

Organize Your Business Meeting

There are important reasons and advantages to having a business component to every chapter meeting.

A business meeting must be run efficiently.

Most people attending a local PTG meeting are there for the technical information, sharing of experience, and support of colleagues. For most, a “business” meeting can be a waste of time. It is important, therefore, that any business meeting be handled efficiently. The presiding officer needs to prepare an agenda and handle every agenda item in a manner that encourages participation and debate. At the same time, the officer needs to watch the clock, help to focus debate, and keep the meeting flowing.

Professional Atmosphere

A well-run business meeting creates a professional tone for the whole meeting.

Member Participation and Information

In order for PTG to remain healthy and growing, members need to be involved in PTG business. From meeting to meeting there will always be issues related to keeping members current with chapter, regional, and national concerns. Therefore, business meetings provide a regular means to inform members and to solicit information from members. A business meeting can generate new ideas, engage members in organizational matters, and encourage members to get involved.

Leadership Development

Every organization needs new leaders. Grass-roots participation on the local level in local chapter business meetings should never be overlooked or underestimated.

Order of business, agenda, timepiece, gavel

These are the tools the presiding officer needs to craft a well-run meeting.

Order of Business

The National Association of Parliamentarians has a reference card titled "Basic Parliamentary Information." Visit <http://parliamentarians.org/store/browsestore.php> to order this publication and to see more useful guides and meeting resources.

Agenda

A written agenda insures that the necessary business will be addressed.

Timepiece

The clock should not dominate a meeting, but time management is important. The presiding officer needs to be a leader in the meeting. Friendliness, efficiency, and balance between formality and informality are all components of the art of a well-run meeting.

The Gavel

Often overlooked, this tool not only lends authority to the presiding officer but also provides a means to control a meeting. It gives finality as each item on the order of business is completed. For chapters that have long used a gavel, this instrument can take on mythical significance as having passed through a long line of chapter leaders.

Sample Meeting Agenda

The "order of business" is the established sequence in which business is handled during a meeting. Using the same agenda each time ensures that business is conducted in an orderly manner according to bylaws and policies. It helps guarantee no important matters are omitted and tells members what to expect during the meeting. The chapter Secretary can also use the agenda form to create the official minutes.

An agenda is also a time management tool. You will see how much time is needed for different activities and helps you keep the meeting within the allotted time frame. Your chapter should choose an order of business or meeting agenda and use it consistently. Simple is best -- just enough to organize the business meeting and other activities planned for your chapter meeting. Customize the outline below to meet the needs of your chapter.

- I. Call to order
- II. Invocation
- III. Welcome and guest introduction
- IV. Roll call (if a sign in sheet is not used)
- V. Reading and approval of previous meeting minutes
- VI. Reports
 - a. officers (including financial report)
 - b. standing committees
 - c. special committees
- VII. Unfinished business
- VIII. New business
- IX. Announcements
- X. Program, technical presentation, etc.
- XI. Adjournment