

TIPS FOR RUNNING A GOOD MEETING

1. Start on time and end on time
2. Have an agenda (put together by the chair or president)
 - Put the most time-consuming or most controversial topics at the beginning of the agenda
 - Allow the appropriate people to have input before it goes out
 - And then, *stick* to it!
3. Decide at the beginning of the meeting what is most important to get done (and work on those items first) – OR – write those important items into the top of the agenda and include time limits before it is mailed out
 - Sometimes you have to “defer” some agenda items until the next meeting – setting time limits for discussion is helpful!!!
4. Have someone take minutes (“notes”) and
 - Record attendance
 - Record – if needed – if there is a quorum (the minimum number of members that must be present at meetings to make the proceedings valid)
 - Record the motions –
 - What was decided
 - Critical timelines
 - Who is responsible
 - Resources to be used (money, personnel to do the work, fund raising, supplies, etc.)
5. What needs to be done before the next meeting, and who will do it
6. Double check WHO IS DOING WHAT before the meeting ends – call to confirm progress half way through to the next meeting
7. Respect everyone’s ability to contribute!
 - EVERYONE can DO SOMETHING on EVERY PROJECT!!
 - COMMITTEES ROCK!! Don’t re-do all the work of your committees, and don’t undo all of the small decisions they made.
8. Respect everyone’s time! A meeting usually lasts between an hour and two hours long. For professions, this is quite a time commitment. For people with disabilities, it can mean arranging specialized transportation, personal attendants, interpreters, etc.

- Keep committee reports short unless the group wants more information
- Share committee information in the form of written reports (not just a verbal report – especially when there are facts & figures)
- Don't tell jokes or personal stories that delay the meeting

PARTS OF AN AGENDA

This is a **SAMPLE AGENDA** that groups, both large and small, use to conduct business:

PADS Board of Directors Meetings
Friday, March 21st 2014 – 1:00 to 2:30 PM
Cedar Rapids Public Library – 540 5th St SE

Call to order by the President
Introductions of Board Members and guests
Reading of the PADS Mission Statement
Approval of the agenda
Approval of minutes from the last meeting
Treasurer's report
Items requiring action
Committee reports
Old business
New business
Adjournment and next meeting: Friday, April 18th – 1:00 PM

ROLES OF OFFICERS (AKA – “EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE”)

Chairperson/president – sets the agenda and leads the meeting – often acts as the “figure head” of the organization in all things

Vice chairperson/vice president – takes over the meeting if the chairperson can't be there – this person often becomes the next chairperson

Secretary – takes the minutes of meetings (minutes are an official, written record of the meeting) and does the correspondence for the group

Treasurer – manages the money (many committees do not have treasurers)

Sometimes, the executive committee also includes the past chair/president

TYPES OF COMMITTEES

Boards often set up committees to lay the groundwork on issues and make recommendations for solutions. A committee chairperson is usually appointed by the Board president, and reports progress back to the full board.

NOTE: A good way to give people with disabilities leadership experience is to encourage participation in committees. Also, being tapped to be the chair of a committee builds leadership skills.

There are three main types of committees:

- **Standing committees** – ongoing, long-term committees dealing with several related issues
- **Ad hoc committees** – short-term with single purpose
- **Task forces** – meet for a specific issue with a deadline – often very intensive work

The Basics of ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

NOTE: The information below is **BASED ON** “Robert’s Rules of Order.” It is designed to give you **THE BASICS** to lead a meeting. Please know that “Robert’s Rules” is a very complex and people spend a lifetime to understand “parliamentary authority.” Most groups use one of two methods to guide their decision making process:

1. **A simplified “Robert’s Rules”** – motions are made and votes are taken in a relaxed atmosphere
2. **Voting by consensus** – very informal – the chair can tell just by the conversation if the group has come to agreement, and says, “I think I hear consensus that we will do _____ – is anyone opposed to that?” If there is opposition, then you can continue with the discussion or you move to call for a motion under Robert’s Rules.

How a Motion works: A committee (or sometimes an individual) presents a topic for discussion, and they make a presentation. And, someone may layout a solution, in the form of a motion for the appropriate body to act upon (like a board of directors). At that point, the chair calls for a second. If no one supports the motion with a second, the motion dies.

If the motion gains a second, the chair calls for “any discussion?” This is where the chair will go back and forth between those who support the motion and those who oppose the motion to give every new idea a voice. (The idea is **NOT** to hear the **same** arguments why three people are for a motion three different times. It is to make sure that if three different people speak for a motion, it gets three different ideas why people should support it. The same goes for those who oppose a motion.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Sometimes, topics are brought up that you should not vote on because you have a conflict of interest. This is called abstaining from voting. In general, a conflict of interest is when you or your organization will get money as the result of your vote. If you think you have a conflict of interest, it is a good idea for you to not take part in the discussion and abstain from voting. You can abstain for any reason.

FOR THE LEADER OF A MEETING

- To introduce a new topic or to offer a solution to a problem, you say, "I move that we..." (A motion must be seconded to continue - most motions require a majority to pass.)
- To second a motion, you say, "I second that." (The group can now talk about the motion. This is called debate.)
- To amend a motion, you say, "I move that this motion be amended by..." (The motion must be seconded to continue - takes a majority to pass.)
- To amend a motion ("friendly amendment"), you say, "Do you agree to a friendly amendment to change...?" Or: "to add...?" (Any change must have the agreement of the motion maker and the person who seconded the motion.)
- To end debate on an issue, you say, "I move the question."
- To have the motion studied, you say, "I move we refer this matter to committee."
- To stop the consideration of a motion (to think about it more), you say, "I move to table the motion."
- To take up a matter that was tabled, you say, "I move to take from the table..."
- To complain about the noise or temperature in the room, you say, "Point of personal privilege...." (This is subject to a ruling by the chairperson and requires no vote.)
- To end the meeting, you say, "I move that the meeting adjourn."

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS (simplified)

→ → → → **TOPIC** → **MOTION** → **SECOND** →
DEBATE (pros & cons) → **VOTE** → **RECORD THE VOTE**
 → → → → **NEXT TOPIC** → **MOTION** → **SECOND** →
DEBATE (pros & cons) → **VOTE** → **RECORD VOTE**



DEBATE – also known as “**DISCUSSION**”

Managing debate on a motion can be difficult, especially for someone who is new to leadership. This is how debate should go):

The chairperson calls for discussion on the motion after it has been seconded, by saying, “Do we have anyone wanting to speak against the motion?” If yes, the chair recognizes the person and they speak. The chair then says, “Do we have anyone wanting to speak for the motion?” If yes, the chair recognizes that person. No one speaks twice (except maybe those answering questions, like the person who made the motion and experts in the topic). There is no “cross-talking” (where everyone is talking at once – trying to ask and answer questions).

HOWEVER, most small groups and organizations **DO NOT** follow these very strict rules (ROBERT’S RULES OF ORDER). It is a good idea for you to know how formal the process is for your group.

NOTE: If you are interested in seeing ROBERT’S RULES OF ORDER in action, tune into C-SPAN and watch the US House of Representatives &/or US Senate as they conduct business.

VOTING (simplified)

The chairperson calls for the vote by saying, “All in favor of the motion signify by saying yes,” (Yes’s are counted). “All opposed signify by saying no,” (No’s are counted). To abstain from voting, you don’t vote yes or no, you say, “I abstain.”

Sometimes, the way you are asked to vote will be different (for example, raise your hand). Sometimes, voting is done in secret on paper ballots.

Votes are counted and the motion either passes or fails based on a majority vote. It generally takes one more than half of the votes to pass a motion – a majority (50% +1).