

Handbook for Committee Chairs

United States Women's Curling Association

Created May 2020

Revisions made February 2022, March 2023, January 2025

Introduction	3
USWCA Mission and Goals.....	3
A message to new Committee Chairs.....	4
Prepare for Fall and Winter Meetings	5
<i>Contact your committee members.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Arrange virtual meeting participation</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Create agenda.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Review prior Board of Directors meeting minutes</i>	<i>7</i>
Attend Fall and Winter Meetings	7
<i>Meet and greet</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Attend your respective officer meeting</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Run your committee meeting.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>What to do if you are unable to attend.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>What to do after your committee meeting.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Bring a motion to the Board of Directors</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Prepare your reports.....</i>	<i>13</i>
Continue the work after the Fall or Winter meeting.....	14
<i>Finalize the written report of your committee meeting.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>What to do between meetings</i>	<i>14</i>
Succession planning	15
<i>Work with the President.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Provide guidance for the next Chair</i>	<i>15</i>
In closing	16
Appendix – Voting process flowcharts.....	17

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!

The main goal of a Committee Chair is to move the business of the committee forward in a way that is (1) consistent with the purpose and goals of the USWCA and (2) responsive to requests from Officers, Executive Council, and Governance Committee.

There are multiple resources available for new Committee Chairs including: (1) the prior Chair who has a key role in mentoring the person who takes her place; (2) the Bylaws that outline the composition and high-level responsibilities of each committee; (3) this handbook which helps to guide the yearly work of a Committee Chair

USWCA Mission and Goals

In leading committee work, consider how your committee advances the mission and goals of the USWCA.

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 website in the [Reports tab](#) of the Members Area. These reports 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. The Job Description and Committee procedure manual 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. Officers and other Committee Chairs can 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.

Prepare for Fall and Winter Meetings

Contact your committee members

One month before each of the Fall and Winter meetings, contact your committee members.

1. **Create your committee email list:** Each August, an updated list of your committee members and their email addresses are available in the Members Area under [Committee List](#).
2. **Send your message to committee members and include the following:**
 - Welcome
 - Date and time of your committee meeting - the updated schedule will be in the meeting section of the USWCA website.
 - Agenda for your meeting (see [Create agenda](#) section below)
 - Ask if they are attending in person or if they can attend by video or conference call.
 - Link to the USWCA website page where they can get all other meeting info.
 - 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.

Arrange virtual meeting participation

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. Request a USWCA Zoom meeting set-up from the Meeting Coordinator and provide the meeting link to your committee members.

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.

Create agenda

Review your previous committee reports, including minutes from any interim conference calls. 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:

1. Member introductions - note new Representatives or committee members.
2. 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.

Review prior Board of Directors meeting minutes

You will be notified when the minutes of the last Board of Directors meeting are posted online. In preparation for the next Board of Directors 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.

Attend Fall and Winter Meetings

Meet and greet

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.

Attend your respective officer meeting

Be sure to attend your respective officer's meeting in advance of your committee meeting. The purpose of that meeting is to get guidance from your officer/leader and keep her informed about what you are looking to accomplish with your committee throughout the year. You should also provide an update on any proposed motions you plan to take to the Board of Directors for a vote.

Run your 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. Allow a chance for everyone to speak to build 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 actions and settle on a deadline to complete each of them.

- 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

Appoint an Acting Chair – Standing Rule 5

Although Committee Chairs are expected to attend the twice-yearly meetings, 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.**

What to do after your committee meeting

Write your committee report

Begin to write a preliminary report as soon after your committee meeting as possible. For more guidelines, see the **Prepare your reports** section below.

Attend Executive Council

All Committee Chairs are members of the Executive Council. 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 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 **Bring a motion to 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 at the Board of Directors meeting but rather inform the Board of Directors about the concept behind the motion, try to find a consensus about what additional work is needed, and offer a timeline when a motion may be expected.

As proposed Bylaw amendments are published with the Call to Meeting, they do not need to be presented in detail at the Executive Council meeting. Only those that have been revised in some way during committee meetings would be presented to 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 should 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 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 **Bring a motion to the Board of Directors.**)

That said, your committee may have important announcements that you wish to make before the Board of Directors meeting and the Representatives Meeting is an opportunity for those announcements.

