

# ***MEETING MINUTES AND LODGE RECORDS***

*A Guide for BMWED Lodge Officers*



A Joint Guide by the  
BMWED Secretary Treasurer's Department  
and BMWED Education Department



# Foreword



Part of the new series of *Guides* for our BMWED Lodge officers, *Handling Lodge Finances & Reports* will give our Lodge Secretary-Treasurers, Presidents, Audit Committees, and all our members a task-focused resource they can use to understand and fulfill their responsibilities in this critical work.

The content of this *Guide* condenses material previously found in the BMWED Secretary-Treasurer's Manual, offering our members a more accessible tool they can put to use in figuring out how to handle Lodge records, including meeting minutes.

When in doubt, our Lodge officers should know they have a team of experts within our union on their side, dedicated to supporting them and ensuring our Lodge officers are set up for success in what we do, together.

Any inquiries regarding the roles and tasks laid out in this *Guide* should be directed to our BMWED Secretary-Treasurer's Department or our BMWED Field Auditors. Their contact information can be found at <https://www.bmwe.org/directory>.



Burlington System Division Educational, 2008

# Notes on Revision

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## Proponency

BMWED Secretary-Treasurer's Department

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### **Edits or Changes should be addressed to:**

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**Approved for Unrestricted Release**

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# Getting Started

This *Guide* does not replace the governing documents which guide our union. While using this *Guide*, understand it supplements our BMWED Bylaws, your System Division's or Federation's bylaws, our IBT Constitution, and our BMW/IBT Merger Agreement. The intent of this *Guide* is to offer you a useful tool that makes the information in our governing documents more accessible for day-to-day work at the Lodge level.

This *Guide* works with others as a "toolbox" our Lodge officers can use. We learn by doing, and by focusing on tasks, not titles. At the Lodge level, our officers may lend each other a hand or hold more than one job within their Lodge. Whether you are holding a Lodge election, managing a Quarterly Audit Report, or building a meeting Agenda, we will have a *Guide* for that.

Remember! You are not alone in doing union work! Never hesitate to reach out to your sisters or brothers for assistance in finding out how you can act to build on the work that sustains our collective strength. We work together, we learn together, we stand together.

As we all learn by doing, it is essential that you take charge of your role and responsibilities. Find ways you can act in line with our overall mission and values. Where you need pointers or to understand our legal obligations, reach out to your elected leaders. As a Lodge officer, it's up to you to **DO** work that makes a positive impact on your Lodge and for your fellow members. It is important to know that your action matters! You are the leading edge of our strength as a union.

Know your agreement. Know our Bylaws and understand what we are here to accomplish together. Then, refer to this *Guide* as you find ways to **ACT** within your Lodge.



BURNOR System Federation Vice Chairman  
Josh Merrier at an action in KC, May 2022

# Gathering Your Tools



**Register for Member Access to our BMWED Website!**

[bmwe.org/account.aspx](https://bmwe.org/account.aspx)

- Find information
- Order Material
- Submit Reports
- Review Records

As a Lodge officer, you will do a more effective job, and your job will be easier, if you have all the tools for the work at hand.

While our union has its roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we work and act in the 21<sup>st</sup> century! We use online platforms and technology to be more agile and reduce unnecessary costs to our members.

