

Wisconsin PTA

PTA Secretary Handbook

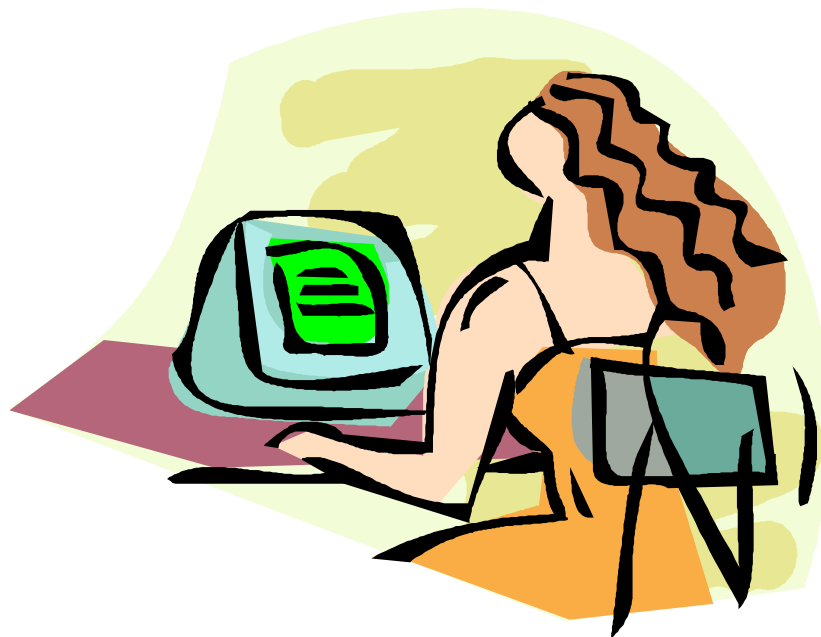


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Responsibilities of a Secretary

The recording secretary is elected and is one of the officers required for a PTA/PTSA. The secretarial responsibilities may be assigned to one person or divided between a recording secretary and a corresponding secretary as specified in the bylaws. If there is no corresponding secretary, the duties of the corresponding secretary may be combined with the duties of the recording secretary, in accordance with the bylaws. In addition to the bylaws, the duties of a secretary are discussed in the *California State PTA Toolkit*, the *National PTA Annual Resources for PTAs* (available from the PTA president) and *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

Before the first PTA Meeting:

- Attend PTA-sponsored workshops or trainings.
- Obtain secretary's minute book with minutes of previous meetings and other materials from your predecessor, including master copy of the bylaws, list of members, and official documents and records of the PTA.
- Keep in mind that you are responsible for accurate, concise, permanent record of the proceedings of all meetings of the association and of the executive board. These minutes are the legal record of the PTA/PTSA.

At the PTA Meeting:

- Read the minutes of any previous meeting when called upon to do so. With approval of the association, reading of the minutes may be postponed to a succeeding meeting, or a committee may be appointed by the president to read the minutes and report.
- Make all corrections to the official minutes. Corrections to the minutes are made immediately following the reading of the minutes, during the time specified on the agenda for minutes, or at any subsequent meeting when errors are discovered. The current minutes shall reflect that a correction was made. In the master copy of the minutes, the secretary circles the incorrect words with a red pen and places the correction in the margin. Corrections must be dated and initialed. Only the group that created the minutes (executive committee, executive board, association) may correct them.
- Record what the group did, with action recorded in the order it took place. Personal opinion and discussion are omitted.
- Read a report (not the full minutes) of each executive board meeting at each association meeting, and move the adoption of board recommendations.

- Upon authorization (i.e. vote) from the group for the payment of a bill, record the expenditures in the minutes.
- Enter all amendments to the bylaws in the minutes when the vote is taken.
- Prepare a list of unfinished business items for the president and assist with preparation of the agenda, if requested.
- Be prepared to help count a rising vote when requested and have blank paper available for voting by ballot.
- Have on hand for reference at each meeting a copy of the bylaws and standing rules, minutes of previous meetings, list of all committees, and an up-to-date list of all members.

After the PTA Meeting:

- Prepare the minutes and give a copy to the president soon after each meeting.
- Distribute meeting materials to members of the Executive Board that did not attend the meeting.
- Prepare copies of the minutes for each member to expedite the meeting, or publish in the PTA's newsletter. When the newsletter is distributed to the school community, only a summary of action is printed.

