THROUGH THE

SECRETARY

RESOURCE GUIDE
2016-2017

All forms in this guide are available online www.trta.org.

HEARTS OF TEXAS: TRTA PROUD THROUGH THE SECRETARY 2016-2017

YOU ARE CRITICAL! The importance of good minutes and their legal standing cannot be overemphasized. The minutes are the official record of the transactions of your meetings.

DUTIES:
For local and district meetings:
Record the proceedings of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and General/Special Meetings.
Perform duties as necessary to fulfill the objectives of TRTA.

ABC'S OF RECORDING MINUTES: Accuracy, Brevity, Clarity

ORDER OF MINUTES: Date, time, location, names giving invocation, pledges, approval of minutes, reports, motions, adjournment. Record what was done. Official action consists of what was voted on or what was decided by consensus. (See sample on back)

TIP: Motion – request that lengthy motions from committee reports be written out and given to you prior to the meeting if possible, record all main motions that are rejected as well as those that are adopted.

DO: Keep minutes forever! Be certain someone else knows where the minutes are stored. If you have an older Unit/District and notebooks are "growing" find a location to place notebooks for archiving. (Local ISD Administration building, local library, etc.)

DON'T: No defamatory or derogatory statements, no personal comments from anyone, no adverse criticism, no lengthy discussions or debates.

APPROVAL: By a membership vote or minutes approval committee. Minutes become official after approval. Sign and record date of approval before filing minutes permanently.

SAMPLE ONLY

(Name of Local Unit/District)
(Date)

The regular meeting of the (Name of Local Unit/District) was held on (date), at (time) at the (location), the President being in the chair and the Secretary being present.

Louisa May Alcott gave the invocation and Betsy Ross led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and the Texas Flag.

The minutes of the last regular meeting were read and approved as read (or approved as corrected).

The Treasurer reported the balance on hand 3/29/16 is $10,048.80.

The Officers and Committee Chairmen presented their reports:

Membership-Martha Washington**:** Membership count is 140. Postcards have been mailed to all at-large members. Membership brochures and TRTA posters have been distributed to all schools, Public Library, Chamber, and Senior Center.

Bylaws- Tom Jefferson**:** The following proposed amendments are recommended for the bylaws (list the proposed amendments in the minutes). The membership will vote at the April meeting.

Cookbook-Abigail Adams: The special committee that was appointed to investigate and report on writing a cookbook for the fundraising project was reviewed. Abigail Adams (Dolly Madison) moved to pursue the cookbook project for the fundraising. Motion adopted.

Unfinished Business: Deborah Franklin was installed as Second Vice-President by President Hancock.

New Business: Susan B. Anthony (Tom Jefferson) moved to establish a committee to organize the program, “Project Active Teachers” in which members would go talk at a regular faculty meeting re: TRS. The purpose of these meetings would be to form an alliance with the active teachers. Motion adopted.

Announcements: Book Project distribution will be on April 3, 2016, at 8:30 A.M. at Roosevelt Elementary.

Program: Henry Clay introduced the guest speaker, Abraham Lincoln, whose subject was “Wit and Humor.”

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 P.M.

_____ _____
Peggy Arnold, Secretary Date Approved/Approved as Corrected

_____ _____
John Hancock, President Date Approved/Approved as Corrected

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TRTA State Secretary/Treasurer

Duties (Taken from the TRTA Policies)

The TRTA <u>State</u> Secretary/Treasurer shall:

1. Record, or cause to be recorded, the proceedings of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors;
2. Serve as the TRTA Finance Committee Chairman;
3. Direct with the TRTA Finance Committee in its work the TRTA staff to prepare an annual budget;
4. Prepare, or cause to be prepared, financial reports to be presented at the Board of Directors regularly scheduled meetings;
5. Prepare, or cause to be prepared, the annual financial statements;
6. Serve as a finance resource to assist districts and local units; and
7. Perform other assigned duties to fulfill the objectives of TRTA.

TRTA District & Local Unit Secretaries

The TRTA <u>District</u> Secretary shall:

1. Record, or cause to be recorded, the proceedings of district meetings.
2. Attend the TRTA Convention secretary training session.
3. Perform other duties to fulfill the objectives of the district.

The TRTA <u>Local Unit</u> Secretary shall:

1. Record, or cause to be recorded, the proceedings of local meetings; and
2. Perform other duties to fulfill the objectives of the local unit.

