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When running meetings, here are some of the rules, the language and order that can help them proceed in an orderly fashion. If the group uses this, it is important to review and practice it with all of them early, so every member feels informed and equipped to fully participate in meetings.

- President calls meeting to order (?this meeting will come to order?).
- Only those who get recognized by the chair may speak during a meeting which has ?come to order.?
- Side conversations are not allowed; if someone wants to speak, it should be to the whole group (unless someone gets permission from the president to have a small side conversation for the purpose of furthering the meeting).
- The president acts as a neutral ?gatekeeper? in discussions of matters to be voted upon.
- In order to discuss something the group needs to vote on, someone (other than the president) has to make a motion or proposal (?I move that?happens?).
- The president should do substantially more facilitation of conversation (?what do you think, Pat??) than talking him/herself.
- In order to even discuss a motion, someone has to ?second? it (?I second the motion?).
- The minutes need to reflect who makes motions, who seconds them and what exactly the motions are (so the secretary may ask the chair to clarify these things at any time).
- If there is no second, the motion dies (will not be discussed).
- If there is a second, the president calls on people to speak for or against the motion (giving reasons to vote for or against).
- If someone who supports the basic motion wants to suggest a change within the motion, he/she may make a ?friendly amendment? in the form of a new motion ?I would like to move that the current motion be amended like this:??). If they just don?t agree, that?s what they say and it doesn?t alter the actual motion.
- The motion to make a friendly amendment either gets a second and the newly altered motion gets discussed or it dies and discussion returns to the original motion.
- The president usually sets a limit of so m any minutes for consideration of a motion and may ask speakers to (a) wrap up their point soon and/or (b) only speak if they have new thoughts on the topic.
- Anytime someone who gets called upon can ?call the question,? meaning that if someone else seconds that ?call? the group must vote at that time on the motion ?on the floor? (being discussed).
- Once a vote is taken by eligible voting members, the secretary announces the numbers and the president announces whether it ?passed? or not.
- The president then gives directions or requests that appropriate action be taken by whomever is responsible to act on the motion that has been ?passed.?
- The president then thanks the participants for their discussion and/or makes suggestions for how to perhaps have a better discussion the next time.
- At the end of the meeting, the president asks for a ?motion to dismiss.? Someone seconds and the president asks for a vote. If it passes, the meeting is officially over.

Community

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