Virginia 4-H Club Member’s Business Meeting Guide

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This guide will help you understand what is required to have exciting and productive 4-H club business meetings. Participating in well-run business meetings will help you learn skills that will be useful as you grow older.

In particular, you can learn the following life skills:

- Citizenship
- Planning and organizing
- Character
- Leadership
- Communication
- Stress management
- Decision making
- Getting along with others
- Teamwork

4-H members should take two steps to contribute to well-organized and fun club meetings. The first step is to learn your privileges and responsibilities as a 4-H club member. The second step is to learn about parliamentary procedure.

Membership – Privileges and Responsibilities

No organization can exist without active members. The qualifications for club membership are defined in your 4-H Club Constitution. The term “member” in this guide refers to a person who has full participation rights.

When you join an organization or club, you enter into a "contract" of membership with that group. That contract is an agreement that defines your privileges and also your responsibilities. The club’s constitution and bylaws defines some of those privileges and responsibilities. Be sure to read your club’s constitution and bylaws to learn about specific rights and expectations that affect you.
The following is a list of privileges and responsibilities that are generally accepted for members of any club.

1) Privileges
   a) To attend meetings
   b) To make motions and enter into debate
   c) To vote
   d) To nominate candidates when appropriate
   e) To be a candidate for office
   f) To insist on the enforcement of the rules of the organization and the use of parliamentary procedure in club meetings
   g) To review the official records of the club, including the minutes and financial reports

2) Responsibilities
   a) To promote the purpose of the club
   b) To comply with and uphold the club’s constitution, bylaws, and rules
   c) To use parliamentary procedure when conducting club business
   d) To attend meetings regularly and punctually
   e) To give one’s undivided attention to the business as well as to the program part of the meeting
   f) To speak up during meetings with helpful input and avoid frivolous matters
   g) To refrain from acts or remarks outside the meetings that will in any way interfere with the work of the club and/or its officers
   h) To hold office when requested
   i) To willingly and carefully perform any duty assigned in the club

What Is Parliamentary Procedure and Why Is It Important?
Parliamentary procedure refers to a set of rules that exist to ensure that business meetings are organized and orderly. The rules make sure that everyone has a chance to participate, be heard, and help the group reach decisions.

Where Did It Come From?
Parliamentary procedure has a long history. It originated in the early English parliaments, the legislative body of Great Britain. The first settlers of America brought it with them. It
became uniform when Henry M. Robert published his manual on parliamentary law. Today, Robert’s Rules of Order is the basic handbook that clubs and organizations use to conduct business.

**What Are Some of the Basic Rules?**

Basic rules of parliamentary procedure include: Only one person may speak at a time; the president of the organization announces the order of business and calls on people to speak; when a person wants the group to take action, he/she makes a motion suggesting that action, and the membership takes a vote to decide.

A basic rule for clubs that use parliamentary procedure is that they follow an order of business. Actions and wording based on parliamentary procedure that might be used by club officers and members is included in the sample order of business to help you learn how to conduct a proper 4-H club business meeting. These actions and wording are just as important for you as a member as they are for the club officers.

**Through Participation in 4-H Club Business Meetings You Should Learn How To:**

- answer roll call
- address the chair
- give a committee or officer report
- make and second motions
- discuss motions
- participate in elections
- vote on items of business

**Order of Business for a 4-H Meeting**

1. **Call to order and Pledges** – President stands, strikes gavel, and says, “This meeting of the ____ 4-H Club will come to order. Please stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance led by ____ and the 4-H Pledge led by ____.”

   TIP! Generally, the president stands when talking and sits when someone else is delivering a report.

2. **Roll Call** – “The secretary will call the roll.” (The president will select the preferred way to answer roll call. Another way to do the roll call is to check names of those present off of a list.) The secretary reports to the president the number of members present and absent and if there are enough members present to have a quorum. The quorum is set in the club bylaws and is the minimum number of members necessary to be present to conduct club business.

3. **Reading of the Minutes** – “The secretary will read the minutes of the last meeting.” Secretary stands, reads minutes, and then sits. The president stands and asks, “Are there any additions or corrections? If not, the minutes stand approved as read.”

