

Handbook for Committee Chairs

United States Women's Curling Association

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Introduction

USWCA Mission and Goals

A Message to New Committee Chairs

Preparing for Fall or Winter Meetings

- Contacting Committee Members**
- Arranging Conference Calling**
- Creating an Agenda**
- Reviewing the Prior Minutes**

Attending a Fall or Winter Meeting

- Meeting and Greeting**
- Running a Committee Meeting**
- What to Do if you are Unable to Attend In-Person**
- What to Do After Your Committee Meeting**
- When Approval is Needed from Executive Council and/or Board of Directors**
- Bringing a Motion to the Board of Directors**
- Preparing Your Reports**

Preparing your Reports

Continuing the Work After a Meeting

- Finalizing and Sending a Written Report of your Committee Meeting**
- Need for Interim Meetings & Handling of Interim Minutes**

Assistant Chairs & Succession Planning

- Making Succession Plans**
- Providing Guidance for the Next Chair**

In Closing

Appendix – Voting process flowcharts

Introduction

Committee Chairs are those entrusted with a leadership role in the USWCA. By taking on a Chair position, you have made a commitment to further the goals of the organization. Thank you!

When a USWCA member takes on the role of a Committee Chair, the prior Chair has always been key to mentoring the person who takes her place. The Bylaws outline the duties and composition of each committee, but more guidance is required to support your role. This handbook is meant to provide a handy reference to guide the yearly work of a Committee Chair.

The main goal of a Committee Chair is to move the business of the committee forward in a way consistent with the goals of the USWCA as outlined in its Strategic Plan, and responsive to requests from Officers, the Executive Council and the Governance Committee. This handbook is a tool you can use to support your work as a Committee Chair.

USWCA Mission and Goals

The USWCA's strategic planning process reconsidered and updated its organizational mission and identified five goals that are most important to the organization. In leading committee work, consider how your committee advances these goals.

Mission

The mission of the USWCA is to develop, nurture, and promote the sport of curling among today's women and all youth.

USWCA Strategic Plan Goals:

1. The USWCA has a governance structure that makes the most effective use of the time, talent, and experience available to us, seeks to develop future leaders of the organization and reflects our geographic diversity.
2. The USWCA is a financially healthy organization that raises the funds needed to support its programs and priorities in a timely manner.

3. The USWCA is the acknowledged leader in the sport of curling for grass roots education, programming and opportunities for youth and women of all ages.
4. The USWCA is a vital resource promoting development, interaction, and education for curling communities.
5. The USWCA is an organization that creates, fosters, and develops a national network of representatives to grow the sport of curling.

A Message to New Committee Chairs

The best way to become familiar with the Chair position is to **understand the history** of your committee. Take some time to read reports previous Chairs have written about their committee meetings. These are located on the uswca.org website in the Reports tab of the Members Area. These reports should provide insights into the activities and decisions of the committee as well as motions brought to the Board of Directors for approval.

Review materials passed on from the previous Committee Chair. If available, a job description and task list by month will guide you throughout the fiscal year, May 1-April 30. Previous correspondence records will give you an idea of those with whom your committee works most closely.

Ask questions. Other Committee Chairs, as well as the Officers, are there to answer your questions and guide you along the way. Make use of this cohort of leaders. They are your colleagues, ready to give feedback, and enthusiastic to hear your perspectives. Start with the Officer to whom you report.

The President makes committee assignments in consultation with the individual Committee Chairs, with advice from the immediate Past President and the 1st Vice President, so be prepared to offer constructive feedback to her during summer planning for the year.

Congratulations and thank you for serving the USWCA as a Committee Chair in support of women's and youth curling.

Preparing for Fall and Winter Meetings

Contacting your Committee Members

One month before the Fall and Winter meetings, contact your committee members. The President will usually send a reminder to do so.

