

Duties for the Secretary

1. Take minutes of all meetings and conventions of the council and retain them as a permanent record. Get official copy signed by president and yourself.
2. Attend to correspondence as required by the President.
3. Be a signing officer and sign all official documents with the President.
4. Prepare a roll call of members and call it when necessary. Have a roll of your Life Members ready in case president requires it.
5. Preserve all documents except those specifically assigned to others.
6. Keep up the roster, especially for Credentials at Convention – a lists of the voting and accredited delegates. This could be difficult sometimes; we are still in the learning process as to how to get this all organized.
7. Be responsible for any reports that may be required. Keep files for each Officer, including Chairpersons. These reports can be attached to the minutes for easy access.
8. Keep a record of all main motions and recommendations. These are in the minutes and also put into the motions book after the minutes have been approved.
9. Keep a record of all committees in your minutes.
10. Provide a list of pending and potential business for the President before the meeting. (Not usually at councils; this depends on your president.)
11. Maintain the elections register and provide the eligibility list during elections (depending on your council, diocese or province).
12. Format and mail out the newsletters and directives (depending on your council, diocese or province). This has been handed over to Communications, for example, in some councils.
13. Send out a notice of meeting at least 30 days before any meeting.
14. Keep current the roster of executive members. (Executive at the parish level includes all elected officers. Executive at diocesan/provincial/national levels includes elected officers plus parish/diocesan/provincial presidents). Have copies available upon request.
15. Know parliamentary procedure to be able to advise the president, upon request, of proper procedure during meetings.
16. Keep a record of all important events and awards for the Archives.

Minutes of Meetings

The minutes are the only official record of the proceedings of the organization: they must be accurate, legible, and filed permanently. The President and the executive use them for constant referral. They are essential for continuity and information for succeeding council executives. They are also the History of the Council.

1. The Minutes should include:
 - kind of meeting (general, annual, executive)
 - name of organization (St. Mary of Assumption Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada)
 - date (including year, time, and place of the meeting)
 - name and title of presiding officer and secretary
 - presence of quorum (roll call of members) – local councils may just pass around a piece of paper – staple it on or if you don't keep names, say "with 16 members attending."
 - approval of previous minutes – as read or as distributed or as amended
 - financial report
 - summary of reports (attach complete reports to minutes or put in their own file)
 - main motions with action decided upon
 - name of mover and seconder of all motions
 - if a ballot or counted vote occurs: the number of votes for, against, and abstaining (only if they request to show they abstained)
 - record vote against the majority by a member, if requested
 - time of adjournment
 - date, signature, and title of recording secretary and council president
 - no opinions or personal comments
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 must be prepared to read (especially at local council meetings) the minutes of the previous meeting if called upon to do so. Ideally, minutes are distributed ahead of time and then the minutes need not be read aloud to the assembly.
4. Record what is done, not what is said.
5. Record ideas; listen to comments, put down main points. Summarize. These records are for the Council's use; make them brief but as complete as possible. Some secretaries (not me of course ;)) either put down too much or too little.
6. Minutes should clearly indicate:
 - Major problems
 - Suggestions proposed
 - Conflicting points of view for clarification of action

7. *Numbering of motions:* All motions are numbered: for example, **2009-1**
Resolutions are also numbered beginning with the post-convention meeting; for example, **Resolution 2006.3 Increase Old Age Security**
8. *Recording of motions:* All motions should be recorded in a separate paragraph and each motion should have a title. This helps in quick referral and for history purposes.

The record of the motion must include:

- motion number and title (for quick reference)
- mover and seconder
- subject (be specific as to what, where, and when)
- action to be taken
- whether motion was carried or defeated

Example:

2009.1 **Bingo Proceeds: Fern Farmer moved that the proceeds of the January 17, 2009 bingo be used to defer the costs of the 2010 diocesan convention being hosted by our parish council. Treasurer Fiona Finance will open a special account for the convention expenses and these proceeds will be deposited into it. Seconded by Franny Farkle. Motion carried.**

Noted that Mary Contrary opposed this motion. *(This would only be here if Mary specifically asked that it be noted in the minutes.)*

9. Minutes must be clear and concise. Use capitalized, underlined, bolded, or italicized headings to introduce a subject. This helps the readers to focus rapidly on a specific area; e.g. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT, *Action Request*. It helps to number items in the Minutes to match the Agenda. For motions, usually have the entire **Motion bolded**.
10. Corrections can be made by bracketing the incorrect portions and restating correctly in the margin. At Diocesan and Provincial levels where minutes are mailed out, all corrections must also be stated in the current minutes, so that councils can make these changes to a copy (especially if a delegate was not present at the meeting).
11. When recording reports in the minutes, state the standing committee, the person reporting, and summarize the report. The report itself should be kept on file separately.
12. If the minutes are not recorded in a bound book, but are in a looseleaf notebook, each page should be initialed and numbered or dated by the secretary and President to guard against substitution of pages.
13. Before adjourning the meeting, the President should announce the program for the evening so that this can be included in the minutes for history purposes.

14. When stating an action done by a member, mention the title of the person involved, if applicable.

Example: Spiritual Development Chairperson Sue St. Marie spoke to Fr. Willing on our behalf to ask . . .

