

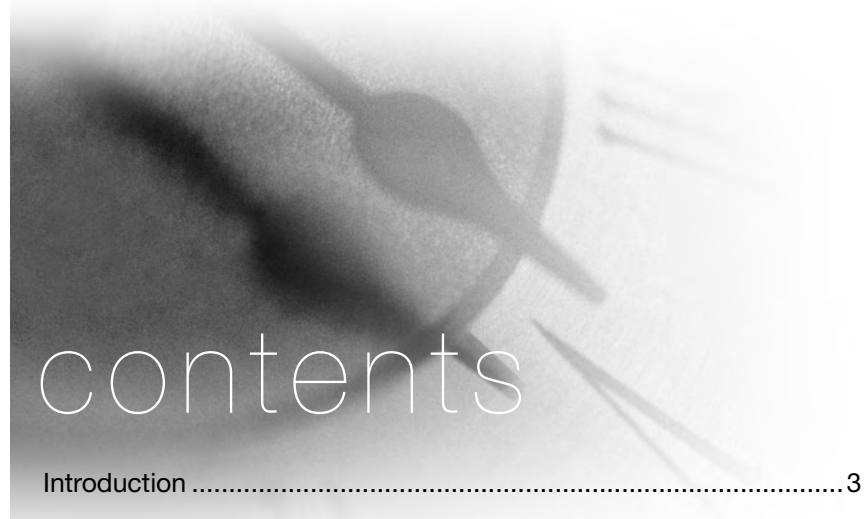
National Association of Home Builders

Running Effective Meetings: Utilizing Parliamentary Procedure



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Introduction	3
The Leader's Role.....	4
Meeting Agendas	8
Parliamentary Procedure.....	9
How do members get their say?	10
How do I present my motion?	18
Meeting Checklist.....	23
Discussion Starters	24
Handling Disruptive Behavior	26
Samples.....	28

Introduction

Association leaders spend a lot of time in meetings. This includes board meetings, general membership meetings, committee meetings, and even meetings to plan meetings. Meetings play a critical role in the overall operation of any volunteer organization, especially associations.

This guide is intended to provide volunteer leaders with an overview of the different strategies and techniques that can help to strengthen their effectiveness at running meetings within the association environment.

By using Robert's Rules of Order and by discussing the different aspects of meeting management including content, interaction, and structure, this manual guides association leaders through the entire process, ensuring effectiveness at every level.

For more information about running effective meetings, contact the Affiliate Services Department of NAHB at (800) 368-5242 x8176.

The Leader's Role

The meeting leader has three major responsibilities as the individual overseeing the meeting. Those three responsibilities are content, interaction, and structure.

1 Content: What are we discussing?

An effective meeting leader considers the information, knowledge, experience, opinions, ideas, attitudes, and expectations that meeting participants bring to the table.

Some of the activities in this area may include:

- **Preparing an agenda:** This can be completed by the volunteer leader, the staff member or ideally both. The rule is to always have an agenda for a meeting and the meeting leader must be familiar with the content of the agenda prior to the meeting.
- **Developing meeting objectives:** The meeting objectives help define the scope of the discussion at a meeting. They should be stated by the meeting leader at the start of the meeting; for example, "We are meeting today to discuss three things... First, to brainstorm themes for the upcoming membership drive. Second..." Objectives can also appear at the top of the agenda. For example, "Objective #1: Brainstorm theme ideas for upcoming membership drive, Objective #2, etc." Your meeting objectives will help you to stay on track and help your participants stay focused on the tasks at hand.
- **Summarizing ideas:** Provide background information as necessary on important meeting topics to guarantee all attendees can fully participate in the meeting. As decisions are made, tasks are assigned or goals are accomplished, summarize to ensure all participants have a thorough understanding of the activities of the meeting. For example, "Before we move on, let's summarize the decisions we have made..."

2 Interaction: How are we discussing it?

An effective meeting leader understands how participants work together while processing the meeting's content. This includes promoting cooperation, listening, encouraging participation, and building trust among all meeting attendees.

