Residents' Councils that they have the power to sponsor and plan their own activities beyond what is provided by the home through the recreation department (see section 2.3)
- "Other" can be any issues dealing with any other topic area that isn't obviously captured in the given program areas like doctors, pharmacy, etc.

### 3.0 Community Involvement Discussions

OARC encourages residents to become active in their communities outside of their long-term care homes whenever possible. This section is designed to capture community involvement or any activities and actions that do not easily apply to experiences that residents have in their long-term care home. Examples of community involvement that could be recorded in this section include:

1. Residents' Council working with Town Council to secure a bus stop outside of their long-term care home.
2. Residents' Council working with local animal shelter, making dog biscuits.
3. Residents' Council advocating with Traffic Control officers to extend the green light timing, so that people have longer times to cross the street.

## 4.0 Our MOHLTC Long-Term Care Quality Inspection Program Report(s) Discussion

- Public copies of the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care (MOHLTC) Inspection Reports are sent directly to the President of the Residents' Council. Remind residents where reports are posted in the home.
- OARC suggests the following process:
  1. Review the Inspection Report, non-compliance and evidence identified by the inspector.
  2. Discuss any concern, reactions and issues with the Report.
  3. Collect any questions requiring clarification to be forwarded to the home's Administrator or invite the Administrator or department manager to the next Residents' Council meeting to present and discuss the situation and action plan.
- Residents' Council has the right, role and responsibility to report any concerns and or recommendations directly to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. OARC recommends that attempts be made to resolve these issues in the home first.

## 5.0 – 5.2 Quarterly Residents' Council Agenda Items Discussion

- Quarterly discussions involve the presence of the Administrator at Residents' Council meetings.

### 5.1 Administrator's Report and Consultation

- The Administrator has the duty to consult with the Residents' Council when invited, but at least every 3 months. The timing of the scheduled quarterly visits with Residents' Council are

negotiated between the Residents' Council and the Administrator. This is the opportunity for the Administrator to seek the advice and receive recommendations from the Residents' Council on various issues that arise in the home.

- OARC recommends entering the dates of the visits on the provisional agenda as a reminder for everyone.

## 5.2 Continuous Quality Improvement Report (CQI)

- OARC suggests the Administrator include an update of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) initiatives, including Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) during their quarterly report to Residents' Council.
- OARC suggests: Residents have a meaningful discussion with the Administrator so everyone is aware of opportunities for resident engagement. **EXAMPLE:** there may be opportunities for residents to become involved in various committees, see section 2.4.

## 6.0 Annual Residents' Council Agenda Items Discussion

- Through discussions between the Residents' Council and the management team, determine the best month for each of these topics (6.1 – 6.7) to be discussed and log this in the minutes and on the Provisional Agenda. OARC suggests that the timing of these discussions remains on the Provisional Agenda and Minute Template as ongoing reminders.

## 6.1 Homes' Financial Statement

- Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 specifies annual review of the home's financial statements, however the Residents' Council may request this information at any time to assist

Residents' Council members throughout the year. The home will provide the Residents' Council with these documents for their review. This is also known as the "ARR" which stands for Annual Reconciliation Report.

## 6.2 Detailed Allocation of Funding Report

- The long-term care home receives money from various sources (MOHLTC, residents, etc.). Residents' Council has the right to learn about how much money comes into the operating budget, and how it is spent. The term "envelope" is often used to describe the amount of money allocated to each program area.

## 6.3 Resident Satisfaction Survey

- This is a 3-step process. Residents' Council is to:
  1. Review existing survey, determining if there are areas for input capturing what residents feel is important.
  2. Receive and fill out current year survey.
  3. Receive survey results and work with management providing advice on how to increase satisfaction and quality.
- There is opportunity for Residents' Council and the Administrator to discuss which month the survey will be taking place, when the Residents' Council will be receiving the previous survey for review and input and schedule the review of the survey. This enables administration and Residents' Council to have this scheduled in their monthly calendars.

