

Tips for a PTA Recording Secretary Updated May 2021



What to take to a meeting?

Pack the following items in a dedicated PTA bag and you're ready to grab and go!

- Something to use to record notes on proceedings of the meeting.
A spiral notebook, pad of paper, or electronic device (and charging cord) for your notes – but always have a pen and paper in case of electronic issues
- A red ink pen and a regular blue or black ink pen (or two)
- Copies of the minutes from the previous meeting—copies for all attendees to see and/or share
- Sign-in sheet for attendance
- Blank Motion Forms (if your PTA decides to use them—if not, maybe you can get it started!)
- Blank ballots (2-3 sets of identical small pieces of paper, index cards, Post-its for ballot voting)
- Keep all of the following items handy for meetings:
 - A copy of the agenda for each meeting in the past two years***
 - A copy of the minutes for each meeting in the past two years***
 - A copy of the treasurer's report and any financial records from each meeting in the past two years***
 - Your PTA's current bylaws—the original "wet signature" copy
 - Your PTA's charter—if you don't have a copy, one can be ordered from the California State PTA.
 - UNITS ONLY: The membership list—provided by the membership officer—containing the name, an extra identifier such as street address or email address, and date of joining for each member.
- Secretary's emergency kit—Post-Its, highlighter, blue black and red pens, pencil, rubber bands, paper clips, binder clips, scotch tape, mini stapler and staples, scissors, and a roll of painter's tape to post minutes, reports, etc. at association meetings.

***** You will be making a permanent LEGAL record of the proceedings of your PTA meetings!
(see the section on what you do with the reports and minutes after the meeting.)**

What you do at the BEGINNING of the meeting:

- Set out copies of the minutes for people to read
- Set out blank Motion Forms and/or provide fillable MOTION form on-line
- Set out the sign-in sheet near the entrance. Sign yourself in clearly to set an example.
You may choose to pass the sign-in sheet around; just make sure it circulates. Do pick this up at the end!
- **Pick up or print copies of each agenda, attachments, and all financial reports;**
all pages are best single-sided to *paste* or bind into your permanent record (see below).

What you do DURING the meeting:

Your main job is to take notes!!

- Minutes follow the actual order of the meeting, which might not be the agenda order. You *may* number agenda items even if the agenda itself is not actually numbered.

- The minutes are a record of **actions** taken by the PTA.

Secretary must record all motions made during the meeting.

(Please refer to the Motions, What to do information handout.)

You *may* number the motions (starting with 1 for each meeting).

Numbering motions makes identification easier if there are corrections to be made.

Added Comments: The president may also ask you to make sure a particular statement or informal decision is included in the minutes so it's part of the permanent record.

- **Other than the wording of the motions, the minutes are NOT a record of what was actually said.**

It *is* helpful to note the topic of discussion and the general points raised in discussion, but it is not necessary to record details. **Never** include personal, inflammatory, or confidential comments.

Record all details of Financial Reports in the body of the minutes; DO NOT just say see attached reports.

Under the Treasurer's Report, Secretary must record:

1. **the opening balance,**
2. **the total deposits,**
3. **the total disbursements, and**
4. **the closing balance**
5. **Must include any motions regarding checks to be written (approval of bills to pay) or checks already paid (ratification).**

Under other Financial Officers, secretary must record details as appropriate, including balances, actions taken, remits included, etc.

What you do as the meeting progresses:

- You present the minutes from the prior meeting (agenda item is Adoption of the Minutes). If corrections were emailed to you, announce these known corrections. The president will ask for any other corrections.
- If there are corrections to the minutes, **you will write them out in your notes for this meeting, as well as mark them on the physical copy of the minutes themselves.**
Circle the error in red ink and write the correction in red ink in the margin. Date & Initial the correction.
- The president will then announce that the minutes have been adopted as corrected or adopted as presented. You sign the minutes at the end of the document using blue or black ink.
- Write "adopted as printed" or "adopted as corrected" and write the date. Or you can pre-print the two options (see the Sample Minutes) and simply write the date in the appropriate place.
- **You collect reports: Auditor's reports (2 times a year), Nomination Committee's report (once a year), Treasurer reports (at every meeting), officer and chairmen reports and handouts, etc.**
- If there are questions about actions taken at a previous meeting, consult the **copies** of the minutes.

What you do at the END of the meeting:

- Collect the attendance sign-in sheet and any remaining copies of minutes/reports of past meetings.

What you do AFTER the meeting:

Writing up the minutes after the meeting:

- Write up the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting when everything is fresh in your memory.
- For the first time only, make a PTA folder, or a Recording Secretary folder within your PTA folder.
- Create a file with a useful label that instantly tells you what the document is: HS PTA Sept 2020 EB min (minutes for the HS Executive Board meeting), HS PTA Sept 2020 Assn min (minutes for the HS association meeting).

- The next month, open the file, immediately save it as minutes for the new month (for example , HS PTA Sept 2020 EB min will be saved as HS PTA Oct 2020 EB min).
- The president should review the draft of the minutes for any glaring errors/omissions/extra added content or accidental inclusion of confidential materials.
Make changes, if needed, and print out two copies of the minutes.
One is the official set to be bound for the record; the other goes to your file/binder for reference.