   If there are corrections, the president asks them to be made and then says, “The minutes stand approved as corrected.”
4. **Treasurer's Report** - “We will now have the treasurer's report.” The president sits, and the treasurer reports on the following: money received, money spent, and the present balance. The president stands and says, “Are there any questions about the treasurer's report? If not, the report is received as read.” (The treasurer's report is approved once a year after an audit.)

5. **Other Reports** - The president asks for the following reports:
   - Additional officers' reports
   - Committee reports
   - Leaders' reports

   If any of the reports calls for an action by the club, usually the person making the report makes a motion for the action to be taken, and it is usually seconded by another person on the committee. The president then repeats the motion and asks for discussion. See “Conducting Business Using Motions.”

   **TIP!** Put someone in charge of reporting on the 4-H newsletter published by the Extension office. Encourage members to bring their copy!

6. **Unfinished Business** - (Something discussed but not decided at a previous meeting)
   “Secretary, were there any motions postponed until this meeting?”

   “Is there any other unfinished business? If not, we will proceed to new business.”

7. **New Business** - (Business not previously discussed)
   “Is there new business to be brought before the club?”

   Member 1: “Mr. President, I move that ____.”

   Member 2: “I second the motion.”

   President: “It has been moved and seconded that ____. Is there any discussion?”

   After discussion is over . . .

   President: “All those in favor of (repeat motion), signify by raising your hand. All those opposed, raise your hand. The motion carries (or fails).”

   See more information about motions and voting in “Conducting Business Using Motions.”

8. **Announcements** - “Are there any announcements?”

   Always announce dates of upcoming activities and meetings.

9. **Adjournment** - The business portion of the meeting can be adjourned before the program and recreation. The president states: “Is there any further business to come before the club?” If the president hears none, he/she may declare the meeting adjourned. “The meeting is adjourned.” President strikes gavel.

10. **Program/Project Work** - “We will now ask our vice president to announce the program.” The president allows the vice president/program chairperson to take charge during this part of the meeting.
11. **Team Building** – During this part of the meeting, there can be team building activities, recreation, refreshments, and/or celebrating.

**Conducting Business Using Motions**

**Main motion** – Beginning of an idea for an action to be taken by the club.

A member rises and asks for the floor:

Member 1: “Mr./Madame President.”

President: “Member 1.”

(When the president recognizes a member, he/she is said to have the floor.)

Member 1: “I move that we donate $25.00 from our treasury to the 4-H Foundation.”

Member 2: “I second the motion.” (Sometimes shortened to simply “Second.”)

(A member doesn’t have to be recognized to second a motion.)

President: “It has been moved and seconded that we donate $25 to the 4-H Foundation. Is there any discussion?”

Member 3: “Since we learned today that we have only $35 dollars in our treasury, I don’t think we can afford to give $25 this year.”

**Amendment motion** – Changing the main motion

Member 4: “I move that we amend the motion by substituting the words ‘$25’ with ‘$15.’”

Member 3: “Second.”

President: “It has been moved and seconded to amend the motion by substituting ‘$25’ with ‘$15.’ Is there any discussion? Hearing none, we will vote on the amendment. All in favor, raise your hand. All opposed, raise your hand. The motion is amended.”

“Is there other discussion on the main motion? Hearing none, we will vote on the motion to donate $15 from our treasury to the 4-H Foundation. All in favor, raise your hand. All opposed, raise your hand. The motion passes. Treasurer, please write and mail a check for $15 to the 4-H Foundation.”

“Is there other business?”

**Voting on Motions** – The president decides on the method of voting:

1. Voice vote: “All those in favor, say “Aye (Yes).” Those opposed, say “Nay (No).”

2. By standing

3. By raising hands
4. By ballot (distributing paper on which each member writes yes or no)

5. By calling the roll and asking each person to say “aye” or “nay.”

The president votes only to break a tie vote.

