

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council

Secretary - Communique #1 - October 2013

The Secretary job description should be passed on each time a new person takes over, providing a continuity of expectations. Although each council may have some expectations which are unique to their needs, there should be standards which are followed throughout the League.

Keeping in mind that the Minutes provide a history of the council, the following suggestions are intended to make recording the minutes easier for you.

1. The minutes should always include:

- Kind of meeting (general, annual, executive)
- Name of Council, and a list of those in attendance (circulate a paper for signing in) and note on the Minutes that X number were in attendance per attached list (if there are too many to list directly in the Minutes).
- Time, date and place that the meeting took place
- Name and position of the person presiding over the meeting
- Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting as read, distributed, or amended.
- Financial report - only the year-end financial statement requires approval; note otherwise that 'the financial report is placed on file'
- Summary of the reports - provide highlights only in the minutes, and state that complete reports are placed on file - then you can attach the complete reports to the official (archived) Minutes.
- Record main motions - naming the main mover and seconder. Then record if the motion is carried or defeated. Remember: if a member wishes to be recorded as having abstained or voted against, this must be recorded in the Minutes.
- Record any action plans
- Record time of adjournment
- Ensure space is left for the name and title of the recording secretary and council president with a signature line
- *Never record personal opinions or comments in the Minutes.*

2. The final version of the Minutes must be typed or written legibly in pen, but never in pencil and must be signed.

3. The secretary should read the Minutes of the previous meeting if called upon to do so, although ideally the Minutes should be distributed ahead of time, eliminating the need to read the Minutes aloud to the assembly.

4. Always record what is DONE, not what is SAID.
5. Record ideas; listen to comments, put down the main points. Then, **SUMMARIZE**. These records are for the Council's use – so make them **brief** but as complete as possible. Strike a balance and do not put down too much information, or too little – just enough information to tell the story.
6. Minutes should clearly indicate any major problems, suggested proposals or solutions, and any conflicting points of view for clarification of action.
7. Place the Minutes, with all attachments in an envelope (or transparent sheet protector), in a binder. Place the signed Minutes in chronological order and have the binder with you for quick access should there be a need to refer to them. The members have a right to access Minutes, and should even be encouraged to do so, to provide that much-needed feeling of inclusion and transparency.
8. Remember to number and initial all pages ensuring no substitutions can occur after approval.

General recommendations:

It is recommended that you maintain 2 binders: one for the Executive Meeting Minutes, and the other for the General Meeting Minutes. Keep in mind that the purpose of meeting as an Executive is to deal with business that is appropriate to be handled by the Executive, and to plan the General Meeting agenda. There is no need to replay the executive meeting at your general meeting, but it is encouraged that the binder containing the Executive Meeting Minutes be placed in open view for any member to access. The president may provide a quick synopsis of what took place at the Executive meeting, but the intent of having an Executive meeting is to allow the membership to handle the **business** expediently (taking up approximately one-third of the time frame), allowing one-third of the time to be spent on **spiritual** and finally one-third on **social time**.

Following this recommended format will help you to accomplish the magic 1/3 Faith, 1/3 Fun and 1/3 Fulfillment formula to have purposeful and fun meetings which ultimately will encourage more regular attendance by your members.

Suzanne S.
Provincial Secretary

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