



The Catholic Women's League of Canada

MEMO

DATE: April 11, 2023
FROM: Janet McLean, national secretary-treasurer
FOR: Parish secretaries
THROUGH: Parish presidents and secretaries
CC: Diocesan and provincial presidents and secretaries and life members
(on request)

It is my pleasure to write to you. For those who may not have heard, I took over as national secretary-treasurer on November 1, 2022, as Marie Rackley, who previously held the position since August 2021, resigned due to personal reasons. Please keep Marie in your prayers.

Welcome to everyone, particularly new secretaries who may have assumed this position following parish council elections. You play an essential role as secretaries are the keepers of their council's history whenever they record the minutes of council meetings. Because of amendments to the *Constitution & Bylaws*, which Marie mentioned in her October memo, all correspondence for parish councils is now directed to the president and secretary for dissemination. You play an important role in ensuring your council's members have access to this information so they are aware of all that is happening in the League.

The new *Handbook for Secretaries* is available on the national website (cwl.ca). I hope you have had a chance to download a copy for your council. I would appreciate your feedback on the handbook as it was prepared for you. If you feel there are items that require clarification or guidance or that you would like to see included, I would be pleased to hear from you. I can be contacted through national office. I hope the handbook will assist you in carrying out your duties to the best of your ability.

One question often asked by secretaries regards the keeping of minutes. As the minutes contain your council's history, the answer can be found in the *Archives Guidelines for League History*—another resource available on the national website. These guidelines state that past minutes should be archived after six years (i.e., the secretary keeps on hand the minutes for the current president's term and the minutes of the terms of two previous presidents). Therefore, a set of minutes should be placed in the council's archives every two years. Minutes are kept forever! As your past president is responsible for archives, speak to her about this process.

Make sure minutes are retained in dated binders or files. While minutes can be kept on electronic devices, it is essential to keep a paper copy as technology changes, and what is used to store documents today may not be accessible in future years.

Thank you for your service to your parish council. I know that secretaries often remain in the position for many years as this is a unique skill you can offer to your council. However, it is important to mentor other members of your council on the ins and outs of the job so that others feel confident to take on this position as well.