15. Archives: Remember that the Secretary's minutes are really the History of the League and it is important to show names, dates, and information, especially at the Fall, Winter, Pre- and Post-Convention meetings. It is at those meetings that the information received and discussed becomes part of CWL history.

RECORD KEEPING

EXTRA EVENTS

Because important events often take place out of a meeting setting, no official record is kept of the proceedings. This is especially true of awards given at annual banquets, events, or conventions. It is important to keep on record a summary of such events.

In the case of awards to members, it is important to include the name, the award given, and even a brief resume of the person e.g. Mary Brown has served the League for 27 years. Over the years she has been president of her council twice and has served on several standing committees.

A list of all members receiving 25, 50, 60 year pins, and members receiving other awards should be incorporated into an official report of the proceedings, so that a ready list is available for referral. The resume of the members' activities with the League (related to CWL) should be kept on file.

ROLL CALL

1. General meetings: At parish level of the League it is sufficient to state how many members were at the meeting. It is optional but desirable to have a list of members present (pass around a sheet of paper) which is kept on file with the minutes but not necessarily included within the minutes proper.
2. At elected officers' meetings it is preferable to list within the minutes all those present and also those absent.
3. Roll Call book:

At Diocesan and Provincial levels a roll call book must be maintained. It is the secretary's responsibility to keep this register up to date. In my experience as both Diocesan and Provincial secretary there was no Roll Call book but a copy of the councils and Diocesan/Provincial Officers was kept with the minutes.

Be prepared at all meetings to take a roll call when requested by the president.

At Convention, it is permissible to use the written Credential list for the official roll call. It is necessary to have a motion moved/seconded/carried to accept the Credential Report as the official roll call of the meeting in question, to confirm the appropriate Voting and Accredited delegates. A verbal roll call is especially advisable at an annual convention where voting is taking place on elections, constitutional changes, *per capita* fees or policy changes, as accuracy is of utmost importance.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

It is ultimately the secretary's responsibility to have a record of those registered at the convention. The Convention Registration person can compile the list. From the Registration list, the "Credential Report" can be produced.

The Convention Register should contain:

1. names and affiliations of delegates in the "Credential Report" at Diocesan/Provincial National levels:
 - Voting delegates (presidents of the previous level)
 - Accredited delegates (elected officers of the council, Life Members, official accredited delegates from previous level(s))
2. Special guests and convention planning committee chairperson

It is not necessary to list all visitors in the register, but they may be included in a registration file folder.

This record must be maintained yearly, and done immediately following each convention.

Early in the new year, before the Convention Registration Committee is finalizing its procedure, contact them and provide them with the necessary information:

- credential form
- voting and accredited information according to the *Constitution & Bylaws*
- proper record-keeping, so that you have all the information following the Convention.

ROSTER

At all levels of the League it is important to maintain an up-to-date Roster.

- A. The Roster must include:
 - 1. Names of all elected officers (including chairpersons)
 - 2. Names of subcommittee chairpersons and representatives
 - 3. Addresses (postal delivery and electronic mail)
 - 4. Phone numbers (residence and business)
 - 5. Date (month and year) on top of the sheet for reference
- B. Send out a roster of the new executive immediately following elections and as often as necessary during the next two years.
- C. Keep the roster current. Any corrections to the roster should be sent out as soon as possible.
- D. Council Rosters are confidential to the Council members. Rosters should not be given to any outside group unless approved by the Executive involved.

RECORD OF MOTIONS

MOTIONS BOOK

A separate list of all motions from all meetings should be kept in a file for easy reference. National Council has recommended that Motion books be used. These are books in which all pages are attached to the cover so that pages are not accidentally removed the book. A coil book cannot be used. As all motions are numbered, it would be easy to look back into the minutes to obtain further information if necessary.

ELIGIBILITY LIST/NOMINATIONS/ELECTIONS REGISTER

It is the secretary's responsibility to maintain the Eligibility file and produce the Elections Register for election year. Election procedures seem to vary from council to council; however, official guidelines can be found in the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*. It has been my experience as both Diocesan and Provincial Secretary to have had the past-president handle the elections.

The Eligibility list (at all but parish level) must contain:

1. Names of all Council officers, including chairpersons
2. Names of Council presidents and years they held that office
3. Years the office was held by the officer or chairperson
4. The 3 terms following their term of office. This makes up the years that they are eligible for nomination.

The Elections file also contains:

1. The procedure to be followed by the Council.
2. Deadline dates to be followed for the election procedure.
3. Nomination form

The Eligibility list is sent out together with the nomination form by the secretary to all presidents of the previous-level councils. The Elections Register is compiled from the nominations received.

HELPFUL HINTS

1. For taking minutes, a loose-leaf coil notebook is best if you don't have a laptop. Loose sheets of paper may be blown from the table or misplaced.
2. The secretary should have sufficient copies of the meeting agenda (orders of the day) for all those attending the meeting.
3. Have a file folder ready to accept all reports given to you. This prevents misplacement and loss.
4. Bring to each meeting a copy of the *Constitution and Bylaws*, Standing Rules of the organization, Policies of the council, book of Parliamentary procedure, and roster list including a list of special committees.
5. References for secretaries: *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*, Provincial and or Diocesan Policies.