Some of the activities in this area include:

- **Encouraging participation:** An effective meeting leader wants all participants to be either actively sharing or actively listening during the meeting. This may require the meeting leader to draw people into the discussion in a non-threatening way. For example, "Beth, what do you think about this?" or "Tom, I would like to hear your ideas on the subject."
- **Leading by example:** A successful meeting facilitator must demonstrate the behavior that he/she expects from other members of the group. This could include arriving on time, being prepared, following through on tasks or listening when someone else is talking. Any behavior that is expected of the meeting participants should be demonstrated by the meeting leader.
- **Managing time:** It is the responsibility of the meeting leader to make sure that the meeting objectives are achieved during the scheduled meeting time. Your best volunteers will appreciate your time management efforts by volunteering for the association again in the future. This means that as a meeting leader you may have to shutdown side conversations, focus participants on the agenda, and bring discussions to a close. Skillful leaders should strive to manage meeting time effectively while maintaining professionalism and a friendly atmosphere throughout the meeting.
- **Ask for feedback:** Running effective meetings is a skill that can improve with practice. It may be helpful to ask meeting participants (either individually or collectively) for constructive feedback on the meeting. If association staff attends your meetings, they can also be a good resource for improving the quality of your meetings. Some questions you may ask could include: "Are the meetings moving too fast?...too slow? Are we covering all of the important topics? Is everyone engaged or involved?"

3 Structure: What's the meeting environment? How does it feel?

The meeting leader can have a positive impact on the way in which both information and participants are organized to achieve the meeting's purpose.

The activities in this area include:

- **Developing ground rules:** As a meeting leader, it is your primary responsibility to set the tone for the meeting. One of the greatest tools a leader can use in this effort is setting ground rules. Ground rules serve as an agreement between the meeting leader and the meeting participants with regard to how meetings for the group will be conducted. Ground rules can include informal items such as "Turn your cell phones off or to vibrate during the meeting," or they can include more vital reminders like "Only one person has the floor at a time." Ground rules should be set at the initial meeting of the group and reinforced at each subsequent meeting.
- **Following agreed upon procedures:** The meeting leader should consistently follow the agreed upon procedures at every meeting. Once you have developed the ground rules, post them in your meeting room or include them on the agenda so that you may refer to them readily.

You can revisit and modify your ground rules anytime throughout your leadership year as long as the group reaches a consensus to do so.

- **Following up on important tasks:** It is important for the meeting leader to remember that the majority of the work for your group (committee, task force, board) is accomplished between meetings. Therefore, it becomes necessary for the meeting leader to track the work that is to be accomplished by members of the group outside of the meeting. Develop a tracking sheet that includes:

- Name of the volunteer
- Description of the task
- Deadline for completion

This allows the meeting leader to provide timely feedback and to have a better picture of where the group is on achieving its goals.

Meeting Agendas

The meeting agenda is the most valuable tool for an individual to be an effective meeting leader. The absence of an agenda prevents a group from accomplishing the desired outcomes.

Consider the following actions when preparing your next meeting agenda:

- State meeting objectives: The specific goals to be accomplished during this meeting.
- Consent agenda: These are the items on the agenda that are easily agreed to by participants. Examples include the report from the previous meeting, routine business and any item that is free of controversy and does not require discussion. (A participant may request to discuss an item included on the consent agenda. In this case, be flexible but do not get thrown off track unnecessarily).
- Prioritize and set a time limit for all agenda items: Place the most important items at the top of the agenda and allot them the most time for discussion.
- Summarize accomplishments: Note the progress that was made during the course of this meeting, and clarify items that have been delegated (including who volunteered for a responsibility and a due date for the task).
- Set date, time, and location of next meeting.

Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary Procedure originated in the early English Parliaments and became uniform in 1876, when Henry M. Robert published his manual on Parliamentary Law. Today, the use of Robert's Rules of Order varies among associations. It is successful because it follows three fundamental principles:

- Allows the majority opinion to rule
- Allows the minority opinion to be heard
- Allows all individuals to participate in the process

Parliamentary Procedure allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion. Following Robert's Rules of Order focuses the structure, operation, and implementation of meetings applicable for any association looking to get more organized.

A Fixed Agenda

Fixed agendas are generally followed by organizations that use Parliamentary Procedure. Here's a typical example:

- 1. Call to order:** If a quorum* is present, the person conducting the meeting says, "The meeting will come to order."
- 2. Minutes:** The secretary reads a record of the previous meeting.
- 3. Officers' reports:** Officers and standing (permanent) committees may report on their activities.
- 4. Reports of special committees:** Special (temporary) committees report on the tasks for which they were created.
- 5. Special orders:** This is important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.
- 6. Unfinished business:** This is business that has come over from the previous meeting.
- 7. New business:** New topics are introduced.
- 8. Announcements:** These inform the people at the meeting of other subjects and events.
- 9. Adjournment:** The meeting ends by a vote or by general consent.

**A quorum is the number of members that must be present for business to be conducted.*

How Do Members Get Their Say?

In Parliamentary Procedure, members can make motions to get their thoughts heard. A motion is a proposal that the assembly needs to take action on a specific issue. Members can do this in different ways. For example:

- Present motions: Making a proposal, “I move that...”
- Second motions: Express support for discussion of another member’s motion, “Second.”
- Debate motions: Give opinions on the motion, “I think...”
- Vote on motions: Make a decision, “All those in favor...”

There are five general types of motions:

- 1 Main motions:** These introduce subjects for consideration. They cannot be made when another motion is before the assembly. They yield to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions.
- A main motion needs a majority vote to pass and cannot be made while any other motion is pending. This means that only one main motion is allowed on the floor at a time. A main motion also needs a second and is amendable.
 - You can tell what type of motion it is by establishing its relationship to other motions. If a motion is made while another motion is pending and it is ruled to be in order, it is by very nature a secondary motion. If a motion is made while no other motions are pending and it is ruled to be in order, then it is a main motion.

FOR EXAMPLE

If a member made the motion that the association “purchase a notebook for each of the board of directors,” that motion would be a main motion. Another member could not now move to “purchase a computer for the association” while the first motion is pending because the computer motion is also a main motion. It would be too confusing to decide on the book and the computer at the same time.

- Previous notice is usually required before a main motion can be made at a meeting when you are proposing to change something that has been adopted in advance of the meeting, such as amending bylaws. Almost always, the bylaws indicate that in order to amend the bylaws the members must receive the proposed amendment at the previous meeting or in advance of the current meeting.

Script of a Main Motion

Member: “I move that...”

Chair: “Is there a second to the motion?” (This statement can be eliminated if a member calls out “second” or if the motion is made on behalf of a committee.)

2nd member: “I second the motion.”

Chair: “It is moved and seconded that (state the motion). Is there any discussion?” (The maker of the motion has the right to speak first.)

- It is during this time that a motion is considered pending and secondary motions may be applied to it.
- After discussion: “Is there any further discussion? Are you ready for the question? The question is on the adoption of the motion to (clearly state the motion).”
- All those in favor, say “Aye.”
- All those opposed, say “No.” (If the chair is in doubt of the results of a voice vote, the chair should state “The chair is in doubt, therefore a rising (or counted) vote will be taken.”
- Uncounted voice, rising, or show of hands vote:

“The affirmative has it, the motion is adopted. We will (state the effect of the vote) and the next business in order is...”

OR

“The negative has it, the motion is lost (state the effect of the vote) and the next business in order is...”

- 2 Privileged motions:** These motions are generally a class of motions that are important enough to warrant interrupting all other motions. Since they are by their very nature urgent issues, debate on them is not allowed. The content of a privileged motion does not relate to the main motion or pending business, but to members and the organization.

Usually, privileged motions are secondary motions, meaning that they are made when a main motion is already on the floor.

