

# The VVA Secretary The Role and Responsibility



Presented By

Fred Elliott  
Past Secretary of the VVAF  
Past Chapter #20 President & Secretary

Bruce Whitaker  
VVA Region 3 Director  
Past Chapter #172 and Maryland State Council President

Barry Hagge  
VVA National Secretary  
Past Chapter 131 President & Secretary

July 16-19, 2008  
Vietnam Veterans of America  
2008 Leadership Conference  
Greenville, South Carolina

# The VVA Secretary Duties and Responsibilities

## Session overview:

This seminar content supersedes all previous versions presented.

Secretaries of Chapters and State Councils have as one of their principal duties and responsibilities the maintenance of the records of their organizations. *Presidents are responsible to assure their elected secretaries maintain records properly.* It may be that some of the records are in other people's hands, e.g., Treasurer, Committee Chairs; however they are the Chapter's or State Council's records. Secretaries can help all officers and committee chairs in the maintenance of records.

This session had been modified from its previous presentation to emphasize the duties of the secretary and to minimize discussion of Robert's Rules of Order and organizational record keeping. These are separate leadership tracts which go into greater detail. Today we will review the role and responsibilities of the VVA Secretary, including some legal responsibilities and traps to avoid.

## The secretary is:

- The key officer for conducting business who records what is done.
- is the recording officer, the corresponding officer, the custodian of the records.
  - Unless-----
- must understand the ranking of motions and other procedures, so the minutes will be accurate.
- must have an understanding of our governance documents. E.g. VVA National Constitution, National Disciplinary Policy, chapter/state council by-Laws
- Should be seated next to the chair to directly communicate with and pass information to the presiding officer. Saves you energy and doesn't disrupt the meeting.
- The military equivalent of a staff officer. The Secretary is not a line officer; that's the President and VP.

### Some of the Secretary's duties are:

1. keep a record of the proceedings of the chapter/State Council.
2. keep committee reports.
3. keep the membership roll and call the roll where required.
4. make the records available to members upon request.
5. notify officers, committee members, and delegates of their election or appointment, furnish committees with documents for the performance of their duties, and have a list of committees and members at meetings.
6. furnish delegates with credentials.
7. sign certified copies of acts of the chapter.
8. maintain record books containing: articles of incorporation, bylaws, special rules of order, standing rules and minutes, and have the current record books on hand at meetings.
9. send the membership notice of each meeting, known as the call of the meeting, and conduct the general correspondence.
10. prepare an order of business for the presiding officer, showing under each heading, matters due to come up. In some case the President wants to do this, regardless of who does it---DO IT.
11. call the meeting to order and preside over the election of a chairman pro tem, in the absence of the president and vice-president.
12. Ensure that required reporting is completed to the State Council or National Office
  - Election reports: 30 or 60 days after elections
12. As assigned.....

### The Chapter's/State council duties are:

- correct the minutes.
- approve the final wording of the minutes, usually by general consent as read or as corrected.
  - A motion is NOT required
- correct the minutes, at any later time, by making the motion to "amend something previously adopted."
  - Ensure that no video or audio tapes are retained after minutes are approved

The act of a board or committee\_\_\_\_\_.

- should be submitted in writing.
- can be given orally only if it is brief enough that the secretary can record it on hearing it.
- is an official statement formally adopted by and submitted in the name of the committee informing the Chapter/State Council of action taken or recommended, or information obtained.
- can contain only what was agreed to by a majority vote at a regular meeting of the committee.

The Minutes should contain:

- A record of what is done, **not what is said**. You do not need 20 pages of discussion that is discoverable
- All adopted subsidiary, privileged, and incidental motions.
- the name of the member offering a main motion, and the motions reconsider, rescind, take from the table, point of order, and appeal from the decision of the chair.
- The chair's ruling on points of order.
- The results of counted or balloted votes.
- Previous notice of motions and their content.
- The name of the guest speaker and the program, if there is one.
- No effort to summarize points given by the speaker.