Local Minutes Compared to District

Frequency and Approval

	Local	District
Frequency	Every Local Unit mtg./Exec. Bd. mtg.	Fall Convention and Spring Leadership Conference
Approval	By Minutes Approval Committee or membership vote	By committee vote

Executive Committee Minutes may be approved by the Executive Committee within 3 months, after that must be approved by Minutes Approval Committee.

Minutes cannot be signed or finalized until approved. Until approval, all minutes must be marked “draft.”

SECRETARY

Why have minutes of your meeting?
Because the minutes give the information of what happened in a meeting. In a board of directors meeting or a meeting of the association, minutes serve as a legal record of what was transacted.

The importance of good minutes and their legal standing cannot be overemphasized. Written minutes that are adopted by the association stand up in court and out-weigh oral testimony regarding what happened at a meeting.

What is a secretary?
Secretaries can be several kinds, including: recording, corresponding, executive, financial. Some secretaries are referred to as clerks or recorders.

The secretary sits close to the presiding officer and observes carefully all the proceedings and by taking notes is able to explain at any time what business is pending. A good secretary is one who is able to correctly record what happened in a meeting and to read aloud effectively.

A secretary must be a good listener. A secretary should have a basic knowledge of the business of the organization so that the words taken down convey the right idea.

Duties of the Secretary
Most important is to write the minutes immediately or the next day while your thoughts are more accurate as to what happened. Skeletal or draft minutes can be very useful when the meetings follow the same pattern as most meetings do.

Review the minutes of the previous meeting and list all business that was postponed and be cognizant of possible new items of business. When business is introduced in a meeting, it should not be a surprise. The presiding officer should confer with the secretary to make sure that no business items are overlooked. Often, the order of business is written jointly by the secretary and the presiding officer.

The presiding officer and the secretary should know of all unfinished business. The presiding officer should never ask for unfinished business during a meeting because the minutes of the previous meeting will reveal any business that was not completed.

Committee chairmen should be contacted to learn if they are going to report at the meeting. The presiding officer should never call on a committee chairman if the committee chairman has nothing to report. The committee chairman should also contact the presiding officer prior to the meeting notifying the chair that a report will be made.

MINUTES DON'T JUST HAPPEN

Before the meeting

- Choose your tool: Decide how you will take notes (pen and paper, laptop computer).
- Decide whether to use a tape recorder during the meeting, the tape or the transcription should never be used in place of the minutes.
- Make sure your tool of choice is in working order and have a backup just in case.
- Review the agenda and issues being addressed.
- Have reference materials such as agendas, minutes, bylaws on hand.
- Have a membership list or your directory so that you can identify everyone at the meeting.
- Request that lengthy motion or committee reports be written out and given to you prior to the meeting.
- Always have more than one pencil/pen on hand and lots of paper.

During the meeting

- Arrive early and get set up.
- Sit where you can see the members of the meeting and clearly hear what is being said. Sit near the Chairman/President.
- Refer to the agenda.
- Stay focused.
- Ask questions for clarity.
- Don't try to write down every single comment-just the main ideas. Minutes contain a record of what was done-not what was said!
- Write down motions, who made them, who seconded is optional, and the results of the vote.
- Make notes of any motions or business to be voted on at future meetings.
- Note the ending time of the meeting.

After the meeting

- Write up the draft minutes immediately after discussion while everything is still fresh in your mind.
- Minutes should be as brief as possible, yet still maintain their accuracy.
- Keep summations simple; be concise, factual, complete, and impartial.
- Establish a reasonable goal to complete and disseminate your minutes. Two weeks following the meeting is a good guideline.
- Complete a "Meeting Action Plan" to summarize duties, responsibilities and deadlines agreed to during the meeting.
- Collect all hand-out materials at meetings that will assist in compilation of complete and accurate minutes.

CONTENTS OF THE MINUTES

The first paragraph should contain the following information:

1. The kind of meeting, whether regular, special, or executive board
2. The name of the group holding the meeting (Local Unit/District)
3. The date and time of the meeting, and the place if it is not always the same.
4. Indication that the regular Presiding Officer and the Secretary were present, or the names of their substitutes.

The second statement should contain the following, if applicable:

1. Name of person giving the invocation/special reading.
2. Name of person leading the pledges.

The third statement should contain the following information:

Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as read (or corrected), the date of the previous meeting being given if it was other than a regular business meeting.

*Note: When the minutes are approved, the word “Approved”, with the secretary’s initials and the date, should be documented at the end of the minutes. When making a correction, draw a single line through or circle the word(s) being corrected. The replacing word(s) can be recorded in the margin if there is not enough space above the words being corrected. The secretary’s initials and the date should be recorded by the corrections. Use a contrasting color of ink to record the corrections.

