

Club Secretary Leadership Manual



Civitan International

The club secretary is responsible for successfully maintaining all records and correspondences of the club. An efficient and well-informed secretary can make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of a Civitan club by being organized to ensure records are maintained properly. The secretary should work closely with the president and board of directors in handling club affairs since this relationship is very important if the club is to run smoothly.

Primary Responsibilities

- **Maintain an accurate membership roster** – This is one of the most important responsibilities of the secretary since updating changes in the membership is constant.
- **Record and report minutes** – The minutes of club and board meetings are vital in recording the history of club activities and decisions.
- **Prepare and submit club reports to Civitan International** – Reports are needed to ensure the club membership is accurate.
- **Handle all club correspondence** – Receiving and acknowledging all club correspondence promptly and professional is critical.
- **Organize and file incoming and outgoing correspondence** – Correspondence of the club must be located easily.
- **Order club supplies** – A secretary must be familiar with what is available and what club supplies are needed.
- **Maintain member attendance records**
- **Understand the significant role of the club secretary**

Maintain an accurate membership roster

It is the responsibility of the club secretary to maintain an accurate roster of membership, constantly updating changes in address, membership additions, and losses. Records kept on each member of the club should include the following information:

- Date the member joined
- Birth date
- Home and business address
- Business and home telephone numbers
- Email addresses
- Personal interest in community affairs

- Schools attended
- Fraternal organizations
- Miscellaneous items

Club history records should be organized and updated regularly. These records contain a list of all past presidents and charter members of the club. Committee appointments over the past several years should also be kept for reference.

Record and report minutes

Minutes of the club and board meetings are imperative to a club. Club minutes should include members present, guests present, presiding officer, speaker and subject, highlights of the meeting (which should be provided to the newsletter editor) and any business conducted. Since minutes of meetings are a history of the activities and decisions of the club, there are two aspects of minutes that you should become familiar with.

Recording minutes:

- Minutes must be complete, yet concise and accurate, with only the facts presented.
- The layout should be in such a way that a reference can be made at any time to any item discussed in the past.
- The minutes should clearly indicate:
 - a. The nature of the meeting—board, general, etc.
 - b. The date, time, and place the meeting was held
 - c. The name of the presiding officer or chairperson
- When the number of members attending is small, the names of all in attendance should be listed.
- At larger meetings, names are not necessary (except the presiding officer or chairperson) but the number of people present should be recorded.
- Precise wording should be used to list any decisions made.
- Motions and amendments should be clearly stated and an indication as to whether they were carried or lost. Also, record the names of those individuals who made the motions and those who seconded them.
- If any business covered in the minutes is reopened at subsequent meetings, the original minutes must not be altered.
- Type the minutes whenever possible.
- Store the recorded minutes in books that allow for permanent storage.

Reporting the minutes at the meeting:

- If possible, avoid reading the minutes. Ideally, the minutes should be distributed to the members before the meeting. This gives them a chance to review them at their leisure.
- The first item of business at the meeting is to accept or confirm the minutes of the previous meeting. A resolution may be used as an alternative.

Board and club minute outlines for the secretary are available online at www.civitan.org, under the Leadership Training icon/secretary heading.

Prepare and submit reports to Civitan International

One of the most important responsibilities of the club secretary is reporting club membership address changes, additions, deletions and new club officers to Civitan International. A copy of your club roster will be sent quarterly with your club billing statement to your club billing contact. As club secretary, you may request one at any time by simply contacting Civitan International. Your roster should be reviewed regularly, ensuring addresses are correct and all active members are listed.

All of the following forms are available online at www.civitan.com and can easily be completed and email to Civitan International. If you email these forms, please save the completed form and send it as an attachment to betht@civitan.org.

- **Adding new members (Addition form)** - As club secretary you should send in an addition form promptly with payment when a new member joins (\$17.50 US/\$15.00 Canada). Once the addition form is received by Civitan International, the new member will be added to the club roster and sent a new member packet by mail. An addition form will be accepted by email or faxed but must be accompanied with a credit card for payment. Additions will not be added without payment.
- **Reinstated and transferred members (Addition form)** - A member may be reinstated or transferred by using the lower portion of the addition form. The cost to reinstate a member is \$5.00 plus \$2.50 liability insurance = \$7.50 US (\$5.00 for Canada). There is no cost to transfer a member from another Civitan club.
- **Deleting a member (Deletion form)** – When a member is to be officially deleted from your club membership roster, a deletion form must be completed and sent to Civitan International. The official date of the deletion is the date it is process at Civitan International.
- **Name or address changes for member (Deletion form)** – Name and address changes for a member are located on the lower portion of the deletion form. If you are submitting a name change, please list the old name and the new name of the member.
- **Changes in current year officers (Deletion form)** – Changes in club officers are also located on the lower portion of the deletion form. If you are submitting a change, please list the old name and the new officer name.
- **Report of club officers** – By July 1 of each year a new slate of club officers should be reported to Civitan International. These officers take office October 1.

Handle all club correspondence

If you are serving your first year as club secretary, meet with the past secretary to determine the current procedures regarding correspondence collection. You may choose to make changes to the current system but having this information will give you a head start. If the mail is sent directly to a post office box make certain that you obtain the key.

