CUSTOMER STORY

How Avon, Ohio Transformed 20 Years of Manual Transcription Into Time for Vacation Days

Discover how one Clerk uses ClerkMinutes to save time and comply with Ohio's Sunshine Laws.



Barbara Brooks
Clerk of Council
City of Avon, Ohio

What changed for Barbara

LEGAL REVIEW REQUESTS Recordings for the law director, instead of waiting on transcription.	**Within minutes**
EARNED TIME OFF Barbara says she can now use the vacation and personal days she had accumulated.	**Usable again**
ADDED STAFF Barbara says the relief came without the city having to hire more personnel.	**None**

01

Meet Barbara

Barbara Brooks had been Clerk of Council in Avon, Ohio for over a decade when she realized something had to change.

The small city of 24,000 residents held regular council meetings every Monday night, and Ohio's Sunshine Laws require public meetings to have posted notice, an agenda, open access, and written minutes. The last requirement—written minutes—had always been the bottleneck. But, now the process is more time-sensitive and stringent than ever.

Barbara managed council minutes and agendas and worked with department heads.

Susan Pintz handled planning and zoning commission meetings, often juggling multiple projects and public hearings that could stretch for hours.

Anne, the newest member of the team at seven months, assisted Barbara with council meetings.

The work was accurate and thorough, but it was crushing them. Barbara had accumulated vacation days and personal time off she couldn't use. Other duties, like letters, newspaper notices, and public phone calls, kept piling up.

02

We put headsets on and typed for hours

The process before ClerkMinutes was straightforward but brutal. Avon digitally recorded every meeting, which Barbara, Susan, and Anne then transcribed manually.

Hours upon hours, every week. Susan faced an additional challenge in planning meetings. That's residents speaking from the audience, often interrupting each other or speaking in fragmented thoughts.

Susan adds, "I do find though before ClerkMinutes, oftentimes when people are in a public meeting and they're speaking, they don't realize they're being recorded. So sometimes people speak very fragmented. And so when we were transcribing the minutes before ClerkMinutes, that proposed a challenge in trying to decipher what they are really saying because some people interrupt people when they're talking, some people speak in the middle of their thought or sentence."

The weight wasn't just the time.

"In addition to the minutes and the agendas, we also often send letters and we do notices in the newspaper and we handle phone calls from the public. So there's all that kind of thing that was just kind of overwhelming me before versus now I feel like I can just breathe a little bit easier and without the city having to hire more personnel," Barbara adds.

Something had to change.

Barbara's workflow, before and after

	BEFORE CLERKMINUTES		WITH CLERKMINUTES
Process	Barbara, Susan, and Anne transcribed every recorded meeting manually.	→	**Upload the agenda, upload the audio, and click generate minutes.**
Law director requests	Time needed to transcribe first.	→	**Delivered within minutes.**
Earned time off	Vacation and personal days piled up unused.	→	**Barbara can use her earned time off.**

03

Enter ClerkMinutes

Barbara had tried other transcription programs before, but none solved the problem. Then she heard about ClerkMinutes.

She uploaded an audio file from a council meeting and waited.

> **"Yeah, I think the first time I uploaded an audio, I was just like, 'Whoa.' It was awesome. And then I was afraid my trial was going to run out before I got approval to purchase it. And so then there was this sense of urgency on my part."**
>
> **Barbara Brooks**, Clerk of Council, City of Avon, OH

Our City Council had questions

- How much would it cost?
- How many people could use it?
- How good was it?

Barbara adds, "I think certainly showing the trial period that you guys offer certainly helped with that because your program was leaps and bounds above any other that we tried."

Barbara got approval and immediately started integrating ClerkMinutes into their workflows.

Susan began using it for planning and zoning meetings.

By the time Anne joined the team seven months ago, ClerkMinutes was already the standard process.

The tool itself was intuitive.

- Upload the agenda.
- Upload the audio
- Click generate minutes.

But trusting it took a little getting used to given how long they had been doing this manually before.

> **"Right,"** Barbara admits. **"And a little bit of trusting it because the AI program summarizes it so well that it was a little bit of a trust factor in the beginning, but I love, love, love the feature where you can highlight a section and say, 'Make it longer.' That's my favorite."**
>
> **Barbara Brooks**, Clerk of Council, City of Avon, OH

The trio quickly understood their roles. ClerkMinutes generates the minutes, but they authenticate it.

"I read in one of your communications where you said [ClerkMinutes] generates the minutes, but the clerks authenticate it and that's very true," she adds, "So that part of it, we still have a job. It's like a tool. The finance

department isn't still using a manual way to calculate their programs as far as tracking the money. So why are the clerks still manually entering the minutes? And that's where this is a definite tool and it helps."

So, when the law director needed to review something controversial or legally sensitive, Barbara could now deliver it instantly.

"I will say that people like our law director, when something very controversial or perhaps legal needs legal review by our law director, we can now get him that within minutes versus, 'Okay, you're going to have to give me some time to transcribe that for you.' So that's been helpful for the law department as well."

Plus, ClerkMinutes didn't just speed up the old process. It solved problems their manual processes couldn't. For instance, Susan's planning meetings with their fragmented public comments and overlapping speakers now became manageable.

Even city council members noticed the difference.

"Well, I do believe that the local government, as far as city council in the meetings, feel a little bit more comfortable about expressing their thoughts or bringing up other topics and having maybe a longer discussion to where before they knew, Oh, I'm really bogging down the clerk's time, so I kind of try to limit what I'm going to say publicly," Barbara adds.

04

The transformation

After 20 years as a clerk, the transformation was simple but profound. The impact was immediate and personal. Barbara could finally breathe.

> **"I would say that if you're spending hours and hours manually transcribing minutes, you've got to give this a try, it's amazing. I feel like I can actually use earned time off before. Before, I didn't know when I could take time out of the office, even though I had earned vacation days and personal days accumulated."**
>
> **Barbara Brooks**, Clerk of Council, City of Avon, OH

Barbara didn't keep the discovery to herself. And then as soon as I tried it, I was sending ClerkMinutes to other clerks in our association and showing it to Susan.

The impact went beyond efficiency.

For years, Barbara and clerks like her had asked software vendors for help. The answer was always the same: agenda management tools, not solutions for the real bottleneck.

"Thank you. And we finally feel heard actually. It's been years that we've asked programs and they talk about agenda management. It's like creating the agenda isn't the problem for us. It's the minutes. And then they're like, 'Oh, can't help you.' Yes, yes. So we appreciate the fact that you're doing this program because without it, I would not be a happy camper."

For Barbara, after 20 years as a clerk, the transformation was simple but profound.

IN HER WORDS

"I've been a clerk for 20 some years and this is the first time I felt like I can accomplish things in regular time like a normal job instead of this heavy weight that was always weighing on me," says Barbara. "This has got to get done and I got to just plunge through it."



Barbara Brooks
Clerk of Council, City of Avon, OH

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