The body of the minutes contains (each subject covered should be written in a separate paragraph):

1. Reports of officers, boards, standing committees, and special committees

    a. Officers (Treasurer’s report being first)
    b. Board (report given by the Secretary)
    c. Standing committees
    d. Special committees

2. Motions

   a. Final wording of all main motions (with any adhering amendments); whether each was adopted, lost, or temporarily disposed of, but not if withdrawn
   b. The name of the maker; may record the name of the person who seconded

3. Announcements

The next statement should record who introduced the program, the speaker's name, and the subject.

The last statement contains the time of adjournment.

The minutes are closed with the signature and title of the Secretary. The minutes may also be signed by the President. The date is the date of approval.

Secretary Tips:

1. Minutes are a source of future reference. They are the record of reports, proposals and decisions of members in an organization.
2. The secretary is responsible for recording the proceedings of regular or special meetings.
3. If meetings are three months or more apart, use a Minutes Approval Committee.

Content and Organization of Minutes:

1. Be accurate; it is important to proofread.
2. Keep copies of Local Unit, District and TRTA Bylaws for reference.
3. Give name of Local Unit, type of meeting, place of meeting and date.
4. Indicate who presided.
5. Record whether minutes were approved and/or any corrections.
6. Record all motions and resolutions; give name of initiating member; state whether adopted or rejected.
7. List paragraphs under headings such as “Unfinished Business” etc.

Committee Reports:

1. Record name of committee reporting.
2. State name of member reporting.
3. Summarize briefly the content of the report.
4. Record any action taken; or
5. Attach a copy of the report to the minutes instead.

Programs:

1. Record the type of presentation, such as “Book Review,” “Music,” “Health Care.”
2. Give the name of the speaker.

DO NOT INCLUDE:

1. Defamatory or derogatory statements
2. Personal comments by secretary
3. Adverse criticism

Remember! Approved minutes must be signed by secretary.

DO's AND DON'Ts ON WRITING MINUTES

DO use a copy of the agenda as a guide in taking minutes and to help write them.
DO record the name of the mover and MAY record the name of who seconded.
DO record the names of all officers and committees from whom reports are received in the meeting.
DO request that all lengthy main motions and amendments be written, then file these copies of the motions with the secretary's notes.
DO record all main motions that are rejected as well as those that are adopted.
DO record the names of persons appointed to committees and of members elected to office.
DO record the number of votes on each side in a vote by ballot or in a counted vote.
DO include the full text of a tellers' report unless directed to do otherwise by the membership.
DO write the minutes as promptly as possible after a meeting and send a copy to the president for proofing.
DO call unfinished business items to the president's attention.
DO take the following to every meeting: previous minutes; a copy of the bylaws and standing rules; a list of officers, chairmen and committee members; any other records that may be needed in the meeting; a copy of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.*
DO use a contrasting color of ink to record the corrections in the margin of the minutes that are being corrected, noting the date of correction.
DO avoid flowery language.
DO use a tape recorder in preparation of the minutes, but that tape or the transcription should never be used in place of the minutes.
DO sign the minutes and annotate the date of approval.
DON'T record discussion unless directed to do so by the assembly.
DON'T record personal opinions.
DON'T record motions that are withdrawn.
DON'T record an entire report in the minutes unless directed to do so by the assembly.

BASIC INFORMATION ON MINUTES

The minutes are not the secretary's report. The minutes are the official record of the transactions of the meeting and they must be complete and accurate. **They should contain a record of what was done during the meeting, not what was said by the members.** The minutes should never reflect the opinion of the secretary, favorable or otherwise, on anything said or done.

Minutes will follow a pattern, namely, the order of business as it was transacted in your meeting. As secretary, you will record the business the way it was transacted although it may not have been in the proper order. Use a copy of the agenda as a guide in taking minutes.

The minutes of each meeting are normally read and approved at the beginning of the next regular meeting, immediately after the call to order and any opening ceremonies. A special meeting does not approve minutes; its minutes should be approved at the next regular meeting.

Corrections, if any, and approval of the minutes are normally done by general consent. The president will ask you, the secretary, to read the minutes. You should rise and read the minutes in a clear voice. When finished, you read your name and title. The words "respectfully submitted," represent an older practice that is no longer required. The president asks for any corrections, and if corrections are required, asks you, the secretary, to make and/or record the corrections. The president will then declare the minutes approved "as read" or "as corrected." If the minutes are to be approved by a motion, a special rule of order should so state this requirement.