Reporting and responding to correspondence will be a vital part of your responsibilities. When information is required by officers, committees or club members the questions will be directed to you as secretary.

Sorting the mail should be done on a regular basis. Record all correspondence received on a detailed journal. The journal should include the name of person to whom the correspondence was sent, date of the correspondence and whom the correspondence was from. Once recorded, forward the correspondence to the relevant officer or member as soon as possible so they can review the information before the meeting and come prepared to make a recommendation if necessary. List the date you forwarded the correspondence to the appropriate person.

Meet with the president after sorting all the correspondence to advise them of any items requiring his/her attention. Discuss which items must be handled at the next club meeting and those that can be held over until the next board meeting. Avoid, whenever possible, standing up and reading every piece of correspondence to club members at the meeting. Rather than verbally reporting, circulate a summary of the correspondence at the meeting, providing information on the basic contents, the recipient, and to whom follow-up action was assigned. Members interested in any particular piece of correspondence may request to see the particular items of interest during a break.

All outgoing correspondence from the club should not be written on blank paper. The club's official letterhead should be used so have an adequate supply of letterhead at all times. If possible, communicate by phone or email. If the communication is verbal, follow-up with a written letter confirming details of the conversation. This will ensure you will have written documentation and a record of the key points of the conversation. If other members write outgoing correspondence be sure to remind them to give a copy to you for your files.

Organize and file incoming and outgoing correspondence

Although you may consider it one of the least desirable aspects of your job, it is essential to file incoming and outgoing correspondence of the club in an organized manner, since you will refer to it on many occasions. Whichever way you choose to file, the important thing is to be able to easily locate any information that you may be called upon to produce.

A simple method of filing is to use a three ring binder for the correspondence. Expanding files may also be suitable. Create a series of sections in the binder(s) to suit the correspondence and other information you need to store. Here are some suggested headings:

- District Incoming Correspondence
- Civitan International Incoming Correspondence
- Incoming Board Matters

- Completed Board and Club Minutes
- Copies of Outgoing Correspondence
- Supply House Orders
- Immediate Action
- Odds and Ends

If the club is doing a special project, it may be necessary to include a separate file for it, especially if the project is ongoing and large amounts of correspondence are generated. The important thing to remember is keep your filing system up to date. Make it simple.

Order club supplies

For the convenience and club savings, the World Headquarters offers supplies essential for club operations. As secretary, it is your duty to familiarize yourself with what is available and have the necessary supplies on hand. Don't wait until the last minute and then expect to get what you need. The Supply House needs a lead time for shipping of two to four weeks on some items, so it's important for you to plan ahead. A few guidelines about ordering supplies are:

- If your club is delinquent in any financial obligations to Civitan International you will be unable to order supplies.
- Before placing an order for any supplies, authorization by the board of directors should be given. No individual accounts are processed unless by credit card.
- Avoid "rush" orders. These orders will not be processed ahead of mail orders received on the same day. Plan ahead.
- You may order online at www.civitan.org/supplies. An order form and the current Civitan supply catalog are available. You may fax, mail, phone, or e-mail your order.
- Print clearly or type complete information: item stock number, description, style, size, or engraving instructions, etc. List the complete club name and accurate shipping address.
- A service charge of \$2.00 is added to all orders.
- Do not remit payment with order by mail; an invoice will be mailed when the order is shipped. Payment is due and payable upon receipt of invoice.
- Normal delivery is by parcel post or United Parcel Service. Shipping charges are added to the invoice and a street address is required for UPS delivery.
- Claims for damage or shortage must be made within five (5) days after receiving merchandise. If you find it necessary to return merchandise for exchange or credit, be sure to pack it carefully to safeguard items from damage. Credit or exchange cannot be made on merchandise items that are damaged on return.
- The Civitan Supply House will not be responsible for errors in sizes, engraved, or printed items that are ordered by phone.

Suggested supply items that you should have on hand at all times:

1. Club stationary
2. Member lapel emblems
3. Framed creeds
4. Framed member scrolls/member plaques
5. Luncheon badges
6. Member and guest cards
7. Program “Thank You” cards
8. Greeting cards (birthday, sympathy, get well, etc.)
9. Proposal for membership cards
10. Decals
11. Place cards
12. Member recruitment brochures:
 - a. CL100 - Civitan: A Service Club Worthy of Your Time
 - b. CL101 - Volunteers Making a Difference Around the World
 - c. CL181 - Talk Civitan
 - d. CL115 - Adding New Members for Your Club’s Success

Maintain member attendance records

Each club should establish its own guidelines regarding attendance at meetings, keeping in mind that requirements must be reasonable. Requirements that are too demanding can drive away busy people, especially those whose employment requires out-of-town travel. As secretary, you should keep an accurate record of attendance at all meetings, crediting attendance in accordance with the rules of the club.

Understand the significant role of the club secretary

The success of your club is directly dependent, to a very large degree, upon the interest you take in the affairs of the club and in your efficient discharge of your duties as club secretary. Your job is doubly important since not only are you serving your club, but you are the club officer who is closest to the operation of the district and international organizations.