For example: If your group is debating the main motion to purchase a computer and you have to go to the bathroom and cannot wait until the debate on the computer is over, you can move for a 10 minute recess.

The Five Privileged Motions:

- 1. Fix the time which to adjourn:** This sets a time for another meeting to continue the business of the current session. Adoption of this motion does not adjourn the present meeting or set the time for its adjournment.
 - 2. Adjourn:** A motion to close the meeting.
 - 3. Recess:** A short interruption which does not close the meeting. After the recess, business resumes at exactly the point where it was interrupted.
 - 4. Questions of privilege:** To bring an urgent request or a main motion relating to the rights of either the assembly or an individual up for immediate consideration.
 - 5. Call for the orders of the day:** By the use of this motion, a single member can require the assembly to follow the order of business or agenda, unless two-thirds of the assembly wish to do otherwise.
- **Note:** *Privileged motions have special privileges only when they are offered as secondary motions. When they are main motions, they are treated like any other main motion and must follow the rules for a main motion.*

- 3 Subsidiary motions:** Subsidiary motions help to dispose of a main motion. They are in order only from the time the main motion has been stated by the chair until the chair begins to take a vote on that main motion. These motions help you get the main motion into its best form before you have to vote on it.

A board member may want to change the main motion (amend it); or send it back to a committee to do more research on it (commit or refer); or put off the decision until the next meeting (postpone to a certain time); or you may just want to kill it (postpone indefinitely).

The Seven Subsidiary Motions:

- 1. Lay on the table:** This motion places the pending question and everything adhering to it in the care of the secretary. If a group meets quarterly or more frequently, the question laid on the table remains there until taken off or until the end of the next regular session. This motion should not be used to kill a motion.
- 2. Previous question:** This motion immediately stops debate and any amendments to move immediately to a vote on the motion. It must be seconded, no debate is allowed, and a two-thirds vote is needed to close debate.
- 3. Limit or extend limits of debate:** Can reduce or increase the number and length of speeches permitted, or limit the length of debate on a specific question.
- 4. Postpone to a certain time:** If the group needs more time to make a decision or if there is a time for consideration of this question that is more convenient, then this motion is the answer. If a group meets quarterly or more frequently, the postponement cannot be beyond the next session.
- 5. Commit or refer:** This motion sends the main motion to a smaller group for further examination. (Be sure to check the group's bylaws before doing so).
- 6. Amend:** Used to modify the pending motion before it is voted on.
- 7. Postpone indefinitely:** In effect, this motion kills the main motion for the duration of the session without the group having to take a vote on the motion.

- 4 Incidental motions:** These usually relate to matters of the business meeting rather than directly to a main motion. All incidental motions are secondary motions, meaning that they are made when a main motion is already on the floor.

Some of these motions, such as suspend the rules or point of order, can be made while nothing is pending; in those situations they are called incidental main motions.

The Six Incidental Motions

- 1. Point of order:** If a member feels the rules are not being followed, he or she can use this motion. It requires the chair to make a ruling and enforce the rules.
- 2. Appeal the decision of the chair:** A motion to take a decision regarding parliamentary procedure out of the hands of the presiding officer and place the final decision in the hands of the assembly.
- 3. Object to the consideration of a question:** The purpose of this motion is to prevent the assembly from considering the question/motion because a member deems the question as irrelevant, unprofitable, or even contentious.
- 4. Suspend the rules:** This motion is used when the group wants to do something that violates its own rules. This motion does not apply to the organization's bylaws, local, state, or national law or fundamental principles of parliamentary law.
- 5. Division of the assembly:** The effect of this motion is to require a standing vote (not a counted vote). A single member can demand this if he or she feels the vote is too close to call. This motion can only be used after a voice vote or hand vote.
- 6. Division of the question:** This motion is used to separate a main motion or amendment into parts to be voted on individually. It can only be used if each part can stand as a separate question.

