



## **Introduction to the Office of BRANCH SECRETARY**

Your experiences as Branch Secretary should be rewarding for you and you can play a key role in helping the branch to exist with a positive outlook. Look for the positives in everything. Whatever you focus on - you will be drawn to - negative or positive. There is no right way to do the wrong thing. So focus on being the best you can be, by learning to do your job well. Then you will find the job will be easy and most of the time, fun. Standing still is the same as moving backwards so always be in a learning mode.

When we use the term "Branch Secretary", we are referring to the member who is elected or appointed to the office and is unpaid. (Reference: General By-Laws for Branches)

The Branch Secretary is an Officer of the Branch and a voting member of the Executive Committee if unpaid. If paid, they do not have the authority to move or second motions or vote on any business at Executive Meetings. However, they do retain the aforementioned rights as Branch Members and may exercise those rights at General Meetings. If the Secretary needs assistance with recording Minutes, the Branch may—by Regulation—authorize the appointment of a recording Secretary who will not be an Officer of the Branch.

The Office of Branch Secretary is a very important one. The Branch Secretary is the key person to the organization and the right-hand person to the Branch President. The Branch Secretary has many responsibilities such as the following:

- The Branch Secretary carries out his/her duties in accordance with the wishes of the Executive Committee, and is the scribe, the organizer and the coordinator of the Branch.
- The Branch Secretary attends all Regular General, Special General and Executive Committee Meetings and keeps a complete and accurate account of all business transacted.
- If the Secretary is recording Minutes on a laptop, it will then be easy to copy the reports into the Minutes.
- Receives and replies to all correspondence promptly and answers all questions from Dominion and Provincial Commands (including Zone and District levels)
- Keeps an up-to-date membership list of all categories, working in conjunction with the Membership Committee.
- Advises the Zone Secretary and Ontario Command when there has been a change of Branch President or Branch Secretary in order that Provincial and Dominion Commands may keep their mailing lists up to date. Also, responds by the deadline date with the latest Branch Profile, as soon as possible after the election of officers, to the Zone Secretary and advises Zone Secretary of any changes.
- Prior to every meeting the Branch Secretary should see to it that all members are advised

in ample time as to the nature of the meeting, with the date, time and place clearly stated. This can be done in a regularly distributed Branch Bulletin, except for special meetings for which a Notice of Motion has been given that requires the membership to be notified 10 days prior to the meeting, such as borrowing, mortgaging, leasing or conveying real property, or any other meeting that is required by bylaw.

- Ensures that an agenda is prepared for the use of the Branch President or Branch Chair (if elected) before a meeting.
- Has on hand the minute book, correspondence, ritual, bylaws and other records needed for the business of the meeting.
- Supplies to each new member upon initiation: (a) A copy of the Ontario Command Bylaws, Branch Regulations and House Rules, and an Official Royal Canadian Legion lapel Badge.
- Shall be the recipient of all complaints against Branch members.
- Ensures that the Standing Committee Chairs present their reports to the General Meeting in writing (section 607 GBLB of the Provincial Bylaws) and give a copy to the Secretary (ideally by email)

The Branch Secretary should have on hand for reference at meetings, the following Legion Publications:

- Rules of Procedure for Legion Meetings
- The General Bylaws (Dominion)
- The Provincial Bylaws (General Bylaws for Branches)
- The Branch Regulations
- The Ritual Awards and Protocol Manual
- The Legion Officers' Manual Plus
- The Branch Minute Book

For recording Minutes, you need a notepad, pencils and pens or if desired, a laptop.

The Branch Secretary must become familiar with these publications for easy reference when required.

You will work closely with the Branch President to assist wherever you can. The Branch President oversees the day-to-day operation of the business. Be accountable for your actions and encourage everyone else to be also. We are there to serve, it's not about us. Help your President maintain harmony within the branch. This won't always be easy, do not listen to negative thoughts or gossip.

## **Correspondence:**

The Branch Secretary receives and replies to all correspondence, completes questionnaires, corresponds with all levels of Command and other agencies for the business of the Branch. Properly handled correspondence will go a long way to solving the communication problems.

In order to do this, you must have the co-operation of your Executive Committee. All incoming mail is the business of the Branch, not just one individual. If mail is received at the home address

of the Branch President or a Branch Chair, they should give a copy to the Branch Secretary for inclusion on the Executive Agenda.

The Executive Meeting is held for the purpose of discussing and conducting the general affairs the Branch, and the administration of the policies authorized by the general membership, providing such policies are consistent with the General By-Laws and principles of The Royal Canadian Legion.

The General Meeting, which is the senior authority of the Branch (Reference Legion Officers Manual) discusses recommendations from the Executive Committee and decides on the business of the Branch. Sufficient time must be given on the Agenda, for new and general business from the membership. The General Meeting Agenda must comply with GBLB 804 unless Branch Regulations have stipulated otherwise. Special General and Annual General Meetings also have specific Agendas.

As Branch Secretary, you will be recording motions and any notices of motion, therefore you must be familiar with the proper handling of motions. To accomplish this, we suggest you refer to the Rules of Procedure for Legion Meetings for information on the various types of motion.

You are not expected to learn all this at once and there is lots of help available to you. One step at a time. Study the manuals and experience will come with time.

A Good Branch Secretary is invaluable in making sure that all the branch business is conducted properly, and in an orderly manner. Be the best you can be and be proud of your role in a successful Legion branch.

**Thank you for all you do.**