Section 4: Running Effective Meetings

- Hold regular meetings of membership, site representatives and leadership bodies as required by the local Constitution and Bylaws.

- Utilize principles of parliamentary procedure to help ensure meetings are inclusive, engaging, and efficient.

Section 4

Best Practices for Meetings

1. **Make your meetings meaningful.** Have them regularly and avoid cancelling them. Have an agenda, and get minutes out in a timely manner. Publish the dates, times and places to all members - with adequate notice. Vary the times and places to accommodate members. Consider door prizes and or food as incentives. Help members feel it is worth their time to attend.

2. **Executive Committee or Board meet one week prior to the general meeting.** They should set the agenda, address issues, plan the meeting, and gather reports.

3. **Presidents are really moderators.** They are non-partisan in the chair, as the President, seeing that members are treated equally, regardless of which side of the questions they debate. They are like an umpire or referee. The president never makes a motion while in the chair, nor do they debate a motion without first having called the vice-president or other person to preside in their place. In such an event, they usually do not resume the chair until the vote has been announced.

4. **Keep meetings moving.** Use a format similar to the ten-minute meeting format. Your LRC can provide this and other helpful tips to save time for you.

5. **Prevent general hubbub.** Prompt action on the agenda will help keep interest. Avoid holding private conversations with members; side conversations between the chairperson and individual members can disrupt a meeting.

6. **Sum up what a speaker has said,** especially if they could not be heard clearly or if they did not express themselves well.

7. **Parliamentary procedure** is to be used to facilitate local meetings, not to stifle them. When in doubt as to proper procedure, common sense on the part of the president should be used to clear up problems and continue business. Below are some basics:
   a. Motion should be made in a proper form before discussion. EX: "I move that ..."
   b. A motion must also receive a second before discussion begins (Motions made on behalf of a committee do not need a second.)
   c. The maker of the motion should speak to the motion.
   d. Facilitate discussion of the motion.
   e. Call the question and vote.

   Follow Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised https://robertsrules.org/

8. **The president should not permit one or two constant talkers to dominate** the meeting. Time is limited; everyone should receive equal opportunity to speak. The chairperson should not recognize the same person twice until all others who wish to speak have had an opportunity.

9. **Include special outside speakers and programs.** Possible topics—retirement issues, grievance issues, contract maintenance issues, member ethics, timely topics, entertainment, social media Do's and Don'ts, and member benefits. (utilize NEA Member Benefits **www.neamb.com**).

Best Practices for Virtual Meetings

When you cannot meet in person with members, you can still continue to do the work of your local. Using virtual resources like Zoom, GoToMeeting, WebEx, Skype, FaceTime, and Facebook Messenger, you can continue to conduct general membership meetings, meet with members, hold executive team meetings, and hold general local committee meetings (e.g., negotiations committee, communications committee, etc.). Additionally, many virtual platforms now offer free accounts to users. Your local should consider usage needs to determine if it is necessary to invest in a subscription to a virtual platform or utilize any available free accounts.

Here are some suggestions to conduct productive and effective virtual meetings:

1. **Organize the Meeting Well**
    Good organization is key to running effective virtual meetings. Here is a short list of instructions to get you started:
    - **Send out a timely invite**
        Send out a calendar invite well in advance of the meeting and make sure that everyone confirms whether they are attending or not. This will help everyone to plan ahead and organize their week accordingly. Advance registration is an excellent tool to use for attendance confirmation and to ascertain how many will be attending.
    - **Send out a meeting reminder**
        If members are working remotely, this means you are going to be disconnected from your membership and team for most of the working day. This is why a smart notification system can be of enormous help. Consider sending participants a reminder notification at least 15 minutes before the meeting. It is also helpful to send out a reminder with the link to the meeting 24 hours before or the day of the meeting.
    - **Send out meeting materials ahead of time**
        Email the meeting agenda and related materials to participants ahead of time. This way, if technical problems prevent some participants from seeing the materials you show using screen-sharing, or if participants can only join by phone, the participants have the materials in advance.
    - **Structure your meeting**
        Instead of letting participants interject whenever they like, structure the meeting clearly. This way everyone will know where exactly their question or comment belongs. Be sure to utilize the chat room features or hand raising features for participation. Consider creating a speaker's list.
    - **Limit meeting time**
        Be mindful of the length of the meeting for virtual meetings. If possible, virtual meetings should be no longer then an hour.