Bring a motion to the Board of Directors

Vet your 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 and to the Representatives Meeting as explained in the previous section.

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 Board of Directors meeting, any attendee can raise a further question or suggest an amendment.

Make your motion

Paperwork

If your committee has a motion to present to the Board of Directors, use the motion form distributed by the Parliamentarian prior to the meeting to document your motion. The Parliamentarian is available for consultation if help is needed with the wording of a motion.

Provide an electronic copy to the Secretary in advance of or after the Board of Directors meeting and keep the electronic document in your committee files.

It is useful to bring a hard copy from which to read the motion at the Board of Directors meeting, 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 if you have made changes based on questions or discussion.

Ensure that the Secretary has the final motion you present to the Board of Directors for vote so it is recorded in the minutes correctly.

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, read the motion verbatim ask if there is any discussion.

When discussion has ended, ask "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.

Prepare your reports

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

Your **verbal 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 achieved or resolved
 - The challenges you are addressing
- Action Plan:
 - How you plan to address an objective, goal or challenge
 - Your timeline to do so
- Motions – this section of your verbal report should follow the procedure in the section above called “Make your motion”

The **written report** should include all 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 Representatives Meeting time.

Continue the work after the Fall or Winter meeting

Finalize the 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 the Secretary an electronic copy of the final 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 videoconference. 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 committee meeting. Write these minutes in the same way and at the same level of detail as minutes from a regular Fall or Winter Meeting. Prepare a verbal 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.

Succession planning

Work 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.

Note: A Chair may name an Assistant Chair to assist with her work. Although Assistant Chairs 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 entire organization.

Provide 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

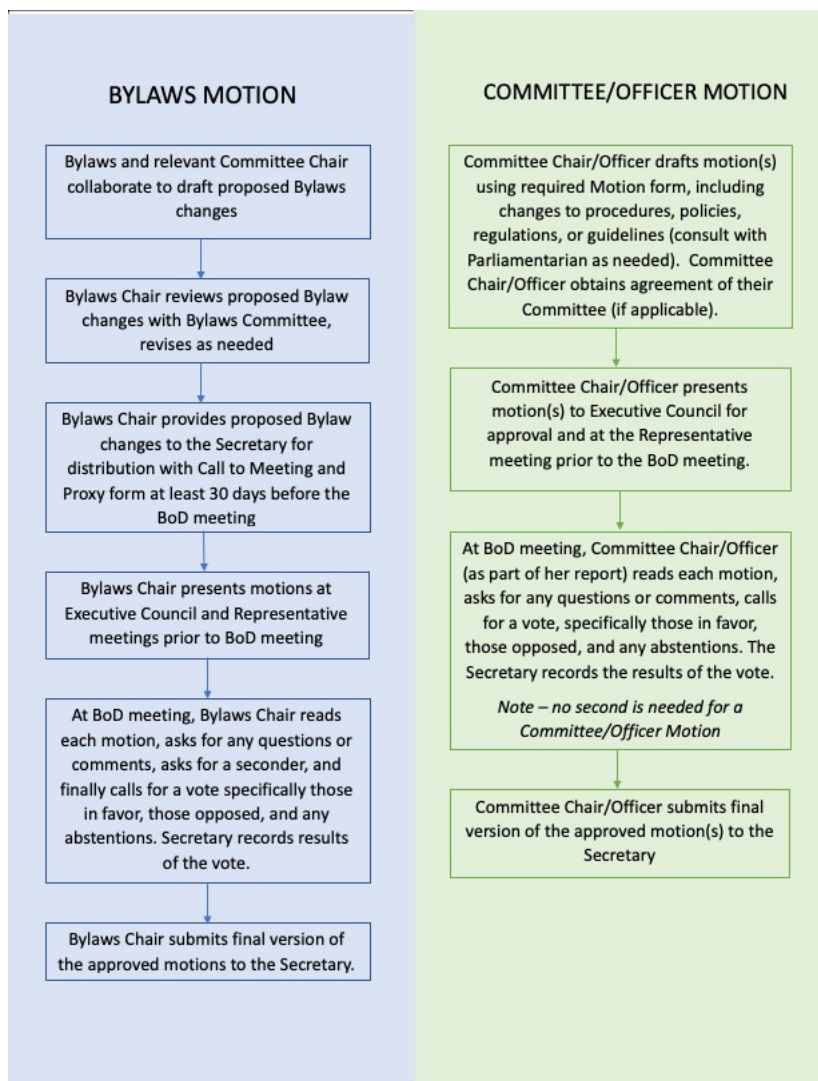
- Timeline for completing tasks through the year
- Any procedure manuals/guidelines that exist for committee work and/or events
- Recent correspondence, especially that with host clubs for USWCA events