Minutes of the preceding meeting can be sent to all members in advance, with "Draft" written on the face of the minutes and without the signature of the secretary. In such a case, it is presumed that the members have reviewed the minutes and they are not read unless this is requested. Corrections to the minutes and approval are handled in the usual manner. The formal copy of minutes is signed by you, the secretary, with the date that the minutes were approved.

At the District level, where regular business meetings are held less often than quarterly and do not last longer than one day, a committee that is appointed for the purpose of approving the minutes should be authorized. The fact that the minutes are not then read for approval at the next meeting does not prevent a member from having a relevant excerpt read for information; nor does it prevent the membership in such a case from making corrections, treating the minutes as having been previously approved.

Minutes should be permanently preserved. Minutes may be bound at the end of the year or kept in a three-ring binder dividing the year with a separate identifying page. Minutes should be kept in a secure environment. Usually the secretary keeps minutes for the previous ten years and then each year thereafter, the oldest minutes are sent to archives.

THE ABC's OF RECORDING MINUTES

A. Accuracy

The importance of being accurate is obvious, yet cannot be emphasized too strongly. If the minutes are to have any value or credibility, they must be correct. Ideally, written copies of all motions should be submitted to the secretary by the makers of the motions. In practice, this is rarely if ever done. Most of the time the exact action to be proposed via motion is not determined in advance. Obviously, simple motions such as to approve a bill for payment would not fall into this category. In fact, only those that might be lengthy or turn out to be controversial or that might be easily misunderstood would really require this treatment. Copies of resolutions usually are supplied to the secretary. When a committee report is of great importance or should be recorded to show the legislative history of a measure, the membership can order it "to be entered in the minutes," in which case the secretary copies it in full in the minutes.

B. Brevity

As with accuracy, this quality of minute preparation cannot be too strongly emphasized. Minutes should not be lengthy! Make it easy for the reader to find out what the meeting accomplished. Do not record discussions, except to the extent it is necessary to make clear what the action entailed.

In recording what was done, keep in mind that official action of any body consists of what was voted on following a motion and second, or what was decided by consensus of those present. Do not record everything that takes place.

C. Clarity

Clarity is equally as important as accuracy and brevity. Do not be so brief as to leave your readers wondering what the action was all about. Remember that the human memory is fallible, so include whatever information is necessary to make clear what the motions covered.

The secretary, with permission of the membership, can be ordered to place certain word (s) or phrases in the minutes.

On occasion it might be necessary to give a brief history of the matter under consideration in order to make clear what the action covers. In this regard, if the matter has been discussed in the past, it is helpful to make reference to former action, i.e. "see minutes of (date)." In this way, repetition of the history is avoided, and if the reference is to the appointment of a committee, the charge will be included which should make clear what the matter involved.

Be concise – which is another "C" that should be observed. The meaning of "concise" includes brevity but goes beyond it to mean saying a lot in a few words. Reduce the minutes to as few words as possible without losing clarity.

TEXAS RETIRED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

MOTION FORM

MOTION:

_____
_____
_____
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_____

RATIONALE:

_____
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_____
_____

ACTION MOTION:

Maker _____

Second _____

- ☐ Adopted
- ☐ Amend
- ☐ Failed
- ☐ Tabled
- ☐ Withdrawn
- ☐ Referred

Date:_____

Motion No._____

Signed_____

USEFUL WORDS FOR MINUTES

Although an accurate overview of the discussion should lead the secretary to the words that are necessary, there are occasions when it seems that the same word is used over and over again.

The following are loosely grouped in no particular order. Think of what you are trying to say and find the nearest alternative:

Discussed	Agreed	Opted
Debated	Concurred	Selected
Deliberated	Disagreed	Picked
Considered	Disputed	Named
Examined	Not the case	Preferred
Analyzed	Planned	Potential
Said	Intended	Possibility
Stated	Meant	Likelihood
Reported	Hoped	Prospect
Established	Proposed	Chance
Confirmed	Existence of	Probability
Verified	Issue of	Options
Declared	Reality of	Alternatives
Pointed out	Topic of	Choice
Explained	Problem of	Preference
Suggested	Question of	Opportunity
Drew attention to	Benefits of	Decided
Raised	Merits of	Resolved
Informed	Advantages of	Approved
Understood	Worth	Concluded
Were reminded that	Value of	Determined
Recalled	Problems	Worried
Clarified	Drawbacks	Concerned
Illustrated	Dangers	Troubled
Defined	Uncertainty	Uneasy
Demonstrated	Disadvantages	Anxious
Emphasized	Chose	Apprehensive

SAMPLE ONLY

(Name of Local Unit/District)
(Date)

The regular meeting of the (Name of Local Unit/District) was held on (date), at (time) at the (location), the President being in the chair and the Secretary being present.

