



Society Strategies

Federation of Genealogical Societies

P.O. Box 200940 Austin TX 78720-0940

Series Set II Number 2

Rev. May 1999

Set II Strategies for Presidents

Planning and Conducting Meetings

by Betty R. Kaufman

Supplemental Page

This strategy paper, written some years ago, is an FGS *Classic* that contains ideas and strategies still relevant today in society management.

Change from “bored meetings” to “board meetings” by reading this paper. Effectively planning and conducting meetings takes work, but the payoff is happier board members and lots of work getting done.

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Set II Strategies for Presidents Planning and Conducting Meetings

by **Betty R. Kaufman**

Congratulations!

YOU are the PRESIDENT. The president is the top ranking officer elected by the membership to lead them and to direct the activities of the organization. This officer, in cooperation with the Board, is responsible for the general management, and the development of group effort to achieve unity of purpose within the organization. To insure success for the term, the president establishes goals, then reaches them by motivating members. Important personal attributes include enthusiasm, motivation, persistence, courage, imagination, dedication, diplomacy and appreciation. This paper is designed to provide guidance and suggestions to enable a new president to successfully achieve those society goals by planning and conducting effective and efficient business meetings.

Before Each Meeting

Prepare an agenda (check by-laws and previous minutes) and give copies to the secretary and the

parliamentarian. Expedite business by providing copies to Board members before the meeting. See further for "Agenda." Remind officers and committee chairmen to prepare reports expected to be delivered.

Discuss meeting plans with the chairmen in charge of arrangements, program, protocol (seating and introduction) and the parliamentarian. Assign reading of correspondence in advance (summarizing and indicating pertinent points). Correspondence belongs to the organization, not to the president.

At the Meeting

You are the chosen leader of your society. Acquire a workable knowledge of parliamentary procedure, and be familiar with the objectives, bylaws, and other rules of the society. You do not have to memorize everything, but do know where to find the answers. It is essential you set an example of impartiality, courtesy, and obedience to rules. Check the

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by-laws and other policies of your organization for the specific duties of your office. Arrive early to ascertain that the meeting is “Ready To Go!” Come well organized so that you are free to welcome members and guests.

In general, a president is expected to do:

- Be the official representative of the organization.
- Preside at all meetings of the society and of the Board.
- Refer to oneself as the chair. (“I” is not appropriate.)
- Call meetings to order ON TIME.
- Determine that a quorum is present.
- Announce, in proper order, the business to come before the meeting.
- Recognize members entitled to the floor.
- State and put to vote all questions that legitimately come before the assembly.
- Announce results of each vote and the effect of the action.
- Expedite business in every way possible without denying members their rights.
- Enforce rules of debate, order and decorum.
- Decide all points of order (subject to appeal).
- Respond to relevant questions of members.
- Refrain from voting except when vote is by ballot or when the vote would change the result.
- At the proper time, declare the meeting adjourned (by general consent or by a vote of the assembly). End the meeting ON TIME.
- Stand while calling a meeting to order, while declaring it adjourned, and while putting a question to vote.
- Carry out administrative and executive duties outlined in by-laws or as directed by the assembly.
- Prepare a report to be given at the annual meeting.

The by-laws may provide for the president to be

ex-officio a member of all committees except the nominating committee. This is not a duty of the office, but a privilege granted by the by-laws. Without such a provision, the president has no more right to attend committee meetings than any other member of the organization.

Ex-officio means “by virtue of office.” If given this privilege, the president has all rights extended to other members of the committee—to make motions, debate or vote. The president is not obligated to attend committee meetings and is not counted in the quorum, but it is the duty of the chairman of the committee to notify the president of each committee meeting.

THE AGENDA (Order of Business)

Parliamentary authorities list preparation of the agenda as the duty of the secretary, but many presidents prefer to prepare their own order of business. The sample agenda may contain more than will be needed for a small organization, but it can be adapted to helping conducting an orderly meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

The president takes position, stands quietly for a few seconds, taps the gavel once, waits for quiet, then says, “*The regular meeting of the (Name of Society) will come to order.*”

OPENING CEREMONIES

Don’t spend too much time on these. The call to order may be followed by invocation, inspiring thought, patriotic expression, or by other opening ceremonies.