1. **Create your committee email list:** Each August, an updated list of your committee members will appear in the Members Area.
2. **To retrieve your committee members' email addresses:** Go to the **Members Area NEWS TAB** under the heading: *Roster of Officers, Representatives and Committee Members*.
3. **Send your message to committee members.** Consider including in your message:
 - A welcome
 - Date and time of your committee meeting. The updated schedule will be on the USWCA home page.
 - A link to the home page where they can get all other info.
 - Ask if they are attending in person or if they can attend by conference call or video teleconferencing.
 - Offer to conference them into the meeting by phone (instructions below), or by video teleconferencing.
 - Attach an agenda for your meeting.
 - Consider adding: "Now is a good time to make sure your contact information is correct in the Members Area. If you can't get into the Members Area, that means you may not have an account and need to create one: <http://www.uswca.org/members>."
 - Consider including a link to past committee reports: <https://www.uswca.org/members-reports>. Again, if they have an account, they should be able to go there. If not,

encourage them to create/request an account before the meetings.

Arranging Conferencing Calling

To conference up to five people using your phone line capabilities (most providers allow this), you can use your iPhone or Android phone. Ask your committee members to call your cell phone.

THEN:

iPhone: When the second person calls, select "Hold and Accept." Then, you'll see Merge as an option. Do this with each new call, up to five participants.

Android phone: Swipe the Green circle to take a second call. Then tap the Merge button.

In each case, put your phone on Speaker so all in the room can hear. If there is background noise from one of the callers, ask them to put their phone on Mute until they want to speak (conference courtesy).

If you prefer, use a **free conferencing service:**
freeconferencecalls.com.

Create an account (very quick process) with an email and create a password. They will give you a dial-in number (everyone conferencing in will need to dial that number for the meeting), access code (what people will use to join the phone call), host pin (what you use to begin the conference), and other info will be emailed to you.

Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing services also are available. For example, Zoom is free for meetings of any length between only two people or for up to 40 minutes for more than two people. Zoom requires payment for meetings for more than two people if they last more than 40 minutes.

To use Zoom, create a Zoom account, sign in, and schedule a meeting. Send the assigned link to all participants.

Test your conferencing method: If you have not used conferencing technology, test your chosen method before your meeting. Test conference calling with two friends, or with a friend's cell phone and a land line. For videoconferencing, schedule a conference with two or more friends and make sure your microphone, speaker and camera settings are working.

Creating an Agenda

Review your previous committee reports, including minutes from any interim conference call. List any outstanding issues that need discussion and decision-making. Estimate the amount of time needed to discuss each. Develop a concise explanation of each problem. You might also list some options for resolving it, with pros and cons of each, or you might begin with a brainstorming discussion.

Suggested Agenda Items:

- Member introductions. Note new Representatives or committee members.
- Topics for discussion
 - Old business from previous meetings. Include the results of action items that were assigned at the previous meeting and questions that had not been decided. Introduce any new information that bears on the decisions to be made.
 - New business. Introduce any tasks that Governance or other committees have asked the committee to address. Introduce other topics that are appropriate for the committee to take up.

Reviewing the Prior Minutes

You will be notified when the minutes of the last Board of Directors meeting are posted online. In preparation for the next meeting, take time to review the minutes. In advance of the meeting, notify the Secretary of any needed corrections or changes, especially to your

committee's report. Be prepared to approve the minutes with suggested corrections brought to the Secretary's attention.

Attending a Fall or Winter Meeting

Meeting and Greeting

As a leader of the USWCA, be prepared to welcome new Representatives to the organization. In addition to getting to know new members of your own committee, seek out and welcome other new attendees to the meetings. They could be future leaders of the organization; get them off to a good start.

As well, it is important that new Committee Chairs feel comfortable in their roles. Let them know they can come to you with any questions.

Running a Committee Meeting

Begin by sending around a sign-in sheet so that you can include a list of the attendees in your committee report. Asking someone to take notes while you facilitate the meeting can be quite helpful.

Your main role is to moderate the discussion. Allowing a chance for everyone to speak builds consensus, investment in your committee, and satisfaction with the outcome. Report what has happened since the last meeting and introduce the first agenda item. To encourage discussion, consider offering your own opinion only after others have expressed theirs.

