Meeting Management 102
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POP QUIZ

If someone makes a motion it must be debated.
All motions which receive a second must be debated.
Citizens always have the right to participate in the deliberations of an elected governing body.
Once a main motion has been decided, it can be reconsidered only if someone voting with the majority wants to do so.
A motion to amend an amendment to a motion is out-of-order.
All motions require a second in order to advance.
A committee can bring a motion before a body without a second.
Junior members of a public body are generally required by Roberts Rules to yield on procedural matters to senior members.
An out-of-order ruling by the chair can be appealed.
Meeting “Robbers”

Disagreement on meeting purpose
Excess tangents and irrelevant discussions
Room was not suited to the meeting
Wrong people in attendance
Leader not clear, or no control from chair
Rights of participants not respected
Participants not prepared for the meeting

Meeting “No-No’s”

Too much on the agenda
Lack of time to deal with important items
Defensive leader, not willing to change
Side conversations
Lack of decorum and formality
Leader is too conciliatory
Leader has a predetermined solution

EVERY MEETING NEEDS A PLAN
Successful Meetings are Planned

Define the desired meeting outcome in specific and preferably measurable terms
(e.g., "we are gathered here to unite...")
Make sure the meeting is necessary
Decide who needs to attend
Draft an agenda that is realistic; distribute a finalized agenda in advance
Assure an appropriate meeting location

O.C.G.A. 50-14-1(d & e)

"Every agency shall prescribe the time, place, and dates of regular meetings of the agency. Such information shall be available to the general public and a notice containing such information shall be posted and maintained in a conspicuous place. Prior to any meeting, the agency holding such meeting shall make available an agenda of all matters expected to come before the agency at such meeting."

AGENDAS “101”

Regularize the agenda format
Who prepares the agenda?
Who approves the agenda?
Establish deadlines for the agenda
Who can add items and when
When and how will the agenda be provided to members (with supporting documents), and to the public and media?
CONFLICTING GOALS WILL CAUSE PROBLEMS

SOME AGENDA ITEMS ARE NOT COMPATIBLE

Things that go wrong

- Conflicting recommendations
- Rippling effect of lack of trust
- Staff given conflicting directions
- Fights over the minutes mask hidden agendas
- Complaints about poor communication usually mask other agendas too
- Abuse/misunderstanding of parliamentary procedure
Successful Meetings are Planned

Give all members of the governing body the same information and documents
Prepare handouts and meeting strategy
Don’t pack the agenda with too many difficult items or incompatible subjects
Provide options to governing body members; distinguish between policy and administrative issues

Different Types of Meetings

Information-Giving Meetings
Information-Exchanging Meetings
Information-Creating Meetings

Which one of these describes a typical city council meeting?

Three concepts of Democracy

Authoritarian: the leader knows the “true interests” of the people
Direct rule (rule of the many): examples include New England town meetings and other participatory forms
Representative democracy: acquire power through competition for people’s support

Which model is used in Georgia local governments?
Conducting Effective Meetings

Start on time; set the tone
Establish clear ground rules
Stay on topic, focus on outcomes and items on the agenda
Use a process: discuss, describe, explore, add, summarize and decide
Summarize decisions and action steps, and the persons responsible for follow-up

ESTABLISH THE TONE FOR THE MEETING EARLY

SOME STANDARDS OF CONDUCT ARE ASSUMED
Conducting Meetings, cont’d

Use of and rules concerning public forum
Recording votes (what to do about abstentions)
Conflict of Interest
Making staff presentations
Avoiding the appearance that decisions have been made in advance
Public Hearings

Items for Council Rules

- Notification of times and dates of regular meetings
- Procedures for calling special meetings
- Attendance at meetings expected
- Contents of meeting information packets, and time of distribution
- Voting procedures
- Quorum rules
- Public hearings rules
- Absence of the presiding officer
- Order of the agenda
- Changing the established order of the agenda
- No action on public forum items, except for emergency
Items for Council Rules

- Limits on speaking (for members or the public)
- Parliamentary procedure manual used/referenced
- Conduct of meetings (decorum of council members; disorderly conduct)
- Public participation rules other than limits on speaking
- Type of minute preparation/style
- Committees (establishing; process for making appointments; duties and responsibilities)
- How often resolutions and ordinances must be read and voted upon
- Getting the floor and making remarks through the chair
- When and how the rules of order may be suspended