## Sample Minutes

### The opening paragraph Call to order

- The chapter name, date, time, place if different from the usual, and
- kind of meeting—regular, special, adjourned, executive, annual.
- The fact that the regular presiding officer and the secretary were present—or
  - the names of the duly elected chair pro tem and secretary pro tem.

### 1. Opening ceremonies.

### 2. Roll call of officers

- The roll call, if required by the rules, of those present, absent, late or leaving early.

### 3. Reading and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting or meetings.

- Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as read or as corrected.
- Correct the minutes being approved and note in the minutes of the meeting, "as corrected."

### The body of the minutes

### 4. Reports of officers', boards', and standing committees' actions

- The fact that the reports of officers, boards, and standing committees were given; and what action **was** taken, if any.
- The treasurer's report with the beginning balance, total income, total expenditures, and ending balance. Members should decide how much of the report they want in the minutes. The report is filed.
- Standing committee reports are given in the order listed in the bylaws.
- Business for or with a committee should be considered at the time the report is given.

### 5. Reports of special (select, ad hoc) committees' actions

- Only from those committees directed to report.
- Given in the order created or date prescribed.

### 6. Special orders (Events in Bylaws)

- Events scheduled in the bylaws such as nominations, elections, etc.
- A motion postponed to a certain time and made a special order by a two-thirds vote.
- The names presented by the nominating committee first and then the names of nominees from the floor.
- The tellers' committee report of all the candidates and how many votes each received.
- The chair's declaration of each member's election.
- The number of votes each nominee received, as well as a statement of the term of office.

### 7. Unfinished business (None...) and General Orders (Postponed Motions)

- Unfinished business is the motion that was being discussed when the previous meeting adjourned.
- A general order is a motion that was postponed until this meeting.
- The minutes should include unfinished business only if there was unfinished business on the agenda.
- The minutes should state what action was taken on business that carried over from the previous meeting.

### 8. New Business (New Motions)

- The name of the maker of a motion but not the person who seconds it.
- The wording of main motions, with amendments, and motions that bring a question back before the chapter.
- If withdrawn it is not recorded unless postponed to another meeting and then withdrawn.
- If a motion was laid on the table and not taken from the table at the meeting, record this fact in the minutes.
- The motions to postpone and refer to a committee should be included in the minutes, if they were adopted.
- Procedural motions not in *Robert's* should be recorded in a book of numbered Special Rules of Order.

- Administrative motions of a continuing nature, should be recorded in a book of numbered Standing Rules.
  - If the motion to recess is adopted, record the time members recessed and reconvened.
9. Good of the chapter (Informal Motionless Observations)
- Members make informal observations about the work or public reputation of the chapter, or its membership.
  - No motions are made, no business is conducted, no action is taken.

The last paragraph

- The hour of adjournment, signature and title of the person who took the minutes.

## **Guidelines for the Secretary**

- A. Approval and correction of the minutes
- Nothing is erased. Corrections are made in the margin or if double spaced above the error.
  - When words are expunged, draw a line through them so they are readable.
  - When minutes are approved, the word "approved", the secretary's initials and date of the approval are written next to the signature of the secretary.
  - If there are minutes of other meetings they are taken in chronological order.
- B. Carrying out the action of the minutes
- When the assembly adopts motions that require someone to do something, the secretary takes this information from the minutes and gives it to the member.
  - A motion to refer to committee should be typed out and given to the committee chair with the instructions.
  - The secretary must be diligent in seeing that the chapter's wishes are earned out.
- C. Samples of brief reports of standing and special committees' adopted acts recorded by the secretary. Reports of Officers and Standing Committees
- Membership Affairs Committee, Member A:
- The committee placed a membership form in the county newspaper to run for one week.
  - At this time the Chapter has 420 VVA members and 125 AVVA members. Public Affairs Committee, Member B.
  - The new schedule of events was posted on our web site and published in the Daily Gazette.
  - The interview about the WA state memorial will be aired on channel 7 next Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Government Affairs, Member G.
  - The committee addressed the City Council and requested they recognize Veterans Day as a holiday.
- Reports of Special Committees
- Winter Dinner Dance Committee, Member R.
- The dance will be held in the hall Saturday January 15, from 8 p.m. until midnight. Tickets will be available in the meeting hall this coming Monday for \$15 per person. Family Day Picnic Committee, Member S.
  - The picnic will be held in the local park Sunday, August 27, and admission is 5 pounds of groceries per family.