- **Note:** *When you make the motion to suspend the rules, you don't necessarily have to tell the exact rule you are suspending, but you do have to tell the object of the suspension. You can't simply say "I move to suspend the rules" and then ignore all of the rules and do whatever you want, having a free for all.*

- 5 "Bring Back" motions:** These are motions that are used to bring a motion back that has already been before the assembly for reconsideration, just in case once wasn't enough!

These motions are methods of properly getting around two of the basic principles of parliamentary procedure. The first is that an assembly cannot be asked to decide the same question twice during one session, unless a special motion is made to allow that. The second is that a motion that conflicts with a motion adopted at the same session or one previously adopted that is still in effect not in order.

The Four "Bring Back" Motions

- 1. Rescind:** This motion is used to cancel something that the voting body did at a previous meeting. We all change our minds, sometimes circumstances change, and this is the motion that allows you to respond to such changes. For the motion to rescind, any of the following votes are needed: two-thirds vote, a majority vote if previous notice is given, or a majority of the entire membership.
- 2. Amend something previously adopted:** This motion is similar to the first, but with two differences. First, instead of canceling a previously adopted motion, this motion changes it. Second, you must include how you propose to change the previously adopted motion in the motion to amend something previously adopted, just like you would in any other motion to amend.
- 3. Take from the table:** To bring a tabled motion back before the group, a member must make the motion to take it from the table by the end of the next regularly scheduled meeting. The motion to take from the table can be made by any member, and it requires a majority vote to pass.
- 4. Reconsider:** This motion erases the original vote on a motion and puts the assembly in the place it was in right before that vote occurred. If the motion to reconsider passes, the motion is put back on the floor, as if the original vote had not occurred, and discussion continues. The motion to reconsider can only be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side. This way, at least one person in the group has changed his or her mind.

Motions:

This Chart will help you to identify and understand the different aspects and types of motions.

	May Interrupt A Speaker	Requires A Second	Debatable	Vote Required	Motions That May Apply
PRIVILEGED MOTIONS					
To fix time at which to adjourn	NO	YES	Limited	Majority	Amend, Reconsider
To adjourn	NO	YES	NO	Majority	None
To take a recess	NO	YES	Limited	Majority	Amend
To rise to a question of privilege	YES	NO	NO	Chairman rules	All
To call for the orders of the day	YES	NO	NO	None	None
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS					
To lay on the table	NO	YES	NO	Majority	None
To call for the previous question	NO	YES	NO	2/3	Reconsider
To limit, extend limits of debate	NO	YES	Limited	2/3	Amend, Reconsider, Previous Question
To postpone definitely	NO	YES	Limited	Majority	Amend, Reconsider, Previous ,question
To refer to a committee	NO	YES	Limited	Majority	Amend, Reconsider, Previous, Question
To amend	NO	YES	YES	Majority	Amend, Reconsider, Previous, Question
To postpone indefinitely	NO	YES	YES	Majority	Limit Debate, Previous, Question, Reconsider
GENERAL MAIN MOTIONS	NO	YES	YES	Majority	All
SPECIFIC TO MAIN MOTIONS					
To take from the table	NO	YES	NO	Majority	None
To reconsider	YES	YES	YES	Majority	Limit Debate, Previous, Question, Table
To reconsider and enter minutes	YES	YES	NO	None until called for	None
To rescind	NO	YES	YES	2/3	All

Motions

How Do I Present My Motion?

Here's what happens when you want a motion considered:

1 You obtain the floor

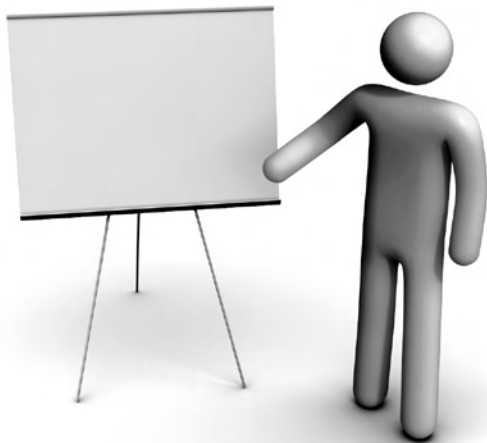
- Wait until the previous speaker is finished.
- Rise and address the chair. Say "Mr. or Madam President..."
- Give your name. The chair will recognize you by repeating it.

