

MOST IMPORTANT WORDS IN LEADERSHIP

The six most important words:
“I admit I made a mistake.”

The five most important words:
“You did a good job.”

The four most important words:
“What is your opinion?”

The three most important words:
“If you please.”

The two most important words:
“Thank You.”

The one most important word:
“We”

The LEAST important word:
“I”

YOU the PRESIDENT

As the chosen leader of your Unit or District, you should have a working knowledge of parliamentary procedure. You should be familiar with the objectives, bylaws and other rules of the American Legion Auxiliary. You don't have to memorize everything, but you do need to know where to find the answers. Of course, you'll set the example for impartiality, courtesy and obedience to rules.

Check the bylaws and standing rules for specific duties of your office. In general, as President you will be expected to:

- ✓ Be the official representative of your organization.
- ✓ Preside at all meetings of the Unit and of the Executive Board.
- ✓ Refer to yourself as "the chair." ("I" is not used.)
- ✓ Call meetings to order on time.
- ✓ Determine that a quorum is present.
- ✓ Announce, in proper order, the business to come before the meeting.
- ✓ Recognize members entitled to the floor.
- ✓ State and put to a vote all questions that legitimately come before the assembly.
- ✓ Announce the result of each vote and the effect of the action.
- ✓ Expedite business in every way possible without denying members their rights.
- ✓ Enforce rules of debate, order and decorum.
- ✓ Respond to relevant questions of members.
- ✓ Refrain from voting except when the vote is by ballot or when your vote would change the result.
- ✓ At the proper time, declare the meeting adjourned (by general consent or by a vote of the assembly.)
- ✓ Stand while calling a meeting to order, while declaring it adjourned and while taking a vote.
- ✓ Carry out administrative and executive duties outlined in the bylaws or as directed by the assembly.
- ✓ Follow through to ensure that the secretary, treasurer and committees have completed their tasks properly.
- ✓ BE CERTAIN TO SEND ALL REQUESTED INFORMATION TO DEPARTMENT.
- ✓ Give all pertinent information received to the proper chairman or officer ASP.

The president is an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee. This is not a duty of the office, but a privilege. Ex-officio means "by virtue of office." The president has all of the rights extended to other members of the committee – to make motions, debate, vote, etc. The president is not obligated to attend committee meetings and is not counted in the quorum. However, it is the duty of the committee chairman to notify the president of each committee meeting.

Consult the Auxiliary Handbook for a sample agenda and duties of the President.

YOU the VICE-PRESIDENT

As the chosen second in command of your Unit or District, you should be prepared to step into the role of president at a moment's notice. In the case of temporary absence of the president, you'll be expected to perform those duties. In the case of permanent absence of the president, you'll become the president. You should be familiar with the objectives, bylaws and other rules of the American Legion Auxiliary. You don't have to memorize everything, but you do need to know where to find the answers. Of course, you'll set the example in impartiality, courtesy and obedience to rules.

Check the bylaws and other rules of your Unit or District for specific duties of your office. In general, as vice-president you'll be expected to:

- ✓ Be the official representative of your organization, on request of the president.
- ✓ Preside at meetings of the Unit or District and the Executive Board in the absence of or at the request of the president. If the first vice-president isn't available, the second vice-president should be available.
- ✓ When presiding at meetings, follow the duties of the president.
- ✓ Carry out administrative and executive duties as outlined in the bylaws or directed by the executive board or assembly.
- ✓ Serve as chairman of a standing committee, if specified in the bylaws or directed by the executive board or assembly.
- ✓ The president is an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee. This privilege does not transfer to the vice-president during the temporary absence of the president.
- ✓ In the temporary absence of the president, you may be required to prepare an agenda for the meeting where you will preside. This information will be found in the Auxiliary Handbook.
- ✓ Always exhibit an aura of calm, level-headedness. An amiable smile and attitude of complete impartiality will do more to keep the troops on target than a book full of rules.
- ✓ Use the gavel to have quiet only when absolutely necessary. Tapping the microphone – or just silently waiting – usually will get their attention and hold it.
- ✓ Stand while processing motions and taking votes.
- ✓ Sit while hearing reports and communications.
- ✓ Take the vote by unanimous consent on matters that are not controversial: such as, approval or correction of minutes, adjournment, courtesy motions, etc. Just say, "If there is no objection....."
- ✓ CONSULT THE AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY HANDBOOK.

YOU the SECRETARY

As the person chosen by your organization to serve in the important position of secretary, you should have a good working knowledge of parliamentary procedure. Your secretarial duties are only second in importance to those of the president. The president is the head of the organization and the secretary is its right hand. Unlike the president, the secretary forfeits no rights of membership by holding office. You're free to make motions, debate and vote on all business matters.