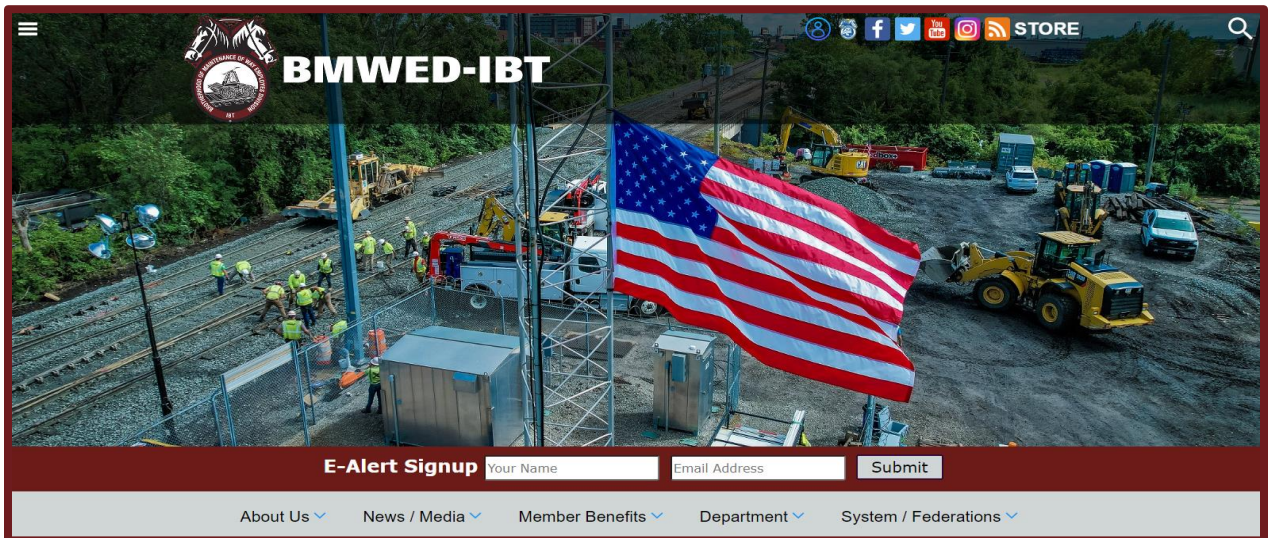
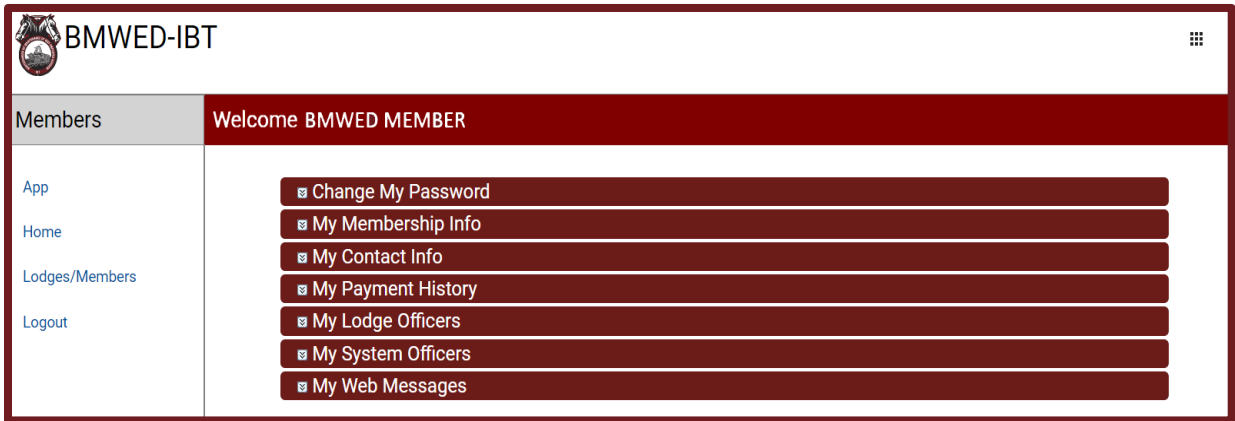


Image capture of <https://www.bmwe.org> from November 17, 2024

All BMWED members have access to special online tools and resources, if they register. Lodge Presidents, Vice Presidents, and Secretary-Treasurers can also access unique and important tools for reviewing or submitting reports, ordering supplies, notifying their Lodges about meetings, and more.

Creating a Member account at [bmwe.org](https://bmwe.org) requires a personal e-mail address (**not a railroad-provided account**). You can create a free e-mail address for yourself with Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook (Hotmail) or other services.

# Gathering Your Tools



With your Member access account set up, you can access the part of our bmwe.org website shown above.

Here you can review personal information, update your own contact data with our union (your phone number, mailing address, or email) and find information about your own Lodge officers, your System Division or Federation officers, and other information.

