

Running a Business Meeting

Typical Agenda

1. Call to order and roll call of the members present
2. Reading of the minutes
(Followed by any corrections)
3. Reports of officers, the Board and standing (regular) committees
(They may make a motion for the group's consideration.)
4. Reports of special committees
(They may make a motion for the group's consideration to carry out any recommendations they make.)
5. Unfinished Business
(Include any issue that was not concluded, was postponed or was tabled during a prior meeting. The secretary's minutes will help the chairman to include these items on the agenda.)
6. New Business
(These items can be introduced by the chairman or can come from any member present. Announcements, educational programs and speakers fit in this portion of the agenda.)
7. Adjournment
(A motion to adjourn may be made at any time of the meeting. If members are not ready to stop, they may vote against the motion and business can continue.)

Simplified Rules

1. Only one subject may be before the group at a time.
2. Each item presented for consideration is entitled to full and free debate.



3. All members have equal rights to be heard.
4. All remarks are addressed to the chairman which helps prevent opposing viewpoints from becoming personal battles.
5. The rights of the minority must be preserved, but the will of the majority must be carried out.
6. Once an action is passed, it should be supported by the whole group.

Handling Motions

1. Obtaining the floor
 - Wait until the last speaker has finished.
 - Raise your hand.
 - Wait until the chairman recognizes you.
2. Making a motion
 - Speak in a clear and concise (brief) manner
 - State the motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that..." rather than "I move that we do not..."
 - Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.
3. Wait for someone to second your motion.
4. Another member will second your motion by saying, "I second the motion," or the chairman will ask for a second.
5. If there is no second to your motion it is lost.
6. The chairman states your motion.



- The chairman will say, “It has been moved and seconded that...” thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
- The membership then either debates your motion, or moves directly to a vote.
- Once your motion is presented to the membership by the chairman, it becomes the property of the assembly and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.

7. Expanding on your motion

- The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this time rather than at the time you present it.
- The mover is always allowed to speak first.
- All comments and debate must be directed to the chair by saying, “Mr. Chairman...”
- The mover may speak again only after other speakers have finished, unless called upon by the chairman.

8. Putting the question to the membership

- The chairman asks, “Are you ready to vote on the question?”
- If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
- A motion to “move the previous question” (stop the debate and vote) may be used if the discussion appears to have bogged down. The mover must be recognized by the chair and the motion must be seconded and receive a two-thirds vote in order to stop the discussion.

Voting on Motions

There are five different methods of voting.



1. **Voice Vote:** The chairman asks those in favor to say “aye,” those opposed to say, “no.” Any member may move for an exact count.
2. **Roll Call:** Each member answers “yes” or “no” as his/her name is called. This method is used when a record of each person’s vote is needed.
3. **By General Consent:** When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the chairman says, “If there is no objection...” The members show agreement by their silence. If one member says, “I object,” the item must be put to a vote.
4. **Division:** When the voice vote is questioned, the chairman may have members raise their hands or stand. Members are not actually counted.
5. **Ballot:** Members write their vote on a slip of paper. This method is used when secrecy is desired.

Adapted from Robert's Rules of Order
<http://www.abateny.org/rules.html>