A sample of what the members said and what the secretary recorded.

Under New Business the motion to have a picnic was considered. The chair asks, "Is there any new business"? Member B rises, is recognized by the chair and says, "I move that we have a picnic. A member calls out, "second." The chair states the motion, "It is moved and seconded that we have a picnic." Member E rises, is recognized by the chair, expresses his opinion on the picnic then takes his

seat. Member C rises, is recognized, expresses her opinion on the picnic then takes her seat. Member D rises, is recognized by the chair, expresses his opinion on the picnic then takes his seat. Member B rises again, is recognized by the chair, and expresses his opinion on the picnic then takes his seat. After more of the same, the chair asks, "Is there is any discussion"? No member responds to the request for discussion. The chair then puts the question. The chair takes the positive vote. "All those in favor of having a picnic say aye." The chair takes the negative vote. "All those opposed to having a picnic say no." The chair announces the result. "The ayes have it and the motion to have a picnic is adopted."

#### New Business

- Member A moved that we have a picnic. Adopted.

Secretary / Duties / Records

#### Chapter 000 April 6, 2000 Order of Business for the presiding officer

- The motion to send five delegates to the state convention was tabled at the March 2, meeting.
- It is in order to take it from the table at this meeting.
- Call to Order
  1. Opening Ceremonies
  2. Roll Call of Officers
  3. Reading and Approval of the March Minutes
  4. Reports of Officers, Boards and Standing Committees
    - Treasurer's Report
    - Secretary requests reimbursement for copies.
    - There are no other officers' reports. Make no mention of them.
    - There is no board of directors' report. Make no mention of it.
    - There are no standing committees' reports. Make no mention of them.
  5. Reports of Special Committees
    - There are no reports of special committees. Make no mention of them.
  6. There are no special orders. Make no mention of them.
  7. There is no unfinished business. Make no mention of it
  7. There is one general order.
    - The motion to buy a computer at a cost not to exceed \$1000 was postponed at the March 2, meeting and is a general order for this meeting.
  8. New Business
  9. Good of the Chapter
- Adjourn

#### Chapter 000 April 6, 2000 Minutes

With comments Call to order

- A quorum being present, the regular meeting of Chapter 000 was called to order on April 6, at 7:05 p.m. by President Leader.

If there is no roll call of officers, the call to order should include the statement "The secretary was present." Since State Councils rotate their meeting places, the location should be included in the call to order.

1. Opening ceremonies
2. Roll call of officers
  - Present were President John Leader, Vice-President George Backup, and Secretary Ronald Notes.
  - Absent was Treasurer Hank Greenback.

Recording the roll is especially important if a rule requires attendance or considers a certain number of absences a resignation. If roll call is not a heading in the order of business, the call to order should state, "the secretary was present."

3. Reading and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting

- The minutes of the March 2, meeting were approved as read.

By unanimous consent the minutes are approved as read or as corrected. The actual correction is made in the minutes being approved, and the minutes of this meeting merely state that a correction was made to the minutes of the prior meeting, without specifying the correction.

Secretary / Duties / Records

#### 7. General orders

- In the treasurer's absence the President proceeded to General Orders.

Before the meeting, the secretary notified the chair there were no committee reports, and no unfinished business. In the absence of the treasurer, the chair immediately proceeded to general orders.

- The motion to buy a computer at a cost not to exceed \$1000, postponed from the previous meeting, was taken up.

Before the meeting, the secretary notified the chair the motion to buy a computer was postponed to this meeting and is a general order. At the appropriate time the chair stated the postponed motion.

- Member A called for the orders of the day. Lost.

Member A requested the chair return to the order of business. The member may have thought their were committee reports and unfinished business. The motion to not return to the orders of the day which requires a two-thirds vote in the negative to reject was probably assumed by the chair.

- After amendments, the motion to buy a computer at a cost not to exceed \$2000 carried.