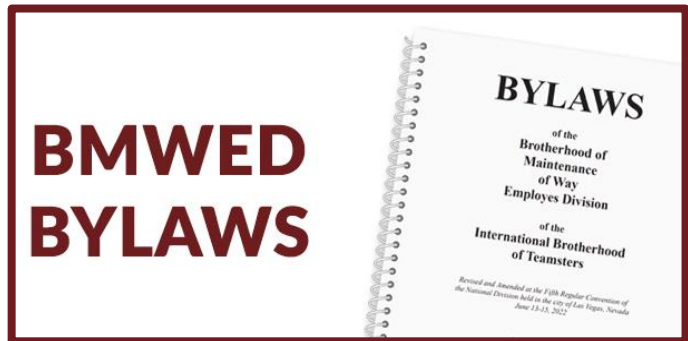
Our Lodges should encourage all our members to sign up for this access. It's quick, easy, and helps our members stay informed.

As a Lodge President, VP, or Secretary-Treasurer, more tools are available to you by clicking the Lodges/Members link in the left-hand column.

[Lodges/Members](#)  ***Tools for Lodge Officers!***

# Gathering Your Tools

While online tools will help you perform your work, it's important to remember that they do not replace our governing documents. You should always have these accessible for your Lodge's business!



***For conducting any Lodge business, you should always have access to:***

- ***Our BMWED Bylaws***
- ***Our BMWED Ritual***
- ***Your System Division or Federation Bylaws***
- ***Your Lodge's Rules***
- ***Your Lodge's Meeting Minutes***
- ***Your Lodge's Committee Reports***
- ***Financial Records and Reports***
- ***Bank Statements***

***You may also want to refer to:***

- ***Functions and Structure of the BMWED***
- ***BMWED Lodge Elections Guide***
- ***BMWED Secretary-Treasurer Instructional Video Collection***
- ***BMWED Ritual and Parliamentary Motions Guide***
- ***BMWE/IBT Merger Agreement***
- ***IBT Constitution***
- ***BMWED ACTS! Guide***

***Find these at [bmwe.org/library/](https://bmwe.org/library/)!***



# So, What's My Job Here?

**Article XVIII of our BMWED Bylaws** establishes how our Local Lodges are governed. As a BMWED Local Lodge officer, you should take time to read and understand the provisions within our Bylaws and in Article XVIII.

The Lodge **Recording Secretary** is the responsible officer for many of the tasks laid out in this *Guide*. Some Lodges combine this office with that of their **Secretary-Treasurer**. Full descriptions of the responsibilities is for these officers are provided in Article XVIII of our Bylaws. These responsibilities include:



BMWED Member at an informational picket targeting BNSF for paid sick leave, April 2023.

- **Maintaining the Lodge's records.** Even if the Recording Secretary takes down the minutes each meeting, final care and charge for those minutes belong to the Secretary-Treasurer.
- **Receiving all official letters,** requests, or notifications to the Lodge. This includes letters or bulletins from your System Division, Federation, National Division, Teamsters, or other unions and organizations. The Recording Secretary will read these letters to the assembled members at your Lodge meeting and make them available for review.
- **Sending out all official letters** and other correspondence, like Meeting Cards, from your Lodge.
- **Filing necessary reports** from the Lodge, like the Quarterly Audit Reports.
- **Properly transferring all records,** accounts, property, and other Lodge files to successors.

Your **Lodge President** oversees the work of your Secretary-Treasurer and Recording Secretary, ensures all officers meet the Lodge's legal obligations, and performs or appoints this work to be completed in the event the Lodge Secretaries are unavailable.

# Who Else Can Help?

Your **BMWED Secretary-Treasurer's Department** has subject matter experts that can help you understand the work you need to get done at the Local Lodge level. You can get guidance and assistance on what files or records are important, how long to hold on to certain records, what files can be maintained in a digital format, and can offer to keep critical documents (like bonds) safe in our National Division's file vault.

- **Safekeeping of critical documents**
- **Membership Services**
- **Guidance on file retention**
- **Expert advice and support**

Your **System Division or Federation** also has a Secretary-Treasurer and may have support staff to deal with administrative issues. Reaching out to your System Division or Federation can help you in nearly every task you perform. Contact your **General Chairperson** for more guidance.