Example:

“*Please rise.*” Wait for quiet. “*The invocation will be given by _____. Please remain standing during the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, to be led by _____.*” If used, invocation and grace are given before the Pledge of Allegiance.

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The chair welcomes members and guests, introduces guests at the head table, and may introduce those of rank in the audience. A person known to the audience is presented; if unknown, the person is introduced.

ROLL CALL QUORUM

This may be done silently by the secretary. If taken orally, the names are usually recorded in the minutes. The president confirms that a quorum is present.

MINUTES

The secretary will read the minutes of the previous meeting. The president sits while they are read, then asks, "*Are there any corrections?*" Pause. If not, they are approved as read. If there are corrections ask, "*Are there further corrections?*" Pause. If not, the minutes are approved as corrected.

TREASURER'S REPORT

"*May we have the treasurer's financial report?*" The president sits while report is given, then asks: "*Are there any questions?*" Pause. "*The report will be placed on file.*"

The treasurer's report is never adopted; it is the auditor's report that is adopted.

CORRESPONDENCE (not requiring action)

The secretary may read official correspondence, first stating from whom it was received and, if possible, condensing the information.

OTHER REPORTS

The chair sits while reports are given and stands while putting any question to vote.

OFFICERS

If an officer makes a recommendation in a report, the officer should not move that it be adopted; another member should so move.

BOARD

The secretary reads the report of the action taken by the Board (not the minutes of the Board). When the report includes motions or resolutions to implement recommendations of the Board, the secretary moves their adoption. No second is required.

STANDING COMMITTEES

The president checks in advance and calls on, in the order listed in the by-laws, only those who have reports to make. The chairman, or reporting member, moves the adoption of motions or resolutions to implement recommendations of the committee. No second is required, unless it is a committee of one.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

(Sometimes called ad hoc or select)

Only those prepared, or instructed, to report should be called on (in the order of their appointment). Some reports are given for information only. If there are recommendations, the same procedure is used as that of a standing committee. When a special committee has completed its work and made its final report, it is automatically discharged.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The president never asks the assembly if there is any unfinished business. Instead, unfinished business (it is not properly called "old business") is that which is recorded in the minutes as begun but not completed at the previous meeting. The president should state, "*Under unfinished business we have ___*" and puts the business back before the assembly.

NEW BUSINESS

The chair always announces the next business in order. "*New business is now in order. Is there any new business?*"

Correspondence requiring action is read by the secretary who makes the necessary motions.

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“Are there any bills?” The treasurer reads the bills. The treasurer, or another member, may move they be paid. A second is required.

PROGRAM

The programs can be presented before or after the business meeting. The chair calls on the program chairman to present the program. The president, however, remains in charge and never officially relinquishes the meeting.

FURTHER BUSINESS

“Is there further business?” Additional business is permissible, but members are encouraged to bring up new business at the proper time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The chair makes announcements first (only those relating to the organization), then asks for other announcements.

CLOSING AND ADJOURNMENT

Invite guests to return; a closing thought may be offered. The meeting may be adjourned by general consent, or by a motion and vote of the assembly.

The presiding officer stands, *“If there is no further business, the meeting will adjourn.”* Pause. *“The meeting is adjourned.”* One tap of the gavel is given to signify adjournment, but this is not necessary unless your organization requires it.

{NOTE: Each organization has a certain meeting at which elections are held, certain reports are given, or special action is required. By-laws and other rules should be checked for this information and these items placed on the agenda for those particular meetings.}

BE A STRONG president. Serve with knowledge, dignity, and poise!

AFTER THE MEETING

Carry out the decisions made by the organization. Evaluate your role as president and presiding officer and the overall effectiveness of the meetings.

BETWEEN MEETINGS

Hold regular discussions with officers and evaluate progress toward established goals. Remain informed about progress of officers and chairmen. Attend all required committee meetings. Study parliamentary procedure. Serve as a public relations representative, as well as the chief executive officer, of the organization.

AT THE CLOSE OF THE TERM

Verify that reports are prepared by all officers and committee chairmen in accordance with the by-laws. Be prepared to give guidance on making reports, preparing final records, organizing files, and preparing notebooks for transfer to successors. Prepare a president's report. Transfer files in good working order.

At the last meeting of the term, remember the officer who opens the meeting, and closes it.