

## **Robert's Rules of Order**

### **51. Secretary and the minutes.**

The officer in charge of minutes (documents recording the proceedings), correspondence, the roll of members, and similar matters is usually called the secretary or clerk. During a meeting, he should be seated near the presiding officer. Bylaws sometimes authorize an assistant secretary or two secretaries; a corresponding secretary and a recording secretary. In the latter case, however, any reading of correspondence at a meeting is done by the recording secretary. In some cases, the secretary may have to preside briefly, as explained in the previous section.

The secretary's duties are to record the minutes and keep them in a book, to maintain current, accurate copies of all organizational documents (including the bylaws, rules of order, and standing rules), to file reports (noting their date of presentation and their disposition), to issue written notices of meetings and certain motions, to prepare the agenda for the presiding officer, to maintain a roster of the membership (unless the bylaws assign this duty to the treasurer), to provide and sign copies of organizational documents, to make the minutes and organizational documents available to members at reasonable times and places, and to call the roll when required. The secretary should also provide the chair with a list of all committees and their members. Furthermore, the secretary should notify persons of their having been chosen as an officer or a committee member, and he is responsible for providing committees with relevant information from the assembly, such as instructions.

In the absence of the secretary, a secretary pro tem should be elected.

In writing the minutes, the secretary should include the following: the date, time, and place of the meeting; the kind of meeting (for example, adjourned regular); the name of the assembly; the fact of the presence of the regular chairman and secretary or, in their absence, the names of their substitutes; whether the minutes of the previous meeting were approved; all main motions in their final form and their status; all oral notices of motions; all points of order and appeals, including the reasons given by the chair; all motions to reconsider; all elections; all numbers or tellers' reports announced by the chair; the roll and the votes of members when a vote was taken by roll call; names of movers of important motions;; and the time of adjournment. The secretary should sign the minutes but should not use the expression "respectfully submitted."

When the minutes have been approved, the secretary should so note on them; if they are approved with corrections, the corrections should be made.

**The minutes should not contain the names of seconders of motions, the secretary's opinions on matters, any withdrawn motions, the proceedings in a committee of the whole, or a summary of the remarks of a guest speaker.**

When the minutes are to be published outside the organization, they should be published only after approval and should be signed by both the president and the secretary. In such a case, remarks by the leading speakers may be included, but doing so may require that the secretary have at least one assistant.

Minutes frequently have attachments to avoid the task of copying the text of documents into the minutes, but it is also permissible for the secretary to record only a brief summary of a report (except any motions from the report must, of course, be recorded in full, as required above).

**The general guideline for determining the content of minutes, except when they are published outside the organization, is they should record what is done by the assembly, not what is said by the members.**