Tips for including everyone's ideas and bringing closure to the meeting:

- Consider asking each committee member, in turn, to give their opinion and their reasoning, either before or after opening the issue to general discussion.
- If you open a question to general discussion, and some members have been more vocal than others, ask "Can we hear from the rest of you, who may not have spoken up so far?"

- Listen and reflect. Summarize the ideas members express. Ask if members feel they have reached a consensus.
- Assign tasks/action items and settle on a deadline to complete each task.
- Summarize what the committee accomplished, decisions made, items that might be passed on to another committee, questions/clarification needed from others.

Closed Session. If you have a sensitive issue to discuss that requires confidentiality, you may hold all or part of your committee meeting in closed session. Inform the President and Meeting Coordinator of your plan and make an announcement at the beginning of your committee meeting. Graciously excuse non-committee members when you wish to go into closed session. Establish the expectations among your committee members that they keep closed session discussions confidential.

What to Do if you are Unable to Attend In Person

Appoint an Acting Chair - Standing Rule 5

Although Committee Chairs are expected to attend the twice-yearly meetings in person, at times this is not possible. If you are unable to attend your committee meeting and/or any of the scheduled Executive Council and Board of Directors meetings, ask someone who is attending to be your Acting Chair. She will lead the committee meeting, attend both Executive Council and Board of Directors meetings, give your committee report, bring forward Motions from the committee, and vote on your behalf. **If you name an Acting Chair, notify both the Secretary and President - see Standing Rule 5 for information on how/when. DO NOT FILL OUT A PROXY.**

If possible, conference into your committee meeting. Although your Acting Chair will lead the meeting, your guidance will also be valuable.

What to Do after your Committee Meeting

Write Committee Report

Begin to write a preliminary report as soon after your committee meeting as possible. For more guidelines, see the “Preparing your Reports” section, below.

Attend Executive Council

Committee Chairs are all members of the Executive Council and will have a place on the agenda to speak to the group, as needed. Before the meeting, decide if you have something to present to that body, or if you will save your report for the Board of Directors meeting.

Reasons to present to the Executive Council

1. If your committee has developed a Motion for the Board of Directors to vote on, present that Motion to the Executive Council. (See the next section on **Preparing a Motion for the Board of Directors.**) Present the rationale for the Motion with any pro and con arguments and other helpful viewpoints. If there are objections to all or part of the Motion, revising it based on the feedback from the Executive Council is strongly advised before bringing it to the Board of Directors. If discussion during the Executive Council meeting indicates more committee work is required, do not bring a formal Motion forward but rather inform the Board of Directors about the Motion’s concept, try to find a consensus about what additional work is needed, and offer a timeline when a Motion may be expected.

Because proposed Bylaws are published in advance, they can wait to be read until the Board of Directors meeting. Only those that have been revised in some way during the meetings would be presented in Executive Council.

2. If your committee wants or needs to do something outside of what would be considered its normal operations — especially if it affects other committees or the organization as a whole, the Chair must present the issue(s) to the Executive Council. A vote from the Council and the Board of Directors may or may not be required depending on the issue. The Council can also offer guidance about how to proceed to carry out your committee’s decisions. This is also a good time to give your fellow leaders a heads-up about any changes coming or any potentially controversial issue in case a Motion or vote may be required.

If you have no motions, questions or issues of concern to discuss, save your report for the Board of Directors meeting.

Reasons to Attend the Representatives Meeting

The main reason to attend the Representatives meeting (if you are not also a Representative) is to present a Motion that has come from your committee. (See the next section on **Bringing a Motion to the Board of Directors.**)

Your committee may have important announcements that you wish to make before the business meeting.

Bringing a Motion to the Board of Directors

Vetting a Motion

If you or your committee have a Motion to present to the Board of Directors, it is important to build a consensus among voting members. To make sure that all Motions have adequate time for discussion, feedback, and debate, bring the Motion to both the Executive Council meeting (as described in the previous section) and to the Representatives Meeting.

The Executive Council and Representatives meetings are ideal forums for further vetting Motions from committees. Present both the pros and cons of your Motions, including some of the possible

implications of those Motions. Encourage questions and consider alternatives and amendments. This process will only make your proposal clearer and stronger.

