

Audio Script

Governance 200 - Conducting Effective Meetings

This is the actual audio that was recorded for Governance 200. Use it for a reference or study guide.

Governance 200 - Conducting Effective Meetings

Welcome to Governance 200

This is one of the required courses for the Governance certificate. Be sure you have taken the two prerequisite courses - Governance 100 and 110 - before taking this course.

This course should take you about 45 minutes to complete.

The sections of this course are:

Leading Effective Meetings, and
Parliamentary Procedure

There are additional online courses for Robert's Rules of Order and leading effective meetings in the SkillSoft library. You can access them through the Leadership Academy under the 'Catalog' in the Communications Curriculum.

Section One: Leading Effective Meetings

There are several elements to leading an effective meeting.

First you should be familiar with our policies and with Parliamentary Procedure - how it works and why it is needed.

An important piece is to be prepared before the meeting starts. Some ways to be prepared include

Having the agenda written, and then expect that there will be changes at the last minute. In larger locals, minutes of executive board meetings and this meeting's agenda might be copied for distribution.

Be sure to go over any committee reports with the committee chairs. Suggest how thoroughly they should report, or that a report is not necessary this time. For committees that don't get to report often, offer to include their information in the printed materials handed out, or in your newsletter or webpage.

You should know about issues that are current for your group, and also for the union in general. Keep up with current events that may be affecting jobs or work issues.

Understanding the people in your group will go a long way to help you prepare a relevant agenda, appoint the best committee chairs, and get the work of the group done

Meetings that work

Your meetings can be interesting, relevant *and* effective.

Use this information to make sure your meetings are not too long, poorly planned, unimportant, or merely social events.

[Components of a meeting]

An effective meeting has an introduction and purpose - both of these are usually laid out in the agenda. The agenda is presented at the beginning of the meeting and there should be an overview discussion of the agenda items.

During the meeting, each task and issue on the agenda should be addressed, and tasks should be specifically assigned.

Near the end of the meeting, when all parts of the agenda have been addressed, the schedule of the next meeting should be discussed and decided.

The end of the meeting should be clear and include an official closure statement when all business has been completed

[What kind of meeting]

What kinds of meetings will a steward be expected to lead? Most meetings will be with members, with new members, or with people that you would like to become members. Sometimes the meetings will be with management - direct supervisors or department heads.

Different meetings could be at the members' worksites, with an organizing committee, an informal meeting over lunch, a general group meeting, or a planning meeting for a specific event.

Meetings can also include emergency meetings to discuss urgent issues as well as small group meetings that deal with individual pieces of a larger goal.

[Create the agenda]

The place where most meetings run into trouble is in the construction of the agenda.

For your meeting to work, the agenda should be well thought-out and include broad goals and clear objectives.

Be specific about upcoming activities or tasks and what it will take to get them done.

Plan for future events - get volunteers, offer leaders in your group a chance to be in charge.

Also you can collaborate with other DLCs or locals. Conversations with stewards and other member leaders can give you insight into issues facing your group.

Collaborations provide an opportunity to get help and combine forces for future events.

Finally, it seems like a small thing, but putting the items in order on your agenda will save time and energy during the meeting.

[Structure the discussion]

Structure the discussion by setting up ground rules at the beginning of the meeting. This will help keep folks focused throughout the meeting. Examples of ground rules are to “Turn off cell phones,” or that “One person talks at a time.”

As the leader of the meeting, it is up to you to make sure the discussion is effective. For instance, be sure to address all of the main points on the agenda - and, be sure that the agenda contains all of the points you need.

The goals of the meeting are the big ideas; and the objectives are the ways to get those big ideas done - be sure you deal with both goals and objectives during the meeting.

You may need to ask questions to stimulate the discussion. Be sure these are open-ended questions, not ones that can be answered yes or no.

Keeping the meeting on-track can be a challenge. Competing events, such as a ringing cell phone, can throw the meeting off topic.

Another thing that can derail your meeting is a discussion that is not on the agenda. There are two good ways to manage off-topic discussions.

One way is to set up ground rules at the beginning of the meeting as we mentioned earlier. Everyone can help enforce them.

A second good way to keep folks on target is to provide a “Parking Lot” for ideas that are not directly related to the topic at hand.