2 You make your motion

- Speak clearly and concisely.
- State your motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we..."
- Stay on the subject and avoid personal attacks.

3 You wait for a second

- Another member will say, "I second the motion."
- Alternatively, the chair will call for a second.
- If there is no second, your motion will not be considered.



4 The chair states your motion

- The chair must say, "It is moved and seconded that we..."
- After this happens, debate or voting can occur.
- Your motion is now "assembly property," and you cannot change it without consent of the members.

5 You expand on your motion

- As the person who made the motion, you are allowed to speak first.
- Direct all comments to the chair.
- Keep to the time limit for speaking.
- You may speak again after all other speakers are finished.

6 The chair puts the question

- The chair asks, "Are you ready for the question?"
- If there is no more debate or if a motion to stop debate is adopted, a vote is taken.
- The chair announces the results.

Parliamentary Procedure Cheat Sheet

Here are some motions you might make, how to make them, and what to expect of the rules.

To do this:	You say this:	May You Interrupt The Speaker?	Do You Need A Second?	Is It Debatable?	Can It Be Amended?	What Vote Is Needed?	Can It Be Reconsidered?
Adjourn meeting	"I move that we adjourn..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Call an intermission	"I move to recess for..."	No	Yes	No (1)	Yes	Majority	No
Complain about heat, noise, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No
Temporarily suspend consideration of an issue	"I move to lay the motion on the table."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No(2)
End debate and amendments	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes (3)
Postpone discussion for a certain time	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Give closer study of something	"I move to refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes (4)
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."	No	Yes	Yes (5)	Yes	Majority	Yes
Introduce business	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
The motions listed above are in order of precedence. Below, there is no order.							
Protest breach of rules or conduct	"I rise to a point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote (6)	No
Vote on a ruling of the chair	"I appeal from the chair's decision."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Yes
Suspend rules temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Avoid considering an improper matter	"I object to consideration of this motion."	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 (7)	Yes (2)
Verify a voice vote by having members stand	"I call for a division," or "Division!"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No
Request information	"Point of information..."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No
Take up a matter previously tabled	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Reconsider a hasty action	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	Yes (8)	Yes	Yes (9)	No	Majority	No

Notes: 1. Unless moved when no question is pending.

2. Affirmative votes may not be reconsidered.

3. Unless vote on question has begun.

4. Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.

5. Unless the motion to be amended is not debatable.

6. Unless the chair submits to the assembly for decision.

7. A 2/3 vote in negative is needed to prevent consideration of the main motion.

8. Only if the speaker has the floor but has not actually begun to speak.

9. Unless the motion to be reconsidered is not debatable.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is my motion in order?

A. Your motion must relate to the business at hand and be presented at the right time. It must not be obstructive, frivolous or against the bylaws.

Q. May I interrupt the speaker?

A. Some motions are so important that the speaker may be interrupted to make them. The original speaker regains the floor after the interruption has been attended to.

Q. Do I need a second?

A. Usually, yes. A second indicates that another member would like to consider your motion. It prevents spending time on a question that interests only one person.

Q. Is the motion debatable?

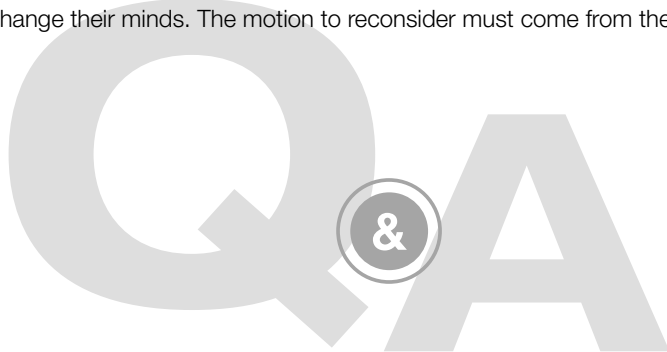
A. Parliamentary procedure guards the right to free and full debate on most motions. However, some subsidiary, privileged, and incidental motions are not debatable.

