



Ohio 4-H
*Secretary's
Resource
Guide*

Name _____

Year _____ Age (as of January 1) _____

County _____

Club Name _____

4-H Advisor _____



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



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References

Adapted from Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
4-H Secretary's Record Book, June 2005.

Huron County 4-H Secretary's Manual, Bonnie Malone, Extension Educator.
Secretary, *Ohio 4-H Club Officer's Guide*. (2002). The Ohio State University.

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Secretary

You are a Leader

Your new position as secretary enables you to connect with your friends, fellow members, advisors, parents, and your community. You are responsible for accurate record keeping for your club by recording minutes of each meeting and communicating any correspondence received by the club. You interact with each club member when you take roll call attendance at the beginning of each meeting, so be creative and use that time to learn something about each member.

Guidelines for Secretaries

Before each meeting, gather all correspondence received since the last meeting so you can present it to the club. Be sure to have an up-to-date roll of members for easy attendance taking. Check the minutes of the last meeting for old business, such as tabled or postponed motions, and make a note to bring each item to the attention of the president.

After the meeting, write the minutes as soon as possible. Your minutes will be much more accurate and complete if you do them right away. If handwritten, be sure the final minutes are neat, legible, and written in ink. If typing, make sure the final minutes are in a font that will be easy to read. Sign the completed minutes. The person who is presiding when the minutes are approved will also sign. Write any necessary business letters or thank-you letters on behalf of the club.

After the last club meeting, give your completed record book containing the club roll, communications, committee lists, leader list, and meeting minutes to your leader. Be prepared to deliver all the secretary's supplies to your successor.

Club Roll

It is the secretary's responsibility to keep an accurate record of each member's attendance. Enter the names of your club's entire membership in your Club Roll list at the beginning of the club year. List the names alphabetically by last name. When new members join, simply add them to the bottom of the roll.

When the president asks you to take roll at the meeting, you should stay seated. Keep roll calls interesting by asking for various responses. Officers or committees may have roll call questions to use for some meetings.

Calling members by name and having them answer a question helps members get to know each other a little better. Some possible questions could be:

- What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
- If you could go anywhere in the United States, where would you go?
- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- What 4-H projects are you taking this year?
- What is your middle name?
- Who is your favorite super hero?
- What do you like best about Ohio?
- What do you like to do in your spare time?
- What is your favorite fair food?
- What is something you are thankful for?
- What is one goal you have for this year?

Another way to vary roll call is to have members guess the number of candies (or jelly beans, corn kernels, etc.) in a jar. After roll call, the person with the closest guess claims the prize!

When a member is present, mark an “x” or “p” in the correct box; when a member is absent, mark an “a” or leave the box blank. Members will be given an excused absence for illness and other reasons. Members must contact an advisor or officer prior to the meeting and explain why they are unable to attend the meeting. Members who are excused for the meeting should be marked “ex.”

Keeping accurate attendance records is very important. Your club or county may have a minimum number of meetings a member must attend to complete the year or be eligible to exhibit at the fair. If there are questions, you will be asked to share the attendance records in your club roll.

Advisor, Officer, and Committee Lists

Keep a list of all club volunteer advisors, including their phone number and email address. Also list all officers of the club and their contact information. A form is included in your record book. Having this information in one place will help you be able to quickly contact the leaders of the club. You may also want to copy the list for the advisors and officers when it is complete.

Keep a list of committees. These include standing committees of the club as well as any special committees formed during the year. Include the date the committee was formed and when they gave their final report. A form is included in your record book. Knowing what committees are active will help you remind the president to call on them during committee reports.

Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the meeting are the secretary’s most important job. The official minutes of the meeting are a permanent record of the 4-H club’s activities and actions. Minutes need to be neat and easy to read. They should always be written in ink or typed. In the minutes, you will need to include the following:

- type of meeting (regular or special)
- name of your club
- place and date of the meeting
- name of presiding officer
- time the meeting began
- number of members, leaders, parents, and guests present
- a statement that the minutes were approved as read or corrected
- an accurate treasurer’s report that shows previous balance, money received since last meeting, payments made after the last meeting, and current balance.
- reports of other officers and committees
- complete motions including:
 - a. name of the person presenting the motion
 - b. exact wording of the motion
 - c. who seconded the motion
 - d. whether the motion passed or failed
- committee appointments and assignments of members
- acknowledgement of any special programs or advisor announcements
- record of all members giving demonstrations and their topics
- acknowledgement of services to the club such as recreation, refreshments, etc.

A worksheet is provided for you to take notes at the meeting. Use the Meeting Notes Worksheets in your record book or use a system that works for you. Additional forms are available on line to download at ohio4h.org/families/members/officer-resources.

After the meeting is over, transfer the information from your meeting notes into a narrative summary on the Meeting Minutes Report Form. You will sign the bottom and the president (or presiding officer) will sign after the minutes have been approved. This document should be kept as your official club record.

Request that one of your advisors also takes notes during the meeting. This will give you someone to contact if you discover that you forgot to write something down.

Sample Minutes

Secretary's Minutes

Helping Hand 4-H Club

January 20, XXXX

The Helping Hand 4-H Club meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Green Thumb. The meeting was held at the Community Building.

Pledges

Pledges to the flags were led by Silver Star and Waving Hand.

Roll Call

Roll call was to name your favorite color. There were 24 members, three advisors, and six guests present.

Secretary's Minutes

Minutes of the December 18 meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's report showed a beginning balance of \$543.89; income of \$15 from the fair booth; and expenses of \$95.20 for pizza and pop at the year-end party; for a current balance of \$463.69.

Other Officer's Reports

Scoop Writer, news reporter, sent a news article to the Farmer's Update and Village Reflector about the year-end party.

Committee Reports

Red Clover, chairman of the Year-end Party Committee, reported that 14 members attended the annual event. All members were recognized for their 4-H accomplishments. \$95.20 was spent on pizza and pop for the party. Mary Doe moved to accept the committee report. Fawn Deer seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Unfinished/Old Business

There was no unfinished business.

Respectfully submitted,

Cramped Hand

Cramped Hand

Secretary

New Business

Mary Doe moved to sell candy bars for the annual fundraiser. Sandy Helper seconded the motion. After much discussion, Larry Helper moved to refer the motion to a committee of three to be appointed by the president and report back at the next meeting. Chris Clover seconded the motion. Motion passed. President Green then appointed Mary Doe, Silver Star, and Waving Hand to the committee. The committee will meet and present their suggestions for possible fundraisers at the next meeting.

John Brush moved to donate \$100.00 to the Agricultural Society to use for landscaping around the Cloverbud Barn at the fairgrounds. Chris Clover seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Misty Rain moved to have a Valentine's Party. Motion died for lack of second.

Advisor's Report

Mrs. Helper borrowed project books from the Extension office so members may look at the different project books available.

Larry Helper moved to adjourn the meeting. John Brush seconded the motion. Motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Educational Program

The educational program for the evening was members talking about the projects they took last year and what projects they might take this year. Everyone was given a Family Guide and then looked through the project books Mrs. Helper brought to the meeting.

Recreation and/or Refreshments

The Hand family served punch and cookies. There was no recreation.

(have president sign after being approved)

Green Thumb

President

Club Program

It is important that every 4-H club prepare a program of activities at the beginning of the year. This program may be prepared by the Executive Committee (the officers), a special program committee, or any variation that works in your club. The proposed program always needs to be adopted by the club. The secretary must include in the minutes the person who moved to adopt the program of activities for the year, who seconded the motion and whether the motion passed or failed. Keep a copy of the adopted club program with the secretary's book.

A club program of activities may take on many forms. It may be a single sheet or any size of booklet. The club program should include:

- meeting dates, times, and locations
- special meeting topics (safety, health, achievement, etc.)
- special activities planned (community service, project work, field trips, etc.)
- demonstration dates, who is providing refreshments, etc.
- advisor and member names and contact information

A copy of the approved club program should be given to every family. This allows families to put dates of upcoming 4-H activities on their calendars.