All Chair job description/timeline documents are maintained by the President 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 [Committee Documents/Governance/Job Descriptions](#).

In closing

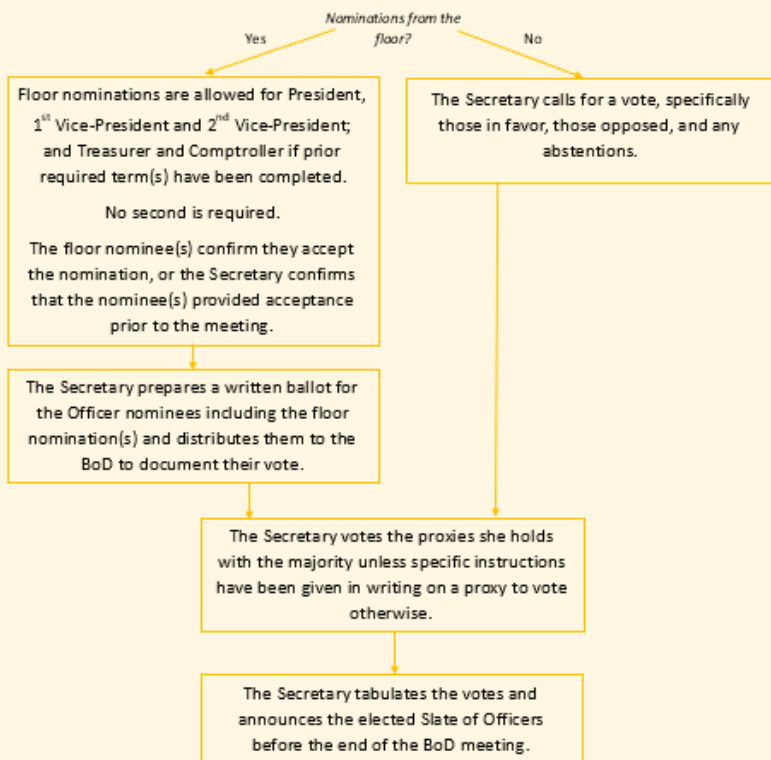
Most of all, enjoy your work with the USWCA's national network of curling women. The role of Committee Chairs is key to the promotion of women's and youth curling across the country.

Appendix – Voting process flowcharts



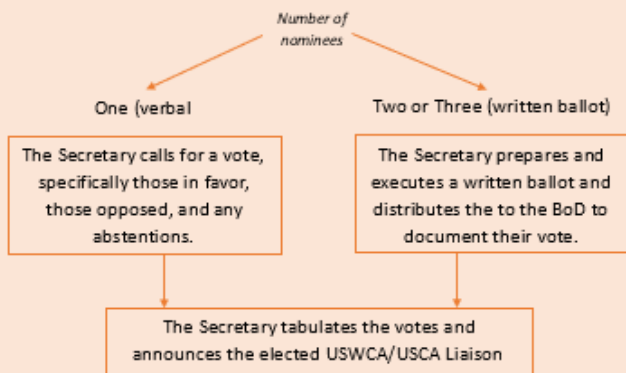
OFFICER ELECTIONS AT WINTER MEETING

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.



Created 5/16/202 Karen Brattesani, Carolyn MacLeod, Donna Pearson

Revised 1/14/2022 Carolyn MacLeod

Revised 03/19/2023 Cindy Riehl – added Appendix – Voting Process Flowcharts

Revised 01/21/25 Cindy Riehl – updated Table of Contents, fixed formatting and language for consistency, updated hyperlinks, generalized language around meetings to remove reference to “in-person”, updated Parliamentarian as point of contact for Committee motions