



# **The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

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## **Handbook for Secretaries**

Revised 2022

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# League Objects

The objects of the League shall be to unite Catholic women of Canada

1. to achieve individual and collective spiritual development
2. to promote the teachings of the Catholic church
3. to exemplify the Christian ideal in home and family life
4. to protect the sanctity of life
5. to enhance the role of women in church and society
6. to recognize the human dignity of all people everywhere
7. to uphold and defend Christian education and values in the modern world
8. to contribute to the understanding and growth of religious freedom, social justice, peace and harmony

# Mission Statement

The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.

# Role of the Secretary

1. Attend all executive and general meetings of the council.
2. Assist the president in preparing the agenda for executive and general meetings, bringing to her attention any items that should be brought forward from the previous meeting, correspondence, previous minutes and recommendations of the executive that may help in preparation of the agenda.
3. Distribute individual copies of the agenda, post a copy of the agenda on a board, flip chart, or project on a screen (Appendix 1).
4. Call the roll or have members sign a list of attendance at meetings.
5. Take the minutes of meetings, record motions and retain minutes as a permanent record (Appendix 2).
6. Bring the minute book containing past minutes to meetings for reference purposes.
7. Keep motion book up-to-date and bring to meetings.
8. Distribute copies of the minutes of the previous meeting prior to the meeting or prepare to read the minutes at the meeting.
9. Report on the executive meeting at the general meeting, if the president so requests.
10. Report correspondence received and/or sent.
11. Send all occasion cards as requested by the president.
12. Be a signing officer for official documents.
13. Be responsible for receiving reports from the executive.
14. Be responsible for all council papers and records; know where council archives, including the council charter, are located.
15. Maintain an up-to-date Elections Register (for diocesan, provincial and national levels).
16. Ensure that the list of the newly elected executive, with their names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses, is forwarded immediately following the annual meeting of members/convention:
  - parish level forward list to diocesan level
  - diocesan level forward list to parish, provincial and national levels
  - provincial level forward list to diocesan and national levels
17. Provide the credentials for delegates to annual meeting of members/convention.
18. Assume the role of communications or assign a subcommittee.

# Recording the Minutes

Minutes are a legal record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said. Content of the minutes of all meetings and annual meetings of members/conventions of the council concerned must be retained as a permanent record and must include all of the following components.

- name of the council
- type of meeting (i.e., executive, general, annual)
- date, time and place of the meeting
- roll call or list of attendance attached (roll call should be taken of the executive, with names of those present and absent recorded)
- adoption of previous minutes
- brief financial report—the monthly statement is not adopted but reported for information and put on file. At the annual meeting of members/convention, an examined financial statement is presented and officially adopted by the members.
- record, in brief, topics discussed
- motions, with actions decided upon
- number of votes for and against for ballot or counted votes only
- title of any committee reporting, with highlights of report; submitted reports should be filed for reference
- appointment of committees, elected delegates, etc.
- time of adjournment
- signed by president and secretary and date approved

## **When are Minutes Adopted?**

Minutes of one meeting are usually adopted at the next meeting. Minutes are always adopted by the members of the group to whom they belong. This group may authorize a smaller group, such as a committee, to adopt the minutes of a particular meeting. In fact, this is advisable when a group meets only once a year or only at six-month intervals.

At **parish** level, where meetings are held monthly, minutes of one meeting are always adopted at the next meeting by the members in attendance. This holds true, as well, for the minutes of the annual meeting, which are adopted at the next regular monthly meeting of the parish council.

At **diocesan, provincial** and **national** levels, minutes of business sessions of annual meetings of members (AMM)/conventions may be adopted by a committee or the executive **if** the members of the AMM/convention have authorized their adoption in this way. This authorization is advisable since AMM/conventions take place only once a year. The AMM/convention standing rules, when

adopted, would give this authorization. Otherwise, the minutes must be adopted at the AMM/convention the following year.

Minutes of executive meetings are adopted by the executive at the next executive meeting, unless the meetings are far enough apart to warrant having a committee adopt them.

Minutes can be corrected at any meeting of the group even after they have been adopted; however, a specific motion to amend the minutes is required.

For more detailed information, see *Robert's Rules of Order*.

### **Motion Book**

The council's motion book should contain a list of the substantive motions of the council. Motions should be recorded in chronological order.

## **The Elections Register**

For parish councils, the Elections Register is a list of the paid-up members of the parish council.

For diocesan and provincial councils, the Elections Register should be updated at the beginning of January each year. In an election year, this list is given to the chairperson of the nominations and elections committee. At the national level, the Elections Register is updated by the executive director. The Elections Register contains the names of all **current** and **past** executive members in accordance with Part XVI, Section 1 (b), (c) and (d) of the *Constitution & Bylaws*.

