

Steps for Meeting Prep

The saying goes if you fail to plan, you plan to fail

BEFORE THE MEETING:

Planning for an effective and productive meeting starts well before the meeting date. All parties that are involved in ensuring the meeting goes well should be thinking about what needs to be done sometime months ahead of time. Below is a checklist that will start the thought process for preparing for a meeting.

- What is the main purpose of the meeting?
(regularly scheduled, committee, annual meeting, planning, closing)
- What are the desired outcomes?
- Who is responsible for each agenda item?
- Confirm location and necessary equipment
(size, av equipment, physical location)
- What is the best room setup?
(auditorium, classroom, boardroom, u-shape, banquet)
- Prepare Agenda
 - ◇ Considerations
 - What reports need to be made?
 - What items are required to be completed?
 - How much time is available for the meeting?
 - Which items are for action vs. for information?
 - Are there items from previous meetings that need to be placed on the current agenda?
 - Place each item in the appropriate spot on agenda?
 - Coordinate with the secretary and parliamentarian
 - ◇ Specifics
 - What is the start and end time for meeting
 - Ensure proper allotment of time for each item?
 - Require business items (motions) be submitted in advance if at all possible
 - Create the appropriate scripts for every action expected at the meeting
- Work with the secretary to distribute the meeting agenda and accompanying documents in enough time for the membership to review.
- Ensure everyone on the agenda knows their role



DURING THE MEETING:

Although it is the role of the entire gathered assembly to ensure the meeting runs well, the presiding officer acts as a leader in this effort. It is important that the presiding officer pays attention to a few key details that can greatly assist in this effort. Below is a checklist of a few of the things the presiding officer should focus on.

- Call the meeting to order on time
- Stay focused on the agenda. Mark items as completed to keep track.
- Only allow each item the time it is allotted. Monitor time for debate.
- Use unanimous consent, whenever possible.
- Use consent agenda, if possible.
- Encourage equal participation amongst the membership.
 - ◇ Prompt comments, if necessary
- Control interruptions and digressions
 - ◇ Don't allow the debate to be monopolized by single person or perspective
 - ◇ Clarify and rephrase when necessary
- Keep track of motions, who has spoken and what is pending. Writing it down can be helpful.
- Manage conflict as it happens. Do not let it divert the forward movement of the meeting.
- Ensure decisions and assignments are clear
- Work with the secretary to keep track of items that are moved to future meetings
- Feel free to use informal procedures for a smaller group (less than 12 people)
- Use formal procedures if larger group (12+)
- Use formal procedure depending on an item's possibility of controversy/importance
- Close the meeting on time
- Close the meeting positively

AFTER THE MEETING:

Once the meeting has ended, it does not mean the work is done. It is important to follow-up and close out items as required. Below is a checklist of items that the presiding officer needs to ensure are handled after the meeting is over.

- Work with the secretary to review and distribute meeting minutes.
- Follow up on assigned action items
- Schedule any follow-up meetings.
- Share any information with the membership that needs to be communicated based on the action taken at the meeting.
- Ensure that any related documents, reports, or systems are updated based on the meeting's discussions and decisions.
- Review and evaluate what occurred at the meeting. What are the areas of improvement? Get input from others on their experiences.

