

## Unit Secretary

The Secretary must understand the organizational form, the purpose, the program, and the total involvement of the Unit in order to perform the responsibilities assigned to her and to assist the president. As secretary, your unique task is to document the continuing history of your Unit's meetings. Your job requires thoughtfulness and accuracy.

### Responsibilities –

- Take and keep accurate minutes of all the meetings of the Unit, Mission Team (leadership committee), and any other meetings as called by the president.
- Serve as custodian of all records and official papers.
- Assist the president in setting the agenda.
- Take care of and coordinate written correspondence.
- Sign, with the president, on orders on the treasury and all official and legal papers, making certain they are properly dated.
- Keep an accurate, up-to-date roll of membership.
- **Send a list of elected leaders of the Unit, including addresses, zip codes, phone numbers, and email addresses, to the District secretary immediately upon their election; and send the name of the new president to the Mission Resource Center.**
- Serve on the Executive Committee and, where they exist, the Program Committee; Finance Committee; and Membership, Nurture, and Outreach Committee.
- Review and organize materials from the previous year (if newly elected, you should have received material from the previous secretary).
- Organize files
- Distribute minutes of Mission/Leadership Team meetings, Unit Meetings, and Executive Committee.
- Ask that a statement be repeated if you are not certain you understand what was said.
- Always have a sign-in sheet available to ensure you have an accurate record of attendance.

### Set Priorities

As a local Unit secretary, there are several high priority activities to note as you begin your term of office:

- **Complete and Maintain an Accurate Unit Roster.** Complete the Local Unit Officer Roster and send it to the District Secretary immediately upon election with the date the election is effective. (Template attached.)
- **Set up a Minutes Book, Files, Records.** There are a variety of record keeping responsibilities in the role of Secretary. Your Unit depends on you to maintain its records. Decide on the system you will use to handle correspondence, files, and records and stick with it. Do not change unless it is not working for you.

### **Develop Skills**

- **Listening.** Secretaries need to continuously exercise listening skills and transforming what you hear into accurate and meaningful minutes, letters, and reports. You may wish to use a checklist to help develop useful listening habits.
- **Taking minutes.** Minutes are part of the history of the organization. Taking accurate and useful minutes is one of your most important responsibilities. You can practice the skill of writing minutes throughout your term of office.
- **Minutes:**
  - Can be, and are often used as, legal documents.
  - Can be used for clarity of issues discussed.
  - Record what's important. What refreshments were served is not important; the issues discussed are.
- Additionally, you may also wish to purchase the book, "The Art of Taking Minutes" by Delores Dochterman. It is an excellent resource and reference book for all secretaries.
  - **Use the agenda as a framework.** Prepare a template for the minutes by reproducing the agenda and leaving plenty of space under each heading to record your notes. (Template attachment)
  - **Choose a style for the minutes.** Meetings and minutes may be formal, modified formal, or informal, depending on how the president and attendees follow parliamentary procedure and rules of order. A formal agenda may list the following items of business: Call to Order, Announcement of Quorum, Minutes of Previous Meeting, Treasurer's Report, Committee Reports, Old Business, New Business, Adjournment. An informal agenda may have the following items: Welcome, Minutes of Previous Meeting, Treasurer's Report, Announcements, and Adjournment.

- **Become knowledgeable about the topics scheduled for discussion.**  
Review the agenda before the meeting. If you are unfamiliar with a topic, ask the president to tell you something about it.
- **At the beginning of the meeting note the following:** the time, presence of a quorum, the names of those present and absent, and the opening remarks of the presiding officer.
- **Record motions exactly as stated.** A motion is a formal proposal made by a member of the group, seconded by another member, and passed or defeated by a vote. List the names of those making and seconding motions.
- **Ask speakers to provide you with copies.** Be sure that speakers who are presenting reports provide you with copies. In the minutes, you can refer to these reports by saying, “The speaker’s report is attached and becomes a part of the minutes.”
- **Write the minutes in final form as soon after the meeting as possible.**
- **Always title the minutes.** Always head the minutes with the name of the group, place of the meeting, and date. Note persons who are in attendance and those who are not.
- **Write in third person.**
- **Record actions, not your opinion.** State motions in full, including the name of the person making the motion and the action, whether carried or not. Do not include all discussion, but do include sufficient discussion to clarify the action taken. If a person looked back on this action ten years from now, is enough background information presented so that the action is understandable? Remember, you are not writing a thesis; 18 pages are too much – re-read and see how you can cut back on the number of pages. You are probably recording too much extraneous information.
- **Never hesitate to ask the maker of a motion to put the motion in writing.** You should go to the meeting with forms prepared for the maker to write out her motion, and this should be handed to you or the chairperson since this ensures a record of exact working. This is particularly helpful when the motion is long and involved and when it is voiced after much, and sometimes tense, debate. (Template attached.)