It is essential to record the year that a member comes onto the executive, the year she becomes eligible (at the end of her full term) and the number of years she has been eligible. It is helpful to prepare a chart to accurately record this information. The secretary should refer to Section 7 of the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* for detailed information on this process and sample Elections Registers.

# Appendix 1: Sample Agenda

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada**

**St. Mary's Parish Council**

**Agenda for General Meeting**

**To be held in Parish Hall**

**February 11, 20XX**

1. Call to order
2. Opening prayer, and spiritual program
3. Territorial acknowledgement
4. Opening remarks of president and spiritual advisor
5. Roll call
6. Adoption of the agenda
7. Adoption of minutes of previous meeting
8. Secretary's report
9. Treasurer's report
10. Reports of chairpersons
  - faith
  - service
  - social justice
11. Reports of the chairpersons of special committees
12. Ongoing business
  - a. Reception for first communion
  - b.
13. New business
  - a.
  - b.
14. Adjournment
15. Closing prayer

# Appendix 2: Sample Minutes

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada**  
**St. Mary's Parish Council**  
**Minutes of General Meeting held in the Parish Hall**  
**February 11, 20XX**

1. Meeting called to order

The president, Kay Fine, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Opening Prayer and Spiritual Program

Spiritual Advisor Fr. James Brown, led the members in the recitation of the League Prayer. Cathy Baker then led the members in "Prayer to the Mother of God, Mary," a prayer service from the League resources on the League website.

3. The president gave the territorial acknowledgement.

4. Opening remarks

The president welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming in such large numbers on a cold evening. Fr. Brown reminded the members that he would be leaving on February 15<sup>th</sup> for a seven-day retreat and asked the members to pray for him.

5. Roll call

The following executive members were present:

The following executive members were absent:

6. Adoption of agenda

The following item was added under New Business: "Recognition of Charter Members."

**MOTION:** To accept the agenda as amended. Made by Joan Ruiz, seconded by Ellen Brown. **ADOPTED.**

7. Minutes of previous meeting

Secretary Betty Green read the minutes of the January 14, 20XX, general meeting and the following correction was made, "The treasurer reported a bank balance of \$516.24."

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the January 14, 20XX, general meeting as corrected. Made by Celine Terriault, seconded by Micha Ussef. **ADOPTED.**

8. Secretary's report

Betty Green reported the following correspondence:

- received a thank you from Fr. Brown for anniversary gift

- received information on diocesan convention from diocesan president
- sent a sympathy card to family of Irma Podlowski

9. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Fern Plant reported receipts of \$325.00 and disbursements of \$192.00, leaving a balance of \$560.00 on hand as of February 10, 20XX. A copy of the full report was filed with the minutes. Chairperson of Social Justice Thelma Baxter spoke about the recent earthquake in Haiti and suggested that the council send a donation to Development and Peace to help aid those affected by the disaster.

**MOTION:** To send \$150.00 to Development and Peace to aid those affected by the recent earthquake in Haiti. Made by Thelma Baxter, seconded by Solange Brie. ADOPTED

10. Reports of Chairpersons

Faith: Cathy Baker reported on the World Day of Prayer to be held at Union United Church on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 20XX, at 11:00 a.m. She also spoke about the Easter celebrations. Copy of report attached.

Service: Joan Ruiz reported that 12 members had helped serve lunch at the Women's Drop-In Centre on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Copy of report attached.

Social Justice: Thelma Baxter reported on a meeting of parish social justice representatives with the diocese's social justice coordinator that she had attended last week. Copy of report attached.

11. Special committee reports

Convention committee: Chairperson Ann Brown reported that plans to host the diocesan convention were progressing. Copy of the committee report attached.

12. Ongoing business

Reception for first communion: The following topic introduced at the January meeting was brought forward.

**MOTION:** That the council purchase a rosary for each first communicant at a cost of \$5.00 per rosary. Made by Marie Dogherty, seconded by Fern Plantar. ADOPTED

13. New business

a. Recognition of charter members

**MOTION:** That the council present 25-year pins to charter members on the occasion of the council's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Moved by Ellen Brown, seconded by Fran Vilagos. ADOPTED

b. Announcements: The diocesan meeting will be held on Saturday, March 13, 20XX at the Diocesan Centre at 2 p.m. All members are invited to attend.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

*Or:* **MOTION:** That the meeting be adjourned. Made by Irene Lemire, seconded by Anna Maria Gianti. ADOPTED. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

15. Closing Prayer

The meeting closed with the League theme prayer.

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Betty Green, Secretary

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Date Signed

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Kay Fine, President

# Resources and References

*The Canadian League* magazine—copies of individual articles are available from national office.

**Communiqués** from the national executive/board are regularly posted on the League website ([cwl.ca](http://cwl.ca)).

## ***Robert's Rules of Order***

The following resources are available from national office:

- *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* with information on the following:
  - Elections Register
  - Style Guide for Publications
- *Personal Letter-Writing Guide*