Club Constitution and Bylaws

Every 4-H club is required to adopt the Ohio 4-H Youth Development Club Constitution provided by The Ohio State University. Each club has to adopt the constitution one time, it does not have to be voted on every year. All clubs in existence in 2011 adopted the constitution. Clubs starting after 2011 had to adopt the constitution when they organized. Constitutions signed by the club president and organizational advisor when it was adopted are on file in the Extension office. Blank copies may be viewed at ohio4h.org/volunteers/volunteers/club-leaders/finances.

Although it is optional, clubs may create their own set of operational by-laws (as long as the added rules do not conflict with the club constitution). Bylaws include additional club rules, guidelines, expectations, or policies not listed in the constitution. A 4-H Club Bylaws Template is posted online at the same web address as the club constitution. Club bylaws must be approved by the club and signed by the president and organizational advisor. A signed copy of the bylaws should be filed at the Extension office.

Bylaws are the club's operational rules. They may change throughout the year. Bylaws may include:

- standard meeting dates and times
- order of business for a club meeting
- how officers are nominated and elected
- duties of the officers
- list of standing committees
- how special committees are set up
- what is expected of members
- rules regarding the completion of projects
- meeting attendance rules and consequences if rules are not met
- how bylaws may be amended

The club secretary should maintain a signed copy of the constitution and bylaws. These documents should be reviewed by the club each year. There should be a motion, second and passing vote recorded in the minutes adopting the bylaws each year. Bylaws may be changed with a standard majority vote any time throughout the year.

Each member should sign a copy of the approved constitution and bylaws each year. This signifies that every member accepts and is bound by the terms included.

Writing Invitations and Thank-You Notes

One of the club secretary's duties is to write letters as directed by the club. Most correspondence will be writing invitations and thank-you notes. When directed by the club president to send correspondence, do so in a timely manner and keep a copy with your secretary's records.

Writing an Invitation

Whenever your club is planning a special event that includes parents or other guests, it is the responsibility of the secretary to prepare invitations. For example, your club is preparing to install newly elected officers. It was voted on and approved by the club to invite all parents. The club voted (with two-thirds majority) to provide punch and coffee, and to ask each family to bring a dozen cookies for refreshments. The invitation to parents should be similar to this:

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Brush,

The Helping Hand 4-H Club cordially invites you to our officer installation ceremony. The ceremony will take place in the Sand Township Hall on Sunday, February 28, at 1:00 p.m. Coffee and punch will be provided. The club requests that each family supply one dozen cookies. Please provide an ingredient list with your cookies, in case anyone attending has a food allergy.

Sincerely,

Cramped Hand

Cramped Hand

4-H Club Secretary

Helping Hand 4-H Club

Writing a Thank-You Note

If your club receives a donation, has a guest speaker, or is given other gifts or services, it is the responsibility of the secretary to write a thank-you note. For example, Pam Smith, Sand Township Recycling Education, was the guest speaker for your club's recycling meeting. You need to write a thank-you note within three days after your meeting. The thank-you note should be similar to this:

Dear Mrs. Smith,

Thank you for coming to our 4-H meeting and giving a presentation on recycling. We now have a much better understanding of what we can do to clean up our environment just by making a few changes in our lifestyle.

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Cramped Hand

Cramped Hand

4-H Club Secretary

Helping Hand 4-H Club



I pledge
My **head** to clearer thinking,
My **heart** to greater loyalty,
My **hands** to larger service, and
My **health** to better living,
For my club, my community,
my country, and my world.

ohio4h.org

This publication and other officer resources can be found at **ohio4h.org/officerresources**. For other Ohio State University Extension, 4-H Youth Development publications, contact your local OSU Extension office or purchase online at **extensionpubs.osu.edu**. Ohio residents get the best price when they order and pick up their purchases through local Extension offices.