- **Remember:**
  - We ACCEPT resignations and plans of work.
  - We ADOPT bylaws, resolutions, and budgets.
  - We APPROVE minutes.
  - We RECEIVE reports, unless they contain recommendations.
- **Have the following handy:**
  - A copy of the most recent minutes
  - A current list of Unit members
  - A current list of District officers (names/address/telephone number/email address)

## RETENTION OF RECORDS AND MINUTES FILES

The following are suggestions from the office of the Recording Secretary of the Women's Division.

**Minutes.** Keep minutes for easy access up to four years, or in accordance with your Unit rules. Attach an annual year-end audited treasurer's report to the minutes. (One copy of the treasurer's report for each year.

**Reports.** Attach to minutes, reports of the Executive Committee and the Administrative Committed.

**Nominations.** Attach a final copy of the slate of officers to the minutes.

**Programs.** Retain programs of any event that is of historic interest to the Unit.

**Letters/Memos.** Discard any letters that contain out-of-date information on the basis of current information.

**Mailings.** All mailings are sent to District officers.

**Newspaper Articles.** Make a scrapbook to retain newspaper clippings and photos of special events.

A more complete file of all of the above may be kept if it is desired and if space is available. Outgoing secretaries owe it to their successors to go through their files and discard unnecessary items before turning over files; brief index and/or well marked file folders can also help.



## United Methodist Women South West District – Florida Conference

	(Type name of Meeting Held- Leadership, Program, etc.)
Location	(Type where meeting was held)
Date	(Type Date)
Attendees	(Type names of people in attendance)
Absent	(Type names of people absent)
Guests	(Names of guests)

Call to order (name of person and time)

Devotions Prayer Calendar and announcements, UMW Purpose

Approval of Minutes (Reviewed and approved by (Name) and (Name))

Report of the Treasurer

Report of the Officers, Coordinators and Circle Leaders  
(Correspondence, Referrals/Recommendations)

Unfinished Business

New Business

Highlights of Programs/events (not full report; the full report should be attached)

Items of Information

Adjournment Motion and Time

**SAMPLE MOTION FORM**

Motion \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Second \_\_\_\_\_

Passed/Failed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**United Methodist Women  
South West District – Florida Conference**

**Listing of Officers for 2019      UMW Unit \_\_\_\_\_**

**Mail to: District Secretary Gloria Heston, 3918 SE 20th Ave., Cape Coral, FL 33904 or gloriaheston.umw@gmail.com**

<b>Office</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
<b>President</b>				
<b>Vice-President</b>				
<b>Secretary</b>				
<b>Treasurer</b>				
<b>Program Resources</b>				
<b>Spiritual Growth</b>				
<b>E &amp; I</b>				
<b>MN&amp;O</b>				
<b>Social Action</b>				
<b>Communications</b>				
<b>Nominations</b>				
<b>Circle Leaders:</b>				

**\*Fill out what you have. Ensure we have at least one person with an email to get the updates and news (even if they don't have an office.) If no email, designate at least 3 people (ex. President Treasurer, Secretary) to receive updates.**

**Need USPS mailing?    \_\_\_\_\_Yes\_\_\_\_\_No**

**Number of Members  
Jan. 1 –Dec. 31, 2018 \_\_\_\_\_**

**New Members added in 2018 \_\_\_\_\_**

**Members lost by death in 2018  
\_\_\_\_\_**