Storing the Meeting Minutes:

- The official copy of the minutes should be placed on file in a **minutes binder** that is located within the school or some other pre-determined location so that the member may have access to the.
- Signed copies of the following should be included in the **minutes binder**:
 - Committee reports
 - Officer's reports
 - Written motions
 - Correspondences
- When distributing the meeting minutes it is not necessary to include the attachments. The minutes should reference the attachments and indicate they are on file. Copies of attachments may be requested if anyone wishes to reference them.

What needs to be In the Secretary's Minutes?

Meeting Minutes should contain:

- Name of the association and kind of meeting (association, executive board, special);
- Date, time and place of meeting;
- Name and title of presiding officer (or pro tem);
- Disposition of minutes of previous meeting - whether read and approved/corrected or their reading postponed including when and how they are to be approved;
- Statement of account as given and list of bills approved for payment;
- Summarized reports of other officers and chairmen (important reports such as budget should be attached to the minutes in full);
- Record of each motion voted upon, the name of member who made the motion, and whether carried or lost (the name of the seconder does not need to be recorded);
- Copy of any resolutions adopted;
- Record of results of any election and votes cast;
- Brief notation of program topic, names of participants, and method of presentation;
- Time of adjournment;
- List of persons in attendance or excused absences; and
- Signature of secretary, using own given name.

Meeting Minutes should NOT include the following:

- Opinions or interpretations of the recording secretary
- Judgmental phrases like "heated debate" or "valuable comment"
- Motions that are withdrawn
- Flowery language
- Detailed reports
- Transcripts of the meeting (minutes should **not** be taken down verbatim)

Correcting the Meeting Minutes

Corrections to the minutes are to be made immediately following the reading of the minutes or, if distributed and not read aloud, during the time devoted on the agenda to the minutes.

- Whenever an error is mentioned, it is noted in the minutes of the current meeting.
- Corrections are made in the secretary's minute book by circling the incorrect words with a red pen and placing the correction in the margin.
- All corrections must be initialed and dated.
- Corrections to the minutes can be made years later by means of a motion to amend something previously adopted. This requires a two-thirds vote or a majority vote with prior notice.
- With approval of the association the reading of the minutes of the meeting may be postponed to the next meeting, or a committee may be appointed to read the minutes and report findings at the next meeting. If a committee is appointed, all members must have been present at that meeting. The members of the committee must sign their names at the end of the master copy of those minutes.
- Only the group (executive committee, executive board, association) which created the minutes can correct them!

What should the Secretary bring to each meeting?

The secretary should bring to each meeting:

- Paper for ballot voting or prepared ballots
- File or correspondence received and responses (if there is no corresponding secretary)
- Motion blanks (see page
- Notepad (to write down anything that the president might need after the meeting)
- File to hold copies of motions, reports, materials distributed by the group
- Supplies which include pens, pencils, paper clips, stapler, post-it notes, tape, scissors, and anything else required for the meeting

Responsibilities of the Corresponding Secretary

Responsibilities of the corresponding secretary are defined in the bylaws and include other related duties that the president or executive board may assign.

- Send notices of meetings to executive board members and/or association members as directed.
- Read correspondence at executive board and association meetings as requested by the president.
- Check with the president about letters to be written immediately after the meeting.
 - ▶ Some letters will be written for the president to sign and will contain specific wording as directed by executive board or association action.
 - ▶ Other letters will be written and signed by the corresponding secretary following general instructions.
- Write authorized letters promptly.
 - ▶ Be accurate - check names and titles carefully.
 - ▶ Give precise information, with exact copy of recommendations, resolutions or motions and reasons for action taken.
 - ▶ Refer to any one of many reference books on writing business letters for suggestions as to form and style.
- Keep file of all letters received and copies of replies written.
 - ▶ Important correspondence should be passed along to your successor or placed with the official records of the unit.
- Unless the bylaws specify otherwise, notify officers and committee members of their election or appointment and send names of newly elected officers to council (if in council) or district promptly.

Responsibilities of the Council Secretary & Corresponding Secretary

Council Secretary: In addition to the duties listed for the PTA secretary, the council secretary shall:

- Maintain a list of member units.
- Keep an accurate, concise, permanent record of the proceedings of all meetings of the executive committee.
- Have on hand for reference at each meeting a list of all unit representatives to the council and a membership list for each unit belonging to the council.
- Have available at each meeting motion forms/blanks.
- Plan and present PTA secretary training for member units.

Council Corresponding Secretary: In addition to the responsibilities listed for the PTA corresponding secretary, the council corresponding secretary shall:

- Send notices to unit representatives and council board members as directed.
- Unless the bylaws specify otherwise, notify officers and committee members of their election or appointment and send names of newly-elected officers to district promptly.
- Plan and present PTA corresponding secretary training for member units.

