

# Secretary's Handbook 2016



## GFWC Florida Federation of Women's Clubs

## **Secretary's Handbook**

Congratulations! You are the SECRETARY! An organization may have as many officers as it considers necessary, but in order to function properly, two officers are absolutely necessary. A presiding officer and a recording secretary. By working in close harmony with the president, you may help make her job easier and contribute to a successful club year.

There are many wonderful suggestions, tips and samples located in this booklet. Read them and use them and we know you will enjoy your job as secretary.

## Duties of a Secretary

The duties of the secretary may vary somewhat with each organization, but some duties are Standard such as those listed below.

1. Keep accurate records of all business meetings of the organization and the Board. This record is called the Minutes. The minutes should be a record of what was actually done, not what was said!
2. Maintain an accurate membership list, unless this is the duty of another officer as Prescribed in your club bylaws. Call the roll when required.
3. Keep on file all club records, including committee reports.
4. Take to each meeting:
  - Minute book
  - Official copy of the bylaws
  - Official copy of the standing rules
  - A list of members
  - A list of committees and membership of each
  - Copies of the agenda
  - Ballots
  - Other supplies that may be needed
5. Make the minutes available for examination by the members upon request.
6. Handles correspondence and send out notices to meetings if there is not another officer of chairman assigned these duties.
7. Notify officers, committee members and delegates of their election of appointments.
8. Maintain the official copies of the bylaws and standing rules of the organization.
9. Working with the president, prepare the agenda for each meeting of the club and the board.
10. Send the president a copy of the minutes as soon as possible after each meeting.
11. Call the meeting to order if the president and vice president(s) are absent. You will preside until a temporary chairman is elected by the assembly.
12. Transfer all materials pertaining to the office to the newly elected secretary.

## Minutes

The minutes are the official records of the transactions of the organization and they must be complete and accurate. The minutes should contain only what was actually done at the meeting, not what was said by the members. The minutes should never reflect the secretary's personal opinion, favorable or otherwise, on anything said or done (no delicious luncheon; no interesting speaker!).

Minutes follow a pattern – the agenda or order of business as it was transacted by the club. The business must be recorded the way it was transacted by the club. The business must be recorded the way it was transacted although it may not have been in the proper order.

The minutes are usually read and approved at the beginning of the next regular meeting. A special meeting does not approve minutes; those minutes should be approved at the next regular meeting.

Corrections, if any and approval of the minutes are normally done by unanimous consent. The presiding officer calls for the reading of the minutes. The secretary rises and reads the minutes (she may use a microphone if one is provided). When she finishes reading them she does not “respectfully submit” them. She simply reads her name and the title. The chair will ask for any corrections and instruct the secretary to make them. The chair will then declare the minutes approved “as read” or “as corrected”.

After the minutes have been read and approved, this fact should be noted on the minutes with the initials of the secretary and the date. If the organization wishes, the minutes can also be signed by the president. Minutes can contain a Committee Appointed to Approve the Minutes Page, with a signature line for everyone who is appointed to approve the minutes. (example on next page).

Corrections can be made by drawing a circle around the work to be corrected or one line through the word or words, then a line out to the left margin where the correction will be made. The secretary should initial and date the correction. If there is an omission, insert a ^, circle it and draw a line out to the left again making sure to write in the omission, initial and date the correction.

In some instances, a committee may be appointed to approved the minutes rather than having them read aloud at a meeting.

Minutes are the legal record of the club. They may also be the only written history of the club. Be careful to keep them in good order, always in the possession of the secretary. Be very cautious when “cleaning out the files” that old minutes do not become part of the things destroyed!

Club name and Meeting (General Meeting, Board Meeting, etc.)  
Day of week and Date  
City, State

COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES

APPROVED AS (WRITTEN, CORRECTED)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name, title)

## Contents of Minutes

Minutes should contain certain information and leave out other. They generally follow a standard outline or agenda.

1. The first paragraph contains:
  - a. The kind of meeting – regular, special or adjourned
  - b. The name of the organization
  - c. The date and time of the meeting and the place, if it is not always the same.
  - d. A notation of the presence of the regular presiding officer and the secretary, or the names of their substitutes.
  - e. Action taken on the minutes or the previous meeting (approved as read or as corrected)
2. The body of the minutes contains: (separate paragraph for each subject)
  - A. Reports of officers, boards, standing committees, and special committees
    1. Officers – at least the treasurer's report and others if they have them
    2. Board – given by the secretary for information
    3. Standing committee – this would include department reports and other standing committees listed in the club bylaws.
    4. Special committees such as committee in charge of upcoming fundraiser
  - B. Motions
    1. Final wording of all main motions with any amendments incorporated and any motion to reconsider; also whether each was adopted, lost or temporarily disposed of, but not is withdrawn
    2. All notices of motions
    3. All points of order and appeals, noting whether sustained or lost, and giving the chair's reasons for the ruling
    4. The name of the maker of important motions, but not the seconder
  - C. Announcements
3. The last paragraph contains the hour of adjournment.
4. The minutes are closed with the signature and title of the person writing the minutes.

*\*\*Two sets of Sample Minutes – Follow. They were prepared by Phyllis Wood, Registered Parliamentarian and GFWC FL member. Think of the business they must have transacted at those two meetings, het they are one page. The biggest problem with minutes is that they say too much, not too little.*

## Minute Minutia

Identify people named in the minutes by first and last names. Future secretaries and club members may not know who “Betty” was.

You should write “Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America,” never just “Pledge.” Your presiding officer should say the same.