Of course, at the business meeting (Board of Directors), any attendee can raise a further question or suggest an amendment.

Making a Motion

Paperwork:

If your committee has a Motion to present to the Board of Directors, provide a copy to both the Secretary and the President and keep one for your files. You may send your Motion in advance by email.

It is useful to bring your own hard copy from which to read the Motion, and on which you can note any changes or amendments made during discussion. You may need to reread the Motion prior to the formal vote. Include a date and your name. A Motion Form is available online for your use.

Follow up by sending the Secretary a digital copy (Word) of each Motion, as voted upon. Doing so ensures that the Motion is recorded in the minutes **exactly as submitted and presented for vote** to the Board of Directors.

Note: The Chair of the Bylaws Committee is available for consultation if help is needed with the wording of a Motion.

Procedure:

Consistent with *Robert's Rules of Order*, a Motion from your committee does not need a second, as it has already been vetted by multiple members of your committee. Introduce your Motion by summarizing the rationale that led to the Motion. Then, 1. Read the Motion verbatim and 2. Ask if there is any discussion.

When discussion has ended, ask, "Are we ready to move the question?" or "Are we ready for a vote on the Motion?" You might want to reread the Motion, especially if there has been extensive discussion. Then say, "All those in favor say 'Aye.' Those opposed say

‘Nay.’ Abstentions?” The Secretary will record the passage or rejection of the Motion.

If it is unclear if the Ayes or Nays are loudest, you may call for a vote by show of hands, where voting members indicate the number of votes, including proxies, they represent. If the nature of the Motion requires it, a vote may be conducted by paper ballot.

Refer to the Appendix for voting process flowcharts.

Preparing your Reports

After your committee meeting, you will make a brief oral report at the Board of Directors meeting and prepare a written report, which will be posted to the USWCA website and serves as a record of your committee’s work.

Your **oral report** to the Board of Directors is a **summary** of:

- Topics discussed:
 - State the main problems or questions the committee addressed, which may be drawn from your agenda
 - Report the consensus of the group or decision in each case.
- Accomplishments/ Challenges:
 - What you did or resolved
 - What challenges you are addressing
- Action Plan:
 - How you achieved your accomplishments
 - How you plan to address an objective, goal or challenge
 - Your timeline to do so
- Motions. (Follow Procedure in section on **Making a Motion**.)

The **written report** should include all of the above, PLUS:

- Date of meeting.
- Attendance list.
- A record of who took on a task (action item), if any, and when they plan to complete the task.
- Include topics left to discuss, decisions left to be made.
- Note if there is a plan to reconvene by conference/ video-call between regular USWCA Meetings.
- Include minutes from interim meetings in the minutes of the next regularly scheduled Fall or Winter Meeting.
- Your name, as submitter.

Committee Chairs often find it convenient to prepare their written report as soon as possible after their committee meeting, or during the Reps Meeting time.

Continuing the Work After a Meeting

Finalizing and Sending a Written Report of your Committee Meeting

As soon as possible after the Board of Directors Meeting, send a copy of your committee report to your committee members for feedback. Also, send to the Secretary an electronic copy of Motions you brought before the Board. This ensures that they are recorded in the Minutes exactly as read and approved.

After making any needed revisions, send the Secretary and the webmaster an electronic copy of your committee report, ideally two weeks after the meeting, but no later than 30 days afterwards.

What to Do Between Meetings

It is important for committee members to stay engaged between meetings. Soon after the meeting, carry out your own action items and follow up with anyone else who took an action item.

Interim meetings: If the committee had unfinished business at the end of the last meeting and the USWCA would benefit by having the issue resolved before the next in-person meeting, call an interim meeting by conference call or video-conference. An interim meeting is especially important if another committee or leader is awaiting a committee decision before they can act. Before the interim meeting, gather whatever additional information the committee might.

If a decision needs to be made and/or voted on by the Executive Council, be prepared to speak on the issue at the next regularly scheduled council meeting. If a decision and/or vote needs to be taken sooner, contact the President and ask for a virtual Executive Council meeting.

