

Covering meetings

Explain issues, how decisions are made, and what it means

- Start with research.
- Clarify. Condense. Concentrate.
- Encourage readers to attend meetings.
- Go early.
- Dress appropriately.

Covering meetings

Explain issues, how decisions are made, and what it means

- Stick around after the meeting.
- Distill meandering malarkey into meaningful news.
- Remember, meetings are not always news.

Covering meetings

Meeting story checklist

- Group/agency name
- Location and length of meeting
- Important decisions
- Quotes
- Reactions
- Crowd size
- Atmosphere
- Graphics
- Unusual events
- What happens next?

Covering meetings

Personalizing meetings

- Write about real people.
- Write about real issues.
- Look for ways to involve your readers.



Covering meetings

Learn the jargon:

- An “ordinance” is basically the same thing as a “law.” More people understand the word “law,” so use it.
- A “resolution” is essentially a non-binding decree or request. These things rarely, if ever, mean much beyond symbolism.

Covering meetings

Know what you're covering!

- A “council” is similar to a “commission” or a “board,” but members of all three get very cranky when you confuse them.

Covering meetings

- Watch your AP style; look under “governmental bodies” and “titles” for help figuring out how to do it right.
- Capitalizations and abbreviations can be tricky – double-check before you submit!

Covering politics

Covering campaigns and elections

- Prioritize.
- Get to know the candidates.
- Do your homework.
- Use reliable experts.
- Decide what matters.
- Brainstorm story ideas.
- Spread onto the Web.



Covering politics

Keeping tabs of governmental policies and players

- Decision making
- The election process
- Money

Getting the facts

- Meetings
- Speeches
- News releases
- News conferences
- Network of sources
- Documents

Covering politics

5 Unfortunate truths about covering politics

- Politicians lie.
- Politicians will schmooze you so they can use you.
- Everybody believes your stories are biased.

Covering politics

5 Unfortunate truths...

- People don't want to read about government process.
- You must peel away layer after layer to get to the truth.