



Having Effective Meetings

Introduction

The two most important components of a successful meeting are an agenda and adherence to parliamentary procedure. Regular business meetings should rarely exceed one hour. If the meeting is short and flows smoothly then your members will be happier and more attentive.

Prior to the Meeting:

- President - Prepare an agenda for each meeting for yourself and give a copy to the secretary. (Some organizations may delegate the responsibility of an agenda to the secretary. If so, she should work closely with the president on its creation.)
- President - Check with each chair scheduled to make a report to assure her presence. Place a time limit on reports and discussion (always give proper notice if you plan to call on a chair).
- A meeting cannot be staged successfully without advance preparation. Check with the hostesses. Be sure that the Publicity Chair (or designated officer) knows her responsibilities.
- Assure proper arrangements for your guest speaker.

The Meeting:

- Arrive early as you must always start the meeting at the designated time.
- Recognize guests and new members.
- Keep the meeting orderly and keep it moving.
- Diversify the meeting programs as to issues, speakers and member participation. Meetings should have a light touch as well as a serious side. Make them enjoyable.

Parliamentary Tips

Making a Motion:

- Member rises and addresses the chair, states her name.
- Receives recognition from the chair.
- States motion (“I move that....”)
- Motion is seconded.
- Chair re-states the motion.
- Chair calls for discussion.
- Chair calls for vote: “All in favor, please say ‘Aye’; opposed ‘No’.”
- Chair states result of vote and states what will be done as a result of motion.

Processing a Motion Subjected to Amendment:

- After a main motion has been made and seconded a member may amend: “I move to amend the motion by....” (Deletion, insertion or substitution of words, sentences, phrases, a paragraph, or a combination of the above.)
- The motion to amend is seconded: “I second the motion to amend.”



- Floor discussion of the amendment.
- Vote on the amendment.
- The main motion is now up for action regardless of disposition of the amendment.
- Floor discussion on the main motion.
- The assembly proceeds to vote.

The Presiding Officer:

- Must remember that action has not been completed on the main motion. It must be considered again after the disposition of the amendment.
- Presents the amendment for discussion: “It has been proposed to amend the motion to read as follows (the motion and amendment are repeated). Is there any discussion?”
- Puts the amendment to a vote, explaining the effect of “Aye” or “No” on both the amendment and the main motion. “If there is no further discussion, the amendment is (repeats amendment). All in favor of the amendment please say ‘Aye.’ All opposed, please say ‘No.’”
- Announces the result on amendment: “The amendment is carried (or defeated).”
- Presents the main motion: “The motion now before the assembly is (repeats motion as amended, if amendment carried). Is there any discussion?”
- Puts motion (including amendment, if carried) to vote.
- Announces final results on main motion and states what will be done as a result of the motion.

Miscellaneous Considerations:

- The mover may request to withdraw or modify her motion without consent of anyone before a motion has been put to the group for consideration. When the motion is before the assembly and there is no objection, the chair announces that the motion is withdrawn or modified. If anyone objects, the request is put to a vote.
- When making the motion to close debate, the traditional form is: “I move the previous question....”
- The motion to postpone the question until a definite time should, of course, mention the specific time proposed.
- The motion to refer to committee should specify the number on the committee, how the committee is to be selected, and when the committee is to report.
- When members of the assembly call out informally, “Question! Question!” the chair is merely to understand that they as individuals are ready to vote on the pending question or motion.
- Without securing recognition from the chair, or even without waiting for a speaker to yield the floor, a member may rise to a point of order, to a point of information, or to a question of privilege. No second is necessary. A point of order on a question of privilege should be stated as a request to the chair.
- The president should not permit one or two constant talkers to dominate this meeting. Time is limited; everyone should receive equal opportunity to speak. The chair should not recognize the same person twice until all others who wish to speak have done so.



This presents only the most frequently used parliamentary procedures that the president should have at her command. Presidents should study ***Robert's Rules of Order: Newly Revised***.

For other questions regarding parliamentary procedure, please see the National Organization of Parliamentarians website (<http://parliamentarians.org/procedure.php>).