

Secretaries Peer-to-Peer Teleconference

May 14, 2014

The items posted in this section are notes from conversations that are not reviewed or approved by the attendees. The information in these notes is not intended to override guidelines, policies and procedures listed elsewhere in the LMSC Guide to Operations or elsewhere on usms.org or in the USMS rule book.

Attendees: Hugh Moore (USMS Governance Committee Chair, PN), Lynn Morrison* (NT), Jerry Clark* (NC), Erin Sullivan* (NB), Robin Smith (SP), Anthony Thompson (MV), RC St. Amour (MR), Christine Schroeder (DV), Lindsey Urbatchka (AZ), Mike Fanelli (MD), Georgia McDaniel (IL), Jenny Perrottet (NC), Pete Tarnetrol (OH), Josh Storch (MR), Paige Buehler* (IW) (*LMSC Development Committee member)

How do your duties compare with those in the Volunteer Role template for LMSC Secretary?

DV – since majority of role is to communicate with membership, little actually comes from the secretary since registrar has email access to membership and marketing chair owns the LMSC’s Facebook page. No working calendar to maintain. Mostly just taking minutes of meetings.

AZ – project work is mostly farmed out to committees. As secretary she checks in with those committees to build the agenda and record the minutes.

NT – Taking minutes, communicating minutes and tracking board action items.

SP – take minutes, draft correspondence, track attendance at board meetings for annual meeting delegate and reimbursement eligibility.

MD – minutes but chair builds agenda

Overall, the level of involvement depends on how the board functions and the complexity of the work the board oversees.

How are annual meeting minutes distributed?

DV – They’re emailed within 2 weeks to the board for corrections then to the webmaster along with committee reports for posting. They’re posted prior to approval because approval happens at next annual meeting.

AZ – Gets approval within 2 weeks and posts to website.

SP – Committee reports included with the minutes of annual meeting in Nov. Board approves the minutes in January and posted to website.

MD – Doesn’t post minutes yet because website under construction.

Searching minutes for motions and approvals of action.

Hugh suggests using the USMS minutes template (or a similar format) where a summary of the motions is listed at the top.

What should go into minutes?

-) Discussion or no discussion – don’t be so busy typing in what everyone says that the decision is missed and not documented. Only document the objective parts which is hard during discussion.

-) Action Items – capture what is to be done, by whom, by when. Good for secretary to track and circle back with volunteers on whether items were completed.
-) Offline decisions – DV’s Board only meets once per year, but makes decisions all year long typically via email. How to capture those decisions? IW has a standing agenda item of “Offline Decisions” so that those made via email or SurveyMonkey since the previous meeting are summarized and documented in the formal meeting minutes. DV saves the email threads, too.

How do you physically take minutes?

Using the agenda as the template and type as the meeting progresses was the primary method. Some handwrote minutes.

Hugh found **good guidelines for writing minutes** (in attached powerpoint). In summary:

1. Focus on decisions and action items
2. “Dull writing is the key to appropriate minutes.”
3. Write minutes as soon as you can following the meeting before memory fades.
4. Make sure the wording for any motion is read back before voting.
5. Budget approvals – reference the approved bottom line (net profit or net loss) in the minutes and append the approved budget spreadsheet in pdf of the minutes.

Public Service Announcement from Anna Lea Matysek, director of membership services...

-) All LMSCs must have an annual membership meeting (not just of the LMSC board).
-) LMSCs must send their annual membership meeting minutes to the National Office. To see annual meeting minutes from any LMSC...
 -) a) go to usms.org
 -) b) mouse over the red "Local Programs" tab
 -) c) select "LMSC Info"
 -) d) select an LMSC from the map or pull-down list
 -) e) select "Latest Annual Meeting Minutes" from the list toward the bottom of that LMSC's info page

Questions and Answers from the LMSC Secretaries Forum

How can Sec’y’s easily access the LMSC Sec’y Forum? (I finally found it, but in a very convoluted way)

- a) go to usms.org
- b) click on "Forums" in the top right corner
- c) log in
- d) scroll down to the "USMS Administration" blue bar, then select the "LMSC Administration" forum link under that heading
- e) select the "LMSC Secretaries" sub-forum

How long does USMS national office keep records of LMSC Annual Meeting Minutes?

They’re on file dating back to 1998.



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Review USMS Volunteer Role Description

http://www.usms.org/admin/lmschb/gto_role_secretary.pdf

How do your activities compare with those listed in the USMS volunteer role template for Secretaries?

How are Secretaries linked to "Governing Documents/Bylaws" practices... how much do you do beyond just being the "keeper of the documents"?

How are your minutes distributed?

Email to board members

Email to LMSC swimmers

Posted on website?



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Minutes

- Have you ever reviewed past LMSC meeting minutes to find an action that occurred at a meeting?
 - If so, was it an easy task? Were you able to quickly find what you were looking for?
- What should go into minutes and what should not?
 - No two people will write the same minutes for a given meeting.
 - Deciding what to include can take considerable time.
- Use good grammar – but don't expect perfection.
- Take notes during the meeting.
 - Some secretaries find it useful to add notes to the original agenda, either in a Word file or on paper.
 - Try different methods and see what works for you



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Minutes

Consider the following reference:

<http://www.effectivemeetings.com/meetingbasics/minutes.asp>

- Minutes capture the essential information of a meeting – decisions and assigned actions. They keep attendees on track by reminding them of their role in a project and clearly define what happened in a group session.
- They keep members of the board and swimmers in the LMSC informed about what is going on.
- They can be invaluable when you need to review actions.
- Focus on action items, not discussion. The purpose of minutes is to define decisions made and to record what actions are to be taken, by whom and when.
- Be objective. Write in the same tense throughout and avoid using people's names except for motions or seconds. This is a business document, not about who said what.



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Minutes

- Avoid inflammatory or personal observations. The fewer adjectives or adverbs you use, the better. Dull writing is the key to appropriate minutes.
- If you need to refer to other documents, attach them in an appendix or indicate where they may be found. Don't rewrite their intent or try to summarize them.
- Consider templates such as what USMS uses for convention. I especially like having the MSA highlighted at the top,. If you ever need to back to look for official board action, a quick review of the top MSA of meeting minutes should tell you whether anything was passed at the meeting.



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Minutes - Tips

- Write minutes as soon as practical following the meeting (unless you have a perfect memory). The longer you wait the more you are likely to forget
- Plan enough time to write minutes. Expect that it will typically take longer to write meeting minutes than the meeting lasted
- Make sure that wording for any motion is read back to the board before it is voted on. Stating that “we’ll let [the secretary] write the motion when he writes the minutes- he knows what we meant” is likely to cause problems when the minutes are approved.
- Any tips/suggestions from participants



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Reminders

- Rule 502.3 states, "Each LMSC shall hold an annual meeting open to all individual members of the LMSC."
- Meeting minutes from the Annual Meeting must be submitted to the National Office. Please submit your 2014 Annual Meeting Minutes to Anna Lea Matysek as soon as they are approved.