



Secretary Playbook 2024



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AAUW Mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

AAUW Vision: Equity for all.

Values: Nonpartisan. Fact-based. Principled. Inclusive and Intersectional.

Introduction

The intention of this guide is to provide tips for secretaries on recording branch meetings and to make the job easier. Whether your branch is small, medium, or large, we hope you will find the information in this document to be relevant and scalable to your organization.

AAUW Bylaws are silent on the officers required. Their bylaws state, “As an AAUW Affiliate, this Affiliate may create such leadership structures as meet this Affiliate’s needs. This Affiliate shall provide AAUW with designed contacts for administration and finance.”

However, according to Michigan law, a 501(c)(3) board of directors must have a minimum of three unrelated board members and elect a president, **secretary**, and treasurer. Therefore, affiliate bylaws need to have a secretary as an elected position by the membership.

Some branches have found that having co-officers works well to share the workload of a particular position and to ease newer members into leadership by partnering them with a more experienced member to collaborate in the shared position. For example, AAUW of Michigan has co-secretaries. We find it very helpful to have a second pair of eyes when publishing the minutes.

Job Description

Branch bylaws usually say something like this in terms of the duties of the secretary:

The secretary shall record and keep minutes of all board, membership, and special meetings. In the absence of the secretary another person, but not the presiding officer or the finance officer, must be appointed to record the minutes of these meetings and ensure that they are retained. The secretary shall make available upon request the minutes of each noted membership meeting and board meeting.



It is important for the secretary to know where minutes will be kept. Each branch will need to decide this. Minutes can be stored on a google drive, a thumb drive, or in a notebook to pass on to the next secretary. Because minutes are a legal document, it is important for each branch to establish an archive to historically house the minutes.

It is also important for each branch to decide who will assume responsibility for correspondence and who notifies the members of meetings. This may or not be the secretary.

Secretaries should have a copy of the branch’s current bylaws on hand at each meeting and a list of those that are to be in attendance at each meeting so as to establish a quorum.

Minutes

Minutes are a written record of your branch meeting. Because they are considered a legal document, strive for clarity and consistency of tone when writing them. Be sure to proofread them well before sending.

The best meeting minutes takers are careful listeners. They are adequately familiar with the meeting topics because of the need to have a firm enough grasp of the subject matter to be able to separate the important points from the noise in what can be long, drawn-out discussions.



Generally, the organization name goes at the top: “*Meeting of the Board of Directors of XYZ,*” with the date on the next line. After the date, you may include both the time the meeting came to order and the time the meeting ended. For example:

Board of Directors of Super Branch

Meeting Minutes

Date: May 1, 2024

Time: 10:00 am to 12:30 pm

The meeting agenda will serve as your outline for the meeting minutes. Keep the minutes’ headings consistent with the agenda topics for continuity.

The minutes of a meeting typically include the following details:

- Names of attendees. State who was present and who was absent and if any guests were present.
- Acceptance of, or amendments made to, the previous meeting’s minutes
- Decisions made regarding each item on the agenda:

Generally, the first time someone speaks in the meeting will include his/her name and often the title. The next time, you can just use the person’s first name.

Meeting minutes are important because they are used to document the key issues raised during a meeting. For example, effective minutes can state the approaches that were proposed to solve a particular problem and the main reason why members chose one method over the other.

For each agenda item, you ultimately want to summarize only the relevant points of the discussion, along with any decisions made. You want to record the gist of the discussion objectively.

The primary purpose of minutes is to record any votes a board or organization takes. You must record who makes a motion, what the motion **states verbatim**, and which participant seconds the motion. The vote tabulation also needs to be included. For example: “The motion passed unanimously” or “The motion passed with 5 voting affirmatively and 2 voting negatively.”



Motions

As stated previously, motions must be included in minutes. In addition, we have found it helpful to have a separate document which lists all of our motions to date. It is easier to find our motions this way instead of searching through minutes.

An example would be:

Motions
2022-2023
AAUW of Michigan Board

2022-2023

President – Sheila Blair

Finance VP – Sally Doty

Program VP (Co) – Barb Duran and Linda Kevorkian

Secretary (Co) – Kay Calley-Martin and Jan Van Gasse

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Motion</u>
7/16/22	Approval of Agenda	Approve the meeting agenda as amended
7/16/22	Annual Meeting Minutes	Approve the 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes as presented
7/16/22	April 29th Board Meeting Minutes	Approve the April 29th Board Meeting Minutes as presented
7/16/22	June 27th Executive Board Meeting Minutes	Approve the June 27th Executive Board Meeting Minutes as amended
7/16/22	Board Resignations	Accept the resignations of Danielle Nelson Beard as Co-Membership VP and Shannon Clements as the incoming secretary
7/16/22	Board Appointments	Ratify the President’s appointments of Linda Kevorkian as Co-Program VP, Kay Calley-Martin and Jan Van Gasse as Co-Secretaries, Jan Van Gasse as Bylaws Director, Ruth Brown as Public Policy

		Director, N’Kenge Gonzalez as Diversity Director, and Amy Shamroe as College/University Director
7/16/22	Budget	Adopt the 2022-2023 budget as amended
7/16/22	Important Dates	Approve the Important Dates for 2022-2023 as amended (Board Meeting Dates, Newsletter Schedule, Annual Meeting Date, etc.)
7/16/22	Nominating Committee Chair	Approve the President’s appointment of Kathy Shaw as the new chair of the Nominating Committee
7/16/22	Standing Committee Chairs	Approve the recommended chairs of the following standing committees: Jan Van Gasse - Resolutions Committee Jan Van Gasse - Bylaws and Policies Committee Amy Shamroe - College/University Relations Ruth Briggs - Funds Committee Ruth Brown - Public Policy Committee Leah Monger - Membership Committee Barb Duran and Linda Kevorkian - Programs Committee N’Kenge Gonzalez - Diversity Committee Leah Monger and Amy Shamroe - Communications Committee
7/16/22	Special Committee Chair	Approve Jan Van Gasse as chair of the State Services Committee
7/16/22	Policies	Approve the policy changes as discussed
10/22/22	July 15-17 Board Meeting Minutes	Approve the July 15-17 Board Meeting Minutes as presented
10/22/22	Committee Members	Approve the Bylaws, Resolutions, and Nominating Committee members as presented
10/22/22	Job Descriptions	Approve the Public Policy Director job description as amended (change “Lobby Corp” to “Lobby Corps”) and the Government Relations Director job description as presented
10/22/22	Policies	Approve the policy changes as discussed
10/22/22	Resolutions Committee	Authorize the Resolutions Committee to investigate the viability of discontinuing the use of resolutions by a bylaws change to be presented at the annual meeting