Check the bylaws and other rules of the American Legion Auxiliary for specific duties of your office. In general, as secretary you will be expected to:

- ✓ Keep a careful and authentic record of the proceedings of all business meetings of the organization and of the executive board. These are the legal records of your organization.
- ✓ Send to the president a copy of the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting.
- ✓ Read the minutes for approval by the assembly, when requested by the presiding officer. Stand while reading and project your voice so all can hear.
- ✓ Allow members to examine the minutes on request. Do not allow them to take the original minutes. You are responsible for them.
- ✓ Be at the meeting early. In the absence of the president and vice-presidents, call the meeting to order and immediately conduct the election of a chairman pro tem.
- ✓ Have at each meeting the minutes book, standing rules, Auxiliary Handbook, list of members, list of committee members, agenda, ballots and other supplies that may be needed.
- ✓ Be custodian of all papers belonging to the organization, not under the charge of any other officer.
- ✓ Maintain the official roll of members and call the roll when requested.
- ✓ Stand while calling the roll and speak clearly so all can hear.
- ✓ Conduct the official correspondence of the organization, except that which naturally falls to other officers and committees. Send out meeting notices.
- ✓ Sign, with the president, all the official acts, orders and proceedings of the organization.
- ✓ Carry out administrative and executive duties outlined in the bylaws or directed by the president, board or assembly.

MINUTES

A secretary is a valuable asset to an organization and should be chosen with careful consideration. This position should never be used as a reward or favor.

The minutes should never contain remarks made in debate and opinions of the secretary. Minutes should contain mainly what was done, not what was said by the members. They should be comprehensive, and yet as brief as is consistent with accuracy. Each motion made with its disposition should be in a separate paragraph for the sake of easy reference.

Minutes should be prepared in final form before being read and approved since they become the legal evidence of what transpired in the meeting.

The words *respectfully submitted* are no longer used before the signature.

The following additional rules and practices relating to the content of minutes are included to help you properly record the various actions that take place in ordinary business meetings.

- ✓ Write good minutes but avoid high flown language. Don't try to show off your literary ability.
- ✓ Leave a wide margin on one side of the page in which to make corrections. It's preferable to use red ink for corrections.
- ✓ Make short paragraphs.
- ✓ Ask that a motion be made in writing if it's long or difficult to record.
- ✓ Always report some action or disposition on every motion recorded.
- ✓ Main motions and resolutions should be recorded exactly as adopted. Each adopted amendment need not be shown. The main motion or resolution is recorded, as amended, in its adopted form.
- ✓ When a count has been ordered or a ballot vote taken, the number of votes on each side should be recorded.
- ✓ The names of those elected or appointed to committees should be listed.
- ✓ The secretary should sit near the presiding officer. This enables the secretary to write out motions and hand them to the presiding officer as they're made.
- ✓ The minutes of a board meeting follow the same rules for recording minutes as for any deliberative assembly. Committees generally keep only a memorandum of their meetings.
- ✓ Only the name and maker of the motion is recorded.
- ✓ The name and subject of a guest speaker can be included in the minutes, but not a summary of the remarks.
- ✓ No mention should be made in the minutes of what did not occur in the meeting (e.g., the fact that there was no unfinished business, that a committee had no report or there were no announcements is unnecessary.)
- ✓ When the minutes are approved, the word "Approved," with the secretary's initials and the date, should be written below the minutes.
- ✓ When corrections are made, the error should be bracketed and the correction written on the facing page or in a wide margin. NEVER ERASE ERRORS corrected in the minutes of the meeting. The minutes of the meeting at which the correction was made merely state that a correction was made without specifying the correction.
- ✓ Minutes can be corrected after they're approved, even years later, if the existence of an error or material omission becomes reasonably certain. Any member may propose a correction even though not present at the meeting in question.

A SECRETARY'S PLEA

Help me do my work well; to have the memory of an elephant
and by some miracle to be able to do five things at once.

Never let me lose patience; even when the president has me
search the files for hours for data that is later discovered on her desk.

Help me to understand and carry out all instructions without any explanation.

And, when the year ends, please give me the foresight not to throw out records that will be asked for in a few days even though I was told emphatically, "Destroy these. They're cluttering up the place.

-anonymous

YOU the TREASURER

As the person chosen by your organization to serve in the important position of treasurer, you should have a good working knowledge of parliamentary procedure. Your organization has chosen you for your financial integrity and accounting ability. You are the official keeper of their funds and trustee of their accounts. When large sums of money are involved, you and the other officers who handle funds should be bonded.

Check the bylaws and other rules of your organization for specific duties of your office. In general, as treasurer you will be expected to:

