

## SECTION 5. SECRETARIAL FUNCTIONS

The position of secretary has two component parts: recording and corresponding. It can be filled by two people as separate offices or by one person, depending on the chapter bylaws and volunteer availability.

The secretary should be responsible for recording meeting minutes, which have the following functions and characteristics:

- Serve as a record of votes taken, decisions made, and actions assigned.
- Are titled with the name of the organization, the type of meeting (e.g., board, general membership, or committee), the location, and the date.
- Include the names of the people attending.
- Are saved for at least ten (10) years. (Consider contacting Montgomery County Historical Society before throwing away old minutes; sometimes they are pleased to have these records.)
- Usually begin: “The meeting was called to order at 8:00 PM by Jane Doe, President.”
- Usually end: “The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.”
- Are signed (e.g., “Respectfully Submitted, Sue Smith, Secretary).”
- Any votes occurring between meetings via email or other means (if allowed by the chapter bylaws) are incorporated into the minutes for organizational integrity.

Minutes should be approved at the next meeting of the group in question. When practicable, a draft of the minutes may be circulated (to the chapter board members or committee/group members) before the next meeting for additions and corrections, to minimize the time needed for this process at the next meeting. This also allows those who cannot attend the next meeting to participate in the process. In addition, those who were not able to attend can review what transpired and make editorial suggestions (although substantive changes should not be allowed by those not at the meeting). Approval of the previous meeting’s minutes should be an early agenda item. The text of any amendments to previous minutes should appear in the current meeting minutes when adopted.

It is a best practice to have all meeting minutes formally approved by those who participated in the meeting discussions and decisions. The timely review, revision, and approval process should confirm the minutes to be an authoritative record. This prevents future conflicts from arising over the proceedings, decisions, or outcomes; and the minutes can be used as a reliable record.

It can be beneficial to post the chapter minutes on a bulletin board for library patrons to view. It demonstrates openness and encourages new members and volunteers.

A corresponding secretary traditionally composes and sends written correspondence on behalf of the organization. It is common but not necessary that this person also writes updates for the FOLMC newsletter and serves as the editor of the chapter newsletter.

The secretary should have a current copy of the chapter bylaws and a current membership list. As keeper of the records, the secretary may also serve as historian of the organization.