

Guidelines for Running Effective, Democratic Meetings:

1. Always start on time. Do not repeat earlier parts of the meeting for latecomers (make them wait until after the meeting ends to be filled in). They will eventually get the idea and start arriving on time. Starting on time respects those who take the meeting seriously enough to arrive at the appointed time; starting late just punishes these same people and encourages further lateness.
2. Distribute copies of the proposed agenda at the start of the meeting— this encourages participants to keep track of which item is under discussion (copies should have been distributed earlier, but tenants may have forgotten them).
3. Vote to call the meeting to order. This encourages a more formal atmosphere in which tenants respect the meeting procedures.
4. Read minutes from last meeting and vote to approve or amend them. Make sure someone is taking minutes of the present meeting.
5. Review the agenda and take additions. Make sure the agenda is realistic. Allot a specific amount of time to each part of the meeting— meetings should not last more than two hours. If there are too many issues to be discussed, the chairperson must decide which items will have to wait until the next meeting.
6. Have brief but informative reports from officers and committees. General association meetings should always include a financial report from the treasurer. Questions may be asked during a report, but debate is not allowed. If tenants want to discuss a matter, they should put it on the agenda and not bring it up during a report.
7. Old/New business. This part of the meeting should be reached within 20 minutes of calling the meeting to order— don't spend too much time reading the minutes and giving reports. Take the items one at a time; state the name of the topic and ask someone to introduce the issue and make any proposals.
8. One speaker at a time. Insist that people not speak until recognized by the chairperson. Seriously unruly or disruptive participants should be asked to leave the meeting and return when they are ready to respect others.
9. Stick to the order of the agenda. Don't allow people to bring up other topics. **Insist** that all comments be directed toward resolving the item under discussion.
10. During the debate, remind the participants of how much time was allotted for the topic and how much has been spent. Encourage speakers to make specific proposals to resolve the issue. The chairperson often must end debate and ask for a specific proposal to be voted on in order to prevent long, aimless discussions.
11. Encourage participation. Ask for people who haven't spoken yet to comment. Actively discourage one or two people from dominating the meeting (this includes the chairperson).
12. Vote frequently. Every issue should be resolved through a voted decision or a vote to table

until the next meeting (see parliamentary procedures below).

13. Conduct a brief evaluation at the end of each meeting to assess how the meeting went and how it might be improved.
14. Set a date for the next meeting.

Parliamentary Procedure

The rules most buildings use for their meetings are contained within basic parliamentary procedure. Some simple terms that people should be acquainted with are:

Motion: a specific proposal to be put to a vote.

Second: a second person who declares their support for the motion, allowing debate to begin.

On the floor: means that an issue is currently under discussion.

Amendment to a motion: a suggested change to a motion on the floor. The amendment can be accepted by the person who made the original motion, or can be put to a vote and attached to the motion.

Put on the table: a motion to stop discussion on an issue until a later date. Must be voted on.

Adjourn: A vote to end the meeting.

For example, an association is discussing replacing their front door. Mr. Jones, the chairman of the repair committee, explains the issue and states, "I make a motion that we authorize the expense of up to \$4000 for the replacement of the front door."

The association president says, "is there a second?"

Someone says, "yes. I second the motion."

While the motion is on the floor (under debate), someone says, "I propose an amendment that the new door be made of iron bars like the one in the building across the street." Mr. Jones accepts the amendment, meaning that if the motion passes, then the amendment is approved as well.

After fifteen minutes of debate the chairperson says, "Let's close the debate. The motion on the floor is that we authorize the expense of up to \$4000 for the replacement of the front door, and that the new door be made of iron bars like the one across the street. All those in favor, raise your hands. All those opposed raise your hands." The motion passes and the secretary writes it down. The repair committee will begin looking for contractors.

Call UHAB for more detailed information on parliamentary procedures.