Items for Council Rules

- Rules for general comments at the end of the meeting
- Is a motion always required to engage in debate?
- Chair’s discretion to require a spokesman for a group of citizen speakers, and to limit redundant citizen remarks
- Entering remarks in the minutes explaining votes
- Procedure for declaring conflict-of-Interest
- Discouraging and recording of abstentions
- Enforced meeting ending times
- Use of special equipment (cable cast, TV cameras, special lighting, etc.)
- Rules for the consent agenda

Meetings According to GORP

(this is really a recap)

- Goals
- Order
- Respect
- Planning
Conflict & Disruptive Behavior

Types of Conflict:
- Facts
- Methods
- Goals
- Values

Determine the source of the conflict

Forms of Conflict:
- Goal Conflicts
- Judgment Conflicts
- Normative Conflicts

“Take the bull by the horns”

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO RESOLVING THE ISSUES AT THE HEART OF A CONFLICT AND/OR ACHIEVING THE STATED GOALS?
Meeting Follow-Up

Finish the minutes and circulate them promptly after the meeting.
Make sure target dates and person(s) responsible are recorded and contacted.
Periodically ask members to evaluate the organization’s meeting processes, procedures and practices.
Updates to members on agenda items.
Everyone gets everything.

Chairing & Facilitation of Meetings

The Chair

Memorize often used procedures.
Make sure all know what’s being debated and voted on.
- See that all motions are worded clearly.
- Repeat motions frequently.
- Make the effects of amendments clear.
Learn how to conduct voting.
Know the steps in a meeting.
Learn how to handle points of order and appeals.
Know more about procedure than other members.
Facilitation Styles

Autocratic

Democratic

Laissez-Faire

What style does your governing body use?

Records, Minutes & Documents

1. Why are accurate minutes important?
   - historical record, legal document of action taken, future research & retrieval
2. Types of public meeting minutes:
   - verbatim minutes
   - summary minutes
   - action minutes
3. Amending & Voting (or not) to approve minutes

SOME DOCUMENTS ARE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE
Rules of Procedure for Meetings

What is the purpose of Parliamentary Law & Roberts Rules?

To enable an assembly to transact business with speed and efficiency
To protect the rights of the individual
To preserve a spirit of harmony within the group

Parliamentary Procedure is the Source of other popular rule books

Roberts Rules of Order
Demeter’s Manual of Parliamentary Law & Procedure
Sturgis’ Rules of Procedure
Riddick’s Rules of Procedure
Mason’s Manual of Legislative Procedure
Bourinot’s Rules of Order

Ten Basic Rules of Meeting Procedure

Organization’s rights supersede rights of individuals
All members rights are equal
Must have quorum
Majority rules
Silence is consent
Two-thirds vote rule
One speaker/one question at a time
Debateable motions receive full debate
A question decided typically can’t be brought back up in same meeting
Personal remarks are out of order
Hierarchy of Rights

Right of the majority to decide & to prevail
Right of the minority to be heard
Rights of individual members (which are equal)
Rights of absentees

Supremacy of the Rule of Law

First: Federal & State Constitution
Second: State law & Case law
Third: Local government charter
Fourth: Local government ordinance
Fifth: Referenced rules of procedure, by default where ordinance/charter are silent
Sixth: Common sense and courtesy

How are motions classified?

- Main Motions
- Subsidiary Motions
- Privileged Motions
- Incidental Motions
**Precedence**
Privileged Motions
1. Adjourn
2. Recess
3. Question of privilege

Subsidiary Motions
4. Lay on the table
5. Previous question (end debate)
6. Limit or extend debate
7. Postpone to a certain time (or indefinitely)
8. Commit or refer (to committee)
9. Amend

**Main Motion**

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**How should a motion progress?**
Member addresses Chair
Member is recognized
Member proposes motion
Another member seconds; no discussion without one
Chair states motion
Board discusses motion
Chair takes the vote
Chair announces result of vote

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**How to amend a motion**
- Addition or insertion
- Elimination or striking
- Substitution
- A motion to amend may be hostile, but must be germane
Types of Amendments

- First Rank
- Second Rank; none past
- Vote in reverse order

Other Rules:
- General Consent
- Suspension of the rules
- Tabling vs. postponing
- Calls for “the question”
- Work/Study Session
- Quorums
Advisory Boards & Committees

Role of advisory boards and committees
Expectations of advisory board members
Same rules can apply to these meetings, but they may be venues for greater use of the rule of general consent
Review statement of purpose or enabling ordinance(s)
Meet periodically with appointing authority

So what? Now what?

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