

**“ONE MINUTE, TWO MINUTES.....”  
WORKSHOP FOR SECRETARIES**

**OREGON FCE  
October 2000**

**SECRETARY'S WORKSHOP**  
**One Minute, Two Minutes .....**"

**Agenda**

**Welcome**

**Introductions, and if they're current or past secretary**

**Skit**

**Suggestions from audience of what secretary can do to help meeting**

**Quiz**

**Answers and discussion**

**Go over handout (write main items on flip chart)**

**Secretary's prayer**

## "ONE MINUTE, TWO MINUTES....." WORKSHOP FOR SECRETARIES

The secretary of an organization is second in importance to the president. Even though the vice president is ranked above the secretary in authority of an organization, the secretary is the right hand of the president.

A secretary should:

- Have a working knowledge of parliamentary procedure
- Have good writing skills
- Have organizational skills
- Be prompt
- Prepare an business agenda, if necessary
- Sit near the president or presiding officer
- Have knowledge of how to write minutes of a meeting
- Ask for a motion to be written if it's long or complicated
- Keep all official and historical records

### THE MINUTES OF A MEETING

The minutes of a meeting are an important legal document of what actually happened at a meeting.

Minutes should contain mainly *what was done* at a meeting, *not what was said* by members or officers.

The minutes should be brief but include all actions taken during the meeting.

The minutes should be written using short, indented paragraphs.

Leave wide margins for corrections, which should be made in red ink.

Never erase minutes which have been corrected. Include the corrections in the minutes of the meeting where the correction was made. To make corrections, bracket the error and write the correction in the wide margin or on the facing page.



Motions should be recorded in a separate paragraph, noting whether it was amended, passed or defeated.

The name of the maker of a motion or amendment should be recorded. It is not necessary to record the name of the person who seconds a motion, only that the motion was seconded.

Reports of the entire proceedings of a committee are not recorded in minutes, only the report of the committee chairman.

The name and topic of a guest speaker are included in minutes, but no summary or recording of the speech.

Minutes can be corrected after being approved, even years later, if a mistake or omission of facts or events is found to be true. Any member may question or put forth the correction, even though he or she was not present at the meeting for which minutes are being corrected.

A tape recording of the proceedings of the meeting is helpful for checking with the handwritten minutes taken during the meeting. Tapes of important meetings may also be archived for legal records.

## DO YOU KNOW YOUR "P's and Q's" AS A SECRETARY?

1. T F During a business meeting, a secretary should sit in the front row facing the president, in order to see and hear clearly all that is said from the chair during the business meeting.
2. T F Minutes should include all statements made during debates.
3. T F Minutes may be examined by any or all members upon request.
4. T F A secretary should have at each meeting the minutes book, bylaws, rules, list of members, list of members of committees, agenda, ballots and other supplies as needed.
5. T F The secretary should notify officers, committee and delegates of their appointment or election.
6. T F The secretary should serve as chair of the credentials committee.
7. T F The secretary must record in the minutes the number of votes on each side of a ballot vote.
8. T F The secretary should record in the minutes all business proceedings, including unfinished business even if there was none, and the names of all committees, even if there were no committee reports.
9. T F The secretary should make corrections in the minutes by erasing or crossing out the error and writing the correction above the lines.
10. T F The first paragraph of the minutes should contain the kind of meeting, the name of the group, the date and time and place of the meeting, a notation that the presiding officer and the secretary were present, and the approval or correction of previous minutes.

## **SAMPLE AGENDA**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**WELCOME REMARKS**

**INVOCATION (OPTIONAL)**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PROGRAM**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Secretary's Workshop, 2000  
Handout

THE CHAOTIC CLUB MEETING  
or  
THE SECRETARY'S DILEMMA

*(The club meeting is in progress as we join the scene)*

- Joy: The meeting of the Chaotic Club will come to order (looks around)  
Now, what's next?
- Arlene: Let's do the Secretary's report. I need to leave early, and I'm sure there's  
a mistake in the report from last month's meeting.
- Connie: No, I want the treasurer's report first. I have some bills we need to take  
care of right now!
- Sandy: Ladies, ladies, you're both wrong.
- Arlene: I'm not wrong! I just have to leave early.
- Joy: Now, I remember! It's time for the Roll Call by the Secretary.
- Arlene: Don't waste time----I have to leave!
- Ruth (Sec.): (Reads names. All except Donna respond with "Present" or "Here")  
Joy Arlene Connie Sandy Donna
- Joy: The Roll Call is completed, so now we'll have reports of committees.
- Ruth: I'm not ready to give my report yet.