Interim Meeting Minutes: Keep minutes for any Interim meeting of the Committee. Write these minutes in the same way and at the same level of detail as minutes from a regular Fall or Winter meeting. **Prepare an oral report of the Interim meeting to give with your next presentation to the Executive Council and Board of Directors and submit the written version of the report along with the minutes of the Committee's next regular Fall or Winter meeting.**

Assistant Chairs & Succession Planning

Working with the President

Each incoming President appreciates when Committee Chairs who are ready to step down from their positions can recommend one or more members of their committees to step into the role of Chair.

However, it is the incoming President who makes these appointments for vacant seats.

You can make preliminary inquiries. If you ask individuals about their interest in serving as a Chair, make sure you let them know that the incoming President makes these appointments. For organizational development purposes, the incoming President must consider the balance of regional representation among the leadership, the challenges facing each committee and the skill sets individuals may bring to the position.

A Chair may name an Assistant Chair to assist the Chair with her work. Although assistants may be well qualified to serve as a Committee Chair, an Assistant Chair is not automatically “in line” to serve as Chair. Rather, they are there to assist the existing Chair. As described above, in making leadership appointments, each incoming President must make sure that appointments serve the organization as a whole.

Providing Guidance for the Next Chair

You will be an important mentor for the next Committee Chair. Give generously of your time to ensure a smooth transition.

A new Chair who takes on your role should be able to read about most of your committee’s work as summarized in your committee reports. It will also be helpful to pass on your position’s:

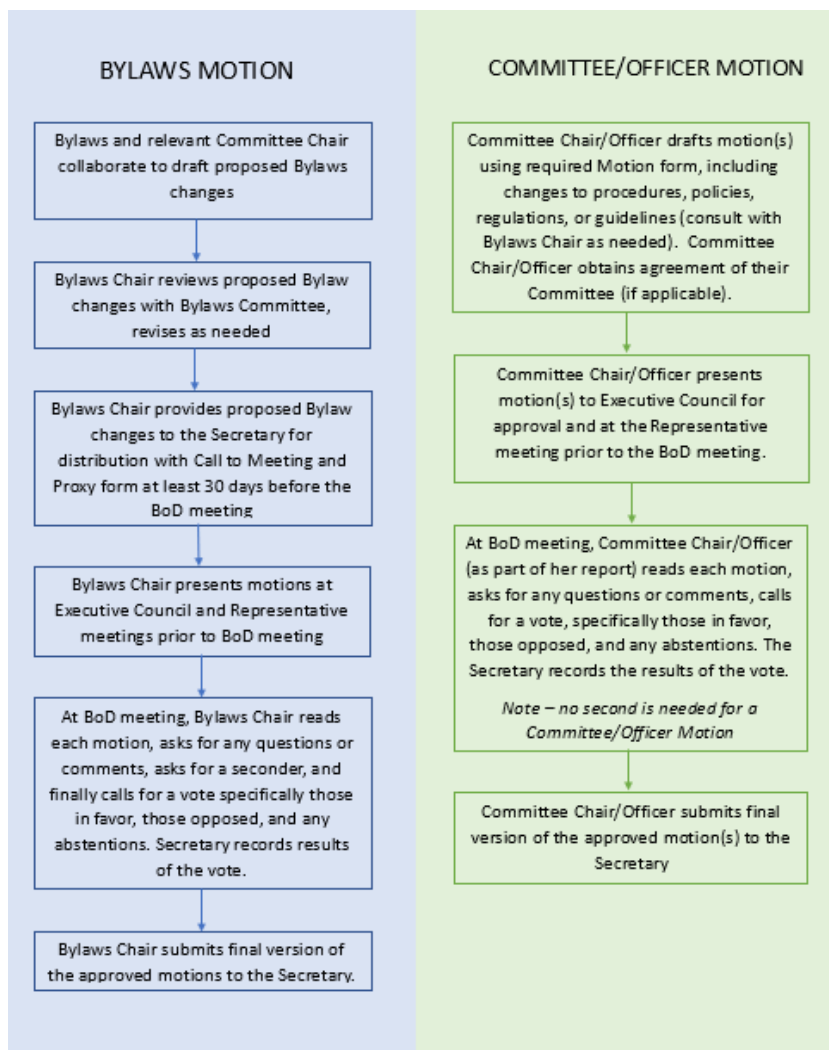
- Job description
- Timeline for completing tasks through the year
- Recent correspondence, especially that with host clubs for USWCA events

