



# HOW TO RUN A BOARD MEETING IN 30 MINUTES OR LESS

## Overview

### ***1. Prepare the Board Meeting Agenda in Advance***

- a) This will increase productivity during the meeting by reducing the time needed to present and review information. This packet must be well-organized, easy to read, and without superfluous materials.

### ***2. Make your Agenda Strategic***

- a) Make sure you review one strategic goal during each board meeting (depending on the number of your strategic goals and the number of board meetings you have in a year). If that's impossible, at least limit the agenda to as few strategic goals of your nonprofit as possible.

### ***3. Start & End on Time***

- a) Time constraints are a wonderful thing. Make it a game to reduce the meeting time required with every gathering of the board.



## Overview

### 4. *Address Decisions, Not Updates*

- a) At its core, the purpose of a Board meeting is to clarify reports and make decisions (which result in Resolutions). **That's it.**
- b) To this end, send information in written form (bullets if possible) by email AHEAD of the meeting, and only address questions about that information - don't discuss. If the information is influencing decisions, focus all discussion on providing only the information needed to make the decisions.

### 5. *Take Minutes (and actually record the meeting)*

- a) Today's tech makes recording a meeting easier than ever. Just do it.
- b) It's most efficient to have the Secretary (or anyone designated - even someone who is not a Director) to jot notes in real time during the meeting. But if that's not possible or practical, recording the meeting will cover you.



## Importance of The Chair's role in efficiently running a board meeting

Before we jump into the Step-by-Step of Running a Board Meeting, it's important to address the importance of the meeting dynamic as set by the Chair of the Meeting. The demeanor and authority of the Chair is paramount to keeping control of the meeting.

Poorly chaired board meetings are the #1 annoyance with Board of Director meetings, and are likely the #1 reason people resign from service on a Board.

To keep the meeting running smoothly, the Chair must prepare ahead of time and be authoritative by interjecting during the meeting to keep discussions relevant. Keeping Directors in check and tamping down distractions allows for productive meetings and actually promotes open discussion - paving the way for strategic progress and benefiting the organization's mission.



## The steps to conducting a Board Meeting are:

- Recognize a quorum
- Call meeting to order
- Approve the agenda and minutes
- Communication and reports
- Old/new/Other business
- Close the meeting



## 1. Recognize a Quorum (1 Minute)

The first order of business is for the chair to determine if a **quorum** as defined in your organization's bylaws, is present.

If you were provided bylaws as part our nonprofit formation package, a quorum is defined as a simple majority of eligible Directors.



## 2. Call the Meeting to Order (1 Minute)

The next order of business is for the Chair to announce “This meeting is hereby called to order.” We recommend stating the exact time for the recording/minutes, and the intended ending, or adjournment time.

*(Note: The #1 frustration expressed regarding board meetings is poor focus, which results in long, boring meetings!)*

This is the time to set the tone for the meeting; a polite greeting and thanks for attendance, welcoming new members and/or guests, and thanking any attendees for any reason.

*\*IMPORTANT: Ask everyone to silence cell phones!*



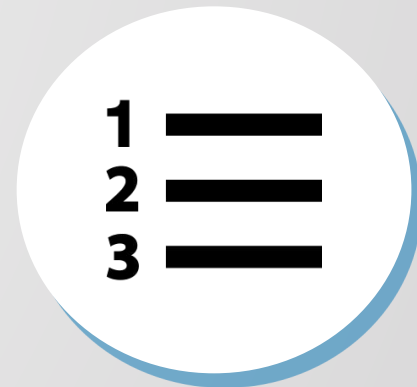
## 3. Approve the Agenda (1 Minute)

Following personal items, the chair moves to the agenda items.

If the Chair has done their job, they've completed our Board Agenda template and sent it ahead of time.

The Chair will ask the members to approve the agenda.

If a member requests amendments to add to or subtract items from the agenda, the amended agenda may be approved without a vote.





## 4. Approve Previous Minutes (5 Minutes)

Before conducting any official business, The Board must approve the minutes of the prior meeting. This makes it important to send the previous meeting minutes to Directors prior to the meeting. The Chair will ask if there are any corrections to the minutes; if there are no corrections, the chair announces: "The minutes are approved as written."

If any Directors propose amendments, the Chair asks the Directors to consider the amendments and agree with them. This may be done without a formal vote. Should a dispute arise regarding an amendment, the Chair may ask for a vote if the amendment should be adopted.

Once the minutes have been approved, the chair shall announce, "If there are no further corrections, the minutes stand approved, as corrected."

The secretary would then record any amendments to the current meeting minutes and the chair would sign the minutes to make them official.



## 5. Reports and Communications (5 Minutes)

The next section of the meeting is a hearing of reports from the top ranking staff (often Executive Director, since the Officers and Director roles do not execute day-to-day operations inside those capacities) and any standing or special committees. Recommendations may be considered for a formal vote and adoption as a Resolution.

Financial reports should be read at the simplest, highest level to keep members current; however, generally, no discussion or action needs to be taken on them. A vote is normally taken only after the annual, official or audited financial report.



## 6. Old Business (5 Minutes)

Old business consists of items previously discussed that are ready for formal approval. If additional discussion is required, the Chair asks for approval to move those items to the discussion portion of the meeting.

All other items should fall into three buckets:

- 1) Voted on and approved;
- 2) Postponed, or
- 3) Tabled.



## 7. New Business (5 Minutes)

Following the conclusion of Old Business items, the Chair will announce any New Business items, one at a time, and allow for discussion (making sure to keep it focused). The Chair may request the members rearrange the order of items for efficiency and relevance.

The Chair should invite discussion and facilitate debate as needed. We recommend the Chair limit the discussion to a certain period of time.

Following discussion, the item may be:

1. Voted on;
2. Amended;
3. Tabled;
4. Moved to committee for consideration, or
5. Postponed.



## 8. Other Business (3 Minutes)

Following New Business, the Chair will make an invitation to bring up non-discussion items, such as announcements.

Other Business may include items for future discussion, to allow time for consideration, prior to adding them to a the next meeting's agenda.



## 9. Adjourn the Meeting (3 Minutes)

To close the meeting, the Chair reviews actions from this meeting as needed, states the date of the next meeting if any, thanks the visitors and declares the meeting adjourned.

As a final, and important step, the Chair should follow up with the Executive Officer and review any aspects of the meeting that they need to discuss prior to the secretary writing the formal record of the meeting.

**That's 29 minutes - you've still got one to spare!**



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