Q. Can the motion be amended?

A. Some motions can be changed by striking out or inserting wording, or both. Amendments must relate to the subject as presented in the main motion.

Q. Can the motion be reconsidered?

A. Some motions can be debated again and re-voted on in order to give members a chance to change their minds. The motion to reconsider must come from the winning side.



Meeting Checklist

Follow this checklist before, during and after your next meeting and you are sure to succeed!

Before the Meeting:

- Schedule room, refreshments, equipment
- Define meeting objectives
- Prepare agenda
- Invite participants and distribute agenda prior to the meeting
- Check the meeting room at least 30 minutes prior to the meeting start time
- Be available to welcome meeting participants

During the Meeting:

- Start on time
- Follow the agenda
- Limit/control discussion
- Solicit participation
- Clarify any action agreed upon
- Summarize the results
- Thank participants for attending

After the Meeting:

- Restore room to its original order and return equipment
- Evaluate meeting effectiveness
- Send out meeting evaluations 3-6 months into the leadership year
- Distribute meeting report in a timely manner
- Take any action agreed to
- Follow up on items delegated to meeting participants

Discussion Starters

One of the most important skills you can develop as a meeting leader is the ability to help promote meaningful discussions in your meetings. Involving members, generating discussion, and gaining the maximum involvement from participants at your meetings benefits the association, your committee, and the productivity of your group. Understanding how to get that activity going can be as simple as knowing how to get the discussion started.

The following examples provide some useful guidelines for generating discussion:

Ask for opinions:

- What is your reaction to...?
- How do you feel about...?
- What is your thinking on...?

Paraphrase:

- Let me see if I understand you correctly, you're saying that...?
- What I hear you saying is...
- Before we proceed, do you mean that...?
- Let me restate your last point to see if I understand you correctly...

Encourage Participation:

- John, how do you feel about...?
- Mary, how would you respond to that last question?
- Before we continue, I would like to get Bob's opinion on...

Ask for Clarification:

- Help me understand that last comment. What would you do if...?
- It is still not clear to me. What should I do if...?
- I see Jane shaking her head. Let's discuss how this issue would apply to your committee...

Be Supportive:

- Let's give Bill a chance to share his opinion.
- Dave has told us how he feels, now let's give Mike our attention.

Test for Consensus:

- It seems that we have come to agreement on this issue.
Let's see a show of hands. Who agrees we should...?
- Glen, do you agree with that too?
- Before we move on, does everyone agree that...?

Do a Quick Survey:

- How does everyone feel about this? Let's start with Bob.
- How many are in favor of the proposal? Let's see a show of hands.

Initiate Action:

- How do you think we should proceed?
- What is the next step?
- Can I have some suggestions for getting started with this?

Summarize:

- Let's summarize the decisions we have made about this.
- Jim, will you summarize your major objection?
- Let's bring everyone up to speed by summarizing where we are at this point.



Handling Disruptive Behaviors

There are some instances where certain participant behaviors exhibited in meetings and group situations limit our ability to successfully lead a meeting. Below is a list of some of the most common behaviors that disrupt meetings and some suggested strategies to address them.

