

REPUBLICAN WOMEN OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO COUNTY



GUIDELINES FOR RECORDING SECRETARY RWCSDC – LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

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WHAT ARE MEETING MINUTES?

Most of us have attended a meeting madly scribbling what we thought were meeting minutes only to find out later that we've missed important information in that the notes we took were never used. Do you often question what information you should record and what you should leave out? Recording effective meeting minutes doesn't have to be hard! Minutes that capture the purpose of the meeting and its agreed outcomes are a record that can be referred back to and can be used for follow-up purposes. Effective meeting minutes are clear and to the point, but at the same time, they do not leave out important information.

Meeting minutes keep a record of what was done or talked about at a meeting, including any decision made or action taken. Typically, meeting minutes are recorded by a secretary or assistant, but it can be done by any appointed individual.

There are three primary ingredients for meetings:

Agendas, Minutes and Follow up Actions

Agenda

A well thought-out Agenda will help make the meeting a smooth one. This responsibility is usually done by the leader of the meeting (President, Chairman). The Agenda should not be crowded with too many items, difficult topics should be listed first as members get tired by the end and may either delay an important item or push one through that requires more consideration.

Minutes

It's very important to write down (record) the matters discussed and agreed upon, or not agreed upon, at the meeting. This ensures things aren't forgotten and that the range of matters raised are stored for future reference if required.

Interestingly, Minutes are the first things future historians might look at if they are writing the history of a particular enterprise or activity. Minutes give an insight to the topical issues of the day. Minutes also record the follow up actions arising out of a meeting.

The Minutes need to record all decisions taken by the Committee or Board at a minimum. Every Agenda item should also record the general direction of the discussion that took place. Sometimes Minute-takers, in their enthusiasm to be thorough, write down who said what, and the Minutes can read like a mini novel. This isn't necessary. Rather the Minutes should reflect the broad direction of a discussion with the key issues covered being recorded.

Sometimes a particular member may wish to have their comment recorded, particularly if they have an alternative view to that of the group, which is perfectly acceptable.

Minute Format

The format of the minutes can vary depending on the standards established by an organization, although there are general guidelines.

Generally, minutes begin with the name of the body holding the meeting (e.g., a board) and usually include the place, date, list of people present, and the time that called the meeting to order. It should also be noted that a quorum is present. If a quorum is not present, minutes are not taken. All items requiring action are automatically continued to the next meeting.

Since the primary function of minutes is to record the decisions made, all official decisions must be included. If a formal motion is proposed and seconded, then (regardless whether it passes) this is recorded. The voting tally may also be included. The part of the minutes dealing with a routine motion might note merely that a particular motion was "moved by Ann and passed". It is not strictly necessary to include the name of the person who seconds a motion. Where a tally is included, it is sufficient to record the number of people voting for and against a motion, but requests by participants to note their votes by name may be allowed. If a decision is made by roll-call vote, then all of the individual votes are recorded by name. If it is made by general consent without a formal vote, then this fact may be recorded.

The minutes should end with a notation of the time that the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes are sometimes submitted by the person who is responsible for them (often the secretary) at a subsequent meeting for review. The traditional closing phrase is "Respectfully submitted" (although this is no longer common), followed by the officer's signature, his or her typed (or printed) name, and his or her title.

Follow up actions

Without Follow up actions, a meeting is just people talking. Talking alone isn't a bad thing, as it can often help meeting participants clarify their own thinking on a particular matter. But if a Committee or Board does little else then perhaps there is too much talking and not enough action.

RECORDING SECRETARY

The Recording Secretary is responsible for keeping the records of the proceedings with the prime qualifications being accuracy and prompt and regular attendance.

Duties:

1. Record minutes of every meeting of the Executive Committee and General Membership meetings. Within seven (7) business days after each meeting, send copies of the minutes to the President for her review.

2. After her review, prepare a final draft to be presented, received, corrected and filed by the Executive Committee and General Membership.
3. If asked, read the minutes of the previous meetings. If they have been provided in advance, the reading may be dispensed with.
4. After received and file, the secretary should sign the minutes and keep them in a safe place. Most organizations keep records permanently as they are the history of your organization and may need to be referred in the future.
5. After filed, keep an extra set of minutes for the Financial Review Officer's end of the year report.
6. Make the minutes and records available to members upon request at a reasonable time and place.
7. Serve as custodian of all records except those specifically assigned to others. Promptly deliver all records to your successor at the end of your term.
8. Maintain record book(s) in which the Bylaws, special rules of order, standing rules and minutes are entered, with any amendments to these documents properly recorded and have the current information on hand at all meetings.
9. In the absence of the President and Vice President, the Recording Secretary shall call the meeting to order and preside until the immediate election of a Chairman/President Pro Tempore.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. A large notebook (three-ring binder) for regular and Executive Committee meeting minutes.
2. Recording Secretary's Handbook containing Bylaws and Standing Rules for county and local clubs.
3. List of officers and chairmen (with contact information).