This can be a flip chart with a marker, or a clipboard with some paper...

If an idea or concern comes up that is out of the scope of the meeting, the parking lot gives you a place to write it down so it is not lost. After the meeting, record everything from the parking lot and include it in the minutes of the meeting.

The parking lot is an effective way to show respect for all members’ issues, concerns or questions in addition to keeping people focused. It can also serve as a way to deal with a disruption.

[Set assignments for the meeting]

Choose assignments for your meeting when you are planning - make notes about delegating some of the small tasks and logistics to participants and speak with those people about your plans. Specifically...

- Be sure the Chairpersons know ahead of time that they will be presenting their committee's report.
- Be sure someone is responsible for getting everyone to sign in, and for distributing handouts.
- Assign discussion leaders for small group discussions or specific topics. This is a good opportunity to allow a leader a chance to talk, or for a more quiet person a chance to contribute.
- Someone could provide visual aids such as PowerPoint slides or charts, a poster or a document that illustrates the issue.
- Someone to take notes - this is usually the secretary but it can be a rotating responsibility.

[Disruptions]

One or two people should be in charge of dealing with disruptive events or people. The people assigned to disruptions should be given tools and techniques so that they can handle disruptions effectively.

A disruptive event could be food arriving or a visitor that needs attention, or some other unforeseen event that distracts the meeting - assign one person to take care of these events.

Try to recognize a disruptive person as soon as you can. They may start out upset, or get there gradually, but as the leader if you engage in their conversation, your whole meeting is lost.

The person assigned to disruptive people can take the parking lot clipboard and engage the disrupter in conversation to take notes about their concerns and be sure they are 'heard.'

As the chair, you can say, "Absolutely, I hear your concern, I will ask Terry to meet with you and record what you have to say."

Do not stop the meeting to engage with this person, but be sure their issues get addressed.

[Other Logistics to assign]

There are always logistics to attend to for any group get-together. This is a way to delegate responsibility to potential leaders in your group and get them more involved. These responsibilities can include, but are not limited to, room set-up, refreshments, child care, sign-in sheets, handouts, disruption management, reminder calls and emails, transportation, invitation flyers, and room clean-up. These are all logistical details that, if you ignore them, can cause your meeting to falter.

Be sure you have at least one person assigned to each of these tasks - you cannot do it all yourself...And, for clean-up, you can simply ask everyone to stay for 2 minutes to put away chairs, pick up trash, or other basic clean-up. You can even

remind them of the old quote, “Many hands make light work.”

[Your meeting should be]

You don’t want to hold a meeting just because one is scheduled!

Every meeting should be productive, a working meeting - that is, the meeting should get a problem solved or questions answered or a survey created.

If it is not a working meeting it should be educational and informative, so that everyone gets the same information about the group’s events and planning.

Your meetings should be spirited. That is, have some energy and enthusiasm for the topics being discussed. If you are not interested in what is happening, your group won’t be either and your discussion will lose focus.

Finally, be sure your meeting is meaningful. This is a matter of making the agenda relevant to the interests of the participants. The participants will then be more engaged in the process and content of the meeting.

[Follow-up]

At the end of the meeting, take 2 minutes to recap any decisions that were made during the meeting and review the list of upcoming tasks and events.

Section One Review Questions

One important document to have ready BEFORE the meeting starts is:

- a. The List of members
- b. The Policy File
- c. The Agenda

The answer is C - Write the agenda for the meeting at least three days in advance and be prepared for last-minute changes.

It is necessary for every committee to report at each meeting.

- a. True
- b. False

False - every committee needs to communicate about what it is doing, but not necessarily at the meeting. Memos, email and other written information will keep your meeting short and manageable.

What logistical items can you remember that are crucial to a meeting that works?

Logistical details such as room set-up, refreshments, child care, sign-in sheets, handouts, disruption management, reminder calls and emails, transportation, invitation flyers, and room clean-up are all logistical details that, if you ignore them, can cause your meeting to falter.

Section Two: Parliamentary Procedure

[History]

Parliamentary procedure was first defined in “Robert’s Rules of Order” in 1915. This book is now part of the public domain, which means you can copy any part of it without infringing on copyright.

The most recent edition of Robert’s Rules was published in 2000. We will use this version for the purposes of this course.