**Amending a Motion** - A motion can be amended in the following ways:

1. Inserting or adding a phrase.

   “I move to amend the motion by adding the words ‘Crawford County’ before 4-H Foundation.”

2. By striking out a word or phrase.

   “I move to strike the phrase ‘from our treasury’ from the motion.”

3. By substituting a word, phrase, or entire statement.

   “I move that we amend the motion by substituting the words ‘$25’ with ‘$15.’”

After an amendment has been offered, seconded, and discussed, **only the amendment is voted on.** After it passes, the main motion must be voted on as amended. If the amendment fails, the main motion must be voted on as originally stated.

**Other Pertinent Rules about Motions**

1. Only one main motion may be on the floor at one time. It must be postponed, sent to committee, or voted on before another main motion can be made. A motion to postpone or to send to committee is not a main motion and can be offered to clear a main motion from the floor. Motions to postpone or to send to a committee require a majority vote to pass.

2. With the approval of the members who made and seconded the motion, it can be withdrawn from the floor without a vote.

3. If a motion does not receive a second, it dies (is no longer considered).

4. If debate on a main motion drags on and on, any member may call for the vote:

   Member 1: “Mr./Madame President, I move (or call) for the question.”

   Member 2: “Second.”

   The motion to call for the question may not be debated and requires a two-thirds majority to pass. If it passes, a vote is taken immediately on the main motion.
Electing Officers

Clubs may have a bylaw that addresses eligibility requirements of an officer. For example, a club may require that officers be starting their third year in the club. For the club to have a successful year, nominees must understand the duties of officers and be willing to carry out those duties. One method of electing officers is for a nominating committee to present a slate of officer nominations. This method allows the club to consider who is eligible and to consider who will best be able to perform the duties of each office.

President: “Would the Nominating Committee present the slate of officer nominations.”

Nominating Committee Chair: The Committee nominates Bill for President, Sue for Vice President, Tommy for Secretary and Beth for Treasurer.

President: “Are there any nominations from the floor?”

Member 1: “I move the nominations be closed.”

Member 2: “Second.”

President: “It has been moved and seconded that nominations be closed. All in favor, raise your hand. All opposed, raise your hand. The motion passes. Will the chair of the Nominating Committee please pass out the ballots?”

After voting, the nominating committee should collect and count the ballots. The president should announce the results of the election for the officers.

Want To Learn More?

If you would like to learn more about parliamentary procedure refer to A 4-H Handbook of Parliamentary Procedure, Virginia Cooperative Extension publication 388-538 (publication pending). It provides 4-H members with much greater detail on club meeting management and parliamentary procedure.

Each 4-H Club is required to have an approved constitution and bylaws. Virginia 4-H Club Constitution and Bylaws, Virginia Cooperative Extension publication 388-211, is a tool to assist clubs in creating these documents.

If you are a 4-H club officer, you should refer to Virginia Cooperative Extension publication 388-274, A Guide for 4-H Club Officers. It contains information about the duties and responsibilities of each of the common 4-H club officer positions.

Several other publications will be useful to club officers and leaders. Virginia 4-H Club Annual Goals and Program Plan, Virginia Cooperative Extension publication 388-210, and Worksheet for Planning a 4-H Club Meeting, Virginia Cooperative Extension publication 388-542, will help club officers and leaders plan for regular club meetings.
My 4-H Club Business Meeting Record

4-H member name __________________________________________________________

4-H club name __________________________________________________________________

Volunteer leader name __________________________________________________________________

Year: 20____ - 20____

1) I want to learn these three things about 4-H club business meetings:
   a) _______________________________________________________________________
   b) _______________________________________________________________________
   c) _______________________________________________________________________

2) Number of club meetings:  Held _____        Attended by me_____ 

3) Offices held by me: _________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

4) Committee(s) on which I served: _____________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

5) Committee(s) which I chaired: ______________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

6) Motions and/or reports made by me: _________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

7) Discussions in which I took part: _____________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

8) Elections in which I took part: ______________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________

9) Next year I want to learn or accomplish these three things:
   a) _______________________________________________________________________
   b) _______________________________________________________________________
   c) _______________________________________________________________________