

# Meeting Minutes for SWCDs

New Employee Orientation – August 2025

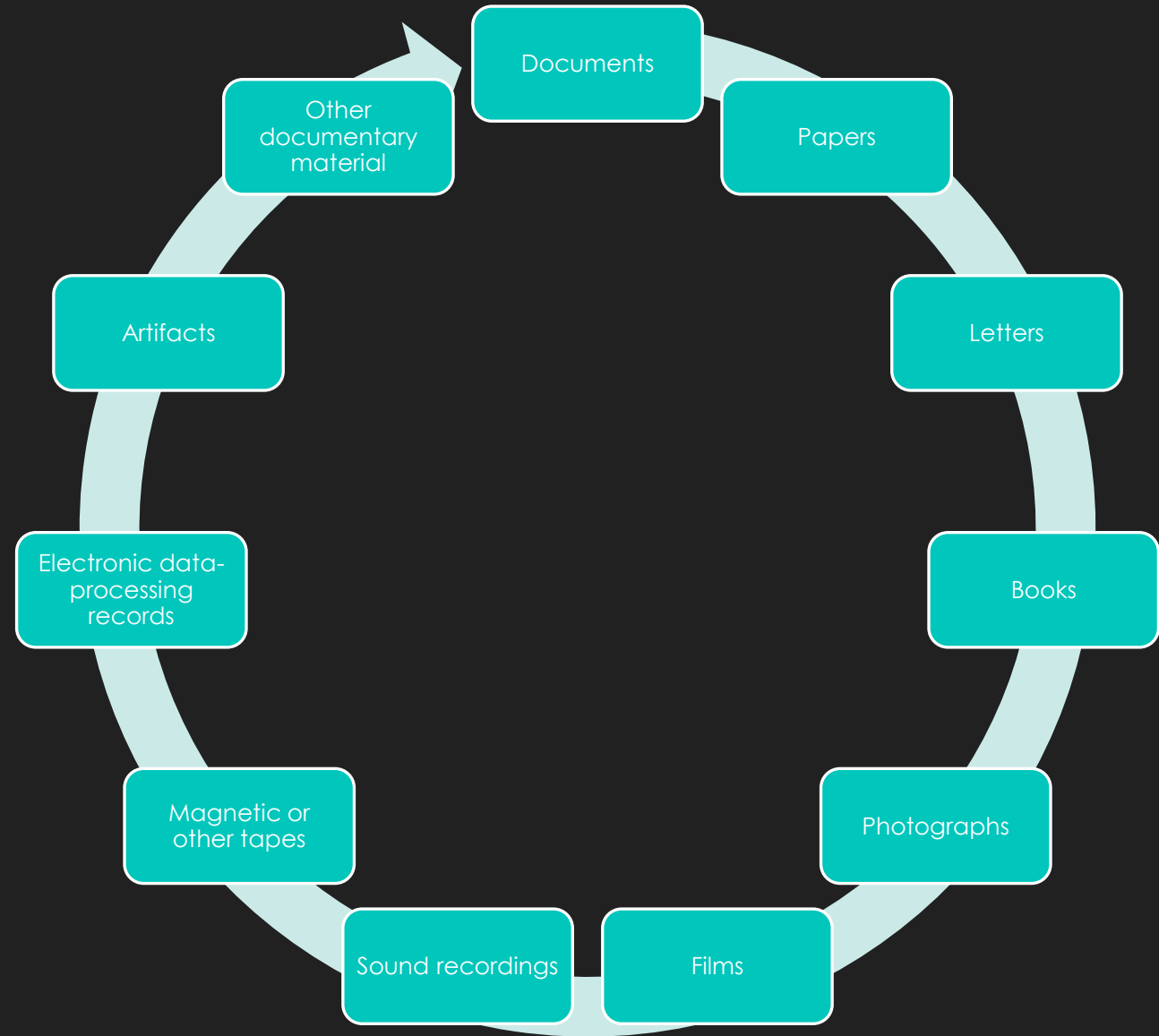
A decorative footer at the bottom of the slide, consisting of a teal-colored area with a diagonal line pattern. A small teal triangle points upwards from the center of the footer towards the text above.

# North Carolina law declares...

- *“The public records and public information compiled by the agencies of North Carolina government or its subdivisions are the property of the people. Therefore, it is the policy of this State that the people may obtain copies of their public records and public information free or at minimal cost unless otherwise specifically provided by law.”*

## Public Records Act

The foundation of our public records laws is the North Carolina Public Records Act. This law makes it clear that written materials and other records created or received by state and local government are the property of North Carolinians, and it gives the people a means of enforcing their right to access government records.



# Open Meetings Law

- *“Government transparency is at the heart of the Open Meetings Law. All official meetings of public bodies and decision-making by public bodies must be conducted openly to give meaning to the state’s official policy that government operations are the people’s business. Forth this reason, the Open Meetings Law requires notice of meetings, public access to meetings, and record-keeping of meetings through minutes.”*



# What meetings must be open and public?

- An official meeting is defined as a meeting, assembly or gathering together of a majority of the members of a public body for the purpose of conducting hearings, participating in deliberations, voting upon public business, or otherwise transacting public business
- If a majority of the public body's members get together for one of these purposes, it is an official meeting subject to Open Meetings Law, regardless of when or where the meeting occurs
- The open meetings law states that each official meeting of a public body must be open to the public, and any person is entitled to attend an official meeting

# Must public bodies keep minutes?



Every public body is required to keep full, accurate minutes of all portions of all official meetings, including closed sessions



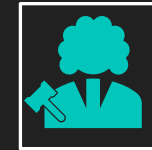
Minutes may be kept in writing, or in the form of audio or video recordings



Minutes are public records, subject to public inspection and copying



Public bodies must keep a "general account" of what takes place in closed session



The "general account" of closed sessions are public records, but they may be withheld from public inspection so long as public inspection would frustrate the purpose of the closed session



Minutes must be kept in perpetuity... don't rely on SharePoint!

# Tips for good meeting minutes



Sometimes, less is more – minutes need to be a record of decisions – not a transcript



Record times – meeting start and end, closed session entry and exit



Approved version should be physically signed so there is no question regarding the “final” draft



Consent agendas may add meeting efficiency

# Cost Share reminders

- Applications – record application number, practice, rank, name (optional)
- Contracts – record contract number, practice, amount, name (optional)
- RFPs – if signed at the board meeting it should be an action item - include contract number and amount, name (optional)
- RFPs – if signed away from a board meeting it should be an informational item - include contract number, amount, date signed and by whom
- Include record of board members that abstain from voting due to financial interest
- Example minutes and agenda on Division website - <https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/soil-water-conservation/districts/resources#DistrictConfidentiality-1948>

# For More Information...



NC General Statute 132  
and 139-8.2



NC Open Government  
Guide



Public Records Request  
Guidance for SWCDs



State Archives of North  
Carolina – Local  
Government Schedules



NC General Statute 143  
Article 33C



Coates' Canons –  
[canons.sog.unc.edu](http://canons.sog.unc.edu)