CUSTOMER STORY

No more couchwork

How St. Louis Park, MN cut a month-long meeting minutes backlog down to 30–45 minutes.



Amanda Lynn Scott-Lerdal
Deputy City Clerk
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

St. Louis Park MINNESOTA

What changed for Amanda

EACH SET OF MINUTES, START TO FINISH From uploading the agenda and recording to a Word document ready for final review.	**30–45 min**
MINUTES BACKLOG Amanda describes being consistently caught up on meeting minutes instead of consistently behind.	Month-long → **Caught up**
COST PER SET OF MINUTES, BEFORE Between staff time and contractor fees.	**~$500**

01

Meet Amanda

As Deputy City Clerk for the growing suburb of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, Amanda Lynn Scott-Lerdal describes her average workday as figuring out which plates need the most spinning. Between Council prep, election support, liquor licenses, domestic partnerships, and administrative hearings for dangerous dog designations, the job is constant context-switching in a city of 50,000.

Meeting minutes were one more plate. For years, they were the heaviest one.

02

The couch work problem

For two decades, St. Louis Park worked with an outside secretarial service to handle council minutes. The process worked. The vendor delivered solid minutes, but it was also becoming expensive.

The cost ran about $500 per set between staff time and contractor fees. For a city accountable to its taxpayers, that math was getting hard to defend.

"It was getting to be that each set of minutes was costing us about $500 between staff time and contractor time," she says. "Like every municipal city, we have to be way more responsible with our money than any private organization must be. We really have to do our best with our tax dollars."

The backlog became a fixture. Something Amanda carried home.

"Yes. I used to call minutes my couchwork. That was work I would take home with me and do in front of the TV at night and, 'Oh, I got to do meetings.' When's the last time I did that?"

Amanda's workflow, before and after

	BEFORE CLERKMINUTES	WITH CLERKMINUTES
Process	An outside secretarial service handled council minutes.	**Upload the agenda and recording, identify speakers, and review a Word document.**
Timeliness	Minutes trailed weeks behind and went home with Amanda as "couchwork."	**Consistently caught up, at 30 to 45 minutes per set.**

03

Finding the right size tool

When Amanda decided the process needed to change, she wasn't looking to overhaul everything. St. Louis Park already had broadcast covered. Their agenda generation worked well. What they needed was targeted minute generation.

She ran a structured evaluation across web searches, vendor outreach, and demos across multiple services. ClerkMinutes won on fit.

> **"What we needed was the right size tool for our demands, which was just this piece, just the minutes."**
>
> **Amanda Lynn Scott-Lerdal**, Deputy City Clerk, St. Louis Park, MN

04

The 15-minute epiphany

During her evaluation, Amanda was testing ClerkMinutes at the same time her city manager was manually reviewing a set of minutes from the previous service, making edits and suggestions line by line. When they placed the two outputs side by side, they matched.

> "I was playing with ClerkMinutes at the same time that our city manager was going through a set of minutes from our previous service with a fine tooth comb and she was making her edits and making her suggestions. And then we looked at what ClerkMinutes spit out next to her edits and it was the same. It was what she wanted from the product. And I was just like, 'I did that in about 15 minutes.' And she's like, 'I'm so happy for you.'
>
> **Amanda Lynn Scott-Lerdal**, Deputy City Clerk, St. Louis Park, MN

05

What caught up looks like

Today, Amanda uploads the agenda and recording, identifies speakers, and receives a Word document ready for final review. Start to finish, it takes between 30 to 45 minutes.

She brought every board and commission in St. Louis Park onto ClerkMinutes. Council agendas reference prior meeting discussions, and with minutes no longer trailing weeks behind, the engineering team can now include direct hyperlinks to meeting records in council reports.

The tool has held up on harder material too. Several recent sessions in St. Louis Park have centered on Operation Metro Surge, a politically charged topic in Minnesota.

> **"Our meeting minutes have to reflect the accurate record and serve all of the public,"** she says. **"So anytime we've had to discuss Operation Metro Surge, it's done a really good job of taking a really emotionally heavy topic and just putting the facts forward."**
>
> **Amanda Lynn Scott-Lerdal**, Deputy City Clerk, St. Louis Park, MN

There's been one more unexpected shift. The meetings themselves have gotten sharper. Commissioners and council members are more aware their words are being captured and stopped saying things like "well, off the record."

"It's helped a lot with that because people are like, 'Oh, my statement is being recognized. I need to keep it concise,'" Amanda adds.

The plates Amanda juggles haven't gotten fewer, but one of the heaviest ones isn't following her home as couch work anymore.

IN HER WORDS

"The council agendas are just moving faster now because we can get minutes through in a timely way. That's great because a lot of times the next report will reference back to a prior discussion. So let's say we're talking about pavement management project or something, right? Now my engineering team is able to just include a hyperlink to our repository and web link and say, 'And here's the conversation if you want to look at it.' . . . And it feels really good to be just consistently caught up on meeting minutes instead of consistently behind."



Amanda Lynn Scott-Lerdal
Deputy City Clerk, St. Louis Park, MN

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