



**Secretary's Annual Report
Ottawa Branch Navy League of Canada:
2018-2019**

SECRETARY: position VACANT
Report prepared by Gerry Powell

PORTFOLIO OBJECTIVES 2018-2019

- There are no established Branch objectives known for this portfolio. However, the secretary's duties are standard and laid out in NLC bylaws and administrative guidance.
- With a brief exception in Spring of 2018, there has not been a designated secretary in the position for several years. With no secretarial routines or records to start from, and little Branch experience remaining with the processes involved, the workload to rebuild it was excessive and the position left vacant again before the 2018 AGM.
- The Treasurer, noting the need for a written record of Council discussions and effectively worded decisions to properly act on their authority for Branch spending, and also that the bylaws allowed for a Secretary-Treasurer (a practice needed in small Branches), undertook to be a standing recording-secretary until a new Secretary was appointed. He stressed that the size and range of NLOB activities needed a separate Secretary be appointed to the position.
- Duties in this capacity started with the training season in Fall 2018, With a focus on the needs for the Council in particular, the objectives undertaken for this effort were:
 - Establish an administrative process for the planning, conduct, and recording of Council and Branch meetings and decisions;
 - Develop an Action List, or equivalent process, to monitor the progress of planned actions or preparations for major event through the training year;
 - Establish a process to make necessary info for upcoming meetings, or records of previous meetings available to directors and, where possible or appropriate, all members
 - ensure the Branch adheres to NLC bylaws and admin guidance.

Comments of Achievement Status

- Nine full Branch meetings were held in the period Sept 2018 to May 2019. All were fully formed with a call/notice, dynamic agenda and, with the exception of the first one, minutes of the previous meeting to approve. Only one did not reach a quorum, but progressed for information purposes with no motions to vote on. The Executive operated effectively with discussions, voting and decisions on necessary business between Council meetings - all recorded/reported secretarially.
- An Action List was started and reviewed monthly by the Council since Oct 2018 to monitor progress on significant or long-term activity. Of the 27 Action Items created over the year, 22 have been completed and closed, 4 are still ongoing, and 1 (update our inventory) has yet to start.
- The calls and supporting material (agenda, current action list, financials, etc) for meetings were initially distributed to Council members by email. However, they are now posted to the Branch website (www.ottawanavyleague.org/council.html) - all available to members (and, for now, the public) and with past meeting records retained.
- All bylaws are being adhered to, and the Ottawa branch works with both National and Division offices to ensure correct interpretation and application of them.

Recommendations for 2019-2020 Objectives

- Continue the processes started and maintain the momentum achieved last year. Make improvements where possible. In particular:
 - Streamline the minutes – currently they are very detailed as a starting point, but they can be cumbersome to produce and follow
 - Develop better use of the agenda process to make meetings more efficient and productive
 - Restructure the admin features of the website to make them easier to access/use
 - Investigate the viability of video conferencing for meetings of the Executive and guests

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PORTFOLIO

- With all meetings now properly initiated and recorded, Council discussions can focus on issues needing their attention through the year in the meeting time available.
- Council have a better ability to manage the affairs and activities of the Branch, particularly its financial affairs. They have developed more mature budgets and monitor their execution effectively. The 2018 budget went through 5 modifications throughout that year. In 2019, they have remained on the original to date.
- Historical records of council proceedings and decisions are now available to all directly rather than held on someone's file, and possibly lost with a Director's departure.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

- This initial effort has focussed on the Secretary's responsibilities for the Council and Branch meetings (Bylaws art 14.13). However, there are other obligations there with respect to Branch records, documentation, correspondence and membership lists that need further attention.
- There are also further responsibilities of the Council at Bylaws art 14.9 that would best be coordinated by the Secretary to the extent desired – such as establishing its own Policies and Procedures (a Council objective stated on several occasions since at least 2008) and prescribing duties and responsibilities.
- The Secretarial function has taken a lot of time and work, particularly in this rebuilding effort. That will become more manageable moving ahead, but will remain a significant commitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Appoint a member dedicated to this portfolio immediately!**
- Develop a Branch "Policies and Procedures" document as allowed for in the bylaws to lay out internal practices & obligations within the Branch (eg – terms of reference) and establish arrangements and practices not specified in the bylaws.

SUMMARY

- The Branch has made a lot of progress in the administrative measures needed to properly manage its affairs. It has been a learning curve for all along the way and will likely continue to be so for another year before being on a well-set path. I thank all on the Council, and many our Lifetime Members, for the patience and support they have provided along the way!

Respectfully,
Gerry Powell