All Chair job description/timeline documents are now maintained by the Governance Committee and must be reviewed by you annually and updated if necessary. These documents can be found in the Member section of the USWCA website under Governance Documents.

In Closing

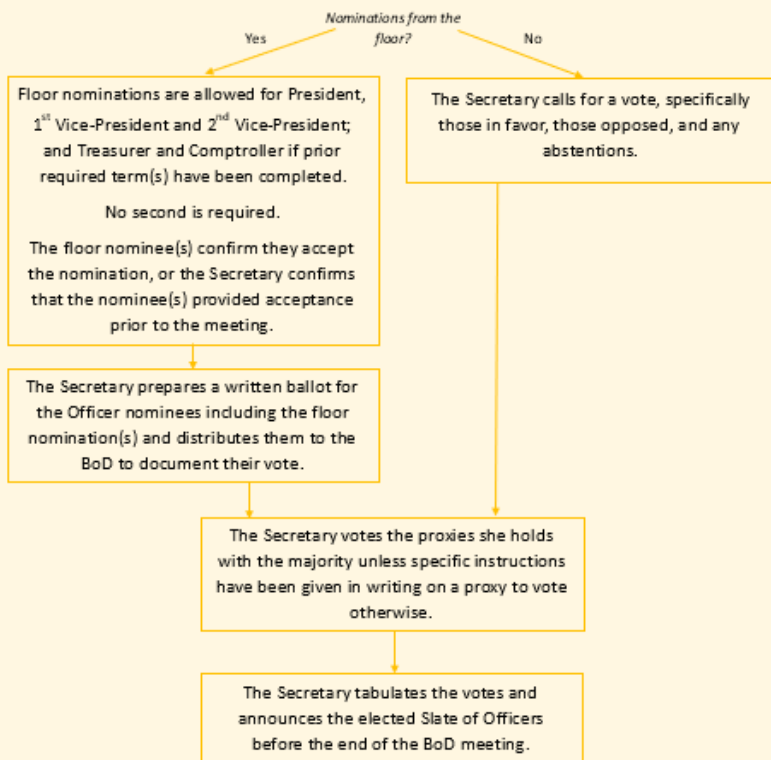
Most of all, enjoy your work with the USWCA's national network of curling women. The role of Committee Chairs is key to the promotion of women's and youth curling across the country.

Appendix – Voting process flowcharts



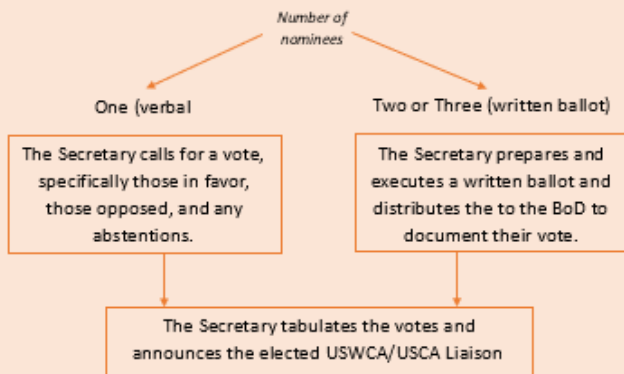
OFFICER ELECTIONS AT WINTER MEETING

Upon presentation of the report of the Nominating Committee at the Winter BoD meeting, the Secretary reads the published slate of nominees and calls for any nominations from the floor.



USWCA/USCA LIAISON ELECTION AT WINTER MEETING

The Nominating Committee solicits nominees from the general membership in advance of the Winter Meeting and if there is more than one nominee, the Executive Council will screen and select no more than three nominees for the vote.



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Flowcharts