

## **A BUSINESS MEETING IN ACTION**

The following section illustrates how a business meeting is conducted from calling the meeting to order to adjournment. Each order of business on the agenda is briefly explained, and then we show how the presiding officer states the agenda item, introduces those giving reports, and recognizes those making motions.

### **Calling the Meeting to Order**

1. Every meeting must begin somewhere and have someone to lead it. The meeting begins when the president or chairperson calls the meeting to order. To call the meeting to order, the president stands at the front of the room, where everyone can see him or her, and says:

President: The meeting will come to order. [one rap of the gavel]

If the president doesn't have a gavel, he or she can get the members' attention by asking them to sit down because the meeting is going to begin. Or the organization can assign a member of the organization to encourage members to sit down. The president then calls the meeting to order.

President: [no gavel] Will the members please be seated?

[Pause and wait for members to sit, and then say] This meeting will come to order.

Members should immediately sit down and come to order by the request of the president.

### **2. Reading and Approving the Minutes**

After the opening ceremonies, the first order of business is reading the minutes. The president asks the secretary to read the minutes of the previous meeting.

President: Will the secretary read the minutes of the previous meeting?

The president steps aside or sits down, and the secretary stands to read the minutes.

Secretary: The S-Club meeting was called to order at X:XX p.m., day, month and year, by the president. The secretary will present last meeting information.

Examples: The treasurer reported a balance of \$XXX in the bank account.

John moved that we sponsor a public cleanup day on Saturday, October 2, at the park at noon. The motion was adopted. The president appointed John, Mary, and Mark to plan the event.

The motion to sponsor a community breakfast was postponed to the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

The secretary sits down, and the president asks the following:

President: Are there any corrections?

The president then pauses and waits to see if there are corrections. If there are no corrections, the president says:

President: The minutes are approved as read.

If a member has a correction, the member rises, addresses the chair, and states:

Member: Mr. President, I believe that Margaret was also appointed to plan the cleanup day at the park.

The president then says:

President: If there is no objection, the minutes will be corrected by adding Margaret's name to the minutes. Are there further corrections? [pause] Hearing none, the minutes are approved as corrected.

If someone makes a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes, it means that the minutes are not read at this time but that they will be read at a later time - at the next meeting or later in the present meeting. This motion is not debatable and takes a majority vote to adopt. If the members vote to dispense with the reading of the minutes, the president can order the minutes read at any time later in the meeting when no business is pending. Someone must make a motion to have the minutes read. This motion needs a second, is not debatable, and takes a majority vote to adopt.

### **3. Reports of Officers**

After the secretary reads the minutes, the next order of business is to hear the reports of the officers. Officers give reports in the order that the bylaws list.

The most common officer's report is that of the treasurer.

The president announces the next business in order and calls on the first officer to give his or her report.

President: The next business in order is reports of officers.

May we have the treasurer's report?

The treasurer stands to give the report, and the president stands to the side or sits down during the report.

Treasurer: The report of the treasurer as of September 30:

The treasurer steps aside, and the president assumes his or her place. The president then asks:

President: Are there any questions?

If there are no questions, the treasurer gives the report to the secretary, and the President says:

President: The treasurer's report is filed.

If a member has a question to ask the treasurer, that person can rise, address the president, and ask:

Member: Mr. President, will the treasurer please tell us XYZ?

The president turns to the treasurer and says:

President: Will the treasurer please answer the member's question.

Balance on hand \$500.00

Dues paid \$125.00

Expenditures None

Balance on hand \$625.00

The president steps aside while the treasurer answers the question.

Treasurer: We will receive XYZ.

President: Are there further questions? [pause] If not, the treasurer's report is filed.

The treasurer's report is always filed with the secretary, and it's never approved or adopted by the assembly. However, when the treasurer's books are audited, the assembly adopts the auditor's report.

Remember, keeping order in the meeting is important, so, as a member, address all questions to the president. The president then can answer your question or ask another member to answer the question.

After all the reports of officers are given, the next business in order is the reports of the committees

### Reports of Committees

Two kinds of committee reports exist. The first gives information about what the committee has been doing. The second asks members to decide a question and includes a motion at the end of the report.

President: The next business in order is to hear reports of the committees. Will the program committee report?

The president steps aside, and the committee chairman takes his or her place at the lectern.

Program Committee Chairman: The programs for this year are XYZ. (List the topic)

The committee chairman stands aside while the president asks:

President: Are there any questions?

Members can now ask questions. After questions, the committee files its report with the secretary.

President: The program committee's report is filed.

If a committee report includes a recommendation of action that it wants the organization to take, its report should include a motion at the end. For example, say that the program committee wants to bring in a speaker and charge admission to the general public as a way to raise money for the organization. The committee can give its report this way:

President: May we have the program committee's report.

Program Committee Chairman: The program committee like to report XYZ.  
(Whatever the topic is)

By direction of the committee, I move that we sponsor XYZ (whatever the topic is).  
[The chairman sits down.]

The president then repeats the motion and asks for discussion. A motion from a committee of more than one does not need a second because the committee has already voted to present the motion.

President: The question is on the XYZ (address issue spoken of)

The members discuss the motion and take a vote. If members adopt the motion, the action is carried out.

### **Unfinished Business and General Orders**

If there are no special orders, then after the committee reports, the next business in order is the unfinished business and general orders. This is business that was left undecided at the last meeting, or it is business that was delayed to the current meeting by making the motion to postpone to the next meeting.

If there is unfinished business, it is placed on the agenda and the president states it. The president does not ask for unfinished business.

Ex. President: The next business in order is unfinished business. At the last meeting, a motion to sponsor a community breakfast was postponed to this meeting. Is there any discussion?

Members then discuss and vote on the motion.

### **New Business**

If there is no unfinished business or general orders, the president goes on to the next business in order, which is new business. If there is no new business listed on the agenda, the president can ask:

President: Is there any new business?

If there is new business on the agenda, the president states what it is.

President: The next business in order is new business. Example: The first item of new business is a request by the drama club that we donate \$100 for stage-set materials. What are the members wishes?

If the members want to do this, someone must make a motion to do so. If no one wants to donate \$100, the members remain silent. The president then asks:

President: Is there any further business?

Members always have a right to bring forward ideas or business for the entire membership to discuss, which they do by making a main motion. Ideas are not discussed first and then a motion made, but rather a motion is made and then discussed. The principle of taking up one item of business at a time especially applies to main motions. Members can present only one main motion at a time.

Members can continue bringing up new business by making motions, discussing them, and voting on them. After each motion is voted on, the president asks the members:

President: Is there any further business?

When no one has anything further to bring before the members, the chair doesn't have to ask for a motion to adjourn, but can say:

President: Is there any further business?

The president pauses to look around the room to give any member the opportunity to rise and make a motion. If no one rises, the president says:

President: If there is no objection, the meeting will now adjourn. [Pause to look around the room.]

President: Since there is no objection, the meeting is adjourned. [one rap of the gavel]

Adjourning the Meeting – We adjourn without all this process just when the meeting and all issues are resolved are time is out.

Member: Mr. President,

Member: I move that the meeting adjourn.

Member 2: Second.

This motion needs a second; it is not debatable.

President: It is moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn. All those in favor say "Aye." Those opposed say "No." The ayes have it, and the meeting is adjourned. [one rap of the gavel]