MINUTES AND RECORDS

Meeting minutes, including Agendas, Minutes and Committee Reports from the Executive Committee or from committee meetings need to be kept in chronological order. Along with the minutes and reports, these meetings offer general other backup material and notes that are pertinent to that meeting and possibly for future meetings.

RECORDING THE MINUTES

Minutes are the permanent record of the organization and are written in ink or typed. Minutes are required to contain only the action taken, not discussion or personal opinions. ***The minutes should contain what is done – not what is said.*** An exception to this could be discussion of a pending matter, with no decision made, that may be carried on into a future meeting. Said discussion should indicate a discussion what held pertaining to the matter (*without using names as to who said what and why*).

MINUTES MUST INCLUDE

1. The type of meeting (*regular, special, closed, etc.*), full name of the organization, date, time, location, if a quorum is present, and the names and titles of elected officers. Committee officers and guests may be included, if desired.
2. The minutes of the previous meeting. If approved, or received and filed, the date of approval and the signature of the Secretary should be indicated at the end of the minutes.
3. The financial statement (*i.e. monthly treasurer's report*) should be attached and the following should be included in the minutes: Beginning Balance (*including date*), total receipts, total disbursements and ending balance (*including date*).
4. List chairmen giving reports at the meeting
5. Actions of the meeting in the order in which the business is presented.
6. All motions (*failed or carried, unless withdrawn*) must contain the name of the person making the motion (*and seconded, if desired*). Include the exact wording of each motion and action taken (*motion carried, motion carried unanimously, motion failed*). The Secretary may ask the maker of the motion or presiding officer to restate the motion for clarity prior to action being taken
7. Resolutions. If appropriate, wording of an approved Resolution must be included in the minutes. (*If the resolution is too long, it may be attached and so noted in the minutes.*)
8. The Program must be included in the minutes, along with the name of the presenter and the topic.
9. Summarized committee reports, unless written reports are attached and noted in the minutes.
10. Once the Financial Review officer's statement is presented to the General Membership, it must be attached to the minutes.
11. The report of the Nominating Committee is recorded, along with nominations from the floor. If a ballot vote is necessary, "tellers" are appointed by the President to record the votes. The Tellers' report must include the number of votes cast for each candidate.
12. Time of adjournment
13. Signature of Recording Secretary with title.

ABBREVIATED FORM OF SAMPLE MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the (club name) was called to order by President (full name) at (time) on (date) and (place, address)

INVOCATION AND FLAG SALUTE

The invocation was given by Chaplain (name) and the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America was led by (name).

ROLL CALL AND QUORUM

Members Present: (list names and titles)

Members Absent: (list names and titles)

Other Members Present: (list name, title if any, and club name)

The President declares a quorum present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Recording Secretary (name) read/presented the minutes of (insert date). They were approved as presented and filed (as corrected if necessary). Motions are not necessary to approve the minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer (name) presented the Treasurer's Report (include month/dates) which included a request to ratify expenditures. A motion is made and seconded to ratify the checks. Action is taken and designated in minutes. The Treasurer's Report is filed for financial review (*do not use the term "audit."*)

MEMBERSHIP

2nd Vice President/Membership (name) presents her report

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Each committee makes a report and action is taken, if necessary. (*i.e. Upon the completion of work of special committees, action may be necessary.*)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

This would be for items left over or continued from previous meetings/

NEW BUSINESS (Any new business brought before the group).

PROGRAM

1st VP/Program Chairman (name) introduced the speaker who spoke regarding_____.

BENEDICTION (Optional)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at (time)

(Name), Recording Secretary

TIDBITS

Just remember almost all meetings are recorded by a clerk/secretary or other designated individual. Minutes contain a "summary" of the most important occurrences, details and decisions made during the meeting.

See how important you are? By providing your voting members accurate information, you are keeping them informed of the workings of your club.

Suggestions:

Be sure to include the month, date and year in the heading of your minutes.

If possible, seat the Recording Secretary to one side of the President as they may need to confer from time to time.

If your President will stick to the layout of the agenda, she will make the Recording Secretary very happy and her job much easier. There is nothing worse for the recorder than to try and keep track of things that are not in order.

Resources: Extra paper, a signup sheet for names and titles of those in attendance (this is especially helpful for large groups), a copy of the bylaws and standing rules, a flag, a voter registration form, extra pens or pencils.

It is the President's discretion as to duties that make her life easier. You may be asked to do something such as helping with the setup for meetings. Make sure there is a flag available, name plates (if used), do a walk around to make sure the room is presentable after the meeting. Any detail that may fall through the crack can be your responsibility if you choose to take it on.

Keep a roster of RWCSDC elected officers and committee chairs in your Secretary's Handbook for easy reference. This roster should include contact information (email address and phone numbers)

Remember: The Secretary is the President's right hand – Grab it and make it work!