Tips for the Secretary

- The Recording Secretary should sit as close as possible to the Chairperson. Having the Recording Secretary sit close by the Chairperson will make it easier for that person to clarify any points that might have been made.
- The Recording Secretary should have a complete list of all attendees of the meeting. If this is not possible, before the meeting begins, pass around a piece of paper for everyone to print his or her name on.
- The Recording Secretary should have at his or her disposal the agenda for the meeting and a copy of the minutes for the last meeting. All background information pertaining to the meeting should also be provided to the minutes-taker. They may need to refer back to this information during the meeting. The whole process can flow much more smoothly if the Recording Secretary has some knowledge of the subjects to be discussed.
- Type your notes out in the template you created before the meeting – this will make the notes easier for everyone to read and use.
- Do not deviate from the agenda. It is best to stick to the agenda as much as possible in order to keep all information on record. Do not allow any business to be discussed that is not on the agenda. This will make for mass confusion.
- Number the pages as you go so you aren't confused later. Remember, though, that the minute-taker is responsible for providing good flow. Don't force yourself to write the minutes in the actual chronological order of the discussion - it may not work.
- Focus on action items, not discussion. The purpose of minutes is to define decisions made and to record what actions are to be taken, by whom and when.
- Record motions properly. **A motion is a formal suggestion made by an attendee at the meeting that has been seconded by another attendee, and then passed by a vote.** The Recording Secretary may need to restate a motion after a lengthy discussion. It is therefore very important to record these motions exactly as they have been stated. An example of how to document a motion is as follows: Moved, seconded, and carried that all members of the Board will receive a three percent cost of living raise. Be sure to list the names of all attendees making and seconding any motions.
- Record every action taken. The Recording Secretary should record every action taken, whether they seem trivial or not. If there are any questions regarding importance, the Recording Secretary should speak to the Chairperson as soon as possible after the meeting
- One final tip would be to read the book Robert's Rules of Order. This is an excellent tool to assist anyone taking minutes. It will help to familiarize you with the format for making, seconding and amending motions.

SAMPLE MEETING MINUTES

UNION ELEMENTARY PTA BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, May 7, 20**, 2:00 p.m.

Union Elementary School Media Room

Members Present: Sally Jones, Susan Longmore, Thomas Martin, Mary Jansen, Diane Day, Judy Millis, Abby Jackson, Colleen Baker, Dennis Morrison **Members Excused:** Ruth Brown

Call to Order: President, Sally Jones, called the meeting to order at 2:05PM. A quorum was represented.

Agenda: The agenda was reviewed and adopted as amended.

Meeting Minutes: The minutes of the November board meeting were accepted as corrected

Treasurer's Report: Report given by Judy Millis.

- Balance in checking account, as of April 2002 is \$745.00
- New members this month - 25. Income for PTA memberships is \$50.00
- Expenditures: PTA membership envelopes - \$10.00, Health Fair expenses \$247.50

Executive Committee Report

- **President;** as attached
- **Vice President;** none at this time
- **Secretary;** a letter of gratitude for the pizza party was received from Mrs. Lange's 5th grade class.

Committee Reports

- **Health Commissioner Report:** Report given by Mary Jansen. There were over 275 attending the fair. This was a very successful event judging from the evaluation that was turned in. The attendees felt that this should be repeated again next year with an emphasis on home first aid kits. Sally will turn in a procedure outline of the Health Fair at the next meeting.
- **Volunteer Coordinator Report:** Report given by Abby Jackson. Abby said that they still needed a few more volunteers for the field day activities at the end of the month. The Clown Around Company can provide the dunking booth and other rented games at a savings of \$35.00. **Motion** by Abby Jackson: *I move that we hire the Clown Around Company for our field day activities this year. Vote affirmative.*
Motion adopted.

Old Business

- **Phone Directory;** the phone directory will be distributed to all families at no charge.
- **Library Books:** tabled until further discussion with librarian regarding costs.

New Business:

- **Digital Camera;** a request has been made to purchase of a digital camera for use during PTA sponsored activities.

Announcements:

- Teacher Appreciation Week May 27 - June 1
- Sixth Grade Advancement June 5
- Legislative Forum June 7
- PTA Meeting June 13

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes accepted: ____ (date) ____ Secretary ____ (signature) _____



Official motion blank

YOUR HOMETOWN PTA

Member Meeting Executive Committee Other _____

Motion No. _____

I move _____

ACTION

Maker _____

Adopted

Seconded by _____

Defeated

Amended

Referred

Postponed

Tabled

Withdrawn

Copies to: President

Secretary permanent binder

Maker