

Prepare for effective board meetings

Parliamentary procedure consultant **Jim Slaughter** offers this checklist to help you and your board president ensure that your meetings are productive.

Before meeting:

- ☐ Why have meeting (decision-making, problem-solving, planning, evaluation)?
- ☐ What are desired outcomes?
- ☐ Who is responsible for each item?
- ☐ Confirm environment and equipment.
- ☐ Room arrangement:
 - To give information: auditorium style.
 - To get participation: circle.
- ☐ Prepare agenda. Considerations:
 - Do all items relate to mandate?
 - Are items for action?
 - Is agenda clear?
 - Is location on agenda?
- ☐ Specifics:
 - Start and end time for meeting.
 - Start and end time for each item.
 - Require business items (motions) be submitted in advance.
 - Assign tasks.
- ☐ Distribute meeting packet.
- ☐ Distribute agenda in advance.
- ☐ Ensure everyone on agenda knows role.

During meeting:

- ☐ Call to order on time.
- ☐ Stay focused using agenda.
- ☐ Focus on substance, not form.
- ☐ End each item on time.
- ☐ Get unanimous consent, whenever possible.
- ☐ Use consent agenda, if possible.
- ☐ Encourage participation/equalize with participation:
 - Prompt comments, if necessary.
- ☐ Control interruptions and digressions:
 - "Park digressions."
 - "Deflate windbags."
 - Clarify and rephrase.
- ☐ Manage conflict.
- ☐ Ensure decisions/assignments are clear.
- ☐ More formal procedure depending on controversy/importance.
- ☐ Close the meeting on time.
- ☐ Close the meeting positively.

Plan for problems:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Rambling member ("park digressions"). | <input type="checkbox"/> Argument between two members. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dominating member ("deflate windbags"). | <input type="checkbox"/> Side conversations. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Argumentative member. | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonparticipating member. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discouraging member. | |