

Subud USA Secretary's Guidelines for Local and Regional Groups (Rev Nov 2007)

Overview

The primary responsibility of the secretary is to take minutes at the general and committee meetings and to distribute those minutes to the appropriate people in a timely fashion. It is preferable that the minutes be typed which facilitates distribution by email and which can, in the end, save the secretary a lot of time with copying, etc. Of course, not everyone has email so some mailing may be required.

Taking Minutes

Each set of minutes should be preceded by the following: the type of meeting (e.g., general, committee), the date, time, and location of the meeting, and a list of who is present. In most cases, when the names of expected attendees are known and the number of absentees is relatively small, a list of those who are absent should also be listed. Generally the reading of the minutes of the last meeting is the first order of business. (If the minutes have been distributed in advance of the meeting then often this step can be waived if the members have read them already). After they are read, the secretary should ask if there are any corrections to these minutes, which should be made if agreed upon. Following any corrections, there should be a vote by the members of the meeting to accept (or reject) the minutes as read. These actions should be recorded in the new minutes. In the minutes from the previous meeting, there is hopefully a list of actions that were decided upon at the previous meeting. The person responsible for each of these actions should give a brief report on their progress on these actions, and these also need to be summarized in the new minutes.

In most cases, there are specific topics to be discussed, and in the best of all worlds this follows the outline on the agenda. In most cases, it is not necessary that the secretary document every comment anyone makes, or who said what. It is important that the topic which was discussed be recorded, any motion that was made regarding that topic be recorded, and results of any vote documented as to how many yes votes, how many no votes, and how many abstentions were cast. An exception to this occurs when a particular topic is very controversial or heated discussion arises. In that case try to summarize briefly the positions of the discussants (e.g., Mr. Q opposed the motion because it is too expensive, Ms. R opposed the motion because it was too complicated, Ms. S supported the motion as important to the work of the group, Mr. T supported the motion, Mr. U opposed the motion, Ms. V supported the motion because it would help the group grow in size, Mr. W had no comment, Ms. X had no comment, Ms. Y felt that the committee was becoming too argumentative over the topic, Mr. Z asked for further study on the topic regarding actual costs). In some cases motions are tabled (put off to be dealt with at another meeting) or skipped due to time limitations. Again, any such action should be recorded.

Action Items

One of the primary purposes of any committee meeting is to make plans regarding actions that need to be taken care of outside the meeting. Unfortunately, the "belling the cat" principle can often arise: the whole committee agrees that something needs to be done but no one volunteers to do it. So it is important that before the conclusion of the meeting that these "action items" be reviewed, and attached to each of them, the name of the person who will be making sure these get done. The secretary should be sure these are clearly listed in the minutes.

Voting

It is not enough just to discuss a subject and reach consensus on it. A formal motion should be proposed, seconded, and a formal vote taken. If the motion results in action that needs to be taken outside of the committee meeting, an action item should also be created and listed by the secretary to be read by the secretary at the end of the meeting.

Keeping Records

All minutes should be filed and stored in an orderly fashion by the secretary. Additionally, any significant communications (letters, emails, etc) that are specific to the center or region should also be filed and stored. It is not necessary to keep records of general mailings (newsletters, flyers, etc.) unless they are pertinent to policies and/or procedures regarding membership, committee actions, or helpers and their status or duties. All such records should be passed on to the next secretary at end of the term.

Membership

It is common for groups to have a separate membership secretary (in the same way that there is often a bookkeeper separate from the treasurer). However, if there is no membership secretary, then it is part of the secretary's duties to keep an accurate record of who the active members are, and an accurate and current list of the address, phone number(s), and email address of these members. Any changes in this list need to be promptly reported to the appropriate regional and national people. This list should be periodically distributed to the center or region along with a request for corrections from the recipients.

Helper-committee latihans

The helpers and the committee should schedule regular latihans to be exclusively attended by the helpers and committee. If the members are not in the same locale, these can be done simultaneously at various locations, including at members' own homes.

Other duties

The chairperson may ask the secretary to participate in one or more of the following: preparation, typing, and/or distributing the agenda, handle the in-coming and out-going correspondence to the chairperson and the center or region, and help with the writing, publishing, or distribution of a newsletter.

Job Description

- 1) Distribute agendas to the general membership for center meetings and to the committee for committee meetings.
- 2) Take accurate minutes of committee meetings, general meetings, and any other meetings involving the committee that require recording of proceedings.
- 3) Provide the committee members or general membership with a copy of the minutes. The minutes should be easily read, neat and understandable.
- 4) Keep orderly files of all records and communications of the committee and the center, and that are sent to the committee or center.
- 5) Handle the in-coming and out-going correspondence to the chairperson and the center.
- 6) Actively participates in committee and center activities.
- 7) Participates in regularly scheduled latihans with the committee and helpers.
- 8) Informs national office of membership, committee, and helper changes.
- 9) May be responsible for putting out the center newsletter, with help from other members.