ONCE PRINTED THE MINUTES ARE FROZEN. THEY ARE NEVER CORRECTED AGAIN ON THE COMPUTER. All further corrections are done in red pen on the physical copy and will be reflected in the next month's minutes. Circle the error in red ink and write the correction in red ink in the margin. Date & Initial the correction. Once the president has signed off, you can relabel the file as FINAL.

- If you are taking the minutes electronically at the meeting, REVIEW WHAT YOU WROTE/typed before having the president review the draft.
- Some presidents request that you email the minutes to the Executive Board in advance of the meeting. Be aware that if anyone informs you of errors, you **CANNOT** correct the errors on the computer. You may make the corrections in red (see directions above) on the permanent record copy of the minutes with the date of the email sent to you; you may make a list of those corrections to announce at the next meeting. Or you may choose to wait until the meeting and get the corrections all at once.
- Make enough copies of the minutes to be distributed at the next meeting (save the receipt and submit for reimbursement) or you can donate the cost of printing and use your own printer.
- Minutes may be posted on a PTA bulletin board on school property for review.
Minutes are never posted on a website. You may, however, post a brief summary.
- Make sure that you file one copy of the agenda and treasurer's report in your file/binder and a copy with each set of minutes.

What you do with the REPORTS AND MINUTES AFTER each meeting:

You will be making two sets of permanent records: one for the Executive Board meetings and another for the Association meetings. For each meeting type, you can paste everything into a bound blank book or have the two sets of permanent records bound at the end of your term.

- **IF YOU ARE PASTING IN A BOUND BLANK BOOK, paste in all the materials for each meeting in agenda order as you go along, numbering the pages as you go.** You may purchase the official PTA Secretary's Book (from the CAPTA store) or use any full sized "composition" style bound blank book. To use this procedure, you will need two copies of any two-sided document.
- **IF YOU ARE SAVING ALL MATERIALS TO BE BOUND AT THE END OF THE TERM,** make sure that you keep everything for each meeting clipped together in agenda order and each of the two types of meetings separate. Store each meeting's materials in a safe place (an accordion folder or box file works well).

What you do at the END OF YOUR YEAR-LONG TERM:

- If you have been pasting in minutes and supporting material as you go along, finish that task. If you have been saving everything to be bound, get the binding done (**not comb or spiral bound**). You will give these to your successor or store them in your school PTA secure storage.
- Store the older copies of the permanent record at the school or in your PTA secure storage.
- Tidy up the binder/files to hand over to your successor. These are your procedure book.
- Update any procedures that might have changed during your term.
- Share all relevant documents electronically with your successor including files such as the Motion Form template and the sign-in sheet template. Be sure to include copies of the past year's minutes for the Executive Board meeting and the Association meeting on a flash drive/in a computer file to share with your successor.
- Encourage your successor to attend the Torrance Council AND Thirty-Third District PTA Training (usually early June and October). There are also regional trainings run by California PTA each year.

Be prepared as you take the minutes: some agenda items come up regularly; some are scheduled but infrequent, and some are rare!
For additional help with motion writing, please refer to the Motions handout.

Agenda items at almost every meeting: Adoption of the agenda, approval of the minutes, the treasurer and other financial officers reports, payment of bills, ratification of bills already paid, committee reports and so on.

Agenda items that come up two times a year:

Audits: Two times a year the auditor makes a report by reading a statement which goes into the minutes. This is then followed by a motion to adopt the audit (the auditor can make the motion).

A further audit may be required if a bank signer resigns. In this case there has to be an additional audit immediately unless the resignation coincides with a regularly scheduled audit.

Budgets: Budget approval to begin the school year and mid-year revisions, if desired or necessary.

Agenda items that come up once a year:

Elections: Elections are held once a year. Ask the president to provide you with a copy of the script to follow along. **BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE ORIGINAL signed COPY OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE IN YOUR MINUTES BOUND BOOKS.** The slate of nominees is read out several times, there are calls for nominations from the floor, and there will be a ballot vote for any position with more than one candidate. The official report of the Teller Committee is to be included in the permanent bound record after the report has been read out.

Nominating Committee Report: Once a year, the Nominating Committee makes a report at the annual election meeting. Make sure that you get the report with signatures from all members of the committee, which you need for the permanent bound record.

Changing bank signers: In May or June of each year, the minutes must contain the necessary motions concerning the bank signers for your PTA. Remind your president and treasurer about these motions, giving them the proper wording. Consult the separate handout on Motions for specific examples.

Agenda items that come up occasionally:

Bylaws Revisions adoption: If your association has bylaws to adopt, the parliamentarian should provide you with a copy of the amendments. These will go into the minutes. There will be a motion to adopt the bylaws after they are signed by the State Parliamentarian. As recording secretary you will sign and date all the signature pages of the new bylaws. **The old set of bylaws will be bound after the minutes in which the adoption was recorded;** file the old bylaws with the other materials to be bound at the end of the term.

Elections at the executive board to fill a vacancy: If a member of the board resigns after being duly elected, or if an elected position was not filled at the time of the regular election, as per unit or council bylaws, the vacancy is filled by an election held at an Executive Board meeting (regularly scheduled or specially called following the bylaws for special Executive Board meetings) with a motion to elect the officer or officers.

Resignations: If someone resigns, you should save the letter of resignation which can be the email or a handwritten/typed letter. If someone has resigned verbally, the president should request a written statement. You will include this letter of resignation in the permanent record in the meeting at which the president announces the resignation. There will then be a motion to accept the resignation which you will record in the minutes.