Make a checklist for each meeting so that you are always well prepared and know what it is you need to do, need to bring, need to prepare before the meeting.

FALL / MIDWINTER MEETING CHECKLIST

- Notice of Fall Meeting approved by the President sent out in August
- Date
- Where
- Bring what
- Tentative Agenda
- Registration Contact
- Billeting
- Is there a workshop? Who is doing the workshop?
- Accommodations
- Directions
- Copies made for the following:
 - Council Presidents
 - Honorary Life Members
 - Life Members
 - Past Diocesan Presidents
 - Zone Chairs
 - Diocesan Officers and Spiritual Advisor
- Envelopes and Labels made for the following:
 - Council Presidents
 - Honorary Life Members
 - Life Members
 - Past Diocesan Presidents
 - Zone Chairs
 - Diocesan Officers and Spiritual Advisor
- Roll Call is ready
- 5 extra copies of the Minutes are available
- Envelopes mailed out
- Secretary's Report
- What you have done since Convention; e.g. fan outs, roster updates, Minutes
- Sign-in sheets
 - HLM, Life Members
 - Past Diocesan Presidents
 - Zone Chairs
 - Council Presidents
 - Diocesan Officers and Spiritual Advisor
 - Members
 - Guests
 - Credential Report

MAIL OUTS

- Envelopes for the following:
 - Council Presidents
 - Honorary Life Members
 - Life Members
 - Past Diocesan Presidents
 - Zone Chairs
 - Diocesan Officers and Spiritual Advisor
- Labels for the envelopes
- Copies of information to be mailed out
 - Fall Notice of Meeting
 - Pre-Convention Minutes
 - Convention Minutes
 - Post-Convention Minutes
 - August Diocesan/Provincial Officers' Directives
 - Newsletter
 - Council Roster
 - Any other information needed

VOTING:

Motions:

always ask for ayes and nays. page 54 red book
no need to ask for abstentions, unless someone asks
abstentions not recorded as votes

Elections:

* nominations are not motions; do not need seconders, or vote
*If there is only 1 candidate for an office, the neatest way to handle this is using the statement given in the P and P manual.
*at local level, all members can vote (if there is a vote); at other levels there are restrictions on who is eligible to vote

What is a majority: 50% +1 of members? of those in attendance?
this should be stated in the P and P manual

Tie vote: is a defeat. The President may vote to break a tie or to create a tie. (page 60 red book)

* { Methods: show of hands, voice, secret ballot, standing (often used when an accurate vote count is difficult), instructed vote :see By-Laws p. 28. How does this influence debate?

Mutual consent: page 66

Can be useful in some situations where there is no obvious objections to the question.

President: Is there any objection to:-----

Hearing none-----

Doubt of outcome: page 68

the member calls - I doubt the outcome. This is an incidental motion no second, no debate. The President calls for a revote (perhaps a standing vote)

A member should abstain if the matter is of direct or personal interest to her.

TIPS FOR THE POSITION OF SECRETARY

Having a checklist helps to keep you organized. What is needed to attend a Council Meeting? Here are a few checklist suggestions:

- The Agenda for the meeting
- Do you need to bring extra copies of the Agenda to pass out to members?
- Paper to write on – taking minutes
- A pen or pencil (eraser)
- Is there a roll call – a list of names of the members is needed
- Last months minutes – as they need to be approved, and then signed by the secretary and president
- Do you need to bring extra copies of the last Minutes to pass out to members?
- A binder would be good to have to keep your agenda, minutes and other correspondence together – in date order
- Dividers for the binder – if you want to keep your roll call, roster, etc .in a separate part of your binder
- Do you have members sign in – then sign in sheets need to be prepared and available for all meetings
- Do you have mail outs – then envelopes and labels will need to be made up
- Do you have email fan outs – then email addresses will need to be input
- Are there any forms that need to be filled out by the secretary – then copies of these should be handy
- Motion Book needs to be updated and brought to each meeting
- Secretary's meeting report

Agenda and Meeting Minutes

- agenda for secretary
- agenda for council members
- an agenda with blank spaces to fill in the information at the meeting (notes for minutes)
- your minutes will mirror what your agenda looks like – there will be exceptions as sometimes there are additions or deletions to the agenda for which you have to make amends. So make sure that there is enough room under the topics to write something.
- Executive reports need to be handed in to the secretary
- You do not need to write any of the reports down at the meeting as the Executive will give you their reports and you take it home and just highlight what was said – you do not have to write down word for word from their report
- So and So talked about such and such and the event is on such and such date
- Type up or write up your minutes as soon as you can and send to your president and executive to look over – if not immediately, at least have your minutes typed up or written up and ready for the next meeting.
- Ensure that all members – even if they do not attend the meeting – receive a copy of the minutes so that they know what is happening in your council.

I hope that this helps you in your position as secretary. Please do not hesitate to contact your Diocesan Secretary if you are unsure of what is required of you. Good luck in your position as Secretary in your Council.