A member moved to amend the motion by striking \$1000 and inserting \$2000, another member seconded the motion, there was discussion on the amendment, the amendment was adopted, there was discussion on the motion as amended, the motion as amended was adopted.

#### 4. Reports of officers and standing committees

- The treasurer's report.
- Opening Balance March 1 \$8900
- Receipts for March \$100
- Disbursements for March \$200
- Closing Balance March 31 \$8800
- The treasurer's report was filed.

The treasurer arrived and was directed by the chair to give the report after disposing of the general order. The secretary recorded the four amounts stated by the treasurer and noted that the treasurer's report containing individual receipts, disbursements, deposits, etc., was filed.

- The secretary presented a bill for \$50 for photocopying. Adopted.

Following the treasurer's report, the secretary requested reimbursement for routine expenses and the chair used unanimous consent to adopt the motion.

#### 8. New Business

- Member B moved to take from the table the motion to send five delegates to the state convention. Member C moved to amend the motion by striking "five" and inserting "two." Member D moved to refer the motion
- and its pending amendment to the finance committee and that it report at the next meeting. The previous question was ordered on all pending questions. The motion to refer to committee was adopted. Before the meeting, the secretary notified the chair that the motion about the delegates was tabled at the March 2, meeting and it is in order to take it from the table at the this meeting.

Secretary / Duties / Records

- Member E, who voted on the prevailing side, moved to reconsider the vote on buying the computer. The members voted to take a 15-minute recess. The meeting recessed at 3:45 p.m. and reconvened at 4 p.m. The motion to reconsider the vote on buying the computer carried. The motion to buy a computer carried. A division was demanded. The vote was retaken, and the motion to buy a computer was lost. After the motion to reconsider another motion is made and adopted, the other motion is reconsidered and voted on a second time. During the process of reconsidering, the privileged motion to recess was made and carried out. The other motion is reconsidered and adopted a second time and then lost after a division is called.
  - Member F moved that we lease a computer system from the Zone Corporation, not to exceed the specifications submitted in Proposal A. Member D moved that when the meeting adjourns, it adjourn to meet tomorrow at 7:00 p.m. Adopted. Member D moved to postpone the motion to lease a computer system to the adjourned meeting and make it a special order. Adopted.
  - Member G moved to have a float in next year's political election ratty. Member C raised a point of order that the motion to have a float in the political election rally was not within the scope of our bylaws. The chair ruled that the point was well taken. Member G appealed from the decision of the chair. The chair ruled that the motion was out of order because the purpose of the association is to help veterans, not to support political parties at their rallies. The chair's decision was sustained. The motion to have a float in next year's political election rally was no longer considered.
  - Member E moved to adjourn. Adopted.
    - After the chapter has voted to adjourn it is in order to give notice of a motion to be made at the next meeting.
  - Member C gave notice that at the next meeting she would move to rescind Standing Rule number 5, which states that we give \$100 to Goofy Days.
    - Previous notice is not the making of a motion and is not debatable.
  - The chair adjourned the meeting at 09:30 p.m.
  - Secretary Ronald Notes took the minutes.
- Adjourn

## Secretary / Duties / Records

Chapter 000 April 7, 2000 Order of Business for the presiding officer • Call to Order

1. Opening Ceremonies
2. Roll Call of Officers
3. Reading and Approval of the April 6, Minutes
4. Reports of Officers and Standing Committees
- There are no officers' reports. Make no mention of them.
- There is no board report. Make no mention of it.
- There are no standing committees' reports. Make no mention of them.
5. Reports of Special Committees
- There are no reports of special committees. Make no mention of them.
6. There is one special order
- The motion to rescind Standing Rule number 5, which states that we give \$100 to Goofy Days.
7. There is no unfinished business. Make no mention of it
7. There is no general order. Make no mention of it
8. New Business
9. Good of the Chapter Adjourn

