

## **Chapter Secretary and Treasurer Responsibilities Workshop**

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The Order of the Eastern Star Ritual, in the Opening of the Chapter, provides the written charge of each Chapter Officer. Each charge states the duty of the office. The Code of Laws includes the Duties of the Secretary (COL, Article 234, pages 154-157) and the Duties of the Treasurer (COL, Article 235, page 156). This workshop document respectfully follows the Ritual and Code of Laws while providing details not explicitly stated to aid Chapter Secretaries and Treasurers in the performance of their duties.

The Chapter Secretary and Treasurer work together as a team with the Worthy Matron. Together, they keep the WM informed on the business of the Chapter. Their roles involve carrying out much of the business voted on by the Chapter in stated meetings through correspondence and payments. Records and finances must be well-maintained for accurate recording and audit purposes.

### **I. Chapter Secretary**

#### **Planning for a Chapter Meeting**

The Worthy Matron and Secretary are important persons for the transaction of business. They should work closely when preparing the Agenda to ensure all business is included. Petitions should be reviewed, and names for an investigation committee should be considered. Ensure that all reports to be given are in proper form and signed. Have warrants written for bills to be paid. The Secretary will need to have the following items at each Stated Meeting:

- Minute book
- Membership and visitor roster
- Ritual, Constitution, and Code of Laws
- Chapter Seal
- Secretary's Cash Book
- The Official Bulletin (available electronically on the Secretary Interface)
- Petitions (all categories)
- Chapter correspondence
- By-Laws book
- Dues Cards

## **Proper Record**

Meeting minutes are a formal, written record of a meeting. It includes discussions, decisions, task assignments, deadlines, key points and ideas, and action items. The minutes serve as a reference document in the future. It also serves as a legal document for financial records with the bank.

All meetings and minutes should follow Robert's Rules. Minutes should start with the attendance and continue through the motion to close of the meeting. The meeting's opening and closing times should be specified. Each topic discussed should have a brief paragraph summarizing the key points.

### Minutes must include:

- Date of meeting and type (State or Called; Long form opening or Short form)
- Order of Business according to the Chapter By-Laws
- Signature of Secretary recording the minutes
- Signature presiding officer and approval date
- Name and station of officers' present and protem officers
- Statement that official communications were read, i.e., Official Bulletin message from WGM & WGP
- Date of Observance of Rob Morris' Birthday
- Memorial or Chapter of Sorrow observance date
- Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- Election of Officers
- Names of members to be suspended (COL, Ch. 12, Art. 267)
- Names and titles of Grand Officers introduced
- Names and stations of Protems
- Number of Past Matrons and Past Patrons, members, and visitors
- Voting of the Chapter (pay bills, accept fundraiser, donations, projects)
- Date of the following reports:
  - Junior Past Matron's Report
  - Audit Report Read and Adopted
  - Delegate's Report of Grand Chapter
  - Secretary's Annual Report to Grand Chapter

### Should be included:

- Treasurer's report
- Approval of previous meeting minutes
- The official visit of the Deputy Grand Matron is a special occasion for a more formal introduction and description.
- Fraternal Visits are a more formal occasion for writing out introductions, if desired.

### Not to be included:

It is a violation of personal privacy to disclose confidential information about another person in the minutes. This often occurs during Sickness and Distress. Do not include the person's name, illness, or

personal information reported. It is acceptable to state, "Keep the following members in your prayers: (Member Name), (Member Name), and (Member Name)."

### **Membership**

The Grand Chapter Office and the Grand Secretary maintain membership information in the Secretary Interface, an online database. Chapter Secretaries are also responsible for maintaining the Chapter Ledger, which includes handwritten membership cards. Each Secretary is given a login and password for accessing the Interface. The Secretary may request that a second person in the Chapter also have computer access to the interface to assist with electronic entries.

The Secretary Interface is to be updated with any changes in membership. New petitions are entered with the name, contact information, and the status of the petition. Update with the date of the ballot and the date of initiation. The Grand Chapter Office will mail a dues card as a result of the addition to the Interface. Plural and transfer memberships are also updated electronically to show their ballot results.

The Interface provides reports on member dues, years of membership, and history. Members with 50 years of membership should be recognized for their achievement. Forms are available on the website to request special certificates with signatures of the WGM and WGP. Keep the Chapter's WM aware of these critical milestones.

### **Endowed Membership**

The Chapter Secretary submits the Endowed Membership Applications to the Grand Chapter of Texas Office. Forms are located on the Grand Chapter website. The application requires a \$500 check or a completed book of stamps. Payment may also be a combination of a check and stamps totaling \$500. In return, the chapter will receive an endowed membership certificate in the name of the person identified.