- Joy: Well, why did n't you do that before you came? I guess we'll come back to your report later.
- Arlene: What about the minutes?
- Joy: Oh, all right, Arlene, we'll have the minutes. Ruth, do you have the minutes?
- Ruth: One minute, two minutes were spent by members at the Chaotic Club last meeting.
- Joy: Now what was wrong with those minutes? They sounded o.k. to me.
- Arlene: Those minutes were from two meetings ago! Now you've wasted my time and I have to leave. (Stomps off the stage)
- Connie: Well, it's about time. Now let's do the Treasurer's Report.
- Sandy: It seems you just can't be patient today.
- Ruth: I'm ready to give my report now.
- Joy: That's great! Go to it!
- Ruth: My report is here (*hands paper to Joy*) and I'm sure that's what happened. I could probably do better, but you know how it is.
- Donna: (Comes rushing in) I'm sorry I'm late. Did I miss anything?
- Sandy: Yes, Arlene and Connie were upsetting everyone by wanting to be first, then Arlene had to leave. Ruth wasn't ready to give her report and now Connie is mad that we haven't finished the treasurer's report.
- Donna: I had an accident with the clothes washer.



Ruth: What happened?

Donna: There's water all over the house! What a mess!

Joy: If everyone would just be quiet, I'd get more done! Now we need to talk about a new book for the library.

Connie: What book?

Joy: The one we are to purchase for the library on Child Care.

Connie: How much does it cost?

Donna: I don't think it matters. Do you know I can't find my club handbook. I'll bet it got wet in the laundry room.

Ruth: It'll be o.k.-----I'm sure we discussed this before.....too bad we had the wrong minutes.

Sandy: I'm sure we can remember if we just stop and think.

Connie: We don't even know if we have enough money to buy the book. We don't know what we have in the treasury.....we didn't have a treasurer's report.

Joy: (*Addresses audience*) Have you ever attended a meeting like this? Everyone interrupting, no one listening, people not paying attention?? Is this the kind of meeting you want to attend? Do you have time for such non-productive meetings?

Sometimes it takes a good Secretary to get the President **and** the meeting back on track.

## THE SECRETARY'S PRAYER

Help me to do my work in an efficient, organized way;  
to have the memory of an elephant (or a computer)  
and be able to retrieve answers to all questions  
even in the middle of the night.

Help me to be patient  
even when I've given the same records  
to the same people five times  
and they ask for them again.

Help me to be able to do ten things as once  
as I'm taking minutes for an important meeting.

Help me to file all records accurately  
so I can find everything and anything in an instant  
when the president's files are in disarray.

And, when my term ends, please  
give me the foresight not to throw out records  
that will be asked for in a few days,  
even though I was told,  
"Clean out those files and throw them away,  
we'll never need those outdated things."

--Anonymous

# **WORKSHOP FOR SECRETARIES**

**A secretary should:**

- know parliamentary rules**
- have good writing skills**
- be organized**
- be prompt**
- prepare agenda, if asked**
- sit near the president  
during meetings**
- know how to write minutes**
- have motions written**
- keep all official records**

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# **WRITING MINUTES**

**Minutes are legal documents**

**Minutes are what's *done*  
not what's *said***

**Minutes are brief, but complete**

**Never erase corrected minutes**

**Minutes may be corrected after  
approval at any time**

**Record motions in separate paragraphs**

**Motion seconder not recorded**

**Tape record meetings  
for accuracy and for  
additional documentation**

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