

Your Role as Secretary

June Cline*

Keeping records is always a big responsibility. When the records belong to your Extension Homemakers club, the responsibility is special. Your club cannot function efficiently without up-to-the-minute records.

The Secretary's Responsibilities

The secretary's job is detailed. Become familiar with and carry out each part of the job. A record lost, a list unmade or a report not filed can mean trouble for your club. The details will fall into place much better if you are organized. That means doing jobs when they need to be done, having records when they are needed and knowing where things are. Your responsibilities as secretary will be to:

- Write the minutes.
- Keep an up-to-date membership roll and check attendance at each meeting.
- Make a record of all committees and notify members if they were named to a committee when they were absent.
- Handle the correspondence unless there is a corresponding secretary.
- Preside at the meetings when the president and vice-president are absent.
- Make reports and send them to the county Extension office when they are due.
- Distribute, collect and send membership cards or reports to the county Extension office.
- Keep a copy of the bylaws with amendments properly entered.
- Take part in each meeting.

Writing the Minutes

First on the list of secretarial responsibilities is writing the minutes. Your club probably has a record book just for the minutes. It is your job to see that the book is filled with factual accounts of each meeting in the same order that the business and program were conducted. If properly written, the minutes are more than just a handy reference. They become a written history of your club!

*Extension organization specialist, The Texas A&M University System.

During the business meeting take the minutes in note form without being overly concerned about neatness. This way you can keep your mind on what people are saying and doing. When you get home, you can enter the minutes in the official record book, taking all the time you need. The minutes should include:

- The type of meeting that was held — business, special.
- The date, hour and place of the meeting.
- The name of the presiding officer.
- A summary of reports and the names of those presenting them.
- A record of each motion and the name of the person making the motion. Record the motion exactly as it was spoken in the meeting. Read the motion back to the club members after their motion has been made — even if you have to interrupt the proceedings. This is the only way you can be sure you have recorded the motion correctly.
- A record of important statements made although no action may have been taken.
- A list of the names of guests and a record of the number of members present.
- A brief summary of the program.

The minutes are a record of what was done, not what was said. They should not contain discussion, personal opinion, adjectives and interpretations.

The secretary signs the minutes after they are written. The president signs them after they are approved.

Corrections to the minutes are made by marking through the word or words to be corrected and writing the correction above or in the margin.

Other Rights and Responsibilities

You are actually the president's secretarial assistant. You should be ready at any time to explain what business is pending.

As secretary, you have all rights of membership. You may introduce motions, discuss them and vote on all measures. You need to attend all meetings. If you are unable to attend, send the record book to the president.

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