You can also take a free Parliamentary Procedure course online at this website

[<http://www.rulesonline.com/index.html>]

[Overview]

What is Parliamentary Procedure? It is the body of rules, ethics, and customs that govern meetings and other operations of most organizations.

It is part of the common law that originated in the House of Commons of Parliament in the United Kingdom, from which it derives its name.

[Function]

What is the role of Robert’s Rules in Local 1000 meetings?

The function of Robert’s Rules of order is to keep meetings moving and to make sure they address everything they are supposed to.

Keep in mind that following the rule of the majority with respect for the minority and getting the work of the organization done are the two core concepts of parliamentary procedure.

Self-governing organizations follow parliamentary procedure to debate and reach group decisions with the least possible friction, usually ending by taking a vote to make decisions for the group.

All Local 1000 meetings follow Robert’s Rules of order as described in the SEIU bylaws. As the leader, you will need to plan to follow Robert’s rules as a functional part of all of your meetings. You may need to write it into your agenda to be sure the structure is followed each time.

Rights of participants:

The concept of parliamentary procedure is that all meeting participants deserve to be heard as the goals of the meeting are moving forward.

This is based on the consideration of the rights of five basic groups:

- the rights of the majority

- the rights of the minority - especially a large minority greater than one-third of the whole group
- the rights of individual members
- the rights of absentee members, and
- the rights of all of these groups taken together

How does it work?

How does parliamentary procedure actually work in a meeting? There are basic steps that are common to all meetings based on parliamentary procedure.

In Local 1000, the DLC president usually runs the meeting and is called the “Chair” of the meeting. If someone else is running the meeting, they are still called the ‘chair.’

[Reports]

The President’s Report is the first report to be presented and includes any action taken by the executive board at its last meeting and the agenda for this meeting.

The president’s report should advise the members of issues facing the local; it should state the priorities of the DLC, and it should share the direction and action the DLC or local should take.

The president’s report should be followed by these motions:

- First, a motion to accept the report of the executive board
- Then, another motion to adopt the agenda for this meeting
- Finally, members should make any other motions pertaining to the president’s report.

If none of these motions are made the chair can say, *“Does the chair hear a motion from the floor to...?”* and state the kind of motion that is needed.

Some possible committee reports that might also be presented include:

- The Stewards’ Committee
- The Organizing Committee
- The C.O.P.E. Committee
- DLC local’s report, and
- Any other committees appointed by the president with approval of the executive board.

Unfinished Business comes after all other reports have been given.

Unfinished business includes any items left over, or referred from a previous

meeting which require membership action.

The chair starts this part of the meeting by saying, *"Is there any unfinished business?"*

This may be followed by a motion from the floor dealing with the specific items of unfinished business.

Remember that there should be some reference to any unfinished business in the minutes of the previous meeting.

After unfinished business comes New Business.

This includes items raised at this meeting which were not necessarily included on the agenda, but which require membership action.

Some new items may have also come up as a result of committee reports or of correspondence.

The chair starts this section of the meeting by saying, *"Is there any new business?"*

This may be followed by a motion dealing with the specific item of new business. The group votes on the motion, and the chair declares, *"The motion is passed - or the motion is not passed"* and moves on to the next motion or point of business.

The next part of the meeting is called 'Good and Welfare.'

This part of the meeting gives the members a chance to discuss the general welfare of the union. It may also be used for some planned activity, a visiting speaker, acknowledgments, or refreshments.

The chair moves to this part of the meeting by saying, *"Is there any good and welfare?"*

Motions should not be made nor any official business conducted during this part of the meeting.

Finally we come to the Adjournment of the meeting.

The chair will always try to keep the meetings short.

If the business of the meeting is finished and no one has made a motion to adjourn, the chair should ask for one by saying, *"Do I hear a motion to adjourn?"*

After the motion is approved and seconded, the chair says, *"The motion being moved and seconded, this meeting is adjourned."*

Notes for the Chairperson

Here are some notes for the Chairperson...

There are a wide variety of elements to any meeting. Here are some examples that will be helpful to the chair:

[Call for a Motion]

Occasionally, the chair may call for a motion. For instance, the chair will say, *"May I have a motion to put that campaign event on the calendar?"*

Any motion must then be seconded and discussed before voting on it.