Louisa May Alcott gave the invocation and Betsy Ross led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and the Texas Flag.

The minutes of the last regular meeting were read and approved as read (or approved as corrected).

The Treasurer reported the balance on hand 3/29/16 is $10,048.80.

The Officers and Committee Chairmen presented their reports:
Membership-Martha Washington**:** Membership count is 140. Postcards have been mailed to all at-large members. Membership brochures and TRTA posters have been distributed to all schools, Public Library, Chamber, and Senior Center.
Bylaws- Tom Jefferson**:** The following proposed amendments are recommended for the bylaws (list the proposed amendments in the minutes). The membership will vote at the April meeting.
Cookbook-Abigail Adams: The special committee that was appointed to investigate and report on writing a cookbook for the fundraising project was reviewed. Abigail Adams (Dolly Madison) moved to pursue the cookbook project for the fundraising. Motion adopted.

Unfinished Business: Deborah Franklin was installed as Second Vice-President by President Hancock.

New Business: Susan B. Anthony (Tom Jefferson) moved to establish a committee to organize the program, "Project Active Teachers" in which members would go talk at a regular faculty meeting re: TRS. The purpose of these meetings would be to form an alliance with the active teachers. Motion adopted.

Announcements:
Book Project distribution will be on April 3, 2016, at 8:30 A.M. at Roosevelt Elementary.

Program: Henry Clay introduced the guest speaker, Abraham Lincoln, whose subject was "Wit and Humor."

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 P.M.

_____ _____
Peggy Arnold, Secretary Date Approved/Approved as Corrected

_____ _____
John Hancock, President Date Approved/Approved as Corrected

Parliamentary Pointers

ACCLAMATION
A motion to elect "by acclamation" is "out of order" if other members wish to make additional nominations. When there are no additional nominations to be made, a motion "to close" requires a second and a 2/3 vote and would thus be a waste of the Assembly's time. If you have no other nominations, just remain silent.

ADJOURNMENT
A formal motion is NOT necessary. The presiding officer may say, "If there is no further business, the meeting is adjourned."

CHAIRMAN
Refers to person presiding or the place from which that person is presiding. NEVER use "Chair" in place of "Chairman."

MAJORITY
More than half of the votes cast. (Abstentions do not count.)

MINUTES
Say "The secretary will read the minutes of the _____(date) meeting." After reading…"You've heard the reading of the minutes, are there any corrections?" Pause. "The minutes are approved as read (or as corrected)." A formal motion is not necessary.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
Do NOT use the term "Old Business" which was business on previous meeting's agenda, which was not completed, or business, which was referred to present meeting. (President should never ask! Check minutes of previous meetings or ask secretary.)

PREVIOUS QUESTION
This motion, if adopted, stops debate and causes an immediate vote on the pending motion. Previous Question requires a second, cannot be debated and a two-thirds vote for adoption.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED
Is no longer used. Person reporting should just sign name to report.

SAME SIGN/VOTING
Do NOT use "Same Sign'. Instead say "Those in favor say 'aye.' Those opposed, say 'no'." (Not same sign)

SAY "I MOVE THAT"
Never say, "I so move." State the entire motion so Assembly will know what the question is. Have maker write the motion, particularly if it is a long or complicated one.

TABLE
The motion to "Lay on the Table" should only be used in an emergency (Example: If an unexpected VIP enters the hall and the Assembly wishes to hear from him/her). Following emergency, the motion is "Taken from the Table."

TREASURER'S REPORT
"You have heard the Treasurer's Report. Are there questions?" Pause "The Treasurer's Report will be filed for audit." (No motion… Will be approved when Audit report is approved.)

ARCHIVING MINUTES

Through the minutes you ensure that an accurate history of your organization and its members is kept.
These records provide a sense of continuity to the organization as each year passes.

- **Keep the minutes in a three-ring binder dividing the year with a separate identifying page or you may bind minutes.**
- **Minutes should be kept forever.**
- **The Secretary is the custodian of all past and present minutes.**
- **If you have an older Unit/District and notebooks are "growing," find a location to place notebooks for archiving. (Local ISD Administration building, local library)**
- **Inform the President and your family members where you keep the notebooks.**
- **As outgoing Secretary, familiarize the new Secretary with your duties and responsibilities and stress the importance of archiving the minutes.**