

How to Run a Board Meeting

Why hold board meetings? Board meetings are the means to optimize collective and collaborative decision-making to plan, direct, and evaluate the work of the League as directed by the grassroots membership. Full board member participation garners a plethora of ideas and divides up the work. In streamlining local board meetings, the following best practices lead to efficient, effective decision-making. The result: simplifying the roles of local League leaders. This helps the League to more efficiently achieve its goals, and it can help to make leadership roles more appealing to future leaders.

Best Practices to Run a Board Meeting:

- Meet on a regular schedule (monthly or bi-monthly) and often enough to address any crisis situation that may emerge. Have the work of the meeting be meaningful, so precious time is well spent.
- Include a fun or social element before or after (or even a working meal) the meeting to increase satisfaction and participation.
- Meet at the same day, time, and place each month to encourage attendance.
- Send an agenda, previous meeting minutes, financial and committee reports (with recommendations and background) by email, snail mail, or a website post prior to meeting. An agenda allots time logically and helps board members prepare for board meetings.
 - Sample agenda items include: announcements; previous minutes; treasurer's report; president's report; office report; and committee reports.
 - Include time allotments to each agenda item and the decisions that need to be made. Be sure to allow more time for discussion about needed decisions and schedule these items first.
 - Rotate topics and presenters.
- Make sure that the roles and expectation of board members are set and that they will come prepared to accomplish planned business. Absent and unprepared attendees guarantee longer meetings that often end without concluding the business. An absent board member may have just the piece of information needed to help others make an important decision.
- Begin and end on time with the full complement of board members. Punctual board members dread board meetings that start late and go beyond allotted time.
- Have committees report clearly to the board without replicating previously distributed information and answer questions about reports and recommendations. Reports not requiring board decisions, or without consideration of board decisions, can be included in the next meeting agenda and should not prolong the current meeting. Remember- Committee reports can double as newsletter/web site articles.
- Base collective decisions on orderly, business-like (parliamentary) discussion. Inattentiveness and side conversations hinder a board from being productive.





Chapter 9: Leading Together

- Keeps discussion focused and stick to the agenda. This should be done by the President or team leader. Employ a “Parking Lot” to capture non-agenda items thereby tracking a potentially great idea. (Parking lot is a term for recording unrelated business on a white board or a sheet of paper for use by the president or team in crafting future agendas.)
- Summarize discussions/ votes/ recommended actions before moving to the next agenda item. This should be done by the President or team leader.
- Postpone decision-making when information is inadequate and send it back to committee rather than functioning as that committee.
- Take full minutes, including a list of attending and absent board members, to provide a record for future reference for future boards.



Check out the “Tools You Can Use” section at the back of the manual for a Focusing Grid worksheet to help your League Board focus their efforts!