

SECRETARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The secretary is the recording officer of the association and custodian of its records, except those specifically assigned to others, such as the treasurer. The secretary's primary duty is to take minutes of meetings and make a record of all motions made at these meetings. It is required by the CSFPA By-Laws/Operating Procedures that the secretary maintain a separate (and historical) motion book in which all motions made at association meetings are recorded. The motion book is the property of the association and should be passed on from one secretary to the next. Motions are the only means by which a member brings business before the association membership for final approval and formal authorization. Therefore, motions deserve special attention.

Motion defined: A formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the association take certain action. There are many separate parliamentary procedures governing the handling of a motion, but basically a motion becomes the only authorizing mechanism that directs (and authorizes) a certain action and must be made at a general membership meeting. Please see the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Revised" for a more detailed discussion on motions and their function. Certain general rules apply to motions, as follows:

A. Generally speaking motions are the primary mechanism for authorizing actions to be taken by the personnel assigned to carry out those actions, including, but not limited to: writing checks in payment of obligations, forming committees to perform specific activities (such as a fund raising committee), approving the association's budget and any subsequent budgeted amendments, making commitments against the association's resources, authorizing the purchase of major items of equipment, etc..

B. Motions cannot be make of implemented at the executive board meeting. The executive board can recommend a certain action or plan of action be taken, or implemented, but cannot authorize such action. Executive Board recommendations must be brought to the general membership and can be turned into a motion, which, if approved, then authorizes the action contained in the motion. The motion or action must (and can only) be approved by the association membership.

C. The Association's budget is passed by a formal "motion" which then authorizes the treasurer to pay those obligations as identified and contained in each specific line item of the approved budget. However, once the budget allocation for that line item is reached, the treasurer has no authorization to write checks against that particular budget allocation without the budget being amended and formally re-approved the chapter membership.

D. The motion book should contain information on each motion, such as the content of the motion, the date, the name of the person making the motion, and if it was seconded and passed.

Therefore, you can see that the secretary has a very important role to play in ensuring that the association business is conducted in a formal manner, that financial obligations are formally approved and recorded, and ensuring that the members have access to everything that occurs within the association and at the association's expense.

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Additionally, the secretary has other duties, such as:

A. Publishing and distributing meeting notices and agendas. Every meeting should have an agenda and the meeting moderator (usually the president) should try to stick to the agenda. If a special meeting is called the only items allowed on the agenda must be directly related to the special purpose for which the meeting was called. Unrelated items cannot be addressed at a special meeting called for another purpose.

B. Keep minutes of all meetings, recording the date and time of the meeting, identifying those in attendance, any motions made and passed, and announce the date and time of the next meeting as appropriate. Although it is helpful to use a tape recorder to record the discussion that occur, the meeting minutes should only provide a summary of the discussions if/as appropriate. Minutes from the previous meeting should be formally approved (by a motion to accept, and with corrections if necessary) at the following meeting.

C. The secretary should be prepared to inform the president or any member of prior motions, especially if they are related to a new, but related, item of business that comes up for discussion.

D. Meeting minutes should be maintained for three years, after which they can be discarded, however, the "Motion Book" is maintained as long as the organization is in existence. The secretary must make association records and minutes available to members upon request.

E. The secretary is also expected to maintain a current copy of the association's By-Laws and Operating Procedures.

F. The secretary shall call a meeting to order in the absence of the president or vice president and preside until the immediate election of a chairman pro tem.

It is important to remember that a non-profit organization's business activities are open to the public scrutiny as well as to examination by any member of the organization.