

# **RUSTY'S RULES OF ORDER**

*UNDERSTANDING MEETING PROCEDURE  
AND PUTTING IDEAS INTO ACTION*

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# WHY DO WE NEED GOOD MEETINGS?

*Good meeting procedure is the foundation of collective action*

- Time efficient
- Productive
- Civil and Respectful
- Lively Participation
- Stack is maintained
- All are treated equally
- Discussion is on topic
- Participants come prepared
- Makes Decisions!

# WHAT DOES A GOOD MEETING LOOK LIKE?

## **AGENDA:**

- Written in a Standard Format
- Includes the full text of proposals
- Available before the Meeting
- Printed and handed out

**CARD CONDUCTOR:** verifies voters for accurate vote counts

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** takes accurate, detailed, and concise minutes suitable for official records

## **CHAIR:**

- ensures the agenda is followed
- takes stack & calls on speakers
- keeps discussion to on-topic
- enforces all meeting procedures

## **RUSTY'S RULES OF ORDER:**

- Abridged version of Robert's Rules for parliamentary procedure
- Accessible- easy to learn and use
- Promotes democracy with efficient majority decision making

# AGENDA FORMAT, EXPLAINED (1/3)

- 1. Call to Order** – The chair officially begins the meeting
- 2. Elect Card Conductor** – The card conductor checks the membership standing of all present and confirms that quorum has been met
- 3. Introductions** – All state their name, IU, and any positions held.
- 4. Song** – A song from the little red songbook is sang
- 5. Reading of Last Meeting's Minutes** – The recording secretary reviews items of business and elections from the previous meeting
- 6. Review & Approve Agenda** – The chair reviews the agenda as it stands and asks if anyone has any additional items of new business so they can be added to the agenda at this time.

# AGENDA FORMAT, EXPLAINED (2/3)

- 7. Reading of Communication and Bills** - all official documents reviewed
- 8. Reports of Officers, Delegates and Committees** –reports on the previous month's activity are presented
- 9. Old Business** – Business unaddressed at a previous meeting is revisited
- 10. Order of The Day** – Discussion takes place or a presentation is given without a proposal on the floor.
- 11. New Business** – Items of business are read, discussed, and voted upon. If new committees are created or new delegates are nominated, they should be added to agenda under nominations and elections. Anything which is tabled to the next meeting should be included in that month's agenda under 'old business'.

# AGENDA FORMAT, EXPLAINED (3/3)

**12. Nominations, Elections, & Installations-** The next meeting's Chair and Recording Secretary and any positions to be filled on newly committees are nominated and voted on. New officers are nominated t one meeting and voted upon at the following meeting.

**13. Review of the Meeting-** The recording secretary reviews old business, new business, and elections from the meeting.

**14. Critique of the Meeting-** Members share what went well during the meeting and offer suggestions for improvement for the future

**15. Good and Welfare-** Members present upcoming events, items of personal concern, or anything that didn't fit elsewhere in the meeting.

**16. Adjournment** – The meeting comes to a close.

# AGENDA WRITING ACTIVITY

**Directions: State where the items should be included in an agenda**

1. A 15 minute discussion on button making
2. A proposal about ordering t-shirts which was tabled during the previous meeting
3. A summary of an event at which a delegate ran an IWW table
4. Issues that came up during the organizing committee meeting
5. The decision of who will be interviewed about a project

# HOW TO WRITE MEETING MINUTES

- The time the meeting is called to order and adjourns
- The number of members in good standing and bad standing and the number of guests present
- Full text of any reports submitted before the meeting & summaries of any given during the meeting
- Full text of all proposals and amendments, the number of votes for and against, and if they pass
- Summaries of discussion on items of business and the order of the day
- Nominations for election
- The number of votes for each nominee during each election and who wins the election
- summaries of critiques
- summaries of items of good and welfare, noting the time and dates of upcoming events or who to contact for more information

# WHAT IS A PROPOSAL?

**Proposals or Main Motions:** Official suggestions of business to carry out, expressed through a series of clauses falling in two sections:

**WHEREAS:** Qualifying introductory statement explaining:

- an existing problem or goal which needs to be addressed
- why the course of action in the resolution is the best way to address the issue

**LET IT BE RESOLVED:** statement expressing the course action to take to address the issue in the WHEREAS, or the *implementation process*, including:

- What needs to be done
- Who will do it
- When they will do it
- How they will do it

*Resolutions included in the 'LET IT BE RESOLVED' are the actions to vote on, while the 'WHEREAS' is background information*

# HOW TO WRITE A PROPOSAL

**WHO** will be involved: **Potentially Chicago GMB members, GMB (funding) Twin Cities GMB**

**WHAT** is the focus: **subsidizing travel costs for Chicago GMB members accepted to TC OT102**

**WHERE** will it happen: **Minneapolis**

**WHEN** will it happen/happen by: **November 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**WHY** is it important: **OT102s are a new curriculum and rarely held**

**HOW** will it get done: **GMB funds registration fees and travel expenses up to \$300**

## **PROPOSAL:**

*Whereas, the Twin Cities GMB* is hosting an OT102 the weekend of November 22nd and 23rd,  
*Whereas, OT102s are rarely held and extremely valuable* for those moving beyond going public in an organizing campaign, and

*Whereas, several FWs in the Chicago GMB* have already filled out requests to attend the training and are awaiting approval by the Twin Cities GMB,

*Be it resolved,* The Chicago **GMB will fund registration fees and travel expenses up to \$300** to be shared between up to 4 members of the Chicago branch as approved by the Twin Cities GMB to attend the OT102 on **Nov 22 and 23rd.**

**WHO** will be involved: **Chicago GMB**

**WHAT** is the focus: **proposals at meetings only considered if there is a written record of them**

**WHERE** will it happen: **GMB**

**WHEN** will it happen/happen by: **effective Nov. 2014 GMB meeting**

**WHY** is it important: **increase accessibility, democracy, and accurate meeting minutes**

**HOW** will it get done: **all proposals must be submitted in writing, either hard copy or written, and not ruled in order if there is no written record**

## **PROPOSAL:**

**WHEREAS**, secretaries are tasked with accurately recording the minutes of regular **General Membership Branch meetings**,

**WHEREAS**, it is the duty of the meeting Chair to **ensure that meetings are clear, understandable, accessible, and transparent** to members,

**WHEREAS**, accessibility includes cognitive accessibility,

**WHEREAS**, members are expected to vote on and enact the text of motions proposed at meetings, and **WHEREAS**, disputes have occurred over the precise language of proposed motions,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that **all proposals to be voted on at Chicago GMB meetings be submitted in writing**, either beforehand over the listserv or on paper during the meeting,

**BE RESOLVED** that **no motion to be voted on at Chicago GMB meetings shall be ruled in order and considered without the exact text written out** and made available and accessible to all members in attendance, and

**FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED** that **making proposals accessible to members** can include, upon request,

- 1.) Providing a print copy of the proposal to any member in attendance, or
- 2.) Projecting the text of the proposal on the branch office's projector screen

# PROPOSAL WRITING ACTIVITY

**Directions:** Turn the suggestion into a properly written proposal

(1) We should fundraise for an upcoming action by holding a bake sale

(2) We haven't produced any new literature in a long time. We should form a writing committee overseen by the Education Officer

(3) The branch office needs better visibility and a larger selection of items for sale. We should find out how much it would cost to buy a light-up sign, new shelves, and merchandise from the literature department. A three person team should present a recommendation for at the next meeting, unless it costs under \$300, then they should be empowered to buy everything.

# “PROBLEMS & RESOLUTIONS”

## PROPOSAL WRITING ACTIVITY

**Directions: Write a proposal implementing a solution for each problem**

- (1) I'm always hungry during meetings.
- (2) The committee tasked with creating a new member packet is six months past its deadline.
- (3) More and more branch members who have children aren't coming to meetings.

# MAKING MOTIONS & AMENDMENTS

**Proposals must be seconded to “take to floor”** or be open for discussion

**Amendments are secondary motions to edit the language of a proposal** which is currently on the floor

**Once an amendment is voted on, the floor returns to proposal** and the original stack resumes

## **Friendly Amendments**

- Accepted by the member who made the proposal
- change the language of the proposal without a vote, returning it to the floor

## **Unfriendly Amendments**

- not accepted by the FW who made the proposal
- must be seconded and voted on

# TABLING & CALLING TO QUESTION

Discussion on an item of business must be ended one of two ways:

