

AFGC Club Secretary Guidelines

Club Bylaws

- Read your club's bylaws section for the Secretary's duties, which typically contains language such as:
 - Secretary shall:
 - Record the proceedings of the regular and executive board meetings.
 - Conduct the official correspondence.
 - Read communications received.
 - Maintain an archive of newsletters, yearbooks, and other relevant items.

Fiscal Year: Usually June 1 through May 31

RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICERS AND AFGC AS A 501 (c) 3 ENTITY (excerpt from the AFGC Bylaws)

No part of the net earnings of the garden club shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, officers or other private persons, except that the garden club shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II.

No substantial part of the activities of the garden club shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation and the garden club shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publication or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or opposition to any candidate for public office.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, the garden club shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried by a garden club from federal income tax under section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Suggested Procedures & Timelines

- After induction of the new Secretary, arrange to meet with the incoming secretary to transfer all records and supplies.
- Attend all meetings of the club and the executive committee.
- Request that the Club President provide a written agenda before the meeting to help with taking minutes.
- Write up and provide the minutes of the meeting by your club's deadline.
- Minutes should:
 - Should reflect the entity, date, presiding officer and the recording secretary, and location
 - Should reflect all business voted on
 - The name of the maker of a motion – but not the seconder
 - Motions as ultimately amended – not the process getting there
 - Should reflect discussion if related to a project that did not require voting at the time
 - Should never reflect any opinion or any editorial comment
 - Can be corrected at any future time
 - Must be retained permanently

Tips for writing meeting minutes

- Minutes should be less than a page for most of your garden club business
- Start with who, when and where the meeting opened
- Report the disposal of the minutes (approved as read, as corrected, as distributed)
- If minutes are pre-distributed, then there is no need to read them at the meeting
- No formal motion is needed to adopt minutes as presented (it is not wrong to have a motion to adopt but it is not necessary)
- Report the balances your club members are interested in (bank balance, working balance, earmarked funds)
- Report who made a motion, what the motion was, (do not bother with who seconded it) and how the motion was disposed (carried, failed, unanimously carried)
- Record motions as ultimately amended – do not include the process to the final motion
- Refrain from “fixing” the motion to what they meant – record what was voted on, not your interpretation of the motion
- Report who reported but not what was reported (this is in their written report to the director or president, etc.). Do not list the menu for the Christmas party. Only that the Christmas party was discussed.
- Report the time of adjournment
- Minutes are not your club’s history – use your newsletter for that

What is Penny Pines?

- For every \$68 collected by members, the club sends a check to the AFGC Penny Pines Chair along with the Penny Pines form. AFGC forwards this to the NGC/USDA Forest Service program to assist in the replacement of burnt or damaged trees in conjunction with federal funds. Seedlings are replacements and/or trees native to that particular area and are not necessarily of the pine variety. You are able to designate which National Forest in Arizona that you would like the funds to be used. You are also able to make the donation in honor or memory of someone.

Tax Returns

- AFGC will send a form for Certification for Filing Form 990-N to the club Treasurer in the summer.

Forms – some of these are updated every two years or when there is a new AFGC Treasurer, you can find the latest version of forms at: <https://www.azgardenclubs.com/member resources/>

- Reporting Hierarchy
- Leadership Toolkit
- Awards Rules
- Awards Application
- AFGC Life Membership Application
- PRGC Life Membership Application
- NGC Life Membership Application
- AFGC-Expense-Reimbursement-Form-2021

What does AFGC do with your dues?

We are a group of gardeners who have organized on a local, state, national, and international level. Sixteen local clubs and two plant societies make up the Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. Fifty State Garden Clubs, the National Capital Area Garden Club, and 447 international affiliates make up the National Garden Clubs, Inc. Our members create a powerful voice and expansive network for advancing common interests, not only from our local communities but all over the world. We provide education, resources, and national networking opportunities for our members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility.

Specifically, of the \$12.50 per member that each club sends to AFGC, one dollar goes to NGC for state dues. AFGC also pays \$90 in dues annually to NGC Pacific Region. Other AFGC expenses that can benefit clubs or their members include event insurance, scholarships, our website and newsletter, conventions and annual meetings, symposiums, and hosting NGC schools.

Fundraising Ideas

- Plant/yard sale
- Garden tour
- Garden tea party
- Afternoon at the Movies
- Gardening calendar
- Selling homemade craft items at community events
- What is your club doing?

Alternate methods of payment (CC, PayPal, Venmo, Square, etc.) Several clubs have been successful using PayPal as a means to accept online payment. If you already have a PayPal account for your club, it's easy to request a Zettle credit card processor, which connects to your PayPal account.

There are also other options such as Square and Venmo. If you have questions about setting any of these up, contact the AFGC Treasurer and we can help point you in the right direction.

SCAMS and how to avoid falling into them

Small non-profit organizations are often the target of scammers since the officers do not usually work together on a daily basis and often conduct business via email. One of the most common email scams is someone impersonating the president of an organization in an email asking the treasurer to pay a vendor immediately. Here's how you as the treasurer can prevent falling into this type of scam:

1. Scammers will generally be very insistent that the matter is urgent and they need you to act right now. The email may be just one line: "Peggy, I need you to send a check for \$345 to xyz company today. I'll get the details to you later. Kim" If you get an email like this, pick up the phone and call (or text) your president and make sure she (or he) really made the request.
2. Check the "From" header to make sure the sender's email address really is the email address of the president. It is very easy for scammers to change the "From" text (i.e., Kim Rosenlof) but not the "From" address <kim@rosenlof.com>. Using Kim as an example, if you see Kim Rosenlof <reply1324@gmail.com>, you know the email is not actually coming from Kim Rosenlof.
3. If the email requests you to pay in Visa/MC debit, Amazon, Wal-Mart, Apple, Google Play, or any other type of gift card, or requires that you use Western Union or another wire service, suspect fraud immediately. NEVER PAY ANYONE OVER THE PHONE OR BY EMAIL BY WIRING MONEY OR WITH GIFT CARDS.

Other scams to be on the lookout for:

- Predators impersonating legitimate businesses (such as PayPal, your club's bank, Zelle, Venmo, etc.) or government agencies (IRS, Better Business Bureau, Social Security Admin, etc.) on the phone or by email.

Be very wary, don't provide ANY information, and if the caller is very insistent, hang up and call the entity using a publicly provided phone number (NOT one given to you by the caller).

- Tech support scams by "businesses" who contact you to tell you there is a virus on your computer
- You receive a letter that demands payment on a debt you've never heard of – especially if your club has its own website. Domain name registries are common scammers that send carefully worded "invoices" that may convince a new club treasurer that they have to pay this bill when in fact it is a solicitation.