The Subordinate Chapter is to accept the Endowed Membership as effective immediately on the date received in the Grand Chapter Office. The Chapter is not to request dues from the member from that date forward. The Chapter will receive a check from the Grand Treasurer for the interest earned on the endowment, but not until interest has been earned for one year. Each May 1, the Annual Endowed Membership report is mailed to chapters with an interest check enclosed. Endowments purchased the year prior, following the May 31<sup>st</sup> cutoff date, will not be included in the report. Interest must be earned for a full year before the chapter receives interest on the endowment. (Code of Laws, Article 163-A, pg.112)

A member may transfer their Endowment when they transfer their membership to another chapter. When the Chapter purchases an Endowment for a member, and they intend the Endowment to remain with the Chapter regardless of the member's choice to transfer their membership, indicate on the purchase form, "In Honor of ...". This shows to the Grand Chapter Office and the Grand Treasurer that the Endowment is to remain permanently with the Chapter. There is currently no legislation on this practice. It is presently understood in the interest of the Chapter.

## **Dispensations**

The Secretary, under the seal of the Chapter, must request a Special Dispensation. This request is sent directly to the Grand Secretary, who contacts the WGM. A dispensation is necessary for a change in meeting location, a change in meeting date, a new location, an installation outside of the regular schedule, lost secret work, or initiating a member with a physical impairment. The charge for a dispensation is \$5.00. (Code of Laws, Chapter 1, pg.120)

## **Annual Report**

The Annual Report of a Chapter is due every year by June 8. The form is available on the Grand Chapter website. Since the form may change from year to year, it is to be downloaded yearly. The form has fields for entering text and numbers where appropriate. The file is submitted electronically to the Grand Secretary. A printed copy, with signatures and the seal of the chapter, along with the Per Capita payment, is to be mailed to the Grand Chapter Office by the deadline. There are penalties to Chapters that submit a late annual report. (Code of Laws, Article 234, f, pg. 155)

## **Conduct Correspondence**

The Secretary is the primary person to conduct all correspondence on behalf of the Chapter. An alternate member may be assigned to specific communications. Articles and invitations for the Official Bulletin are voted on by the Chapter and submitted. The deadline is the 6<sup>th</sup> of the month by Noon for the following monthly issue. Submissions are sent electronically to both the Grand Secretary at [traversoes1819@gmail.com](mailto:traversoes1819@gmail.com) and [OESbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:OESbulletin@gmail.com).

### Correspondence and Communications:

- Letter to Masonic Lodge for permission to hold Installation on a specific date other than Stated Meeting.
- Articles for the Official Bulletin as approved by the Chapter.
- Request a specific date with a Grand Line Officer for a future event, such as a Fraternal Visit or reception.
- Dues notices and correspondence with members.
- Newsletter
- Invitations
- Notification to the newly elected member for initiation
- Acceptance of the Official Visit date to the Deputy Grand Matron

## **Receive Money**

The Secretary receives all the money from the Chapter. This includes dues, fundraisers, Endowed Membership interest payments, donations, and silver drill. Each payment is correctly noted in the Secretary's Cash Book. The cash book should record the date cash was received, the purpose, the person making the payment, and the amount of money. This information is provided to the Treasurer for entry into the Treasurer's Cash Book. The Treasurer gives a receipt for the funds received from the Secretary. The Treasure is to deposit the money within a few days of receiving it.

The Secretary writes a warrant for each expense to be paid by the Chapter. The warrants are read at the Stated Meeting and voted on by the members who are present. Approved warrants are given to the Treasurer in exchange for checks. The checks are distributed to the appropriate person for payment. It is recommended that each check contain two signatures.

### **Chapter Seal**

The official Seal of the Chapter is to be affixed to the following:

- Dues cards
- Official Correspondence
- Requests for Special Dispensations
- Annual Report
- Certificates issued by the Chapter
- Proxy of the WM for Grand Chapter

## **II. Chapter Treasurer**

Elections for Officers occur in April each year. The Chapter should also vote to update the signatures for the financial accounts at the bank. The minutes are to list the names of those members who have signature authority. These minutes are taken to the bank to prove legal authority for the Chapter's account. It is recommended that authorized signatures include the Treasurer, Secretary, and the WM. With two required signatures on a check, a third person is available if another is absent.

### Chapter Minutes specific to Treasurer duties:

- Include the vote of the Chapter to pay bills
- Include the vote of the Chapter to add or remove a member from the Bank documents
- Include election of officers
- Include any Chapter decision and vote to change banks, investments, proceeds of fundraisers, or distribution of funds.

The Treasurer should bring to each Chapter meeting the checkbook, Treasurer's Cash Book, receipt book, and two copies of the monthly report. Offer a copy of the report to the WM and Secretary. Following the meeting, work with the Secretary to write checks for approved expenses and receive money collected by the Secretary. Within a few days, deposit the funds into the bank. This process ensures that all business transactions are processed promptly. Avoid holding checks and cash between meetings.

