



LEADING A BUSINESS MEETING

To conduct an efficient and effective meeting where all voices are heard, there are a variety of strategies that may be implemented before, during, and after the actual meeting. Within our clubs, there are usually two types of meetings we use to handle our business - general and board meetings, and more recently virtual meetings. There are several ways to ensure all types of meetings are informative and productive. Below are some ideas to aid the presiding officer (usually the president) and the participants in these meetings.

GENERAL MEETING - typically where the full membership is included, voting may be conducted, and business items are streamlined.

Before the meeting:

- Review your club's guidance documents and procedures to know the rules to follow.
- Create a basic agenda (the format may be contained in your guidance documents - bylaws, standing rules, etc.) or you can create a simple one that works for your club.
- Share meeting expectations in advance - consider providing these to all members, especially new members, so they know what to expect - for example, an outline of the basic agenda, as well as general information about the non-business and social portions of your meeting.
- If your procedures require prior notification to members about upcoming voting, verify this has been completed prior to the meeting.

During the meeting:

- Follow the agenda, start on time, be respectful of all participants.
- Encourage members to voice their questions, after seeking recognition by the chair. The goal of the presiding officer is to be the meeting's facilitator and to ensure all members understand what is happening.
- Avoid getting into detailed discussions/debates about club business without a motion on the floor. These items may be best handled during a board meeting and all members should be invited and given information about how to share their ideas with the board members.
- Ensure members vote on the items requiring their ratification - typically, budget, officer elections, etc., following your procedures.
- Consider conducting a vote by general consent or without objection if there appears to be no opposition to the question. In this format, if no member objects, their silence gives consent. If there is any objection, a vote may not be handled in this manner. As an

example, when the minutes are presented, and everyone appears to concur with their adoption, rather than go through the full motion process, the presiding officer may state, "Without objection, the minutes are approved as presented." The officer must wait to see if there is any objection before moving forward.

After the meeting:

- Document outcomes from the meeting (via the minutes).
- Encourage members to share any of their questions/concerns/ideas with the presiding officer or other board members at any time.
- Follow up on any action items discussed.
- Seek feedback on ways to make your general meeting better.

BOARD MEETING - where board members/chairpersons are expected or required to attend, all members welcome.

Before the meeting:

- Determine the purpose of the meeting (officer/committee reports, recommendations to the general membership, new business, discussion items, etc.)
- Identify key participants required to attend - board members, committee chairs, other invited members.
- Confirm specifics - date, time, place, etc. well in advance of the meeting (2 weeks minimum).
- Develop and share an agenda prior to the meeting (see agenda style options below).
- Share meeting expectations in advance - how to seek recognition, how much time is allowed to speak on a motion, ask that members refrain from restating points already made by others, how voting will be conducted, etc.

During the meeting:

- Follow the agenda, start on time, be respectful of all participants.
- Review the expectations for the meeting as shared prior to the meeting and clarify any questions or concerns.
- The presiding officer needs to provide fair access for all as they facilitate the meeting. In the rare instance when the presiding officer wishes to share their opinions on a particular motion, the gavel should be passed to the next officer in line who should preside for the remainder of the discussion or vote on the topic.
- Encourage the members to make a motion *before* any discussion begins.

- The presiding officer should alternate between pro/con positions on a topic. Ask those who wish to speak to raise their hand for recognition, then indicate thumbs up/down on their position to aid in the discussion.
- Consider having a timekeeper for speakers to ensure all members will be able to share their thoughts and avoid one member/position dominating.
- Redirect participants to the topic at hand if they become sidetracked by other points.
- Set aside specific time for open discussion when members seek input and feedback from others before making a proposal.

After the meeting:

- Document outcomes from the meeting (via the minutes).
- Share pending items for further action and who/when/how they will be handled - set up an Action Items or Follow-Up list that will be shared with all.
- Provide accountability measures to ensure tasks are completed.
- Provide support/resources for members to obtain assistance with their tasks.

Developing an Agenda

- Basic agenda - may provide a short list of topics, participants, and the order they will be covered at the meeting.
- Focused agenda - includes the basic agenda items and may also outline participants, specific topics, possible motions, new business and assigns projected time limits to each item.
- Consent agenda - most detailed and allows for all members to review the reports, motions, etc. prior to the meeting. This allows members to prioritize time for discussion on the areas of highest need. Members receive and review the consent agenda prior to the meeting. The board members "pull out" items they have questions on, disagree with, or need additional information on before adopting/defeating the action. The items not pulled are adopted as a whole, and the remainder of the meeting focuses only on the "pulled items" allowing for the most expeditious use of time.

Sample of a Basic Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes (if not handled previously by a Minutes Approval Committee)
2. Reports of officers and standing committees
3. Reports of special committees
4. Unfinished business
5. New business

Sample of a Focused Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes (if not handled previously by a Minutes Approval Committee)
 - a. Secretary - Jane Brown - minutes from the (date) board meeting
2. Reports of the officers and standing committees
 - a. Membership Chair
 - i. Number of current members
 - ii. Prospective members
 - b. Finance Chair -
 - i. Current balance checking account \$
 - ii. Current balance savings account \$
 - iii. Pending expenses
 - iv. Budget proposals for review
 - c. Social Chair
 - i. Update on upcoming evening out for parents
 - d. Publications Chair
 - i. Deadline for next publication and any specifics input needed
3. Reports of special committees
 - a. Holiday Party Chair - need to finalize the event location, 3 options available
4. Unfinished business
5. New business

Creating a Consent Agenda - see Consent Agenda information in separate publication

VIRTUAL MEETING – If a virtual meeting is recommended (and permitted by the bylaws), club leaders will likely need to provide special standing rules for members to adopt and follow during the online event.

Areas to consider and some items you may wish to include:

- How members will participate, including the platform that will be used to access the meeting and for voting
- Specify the business that will be covered in advance
- How does a member get recognized to speak or make motions
- Rules for conduct - for example, remain mute when not speaking, identify who may share their screen, etc.
- Speaking limits for each member and total debate may need to be reduced because of the online format
- All motions needing a second are deemed to be seconded to expedite the meeting
- Connectivity should be the responsibility of each participant, and lack of it is not a point of order or cause to retake a vote

Virtual meetings have many benefits but may also present unique challenges. They have a different dynamic that may have less engagement and the appearance of less transparency. Keeping the meetings focused and structured will aid the leaders and members in accomplishing their objectives.