2. **Focus on What's Important**
    Every meeting should have a clear objective and established agenda. Remember that you are taking up everyone's valuable time. Asking participants to stay and listen to minor issues that don't affect them is not an efficient way to run a meeting.

3. **Establish Next Steps**
    Particularly for Virtual Executive Committee Meetings and/or other virtual Association Committee meetings, make sure that all action points are written down, deadlines agreed upon and tasks distributed amongst team members. Always reserve 5-10 minutes for wrapping-up and work distribution. Determine if and when a follow-up meeting should be planned. Following the meeting, the President or another key person should email the attendees with a summary of the results of the meeting and any assignments or commitments that resulted from the meeting.

4. **Mute your phone or computer audio when not talking.**
    When you are not muted, be aware of noises that may be heard by participants – avoid rustling papers, tapping pens, or making other noises. If you are the host, ask at the beginning that participants mute their microphones whenever they are not talking.

5. **Key Tips for Zoom Meetings (www.zoom.us)**
    Zoom is one of the most popular platforms for virtual meetings. Some key tips for Zoom meetings are as follows:
    *   Prior to hosting your first Zoom meeting, watch some of Zoom's video tutorials to get an idea of the platform, the layout, and its functions.
    *   Use Zoom's waiting room feature. When you enable the waiting room for a Zoom meeting, each user who connects is put in a que that the meeting host has to approve them from. If you don't recognize someone in the waiting room, don't let them in.
    *   Mute audio for meeting attendees. This can be toggled off in the meeting creation menu. Members can then unmute themselves during the meeting when they need to speak during the meeting.
    *   Require advanced registration.
    *   Inform participants that the Zoom meeting may be accessed by computer or cell phone.
    *   Join the meeting a few minutes before its official start and use the time to check technical functions
    *   Turn off screen sharing. "Zoom bombers" need to be able to visually take over a meeting to be effective and preventing anyone from sharing their screen aside from the meeting host stops them from being able to go on the attack. This option can be toggled off once the meeting has started.

6. **Key Tips for GoToMeetings (www.gotomeeting.com)**
    *   It is not necessary to download any programs to use this software
    *   Set up your meeting so that it is open 15 minutes before it starts for smaller meetings. This will allow everyone to get comfortable with the various functions.
    *   Mute all other participants or ask participants to mute their own microphones. This will prevent disruptive background noise during the meetings.

Sample Guide for Planning Effective Meetings and Agenda

Every meeting should be controlled by an Order of Business. It may be whatever the Union itself determines or whatever the properly authorized officers may designate. Normally, it should include:

Name of Organization
Date
Location
Time
Agenda

Call to Order – by the president or chair

Reading and Approval of the Minutes
- can be presented orally or in written form
- are there any corrections to the minutes?
- corrections, when proposed, are usually handled by unanimous consent
- no motion is needed for approval

Adoption of Agenda

Reports of Officers Reports
- can be oral or written
- no motion is needed to adopt treasurer's report unless it is audited
- no motion is needed to adopt committee reports unless recommendations for action are made

Reports of Committees

Old Business – unfinished business from last meeting is brought forward for action.
- motion is required to adopt

New Business – any items not previously up for action

Announcements or "For the Good of the Order"
- oral or written

Adjournment

Agenda items may be added where necessary.

NOTE: *An agenda listing committee reports, pending and special-order business should be compiled before the meeting and publicized widely, if possible.*

Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th Edition)

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
Close meeting	I move to **adjourn**	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Take break	I move to **recess** for	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Register complaint	I rise to a **question of privilege**	Yes	No	No	No	None
Make follow agenda	I call for the **orders of the day**	Yes	No	No	No	None
Lay aside temporarily	I move to **lay** the question **on the table**	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Close debate	I move the **previous question**	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Modify wording of motion	I move to **amend** the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Kill main motion	I move that the motion be **postponed indefinitely**	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Bring business before assembly (a **main motion**)	I move that [or "to"] ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Enforce rules	**Point of order**	Yes	No	No	No	None
Submit matter to assembly	I **appeal** from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
Suspend rules	I move to **suspend the rules** which ...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
Avoid main motion altogether	I **object to the consideration** of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Divide motion	I move to **divide the question**	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Demand rising vote	I call for a **division**	Yes	No	No	No	None
Parliamentary law question	**Parliamentary inquiry**	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None
Request information	**Request for information**	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None

Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly

No order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
Take matter from table	I move to **take from the table ...**	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Cancel or change previous action	I move to **rescind/ amend something previously adopted...**	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or maj. w/ notice
Reconsider motion	I move to **reconsider** the vote ...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

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