

Being a Great Chapter Secretary

By Melissa McGavick, WBN Cranberry Chapter Member, WBN President of the Board 2009 -2010

A good Chapter Secretary is vital to the health of your chapter. Good organizational skills and the ability to accurately record meeting minutes are required. The Chapter Secretary conducts the chapter meeting in the Chapter Chair's absence.

Each chapter differs slightly in the terms a secretary is elected to serve. Traditionally, the role has been a 3 month term after which the Chapter Secretary became the Chapter Chairperson. However some great Chapter Secretaries do not wish to serve in the role of Chapter Chair.

Some chapters elect officers for 6 or 12 months, however the thought of a 6 or 12 month commitment can be intimidating. Another option holding chapter elections every 3 months giving the chapter the option to reelect the officer for another 3 month term, up to one year total.

The following checklist shows the activities and events the Chapter Secretary is responsible for addressing throughout her term. Although the list may appear daunting on paper, if the Secretary is organized, the whole process takes an average of less than two hours per month.

When First Elected to Secretary Position

- Meet with outgoing executive committee and obtain files from outgoing secretary.
- Confirm outgoing secretary submitted list of newly elected officers to WBN Board Services coordinator at bsc@wbnc.com. (Submit this information anytime officer changes are made.)
- Meet with new executive committee to create a Chapter Challenge Success Plan.
- Download all chapter leadership materials from website and read it.
- Attend live WBN Chapter Leadership Training program.
- Watch recorded trainings from Chapter Leadership Training if you didn't attend the most recent live event.
- Observe who in chapter would make a good secretary and encourage her to consider it for the next term.

Every meeting

- Prepare concise presentation of any part of the chapter meeting you will be facilitating, keeping within the time allotted on the agenda.
- Email chapter members a reminder about the upcoming meeting. Include scheduled speakers and a reminder to call in any absences.
- Print a few extra copies of the agenda for guest.
- Take and prepare chapter meeting minutes and email to chapter members.

- Update club membership roster to reflect any changes in club membership.
- Update your group email list to reflect any changes in club membership.
- Take attendance and keep record of all in attendance, excused absences, unexcused absences, leave of absences and evaluate if there are any reoccurring absences needing to be addressed. Report findings to chapter chair and rep.
- Contact chapter members regarding unexcused absences & keep a record of who was spoken to and on what date.

Once a Month

- Assist Chapter Representative in completing chapter challenge report.

Once a Quarter

- Attend and take minutes at chapter executive committee meeting. Held once every three months to make sure things are going well within the chapter.

Before you leave the office

- The last month you are secretary, Meet with incoming executive committee and give files to newly elected secretary. Help prepare new secretary for office.
- Submit the list of newly elected officers to WBN Board Services Coordinator at bsc@wbnc.com.

About the Author: Melissa McGavick is President of McGavick Interactive Training, and a professional public speaker. Typically she works with successful business people who want to develop their public speaking and communication skills, leadership potential, and sell their ideas or products more effectively. She can be reached at by phone at 412-400-3414. More information is available at www.mcgavick.net.



Melissa has served as a Chapter Rep and Chapter Chair of the Cranberry WBN chapter, chaired ten different WBN committees, served as both Vice-President (2008-2009) and President (2009-2010) of the WBN Board of Directors. In 2008 she was selected as the WBN Woman of the Year. Melissa has also served in the top leadership positions in four other non-profit organizations, including the Pittsburgh chapter of the Downtown Women's Club, Women Entrepreneurs in Business, Women Think P.I.N.K., and Toastmasters International District 13.

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