## 6.4 Resident Information Package

- Using information, they feel is important, the residents of the Residents' Council can develop a brochure (with assistance from the home if requested) that is to be inserted into the Admission Package that all new residents receive.

## 6.5 Dining and Snack Review

- 6.5 (a) Menu Planning:
  - OARC suggests: Residents' Council review all menu cycles which align with the home's schedule.
  - The Residents' Council has the right to be aware of the home's menu cycle and may have a committee in place to review menus being introduced prior to each cycle.
- 6.5 (b) Meals and Snack Times:
  - OARC suggests: Residents' Council review the meal and snack times of their home.
  - The Residents' Council has the right to review the dining room service, including choices available, as well as the meal times.
  - The Residents' Council has the right to review the snack service, including choices available, as well as the snack times.



## 6.6 Residents' Council Assistant

- OARC suggests: Residents' Council to review acceptance of the Assistant on an annual basis.
- Residents' Councils have the right to receive help and support from a person who is appointed by the home's Administrator and is acceptable to the Residents' Council. OARC suggests this process involves discussions with all parties so that everyone is aware of the responsibilities and expectations of this role.

## 6.7 Homes' Mission Statement

- The Mission Statement is to be revised as necessary, and redeveloped every 5 years. Note the date that the previous revision took place directly on the Provisional Agenda and Minute Template as a reminder.

## 7.0 Next Meeting

- Record and announce publically the date and time of the next scheduled Residents' Council meeting.

## 8.0 Adjournment

- Residents' Councils may consider adjourning the meeting using closing remarks. An example of closing remarks can be found in the Appendix section of OARC's "Supporting Your Residents' Council: A Resource for Residents' Councils Leadership Team and Staff Assistants" or on [www.ontarc.com](http://www.ontarc.com)
- The LTCHA, states that the most recent minutes of the Residents' Council are part of the 'required information' that are to be posted publicly in the home in a 'conspicuous and easily accessible location.' However, the law clarifies this

process, by stating that the posting of these minutes is done 'with the consent of the Residents' Council.' (LTCHA, 2007. 79. (1) (2) (3)) The Residents' Council has the authority to decide if the minutes from their meeting will be posted. OARC recommends that the minutes be posted so that everyone in the LTC home has the ability to learn about what the Residents' Council is speaking about, making decisions on and how the Council works with management as part of the quality improvement process in the home. On occasion, there may be a reason why the Council wishes for the minutes to not be posted, but for the most part, it is important to show these minutes publicly.

- OARC Recommends the process of approving minutes be completed within 2-3 days from the meeting, and is delegated to a sub-committee or the executive board so that the minutes become the official and legal record quickly. The Administrator of the home is then made aware of recommendations/concerns via this official document.
- Administrator's Acknowledgement: As the direct representative of the licensee, the Administrator has the legislative responsibility to respond to any concerns or recommendations brought forward through the Residents' Council. This response is to be in writing within ten days of the Administrator becoming aware of the issue(s). By signing and dating this acknowledgement on the minute template the Administrator agrees that they have become aware of the concerns and/or recommendation on the dates specified. PLEASE NOTE: the signature is to indicate

acknowledgement, not to provide approval of minutes. The minutes are approved by a Residents' Council sub-committee.

- Please note that the Administrators' Acknowledgement of the minutes does not represent a written response as required by the LTCHA, 2007. A full written response to the Residents' Council is separate from acknowledging receipt, and gives a proposed action plan and explanation that will bring resolution to the identified issue or recommendation.

#### References

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO). (2015). *Every Resident: Bill of Rights for People Who Live in Ontario Long-Term Care Homes*. Toronto: Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO). Retrieved from <http://www.cleo.on.ca/en/order-publications>

Henry M. Robert III, D. H. (2011). *Robert's Rules of Order - newly revised in brief*. Philadelphia: Da Capo Press.

Long Term Care Homes Act. (2007).