- **Copies of vital records**
- **Lodge Rosters**
- **Guidance on System Division or Federation Bylaws**

Within the Secretary-Treasurer's Department, our **BMWED Field Auditors** are your greatest allies when it comes to ensuring your required Lodge records are properly maintained. Whether it's understanding why Lodge minutes are important as attachments to a Quarterly Audit Report, understanding what National Division letters might require further action, or even just understanding what to do with your day-to-day responsibilities, your Field Auditors are on your side!

- **Tips, Tricks, & Techniques for effective recordkeeping**
- **LM Reports**
- **General Support**

The **BMWED Education Department** works with all parts of our union to build tools we can use to sharpen our skills and teach one another. *Guides* like this one, online or in-person training, or specialized tools are all available by reaching out to your Education Department.

- **Training Tools and Support**

# I Inherited a Cabinet Full of Files! What Do I Do?!



BMWED Members rallying against unsafe, rotten food provided to BMWED workers on Norfolk Southern's DPG mobile gangs, January 2020

## ***Some files may still be useful at your System Division or Federation!***

If you have files or correspondence pertaining to claims, grievances, appeals or discipline at the local Lodge level, reach out to your **General Chairperson** for guidance on what to do with those. Your Grievance Committee may have files from long-settled cases, or they could be claims still moving through the arbitration process. Your General Chairperson can help you understand what's important, what's not, and whether your records can be consolidated at your System Division or Federation office.

## ***Know your legal responsibilities!***

Our union, and your Lodge, have legal obligations regarding how long we retain some records. You will find more information on those specific items in the chart following this page.

## ***Help maintain our union's history!***

Certain records, documents, or photos may no longer have legal relevance or impact your day-to-day operations, but still have historical value to your Lodge, to our union, or to the **Teamsters Labor History Research Center!** Before throwing out a document, photo, letter, or record, you may reach out to our fellow Teamsters to add to their historical collections!

# File Retention and Legal Responsibilities



***Your Lodge has certain recordkeeping obligations with the US Government.***

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Department of Labor's Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS), and other organizations within our government have an interest in how our union keeps records of our work. To stay in compliance with our legal obligations, some records must be kept for a certain period of time.

## ***Records you must keep permanently***

- ***Local Lodge Minutes*** – The OLMS requires we keep records that verify issues that relate to the payment approvals, especially for reimbursements or payments to union officers. These will be in your Lodge minutes and must be kept forever.
- ***Authorization documents*** – If your Lodge has IRS Forms like the SS-4, an FEIN letter, your Department of Labor Form LM-1 (Organization Information Report), or similar identity or authority documents, you must keep those permanently.

## ***Seven-Year Retention Documents***

Many of the documents or records regarding financial information or transactions must be maintained for **seven (7)** years to comply with IRS and OLMS obligations. These include:

- ***Correspondence***
- ***DOL Forms LM-2, LM-3, LM-4, IRS Forms***
- ***Audit Reports***
- ***Bank Statements***
- ***Cancelled checks***
- ***Dues receipt duplicates (if received by Lodge)***
- ***Remittance reports made by the Lodge***

# Membership Records

Most of our recordkeeping for members of the BMWED is now done through electronic platforms like our Membership Services application, used at the System Division, Federation, and National Division level.

If your Lodge still has membership records on file, you may be able to dispose of them. While we should maintain records of our active and retired members, if a member has gone delinquent their records may be discarded after three (3) years.

For most of our Lodges, this may not be an issue. If your Lodge still has records on file for your Lodge members, reach out to your General Chairperson to let them know what you have.

## Keeping Records Digitally

Some parts of our union have the capability to keep digital copies of Lodge records. OLMS and the ***Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA)*** set out guidance and requirements for unions who desire to maintain documents electronically, and any electronic filing system should have backups or other safeguards to ensure access.

If your Lodge has a lot of records you'd prefer to manage in a digital format, you should first let your General Chairperson and our Secretary-Treasurer's Department know. They may be able to offer guidance, advice, or point you toward the best systems to use (or avoid). Our experts as the Secretary-Treasurer's Department can also help you navigate how to make recordkeeping easier while staying compliant with LMRDA and OLMS regulations and guidance.

Bottom line, even electronic records need to be accessible, readable, dependably stored in a way you can easily find them, and available for potential OLMS audits. A simple flash drive may not cut it!