The Expert:

- Acknowledge expertise
- Enlist their help
- Consider mentoring opportunities

The Side Chatter:

- Switch to group activity
- Lower your voice
- Pause
- Move towards them
- Use small group activities

The Talker:

- Use small group activities
- Ask them to be the note-taker
- Establish group questioning (rotate group to group)
- Dramatize the holding of the floor

The Devil's Advocate:

- Use intensely practical examples
- Present hard data
- Make opposition address specific doubts
- Diffuse their negative energy (Does everyone agree with that point of view?)
- Initiate a private discussion

The Shy Guy:

- Use small group projects with defined roles
- Employ group generated questioning
- Rotate small group leadership
- Ask for written responses
- Use an engaging opener
- Demonstrate the value of volunteering
- Provide small incentives
- Allow attendees to participate at their own comfort level (don't put anyone in the "hot seat" unnecessarily)

The Cell Phone User:

- Request at the start of the meeting that cell phones be switched to vibrate mode or turned off
- Develop ground rules which address this issue
- Make break times during the meeting precise so participants know when they can respond to any calls or messages

The Johnny Come Lately:

- Start and end the meeting on time
- Always thank the participants for being on time
- Reward participants that arrive on time

The Yawner:

- Vary the pace of the meeting
- Remain intensely practical
- Utilize group activities
- Vary your vocal patterns

It is important to note that any of these behaviors could also be addressed during a private conversation between the meeting leader and the meeting participant.

Sample Meeting Agenda

Anytown HBA

Membership Committee

September 23, 2010

6:30-8:00 pm

Chair: Julia Jackson / Designs by Julia

Vice Chair: Jim Shields / Shields Construction Co.

I. Meeting Objectives (6:30-6:35 pm)

1. Discuss results of membership survey
2. Elect membership drive Co-Chairs
3. Brainstorm ideas for this year's membership drive

II. Consent Agenda (6:35-6:40 pm)

1. Approval of August, 2006 meeting report
2. Approval to send Chairman and Vice Chairman to NAHB Leadership Training Conference

III. Discussion items

1. Member Survey Discussion (6:40-7:10 pm)
2. Election of Membership Drive Co-Chairs (7:10-7:30 pm)
3. Brainstorm ideas (7:30-7:40 pm)

IV. Open Discussion (7:40-7:55 pm)

V. Meeting Summary (7:55-8:00 pm)

VI. Next meeting: February 23rd, HBA Office, 6:30-8:00 pm

Sample Meeting Ground Rules

- The meeting will begin and end on time.
- The group members will actively participate.
- Decisions will be made by majority vote.
- Respectful disagreements of opinion are allowed.
- Expression of ideas and opinions is encouraged.
- All cell phones will be turned off or set to vibrate.

Sample Meeting Checklist

*** Check those statements on the list below that apply to your current meetings. After you have reviewed the entire list, follow the equation below to find out how productive your meetings actually are.**

Number of Statements Checked _____ x 5 = _____ Meeting Score

* A score of 80 or more indicates that this is an effective and productive meeting.

* A score below 60 suggests additional work may be required to improve the quality of this meeting.

- An agenda is prepared prior to the meeting.
- Meeting participants have an opportunity to contribute to the agenda.
- Advance notice of meeting time and place is provided to those invited.
- Facilities are adequate and comfortable for the number of participants.
- The meeting begins on time.
- The meeting has a scheduled end.
- The use of time is monitored throughout the meeting.
- Everyone has the opportunity to present his/her point of view.
- Participants attentively listen to one another.
- There are periodic summaries as the meeting progresses.
- No one dominates the discussion.
- Everyone has a voice in decisions made at the meeting.
- The meeting typically ends with a summary of accomplishments.

- Participants periodically evaluate the meeting.
- People can be depended upon to carry out any action agreed to during the meeting.
- A memorandum of discussion or minutes of the meeting is provided to each participant following the meeting.
- The meeting leader follows up with participants on actions agreed to during the meeting.
- The appropriate and necessary people can be counted on to attend each meeting.
- The decision process used is appropriate for the size of the group.
- When used, audiovisual equipment is in good working condition and does not detract from the meeting.

Bibliography

Haynes, Marion E., "Effective Meeting Skills: A Practical Guide for More Productive Meetings" (California: Crisp Publications, Inc., 1988.)

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Pike, Robert W. & Arch, David, "Dealing With Difficult Participants" (Minneapolis: Creative Training Techniques Press, 1997.)



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