The chair must then re-state the motion and call for discussion by saying:

"It has been moved and seconded that we put the campaign event on the calendar. Is there any discussion?"

[Amend a Motion]

The word 'amend' means making a change to the motion. Any motion that has been made can be amended. To amend a motion, a member will move that the motion be changed in some way, and another member will second the amendment. The chair will then say,

"An amendment has been made and seconded that we add the campaign event to our calendar. Is there any discussion on the amendment?"

The group then discusses and votes on the amendment.

If a motion has an amendment, you must vote on the amendment first, and then vote on the actual motion.

[Point of Order]

Sometimes a member will rise on a 'point of order.' This means that the member stands up and is usually objecting to something that is being discussed in the wrong place in the meeting, or is not on the agenda at all. The member will say something like,

"I have a point of order; this discussion does not pertain to the business at hand."

The chair then makes a ruling. They will either say, *"Your point is well-taken"* - or *"it's not well-taken."*

Here are a couple of examples: If the point is correct, the chair will say, *"This discussion will be moved to New Business on our agenda"*

Or, if the point is incorrect, the chair will say *"This discussion is related to the business at hand because -"* and the chair will give the reason why the discussion should proceed.

[Point of Information]

A member may also bring up a “Point of Information.” This means they have something they do not understand. They might say something like:

“I don’t understand the meaning of this motion...”

The chair then explains the motion for the member:

“The meaning here is...” and then will explain the details of the motion that has just been presented to the group.

What is the difference between a Point of Order and a Point of Information?

A Point of Order is an objection to a meeting item. Literally, something is out of order.

A Point of Information is a request for clarification of something being presented.

[Table or Postpone a Motion]

Tabling a motion is called postponing a motion in Local 1000. It means putting the motion off for another specific time or a different meeting. This can happen because there is not enough information to discuss it at this meeting, or because the meeting is running too long to continue, or because the motion is complex and needs more research for the group to fully understand and act on it.

[Call for the Question]

When any motion is ready to be voted on, the chair will say, “Are you ready for the question?” The participants, as a group, respond, “Question.”

Then the chair asks for a vote on the motion at hand. One way to start the vote is to say, “There is a motion to...” and read the motion. Then, the chair will say, “All in favor say ‘aye.’” And the group responds with their individual votes.

Next the chair will say, “All those opposed, no.” and anyone in the group who is opposed to the motion will say no. This is called a voice vote. It is usually easy to tell if the motion is passed or not.

Another reason to call for the question would be to interrupt the discussion of the motion and move on to voting on the motion now. To do this, the next speaker says, “I call for the question.” They mean that the discussion should stop and the group should vote on the motion. All present then vote on whether or not to stop the discussion. If this vote passes, the discussion about the motion is finished and the vote is taken on the motion. If it does not pass, the discussion of the motion continues. A written ballot can also be used for special motions, for elections, or if a voice vote is too close to call.

[No Discussion]

There is no discussion or vote on a motion to do any of the following:

- to adjourn the meeting
- to take a recess
- to vote on a point of order
- to withdraw a motion
- to table a motion
- to close debate, or
- to limit debate

These actions are simply moved and then seconded.

Section Two Review Questions

An important set of rules to know and use when leading an effective meeting is:

- a. Legislative Rules
- b. Parliamentary Procedure*
- c. Rules of Engagement

The answer is B - Parliamentary Procedure. It is important to know Parliamentary Procedure, also called Robert's Rules of Order, to keep your meetings fair and running smoothly.

The main goal of using Parliamentary Procedure is to:

- a. Maintain the rule of the majority with respect for the minority and get the work of the organization done*
- b. Make sure the president's issues are the priority
- c. File all grievance reports with the URC

The answer is A - Parliamentary procedure is used in official meetings to maintain the rule of the majority with respect for the minority and to get the work of the organization done in a responsible manner.

If someone wants to recommend an item to the group they will propose:

- a. A movement
- b. A motion*
- c. An action
- d. A resolution

The correct answer is B - To get a vote started, or to accept an idea or an action, a member will say, "I move that we vote or accept..." and then name the idea or action they want the group to deal with.

End of Course

This completes Governance 200.

Your next step is to take and pass the Final Exam to complete this course.

Take the other required courses to receive Certificate of Completion in the Governance track.