- ✓ Be custodian of the funds. Collect, deposit and disburse the funds of the organization.
- ✓ Give a receipt (retaining a duplicate copy) for any cash or checks received, especially when collecting dues.
- ✓ Disburse funds only as authorized by the bylaws, standing rules or the assembly.
- ✓ Verify that all bills are within the budgeted amount for that account fund. Present all bills to the assembly for approval.
- ✓ When an over-budget bill is presented for approval, inform the members that the budgeted amount has been (will be) exceeded.
- ✓ Maintain accounts as established by the organization.
- ✓ Reconcile all bank statements with the check register.
- ✓ Order checks and check registers when needed.
- ✓ Prepare a written treasurer's report for each meeting with copies for the president and secretary. Give a verbal report when called for by the presiding officer.
- ✓ Be chairman or member of the budget committee.
- ✓ File applicable federal, state and local tax forms.
- ✓ Balance the books and prepare a fiscal year financial statement for the audit.
- ✓ Arrange transfer of funds to the new treasurer.
- ✓ Deliver all files and records to your successor after the audit has been completed and adopted.
- ✓ All transactions by the treasurer should be authorized by the organization either in the bylaws, standing rules or by an adopted motion.
- ✓ Dues and fees sent to higher levels should be sent by registered mail.
- ✓ A bank account should be maintained in the name of the organization. Under no circumstances should the funds of an organization be kept in a personal account or in an account identified by the name of the treasurer or other officer. The treasurer is responsible for the signature cards, properly signed and filed with the bank, prior to writing checks.
- ✓ The treasurer's books should be audited annually by an auditing committee. A new treasurer should not accept books unless they've been audited.
- ✓ The adoption of the auditor's report relieves the treasurer of any responsibility for the period covered by the report, except in case of proven fraud.

YOU the HISTORIAN

A historian prepares a narrative account of the society's activities during her term of office, which will become a permanent part of the society's official history.

The historian's narrative book often contains the only reference materials the organization has relating to its history. As our population has become more mobile, the requirements placed on the historian of an organization have become wider and more varied. Many officers and chairmen leave the area and no records are passed on to their successors. Therefore, the historian is expected to fill the more traditional role of a true historian. That is, a writer and keeper of historical records.

Specifically, as the person elected or appointed by the organization to serve in the position of historian you should prepare a narrative account of what the organization's activities and achievements were during your term of office. Detailed information should be given on all these activities and achievements.

Include in the book:

- ✓ Names of officers
- ✓ Names of committee chairmen and members
- ✓ Names of the parent organizations (Department) officers and chairmen
- ✓ Name of members serving on District, Department and National levels
- ✓ Social activities
- ✓ Awards presented to and by the organization and names of those honored.
This may be expanded to other awards received by individual members.
- ✓ Representation at special events (name of event and representatives)
- ✓ Activities that occur after the book was written but before the term is complete should be recorded as an addendum.

Include in a scrapbook:

- ✓ Newspaper articles and notices
- ✓ Newsletters and notices
- ✓ Pictures of events
- ✓ Annual reports of officers and chairmen
- ✓ Invitations
- ✓ Citations
- ✓ Letters and greeting cards
- ✓ Napkins and favors from special events
- ✓ Mementos of visitations
- ✓ More pictures

Check the Department Historian's Guide for the rules to enter your books for judging.

YOU the SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

As sergeant-at-arms you have been entrusted to keep order at the meetings and the care, advancement and retirement of the colors.

Check the rules of your Unit or District for the duties of your office. In general, your duties are:

- ✓ Discreetly calm any member who is being overly loud or disruptive.
- ✓ At the order of the presiding, remove a disruptive member from the meeting without touching her.
- ✓ Care for the flags and Bible.
- ✓ Advance and retire the colors.
- ✓ Greet guests
- ✓ Inform the president of the arrival of guests
- ✓ Escort guests to and from the podium
- ✓ Attend meetings regularly
- ✓ Any other duties requested by the president

YOU the MEMBER

Members join organizations for a variety of reasons. Seldom is it because they need to attend more business meetings. Even less often is it to demonstrate a knowledge of parliamentary procedure. Whatever the reason, they all want to be good members. Nothing gives members more satisfaction following a meeting than knowing they did the right thing at the right time. Learning a few basic rules will help avoid displaying an ignorance of customs which prevail in well-organized societies.

In general, as a member you will be expected to:

- ✓ Respect and abide by the objects, policies and rules of the American Legion Auxiliary.
- ✓ Know the organization's basic structure, policies and manner of operation.
- ✓ Pay dues promptly.
- ✓ Hold office, if elected
- ✓ Serve on committees, if appointed
- ✓ Attend and participate in meetings
- ✓ Be on time...so that the president can begin on time
- ✓ Pay attention...don't talk to your neighbor during the meeting
- ✓ Address all remarks to the chair...don't talk across the room
- ✓ Make motions and start with the words, "I move..."
- ✓ Talk loudly enough to be heard
- ✓ Know what you're voting on...ask if it isn't clear
- ✓ Vote on motions...take an interest in what's happening
- ✓ Withdraw motions you wish you hadn't made
- ✓ Be alert to what appears to be incorrect procedure.
- ✓ Be sensitive to the feelings of your fellow members. Credit them with the best possible motives for the actions.

In meetings, there is a time to rise (stand) and a time to be seated. Knowing the difference will help build your credibility as a member who knows and uses good parliamentary procedure.

RISE to address the chair and make a motion.

Remain seated to second a motion.

RISE to address the chair when discussion is in order.

Remain seated while others discuss your motion.

RISE when the chair takes a rising (standing) vote.

Remain seated when you vote by show of hands.

RISE to make a report.

Remain seated while the report is under discussion.