



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

ALBERTA MACKENZIE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Provincial Secretary Annual Report 2013

Suzanne S.

Diocesan Secretaries:

3 diocesan councils reported

Calgary – Jan M.

Edmonton – Mary Pat O’N.

Grouard-McLennan – Donna P.

Mackenzie-Fort Smith – Pat R.

St. Paul – Rita K.

MINUTES

Most commonly, minutes are delivered to Diocesan officers via email. Print copies are made available at Diocesan Officers meetings when required.

SIGNING OFFICERS

Some Diocesan Councils have the Secretary as a Signing Officer, and in others she is not a signing authority. Edmonton reported that in 62% of their parish councils the Secretary is one of the signing authorities. No councils have separate Recording and Correspondence Secretaries.

AGENDAS and CORRESPONDENCE

Usually, the Diocesan President does virtually all of the preparation of the agenda and handling of correspondence. In all cases, the correspondence is passed on to the Secretary who in turn records it on a list and files it. At the diocesan level, the agenda is prepared in consultation with the other executive members. No councils have separate Recording and Correspondence Secretaries.

REPORTS

Most Diocesan Councils have their Officers submit reports to the whole council ahead of time to be read before the meeting, enabling more efficient time to cover all business. Officers give an oral report at their meetings and can then touch on finer points or clarify items.

CHARTER/ARCHIVES

In one diocese, a particular council is designated to care for the Diocesan Charter and Archives. In most other diocesan councils the Diocesan Past President is responsible for Archives and History. At the parish level, most parishes report that the parish usually has the Charter framed and displayed, and the Past President, often with other interested members, looks after the Archives/History.

INTERNET

Secretaries report using the National and Provincial websites to access updates and pertinent information. The Internet is used to keep the parish Secretaries, through their President, informed of any roster changes and other information that comes in. Each executive officer orders the National Supplies that they require and are reimbursed. Administrative supplies are usually ordered by the President. The Diocesan Council information is updated on the website by the Communications

Chair or Secretary, depending if the council has a separate Communications Chair. Membership updates, deceased members as reported by the Spiritual Development Chair, and other changes that affect the rosters are usually submitted by the Organization Chair.

EMAIL

An important part of the internet is the function of email. Secretaries report that email is constantly used to pass on and receive information and to maintain accurate rosters as changes come in. In two Diocesan councils, where it is difficult and expensive to have Internet, the Secretary will call or mail any information. Those councils who have a Communications Chair usually request them to manage messages that require diocesan-wide distribution.

BIGGEST CHALLENGES

One of the biggest challenges in the role as Secretary is often communication – being informed of any changes in the diocesan councils' executive and the names and contact information for the Provincial/National councils, which seems to be very inconsistent. The following details particular challenges: irregular attendance at meetings; missing information on the minutes as the Secretary tries to participate actively in the meeting; lacking some computer skills; keeping track of councils' roster changes; no computer, therefore they must rely on someone else to do email; getting reports from standing committees; and getting the minutes out in a timely manner.

GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS as the Secretary:

Some of the greatest accomplishments are as follows: getting all the minutes done to satisfaction and receiving the roster changes from presidents; managing the roster updates; learning the role of Secretary quickly; sharing CWL knowledge and experience; being of service to the Parish and the League; maintaining records of council activities which helps with archives.

COMMENTS /SUGGESTIONS

Condensing Standing Committee Chair reports by picking out the most relevant information can be very challenging. Ask the chair to summarize her own report – she knows the most pertinent information. One must be able to record well in order to be a good Secretary. Many secretaries use a laptop to take minutes during the meeting. Preparing as much of the minutes ahead of time by using the condensed Standing Committee Chair reports is an effective and efficient method. Then, secretaries can actually listen more actively and even participate in the meeting as they fill in some details during the meeting. As well, they can then complete the minutes in a timely manner and get them out to the officers as soon as possible. Forwarding a draft of the minutes to one or two key people to proofread the minutes can also be of value. Secretaries appreciate the opportunity to attend Provincial and National Conventions for the connection it gives them with other levels of the League and the wonderful opportunity to learn from others.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne S.

Suzanne S.
Secretary
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council