# Meeting Minutes

The primary records you deal with on a Lodge level are your meeting minutes. This is the written account of your Lodge's business. Meeting minutes should, **at a minimum**, include:

- ***The date, time, and location of your meeting.***
- ***A copy of the meeting agenda, if available.***
- ***A roll call of present officers, members, and guests.***
- ***A record of whether the quorum (5 Lodge members in good standing) was established.***
- ***A record of all business conducted, including:***
  - ***Motions made, listing both the moving member and seconding member.***
  - ***A description of the purpose or intent of the motion. If debate occurs, it can be noted without reproducing the full content of the debate.***
  - ***A record of whether motions carried and, if so, by what method (acclamation, voice vote, division or rising vote, recorded vote, etc.).***
- ***A record of what reports were received by the Chair. These could include:***
  - ***The Secretary-Treasurer's Report (every meeting)***
  - ***The Quarterly Audit Report***
  - ***Grievance Committee or Local Chairperson's Report***
  - ***Legislative Representative Report***
  - ***Strike Committee Report***
  - ***Other committee or officer reports, as required.***
- ***Notes about special presentations, guest speakers, or other major topics discussed during the Lodge meeting.***
- ***Special circumstances or occurrences during the Lodge meeting.***
- ***Other notes relevant to understanding Lodge decisions or expenses, including explanatory information for potential Lodge audits.***

# Meeting Minutes

That sounds like a lot! However, it's important to understand that Lodge meeting minutes are critical documents that can help explain Lodge decisions or expenses to your fellow members, to other members or our union, or to Department of Labor auditors. This information helps "tell the story" of what happened, and why, when it matters. This also keeps your officers and members informed so that we can build on work accomplished or fix issues, rather than starting from scratch.

***Other items you should include with your minutes are:***

- ***Copies of any reports received. You can add them to the minutes after the meeting.***
- ***If paper ballots were used in any voting or election, you can keep those in a labelled, sealed envelope separately. These should be retained for one (1) year after the vote was taken.***

***Items you can choose to include (or not) in your minutes are:***

- ***Copies of any presentations, flyers, materials, or speeches given during the meeting. These can be informational but can also add a lot of bulk to your records which may not be necessary to understand your Lodge's business in the future.***
- ***Copies of correspondence your Lodge received. While your Recording Secretary should present it at the meeting, and you should record their doing so, the actual letters or bulletins themselves may not be necessary to understand the Lodge's business.***

***Items to avoid including in your meeting minutes are:***

- ***Full written transcripts of the meeting. You don't have to get every remark down, word for word, to have a useful record.***
- ***Personal commentary from the Recording Secretary or Secretary-Treasurer. This is an official document, not a diary.***
- ***Menus, tabs, or refreshment receipts. While receipts may be useful for the Secretary-Treasurer's Report and Quarterly Audit Report, they aren't as valuable within meeting minutes.***

# Meeting Minutes, Tips, Tricks, & Techniques

There is no single form, method, or practice for effectively recording meeting minutes. While our Recording Secretaries or Secretary-Treasurer's are obligated to record the meeting, the methods for doing this are left to these officers' discretion.

***That being true, there are still some useful tips for effectively recording your Lodge meeting minutes!***

1. Have a decent grasp of the “flow” of parliamentary procedure as your President runs the meeting. You can pick up on key phrases regarding motions or other matters you need to record. When you hear this, you can ask your President to slow down, restate the motion or moving members, or otherwise help you effectively record what's happening.
2. Work with your President to keep the meeting on task, on agenda. It will help you organize your minutes and anticipate what's ahead. If the meeting turns into a free-for-all discussion, it is much more difficult for you to effectively record what's going on.
3. Some Secretaries will take their quick, handwritten notes and make an easier to read copy, either handwritten or typed out, after the meeting.
4. While there is no single format for meeting minutes, choose a method that works for you and stick with it! If your method is consistent, it makes your job easier and makes it easier for others to review and understand the record you made in the future.
5. Some Lodges have a form or format they use within their Lodge. If so, keep with it. If your Lodge doesn't have something like that, you can propose something. There are examples in this *Guide* you can reference, or create something that works for you!
6. Remember that a shorthand or abbreviation that makes sense to you may not make sense to a Lodge Secretary 8 years from now. Write with the idea that you're making a historical document.