1. **Passing a Procedural Motion (*to Table or to Call to Question*)**
  - motion regarding only the process of the meeting
  - must be seconded & passed
  - immediately take the floor
2. **Acclamation:** passing a motion without taking a formal vote when there is no opposition

**Motion to Table:** motion to stop discussion on an item of business and to move it to the next meeting's agenda under "Old Business"

**Motion to Call to Question:** motion stop discussion and to take a vote on that item of business

*If either are passed, discussion stops regardless if members remain on stack to speak*

# AMENDMENT WRITING ACTIVITY

**Directions: Offer an amendment to improve this proposal**

WHEREAS, multiple members have expressed their hunger during the past few meetings,

WHEREAS, Coyote's restaurant is close by, delivers during meeting times, and offers meals that can feed two people for only \$5.00,

WHEREAS, an average meeting is attended by 20 people,

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that we allocate \$300 per meeting so we can order 60 beef tortas from Coyote's Restaurant.

and FURTHER RESOLVED, that we pass a hat to collect donations in order to tip the delivery driver.

# OTHER PROCEDURAL MOTIONS AND POINTS OF PROCEDURE & INFORMATION

## Other Procedural Motions:

- to refer to committee
- to take a break
- to overrule the chair
- to adjourn

**Point of Procedure:** suggestion of how to better follow meeting procedures

- immediately takes the floor
- should be a short interruption
- Example: discussion is off topic

## Point of Information / Privilege:

- question, clarification, or a request for accommodation
- immediately takes the floor
- should be a short interruption
- requests for information should be directly responded to
- Examples:
  - ◆ can't hear/ needs to be reread
  - ◆ question about a motion
  - ◆ important background info
  - ◆ need something printed

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR A MEETING

- Read the last meeting's minutes
- Review the proposed agenda and all items of business included in it
- prepare arguments for or against motions
- write potential amendments
- ask questions or request additional information if needed for informed discussion and voting
- send the full text of proposals, reports, and upcoming events to be added to the printed agenda

# DISCUSSION GUIDELINES (1/2)

**1. All discussion must directly pertain to the business at hand.** If it's not in the motion nor an argument about the motion, ask the chair when it's appropriate to bring up, or save it for Good & Welfare.

**2. Don't take personal offense if the chair interrupts or corrects you.** It the chair's most important job to keep the meeting on topic.

**3. Don't repeat points** which have already been made, just pass.

**4. Discussion ends when an item of business is tabled or called to question,** regardless if you were on stack or wanted to speak.

**5. Be respectful - if you feel disrespected by an individual fellow worker:**

- stay calm and talk after the meeting.
- voice a point of privilege so it can be handled quickly & calmly by the chair
- If the problem is serious, you can always **use the union's safer space policy as necessary.**

# DISCUSSION GUIDELINES (2/2)

**6. Everything doesn't need to be discussed**, especially if there is little to no opposition, just move the agenda forward already!

**7. Confused? Interrupt stack with a point of information** and receive the answer you need.

**8. Direct responses should only be used to answer questions & correct misunderstandings.** Want to make a counter argument? Get on stack and wait your turn.

**9. Lot's to say but far down on the stack list? Write your ideas down**, cross them off if they are addressed, & make an even more well thought out argument.

**10. Come prepared!** Read the agenda, ask questions, write out amendments, plan arguments, and compile reports before you go to the meeting

**11. Turn your ideas into actions!** Don't limit yourself to soft suggestions, develop your idea, write a proposal, & submit it as an item of New Business!

# CHAIRING A MEETING: FACILITATING DISCUSSION & TAKING STACK

**The Chair guides discussions, primarily through taking stack, or keeping a list of who raises their hand to speak, called on in order, unless:**

1. A point of information is used to ask a question → an appropriate speaker may be called on to provide clarification
2. Discussion is dominated by a few members → the chair may ask if anyone new wishes to speak call on those who raise their hand to do so before returning to the existing stack list
3. Discussion is not related to the item on the floor → the chair interrupts them and calls on the next person on stack
4. A secondary motion is takes the floor → a new stack is maintained until the floor returns to the previous item of business

# MEETING PERSONALITIES ACTIVITY

**Directions:** You've been handed a slip of paper describing your 'meeting personality'. Act out that personality during our meeting role play.

Don't worry if you never did well in theater class, the 'meeting personalities' speak for themselves.