### Here are helpful hints for both the Secretary and Treasurer:

- Establish a consistent numbering system for warrants and checks (example: 2025-1, 2025-2)
- Account for all cash, checks, and electronic payments by logging in individually in both financial books. (example: dues for Greta Spradling, check #1234, \$28; scholarship donation from Mary Jane, cash, \$100.)
- Treasurer provides a receipt to the Secretary totaling all money submitted. (Helpful to group with Chapter meeting dates.)

The Treasurer provides a financial report at each Stated Meeting. Chapters may have various accounts for checking, savings, and investments. One account may have money budgeted for different projects. The report would reflect the amount in each of the budgeted projects. Here is a list of the minimum Closing balance from the last meeting

- Disbursements (money paid out)
- Deposits
- Outstanding checks
- Balance as of the report

The Chapter Audit takes place before the first meeting in June. Bring all financial records for the Committee to review and compare to the Secretary's books and bank statements. Deposit amounts must match the money given to the Treasurer by the Secretary, as indicated on the receipt. The checks cleared with the bank should match the Warrants from the Secretary.

### **III. Financial Audit for Chapter**

Three members of the Chapter serve on the Audit Committee. The following three officers are ineligible to serve: the Secretary, Treasurer, and Worthy Matron. The audit results are included in the Chapter minutes. The Committee should sign and date both the financial books and the warrant books at the last date of audit. (Code of Laws, Chapter 12, Article 267,j. page 167, j. *Audits. The financial affairs of each Subordinate Chapter shall be audited each year as of May 31<sup>st</sup>, and a report thereof shall be made to the Chapter at the first stated meeting after Installation.*)

#### Checklist for audit:

- Review the Secretary and Treasurer's financial books and entries since the last audit date.
- Match warrants, receipts, deposits, and bank balances.
- Warrants are properly signed by the Secretary, Treasurer, and Worthy Matron
- Every bank check is accounted for
- Deposits match Treasurer Receipts
- Treasurer's balance matches bank statements
- Void and outstanding checks should be identified

### **IV. Monthly Reminders**

August: The Worthy Matron's Grand Chapter report is to be given the month immediately following Grand Chapter, if possible. A program honoring Rob Morris must be presented and stated in the minutes.

April: Elections of Officers, dues notices, and notice of dues in arrears should be sent out. A Petition for Transfer of Membership cannot be read in April. This does not apply to a member affiliating with a Chapter by Demit. This applies only to Petitions for Transfer from one Texas Chapter to another Texas Chapter.

Update the Secretary Interface with the names of the elected officers for the new term. Add new members who have been initiated, transferred, or have plural members. Include the name and address of the WM, WP, and Secretary-elect. This information is printed in the new Directory and distributed to every Chapter Secretary and sold at Grand Chapter.

May: Names of members who will be suspended on May 31<sup>st</sup> for non-payment of dues MUST be read at the last Stated Meeting before May 31<sup>st</sup> (Article 267g (1), (2), (3), and (4), Code of Laws Chapter 12). If the names are not read, those members cannot be suspended.

A Memorial Program should be presented; however, the Worthy Matron may choose to do so at another time during the year.

June: The Installation of Officers is held from June 1 to June 23. Open Installations require approval of your Chapter. All Installations held after June 23 must have a Special Dispensation (Article XI, Sections 1a and 1 b).

Chapter Annual Reports must be postmarked by June 8th, and the forms are available on the Grand Chapter Website. Those Secretaries who do not have computer access should request assistance from a member of the Chapter.

Your Chapter financial audit should be conducted after May 31 and before the first stated meeting. The Audit Committee report should be read at the June or July meeting.

The Junior Past Matron report should be given.

The names of those who actually went suspended should be reported by the Secretary at the first stated meeting after May 31<sup>st</sup> (Code of Laws).

## V. Where to direct Questions

There is a chain of command for inquiring about OES Chapter business, protocol, and ritualistic matters.

| Questions directed to the Deputy                | Questions for Grand Secretary                  |
|---|--|
| Consolidation or Demise (both)                  | Consolidation or Demise (both)                 |
| Petition/Candidate questions                    | Special Dispensation (from WGM)                |
| Ritualistic                                     | Current member questions and their OES history |
| Constitution and Code of Laws                   | Endowed Membership                             |
| Interpretation of Ritual                        | OES Supplies, Official Bulletin, paraphernalia |
| Interpretation of Constitution and Code of Laws | Annual reports                                 |
| School of Instruction information               | Donations to projects                          |
| Fundraising or Raffle questions                 | Chapter contact information and address        |
| Member / Chapter violation of Obligation        | Secretary Interface                            |
| Fraternal Visits                                | OES Website                                    |
|   | Order Secret Work (requires dispensation)      |

## **VI. Records Retention Schedule**

The Chapter records are an essential part of the history of an OES Chapter and the Grand Chapter. Petitions, Investigation Committee, member records, receipts for significant expenses, Annual Reports, and Chapter Minutes are maintained permanently. The WM's Annual Report and Treasurer's report are saved with the minutes and are stored permanently. Financial records are kept along with warrant books, check register, dues card stubs, and bank statements for five years. Correspondence and reports (unless kept with the minutes) are maintained for two years.