# Meeting Minutes, Tips, Tricks, & Techniques

***If your Secretary-Treasurer, Local Chairman, or other officer has a report to make, have them write their report out and attach it to your minutes!***

***Avoid duplicating effort or introduce room for errors by rewriting the content of their report.***

***Lodge officers can keep a copy of their written report, to help them keep track of their own work.***

***Your handwritten meeting minutes can focus on actions taken (motions, seconds, votes, etc.).***

***Reports can be more consistent and easier to understand if prepared beforehand by your officers, presented to your members and received by the Chair, then attached to your minutes.***

***As a Lodge Recording Secretary or Secretary-Treasurer you already have enough work to do! Don't add extra work in the middle of trying to record your meeting!***

***This also works for your President's meeting agenda (if written down).***

# Sample Meeting Minutes #1

Lodge 9997 Meeting Minutes

Date: 04/19/2024

Location: Shenanigan's Restaurant, Austin, TX

[See attached Sign-In Sheet for officers and members present].

Quorum reached?  Y  N

Reports Made During Meeting:

Secretary-Treasurer's Report (attached)

Quarterly Audit Report (copy attached)

Local Chairman's Report (attached)

Page 1 of 2!

Unfinished Business:

Brother Jones motioned to reconsider the Lodge family picnic.

No second motion made

Sister Adams motioned to form a committee to collect member input on upcoming bargaining round based off General Chairman's request discussed in February meeting.

Brother Smith seconded. Motion carried by acclamation.

New Business:

Brother Stevens motioned to move meetings to Saturday.

Brother Jones seconded. Motion failed by voice vote.

Brother Stevens requested Division

Motion failed by Rising Vote, 3 YES, 8 NO

Sister Mackey motioned to consider a resolution supporting paid parental leave (copy attached)

Brother Jones seconded Motion carried by acclamation.

After debate on the resolution, no motion was made to adopt.

Brother Collins moved to table the resolution.

Sister Adams seconded Motion carried by acclamation

Resolution tabled.

# Sample Meeting Minutes #1

Lodge 9997 Meeting Minutes

Date: 04/19/2024

Location: Shenanigan's Restaurant, Austin, TX

Page 2 of 2!

## Discussion:

A representative from LECMPA gave a short speech on job insurance.

Brother Anderson passed out some informational flyers on the Railway Labor Act and encouraged members to join a webinar next week on the topic, so we all know how upcoming bargaining will work.

A thank you card from Brother Zeke, thanking the Lodge for his retirement party and for our support, was read out and passed among the members.

## Committees:

Committee on Lodge Bargaining Input formed:

Sister Adams, Committee Chair

Brother Stevens

Brother Smith

Sister Mackey

Committee expected to offer report in June meeting, with a copy sent to the General Chairman.

Brother Stevens motioned to adjourn.

Sister Mackey seconded. Motion carried by acclamation

Next meeting is June 21, 2023 at Shenanigan's Restaurant.

# Sample Meeting Minutes #2

April 19, 2024 Lodge 9997 Meeting Minutes  
Shenanigan's Restaurant, Austin, TX Page 1

Quorum reached (see Sign-In Sheet)

Secretary-Treasurer gave their report and the Quarterly Audit Report for January-March 2024. Both are attached.

Local Chairman gave a report on current claims. Report is attached.

In unfinished business,

Reconsideration of Lodge family picnic

Mike Jones motioned, but no second was made, so motion died.

Jess Adams moved to form a committee to come up with a report on what our Lodge members want this bargaining round, following up on General Chairman's request from last meeting.

Howard Smith seconded, and motion carried by acclamation.

In new business,

Brandon Stevens made a motion to move our regular meetings to Saturdays.

Trey Jones seconded. The motion failed by a voice vote.

Brandon Stevens requested a rising vote, which also failed with 3 YES votes and 8 NO votes.

# Sample Meeting Minutes #2

April 19, 2024 Lodge 9997 Meeting Minutes  
Shenanigan's Restaurant, Austin, TX Page 2

## *New business, continued,*

Tina Mackey proposed a resolution supporting paid parental leave (copy attached).

Tina Mackey motioned to consider. Trey Jones seconded. Motion to consider carried by acclamation.

