

# Conducting a Meeting: President

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## **Agenda**

Typically the President sends out an agenda prior to the meeting and people can respond with items to be added.

Basic elements of an agenda (Standard Order of Business)

- Reading and approval of minutes
- Reports
- Unfinished Business
- New Business
- Adjournment

Optional: include names of officer giving reports and names of Committee and Committee chairs giving reports.

## **Wording: Old Business**

Do not use the term Old Business. Unfinished Business ...

## **At the Meeting**

The meeting will come to order. (With or without gavel)

Quorum – Determines that a quorum is present. In the current DLA structure, six voting members constitute a quorum.

President says: “Let the minutes show that a quorum was present.”

Items should be taken in the order listed on the agenda. Board meetings are more informal and urgent items can be dealt with first. Items can be postponed until a future meeting. If the group agrees, this can be done informally or as a motion.

## **Minutes**

Note: Minutes do not require a motion and do not have to be voted on.

President refers to the distribution of the (draft) minutes. Example:

The minutes of the previous meeting have been distributed. Are there any corrections?

- There being no corrections, the minutes are approved as written
- The correction is noted. The secretary will make the correction.
- Are there any other corrections?

President says: If there are no (further) corrections, the minutes are approved.

After the meeting, the secretary will sign and date the minutes (including any corrections).

### **The President's Role**

Typically, the President refrains from voting, making motions, or seconding motions.

### **Motions**

Members will make motions to urge some action of the body. It is important at the motion be stated clearly. The Secretary records it and either the President or the Secretary will repeat it when necessary. In most meetings, the process of making motions can be conducted more informally than *Robert's Rules* calls for.

Someone makes a motion. Someone else must second the motion, in order for it to be discussed or voted on. Seconding does not imply agreement.

The motion is now pending or "on the floor." Discussion (debate) takes place, during which the words of the motion can be slightly modified for clarity. The maker of the motion has preference in being the first speaker.

If there is no discussion or if discussion seems to be over, then the motion is voted on. The President "puts" the motion (the question) to a vote. The President says: The motion is ... and then repeats the exact wording (or has the secretary read it). Then gives the necessary directions for voting.

If the discussion brings up disagreements on the motion as stated (that is, more than clarifying words), then the motion can be amended. The question (the motion) is now the amendment. The main motion cannot be discussed or voted until the amendment is dealt with.

## **Rules for Debate**

At a Membership meeting there may not be a time when the discussion seems to be over. At this point, the President may need to impose formal rules of debate. The rules for discussion and ending discussion can be very complicated. See appendix.

## **Voting**

Voice votes are typical. Those in favor say “aye.” Those opposed say “no.” Conclude with: The ayes have it and the motion is adopted. Or: The noes have it and the motion is lost. (Or similar wording)

Show of hands is an option. Conclude with number for and against. The ayes have it... etc.

## **Adjournment**

Typically, the time to adjourn is stated in the meeting announcement (or “call”) or in the agenda.

If all the business has been conducted, the President asks, leaving time for response: Is there any further business? ... Since there is no further business, the meeting is adjourned. (No motion, no vote)

If the business is not finished when the appointed time arrives

- The President may state a desire to continue (if the group agrees)
- Motion: someone can make a motion, seconded; a majority may vote to adjourn
- Any motion or actions not completed become items for “Unfinished Business” at the next meeting

## **Rules for Debate (for Appendix)**

At a Membership meeting there may not be a time when the discussion seems to be over. At this point, the President may need to impose formal rules of debate. The rules for discussion and ending discussion can be very complicated. Each speaker must be recognized, time limits are placed on speaking, no one should be allowed to interrupt, speakers who already spoken should not speak again until others wishing to be recognized have spoken.

To end discussion, a speaker recognized by the President, can make a motion to end debate. The formal wording is confusing; acceptable wording would be "I call the question" or "I move that we vote now." The motion must be seconded. The President explains to the group: this motion will end any discussion. Then the motion must be voted and be approved by a two-thirds vote.

After the motion to call the question is approved, then the vote can be held on the main motion.