## **VII. FAQ**

### **1. Does the Worthy Matron decide the Order of Business?**

No. The Worthy Matron must follow the Order of Business set out in the Chapter Bylaws. This order may be suspended only after the reading of the minutes and by at least a two-thirds vote of the members present (Article 258).

### **2. Is it necessary to include in the Minutes all names and titles of Grand Officers, names of protem officers?**

All names and titles of Grand Officers should be recorded, if possible—names and stations of protem. Officers must be included in the Minutes. The number of Past Matrons and Past Patrons, members, and visitors should be recorded. This is your Chapter's history.

### **3. What records should be permanently retained?**

- Member's individual records
- Chapter minutes
- Chapter Bylaws and all Amendments
- Receipts for major expenditures
- Chapter Annual Reports
- Petitions

### **4. How long must you keep the Worthy Matron's Annual Report?**

Not less than five (5) years. A copy should be made a permanent part of the Chapter Minute Book.

### **5. Determination of being 100% in Humanitarian.**

One dollar (\$1.00) per member, based on the present membership shown on line 15 of the Annual Report (Recapitulation page). This amount must be paid to the Humanitarian Chairman on an annual basis. You may choose any project of the current Worthy Grand Matron for your donation.

Your total Chapter membership is shown in the Directory to the right of your Chapter name and number. The number in parentheses (2) is how many plural members you currently have and is included in your total membership number. The number to the right of this is your membership as of May 31. The Form with your Humanitarian Chairman's address is available on the Grand Chapter Website and should be attached to your donation.

### **6. How do you determine if a Petition is ready to be read in your Chapter?**

It must be presented on the proper form, recommended by two (2) members of the Chapter, be accompanied by the appropriate fee, and read only at a Stated Meeting. The petitioner must be at least 18 years of age. The male petitioner must be a Master Mason in good standing at his Lodge. Female petitioners must be qualified for membership as per our Ritual.

**7. Can the Worthy Matron or another Chapter Member inform the Petitioner that they have been accepted or rejected as a candidate?**

No. Only the Secretary may inform the Petitioner of the results of the ballot. This should be done as soon as possible after the ballot.

**8. Do you need to read entire invitations and announcements?**

No. It is permissible to state the highlights of the invitation or announcement and state that the item is on the Secretary's desk if anyone needs further information.

**9. Can the Secretary fill out Warrants before the Chapter meeting?**

Yes. Warrants may be filled out for usual bills, such as rent, post office box rental, etc., ahead of time to save time at your meeting. You should wait on Warrants for Humanitarian donations, as your Chapter should vote on which project they wish to support.

**10. How is the Chapter Ledger to be kept?**

A Ledger sheet for each member is required. One should be completed for each Petitioner, even in the event of a rejection, as this is an official record. The Ledger sheets must be ordered from the Grand Secretary's Office. All data on the sheet is important and should be filled out. Your Ledger sheets should be kept in alphabetical order, and the name is to be recorded exactly as it appears on the Petition. All Ledger sheets must be retained in the permanent record file. You may wish to have separate files for active, inactive, and rejections.

**11. What is a good method of transferring money from the Secretary to the Treasurer?**

It is always a good idea to "earmark" where the money collected at each meeting is to be dispersed. In our Chapter, we use the Form below so we have a record of our money:

| Date Collected | ##/##/20## |
|----------------|------------|
| Dues           | \$         |
| Fees           | \$         |
| Silver Drill   | \$         |
| GC Supplies    | \$         |
| Donations      | \$         |
| Refunds        | \$         |
| Fundraisers    | \$         |
| Other          | \$         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$</b>  |

## **VIII. Contact Information**

### **Grand Chapter Office / Office of the Grand Secretary**

8101 Valcasi Dr., Suite 101, Arlington, TX 76001

(817) 563-1244

### **Mrs. Janet Travers, Grand Secretary**

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### **Mrs. Suzanne DeVine, Grand Treasurer**

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### **Mrs. Betty Hancock, Secretary's Interface Specialist**

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### **Mrs. Kate Cecil, Official Bulletin Editor**

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