

Secretary Training – January 2021
North Texas Conference UMW Officer Training

1. Primary Duties:

Keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the unit and its leadership team and give notice of these meetings.

- a. Serve as custodian of all records and official documents.
- b. Sign all official, legal and financial documents, making certain each is properly dated.
- c. Keep an accurate roll of membership.
- d. Maintain accurate records of all local UMW unit leaders and members to include their leadership titles, home and email addresses, home and/or cell numbers.
- e. Serve on the leadership team and other committees as necessary.

2. Minutes serve several purposes:

- a. They are historical record of a group's decision and actions
- b. They are a reminder of who was given assignments
- c. They are evidence of deadlines
- d. They are a benefit for people who are absent when decisions are made

3. How to write minutes in the meeting:

- a. The accuracy of minutes is essential and should be recorded accurately.
- b. Minutes are also a guide for the secretary and chairperson when drawing up the agenda for the next meeting.
- c. Minutes are used by the President and Secretary when developing the annual report of all activities and accomplishments for the unit.

4. Key points in taking good minutes:

- a. Listening is a very important skill to develop. Listen with care – focus on major issues, facts and actions, and decisions
- b. Write down only the main points as it is impossible to write down everything that is being said.
- c. Summarize all decisions and discussions as simply and succinctly as possible.

5. Identify main points:

- a. What is the main aim of the discussion?
- b. What information is important?
- c. Use your own words. If you do this you will find that your minutes are more accurate and complete than if you try to jot down everything a speaker says.
- d. Pay special attention to decisions. If necessary, ask for the decisions to be repeated.
- e. Ask for clarification. Do not hesitate to stop the meeting if you are not clear about any decisions or issues being discussed.

6. Developing skills in taking minutes:

- a. Taking accurate and useful minutes is **one of your most important responsibilities**.
- b. In addition, you might purchase the book *The Art of Taking Minutes* by Delores Dochterman Benson. It is available on Amazon in paperback and Kindle formats. It is a very good reference and resource book for secretaries.
- c. Ms. Benson (*The Art of Taking Minutes*) states that taking minutes will be easier by following these suggestions:
 - Use the agenda as a framework.
 - Choose a style for the minutes: formal, modified formal, or informal. Style depends on how the president and attendees follow parliamentary procedure and rules of order.
 - A formal agenda may list the following items of business: Attendance, Call to Order, Announcement of Quorum, Minutes of Previous Meeting, Treasurer's Report, Committee Reports, Old Business, New Business, Adjournment.
 - An informal agenda may have the following items: Welcome, Minutes of Previous Meeting, Treasurer's Report, Announcements, Adjournment.
 - Motions must be recorded exactly as stated. A motion is a formal proposal made by a member of the group, seconded by another member, and passed or defeated by a vote. List the names of those making and seconding motions. Do not include all discussions but do include sufficient discussion to clarify the action taken.
 - Encourage speakers/presenters to provide report copies. In the minutes you can refer to these reports by saying, "The speaker's report is attached and becomes a part of the minutes."
 - Write minutes in formal form as soon as possible after the meeting.
 - A few "extra" suggestions for minutes:
 - Always head minutes with the name of the group, place of meeting, and date.
 - Note persons present and absent.

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- Record actions, not opinions.
- Proofread – ensure minutes are reviewed for accuracy to include misspelled words, incomplete sentences and inaccurate punctuation; before distributing minutes ensure they are reviewed by a designated person for accuracy

7. Types of recording methods:

- a. Computer, i.e., laptop, tablet, etc.
- b. Recording the minutes
- c. Standard minute template

8. Template for taking Minutes:

- a. Type meeting (monthly, annual, etc.)
- b. Purpose of meeting
- c. Date, time and location of meeting
- d. Name of person who called the meeting to order
- e. Names of those in attendance (note their leadership title if applicable)
- f. Indication that a quorum was or was not present
- g. Approval of previous meeting minutes
- h. All motions that were made and persons who made them along with names of persons who approved
- i. Summary of reports that are made
- j. Decisions that were voted on
- k. Information regarding the next meeting (date, time, location)
- l. Name of person who took the minutes and date they were taken
- m. Name of person who approved the minutes and date of approval

9. Assist the President and Secretary with Unit meeting coordination:

- a. Coordinate unit meetings using one of the following platforms such as Zoom, Free Conference Call, Go to Meetings, Google Hangouts, Cisco Webex Meetings, etc.
- b. Some of these platforms can be used with home phones, cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc. and may allow you to record and listen to recorded meetings later.

Suggested Websites/Online Resources

- Robert's Rules of Order - <https://robertsrules.com>
- Simplified Rules of Order - <https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/Branches/simplified-roberts-rules-of-order.pdf?sfvrsn=0>
- Robert's Rules Cheat Sheet - https://diphi.web.unc.edu/files/2012/02/MSG-ROBERTS_RULES_CHEAT_SHEET.pdf

Suggested Resources, Publications and Websites

- *United Methodist Women Handbook*
- *United Methodist Women Prayer Calendar*
- *Response Magazine*
- *The Art of Taking Minutes by Delores Dochterman Benson*
- *Status and Role of Women (SROW)*
- UMW North Texas Conference Website – https://www.umwnorthtexas.org/officers_conference_district
- UMW North Texas Conference UMC - <https://ntcumc.org/umw>
- UMW National Website - <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org>

Source: Virginia Conference United Methodist Women Annual Meeting Officers' Training for Secretaries

Source: <http://www.etu.org.za/toolbox/docs/building/webmeetings.html>

Source: UMW Secretary Handbook