### Chapter 000 April 7, 2000 Minutes

with comments Call to order

- The adjourned meeting of Chapter 000 was called to order April 7, at 07:00 p.m. by President Leader. Secretary Ronald Notes was present.
1. Opening ceremonies
  2. Roll call of officers
  - The officers present were President John Leader, Vice-President George Backup, Secretary Ronald Notes, and Treasurer Hank Greenback.
  3. Reading and approval of minutes of the previous meeting
  - The minutes of the April 6, meeting were approved as read.
  6. Special orders
  - The motion to lease a computer system that was postponed to the adjourned meeting was discussed. The treasurer received word from National that all chapters will be getting a computer system by the end of the year. Member F requested permission to withdraw the motion. Permission was granted by the assembly. Since this motion was postponed from the previous meeting withdrawal is recorded and permission granted by the assembly because it owns the motion.
  - Member B moved that the meeting adjourn at 07:30 p.m. The previous question was ordered on the motion. The motion to adjourn at 07:30 p.m. was adopted.  
Since the motion to adjourn was qualified it was debatable and the previous question was ordered.
  - Member A moved that the time of our meetings be changed to 8:00 p.m. Member G questioned the assembly's ability to change the time because it had been established by a prior vote to be 07:00 p.m. The chair ruled that the procedure was proper. It was the motion to "amend something previously adopted." Since no previous notice was given, it will take a two-thirds vote to adopt.
  - The chair adjourned the meeting at 07:30 p.m.
  - Secretary Ronald Notes took the minutes.
- Adjourn

## Secretary / Duties / Records

What would you record in the minutes of Chapter 000 from Part IV Practicing Motions?

Under the heading 8. New  
Business Main ,motion, Rank  
13, Main.

- Member E moved that we purchase carpet at a cost of \$600 for the Rugger Co. to carpet the hall. Adopted.

Postpone the motion indefinitely, Rank 12, Subsidiary.

- Member E moved that we purchase carpet at a cost of \$600 for the Rugger Co. to carpet the hall.
- Member D moved to postpone the motion indefinitely. Adopted.

Amend the pending motion, Rank 11, Subsidiary.

- Member E moved that we purchase carpet at a cost of \$600 for the Rugger Co. to carpet the hall.
- Member D, moved to amend the motion by striking \$600 and inserting \$400. Adopted.
- The motion as amended was lost.

Refer the motion to committee, Rank 10, Subsidiary.

- Member E moved that we purchase carpet at a cost of \$600 for the Rugger Co. to carpet the hall.
- Member I moved that we refer the motion to a committee of three to report at the next meeting. Adopted.
- The chair appointed Members K, N and P to the carpet committee.

Postpone the motion to a certain time, Rank 9, Subsidiary.

- Member E moved that we purchase carpet at a cost of \$600 for the Rugger Co. to carpet the hall.
- Member H moved that we postpone the motion until the next meeting. Adopted.

Limit Debate, Rank 8, Subsidiary.

- Member E moved that we purchase carpet at a cost of \$600 for the Rugger Co. to carpet the hall.
- Member G moved that we limit debate to one minute for each speaker this evening. Adopted.
- The chair appointed Member N to time the speakers.

Call for the previous question, Rank 7, Subsidiary.

- Member E moved that we purchase carpet at a cost of \$600 for the Rugger Co. to carpet the hall.
- Member K moved the previous question. Ayes 17, Noes 8, adopted.
- The motion to purchase carpet at a cost of \$600 was lost.

Call for the orders of the day, Rank 5, Privileged.

- Member K called for the orders of the day.

Point of order, Rank none, Incidental.

- Member E moved that we purchase a carpet at a cost of \$600 for the Rugger Co. to carpet the hall.
- Member C moved to postpone the motion indefinitely.
- Member C raised a point or order, a member spoke a third time.
- The chair ruled the point not well taken.

Appeal from the decision of the chair. Rank none, incidental.

Member E moved that we purchase carpet at a cost of \$600 for the Rugger Co. to carpet the hall.

Member C moved to postpone the motion indefinitely.

Member C raised a point of order, a member spoke a third time.

The chair ruled the point not well taken.

Member C appealed from the decision of the chair.

The chair said a member can speak twice on postpone indefinitely which opens the main question to debate.

The decision of the chair was sustained.