Be sure to sign the minutes.

The secretary should read the recommendation (s) of the board of directors (or executive board) and then state, “By direction of the board I move that this recommendation be adopted”. It does not require a second as it is from a committee of more than one person.

The term secretary pro tempore is used to denote a person filing in for an absent secretary.

The minutes are the secretary’s report. she may, however have another report separate from the minutes.

The tellers’ report is entered in full into the minutes, becoming a part of the official record of their organization.

Preparing an agenda is the usual duty of the secretary although many presidents prefer to prepare their own.

Minutes may be corrected in either margin. It is wise to leave margins wide enough to do this easily.

The purpose of outlining the minutes in the margin is to help someone find a particular item easily. It would not be necessary to read this outline when the minutes are read for approval.

The secretary has all the rights of membership including making, seconding, and debating motions. She is usually too busy to take an active part in the business of the meeting.

If a program is held in conjunction with the regular business meeting, the name and subject of the guest speaker can be given, but her remarks should not be summarized. Any other type program can be noted, but again, editorial remarks are out of order in the minutes.

Record all business in the order in which it was presented in the meeting even though not quite in parliamentary order.

When minutes are “dispensed with” to save time, they must be read and acted upon at the following meeting before the current minutes.

## SAMPLE SET OF MINUTES #1

Call to Order	The regular meeting of the XYZ Club was called to order at 8:00 p.m., October 5, 2004 at the Civic Center by the President Catherine Campbell. The secretary was present.
Opening Exercises	Lois Sinclair gave the devotion. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was led by Lucy Brown. Members and guests were welcomed.
Minutes	The secretary read the minutes of the previous meeting, September 7, 2004. They were approved as read.
Corresponding Secretary	Thank you notes were read from the Red Cross, the Hospital and the Ambulance Squad for donations. An invitation to attend a parliamentary law workshop was received.
Report of Standing Committees	<p>Joan Tully, on behalf of the membership Committee, reported that five applications had been received for membership and were in the process of being reviewed by the committee for presentation at the next meeting.</p> <p>Mary Pemell, on behalf of the Legislative Committee, reported that hearings would be held on November 6, 2004 at City Hall on a suggested plan for assessing property for real estate taxes. The committee recommended that all members of the club go to the hearings or write letters expressing their view on the assessments. On behalf of the committee, she moved the adoption of the recommendation. The recommendation was carried.</p>
Report of Special Committee	On behalf of the committee appointed to investigate the possibility of our sponsoring a Home Tour, Suzy Bennett moved that a Home Tour be held the second week in January with tickets to cost \$6.00. The motion failed.
Unfinished Business and General Order	The motion, which had been postponed from the previous meeting, "that the Club buy a new Gateway computer for the office" was before the assembly for consideration. After amendment, it was adopted as follows: "that the Club buy a new Gateway computer for the office, the cost not to exceed \$8,000.00."
New Business	A motion by Julia Williams, "that the Club plan a parliamentary seminar to be held on a Saturday in the spring," was referred to a committee of three to be appointed by the president and to report at the next meeting. The president appointed Ruth Graham, Beverly Johnson and Wilma Ross.
Adjourn	The meeting was adjourned by general consent at 10:15 p.m.
	Approved
	Date



## SAMPLE SET OF MINUTES #2

Call to Order	The regular meeting of the ABC Club was called to order as 2:00 p.m., January 6, 2004 at the library by the Secretary, Margaret Miller, in the absence of the President, Jenny Harwood, and all vice-presidents. Catherine Campbell was elected Chairman pro-tem.
Opening Exercises	The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was led by Frances Lipe. The members were led in the singing of "America the Beautiful" by Mary Rummage with Helen Merkel at the piano.
Quorum	A quorum being present, the meeting was in order
Minutes	The secretary read the minutes of the November 7, 2003 meeting. They were approved as read. The secretary read the minutes of the December 8, 2003 meeting. They were approved as corrected.
Report of Officers	<p>The secretary reported that she had attended a district meeting on January 2, 2004. Special informational sheets concerning the meeting were distributed.</p> <p>The corresponding secretary read a summary of the correspondence which included thank you notes and an invitation from the City Council to attend a breakfast.</p> <p>The treasurer reported a balance of \$9,599.52 in the checking account as of January 2, 2004. The report was filed for audit.</p>
Report of the Executive Board	The secretary reported for the Executive Board. She moved that the recommendation of the Executive Board "that we increase the amount of money for the GFWC Florida Convention from \$900 to \$1500" be adopted. The Recommendation was adopted.
Report of the Standing Committees	On behalf of the Ways & Means Committee, Leia Honeycutt moved that recommendation "that we have our annual bazaar on October 31, 2004" be adopted. The recommendation was adopted, after amended to read November 1, 2004.
Report of the Special Special Orders	To comply with the bylaws, nominations were in order for the Nominating Committee. Treva Hill, Dorothy Grubb, Joan Darr, Jean Kepler and Audrey Snyder were elected.
New Business	<p>A motion made by Peggy Brown "that we sponsor a cruise to the Bahamas" was referred to a committee of Lois Snider, Connie Gamer and Rose Shore with instructions to report at the next meeting.</p> <p>A motion by Beatrice Hartly, "that we give \$500 to the library for memorials" was seconded and carried.</p>
Program	Muriel Graves introduced Barry Leonard who spoke on the pollution problem of the St. Johns River.
Adjourn	The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m. on motion by Kathy Harris.
	Approved Attest Date