Resolution debated and a motion was made to table by Vince Collins. Jess Adams seconded the motion to table. Motion to table carried by acclamation.

## *Other items,*

A job insurance rep came to talk about LECMPA.

Ash Anderson, our Director of Education, visited the meeting to give us some flyers on the Railway Labor Act and ask us to come to his webinar next week. There was some Q&A on the topic.

We passed around a thank you card from Zeke, thanking us for the retirement party we threw him.

Following the approval to form a committee for bargaining input, the Lodge appointed Jess Adams to lead the committee. Tina Mackey, Brandon Stevens, and Trey Smith are also on the committee. President Collins requested a report at our June meeting.

# Sample Meeting Minutes #2

April 19, 2024 Lodge 9997 Meeting Minutes  
Shenanigan's Restaurant, Austin, TX Page 3

*Other items, continued,*

Brandon Stevens made a motion to adjourn. Tina Mackey seconded, and the motion carried by acclamation.

Reports, agenda, and sign-in sheet are attached. Next meeting will be on Thursday, June 21<sup>st</sup> at Shenanigan's Restaurant.

# Other Items – Recording Votes

## ***What's “acclamation?”***

If you are recording a vote on a motion, your President may just ask your members to say “Yes” or “No” and judge whether the motion passes. This is referred to as a voice vote. If there aren't any “No” votes, then the motion passes “by acclamation.”

## ***Do I have to get a tally on every vote?***

You may not have to. A vote by acclamation doesn't need a final tally. If your President judges a vote passes by a voice vote, it may not require a tally of the “Yes” versus the “No” votes. You should just record that the motion passed by voice vote.

Your members may want a record of votes to be taken. They have the right to do this within parliamentary procedure and can ask for a “division” or rising vote. This requires the President to conduct the vote by a show of hands or by having members stand up in favor (or against) the motion, so they may be counted. This sort of vote should be recorded.

Your Lodge may have rules that all votes are “rising” or show of hands votes. If so, then record the final tally for all votes taken in your minutes.

If you are recording the votes for a Lodge election, or any other measure where paper ballots are used, your minutes should record the names of the Scrutineers appointed by the President, as well as the results of the ballot counts. These paper ballots should also be kept in a sealed envelope, labelled with the date, the measure or election they're for, and your Lodge information. Paper ballots must be kept for one (1) year.

# Other Items – Parliamentary Procedure & Ritual

Your Lodge President handles the decision-making and procedural work around parliamentary procedure. However, understanding parliamentary procedure will give you a better idea of what's going on, making your work easier. Recording the different motions correctly is important to understand what happened later on, either for your Lodge's own use or for an audit of Lodge business.

Our union uses *Robert's Rules of Order* for parliamentary procedure and conducting formal union business. These are simply a standardized set of rules for “fair play” that can ensure meetings are consistent, fair, and that everyone gets a chance to be heard.



You can learn more about how this works with the BMWED Parliamentary Motions Guide and our new *Guide, Running a Lodge Meeting*. If you want to get more expert guidance on how these things work, you can also get a copy of Robert's Rules or Order for your Lodge or go to <https://robertsrules.com/>.

Likewise, knowing the ceremony and format in our *BMWED Ritual* will help you anticipate what you need to record in your minutes. If you know the *Order of Business*, you can know what to look out for as you write notes. You can also find more information about how these work in our *Guide, Setting an Agenda*.



# Where to Learn More

For more guidance on how to maintain your Lodge's records, reach out to your **BMWED Field Auditors** or the experts in our BMWED **Secretary-Treasurer's Department!**



You can also find more tools on how to handle Lodge business, strengthen our union, or develop your own skills and understanding by visiting our Education Department Library at <https://www.bmwe.org/library!>

Our union regularly conducts training, both online and in person. You can find information for upcoming training events, sign up, or register for online training at <https://www.bmwe.org/training>.

The best way we learn our jobs is by doing them, and by learning from and working with one another! Reach out to fellow Lodge officers, other Lodges in your System Division or Federation, and to the resources or guidance your **General Chairperson** has for you!

If you have any further questions, concerns, or see the need for a tool we don't yet have for our members, contact your Education Department at [education@bmwe.org](mailto:education@bmwe.org).