Robert’s Rules of Order: Promoting CSI Chapter Meeting Effectiveness

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Why Robert’s Rules of Order?

- Provides common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate;
- Places the entire membership on the same footing and speaking the same language;
- Facilitates the general will of the whole membership;
- Promotes discussion, deliberation and decision-making by the membership;
- Provides for constructive and democratic meetings, promoting the business of the organization.
- Minimizes the intimidation of members, and encourages full participation.
- Informs majority decision-making.
Principles of Parliamentary Procedure

1. Promote effective collaboration & accomplishment of the group’s purposes;

2. Focus the meeting on one matter at a time… until it is completely decided, rejected or tabled;

3. Equality of rights, privileges and obligations for all members… both the minority and the majority.

4. All members (including the chair) have the right to:
   a. understand the meaning of any question presented in the meeting;
   b. know what effect a decision will have; and
   c. speak on and discuss each matter presented for decision.

5. All issues are decided by majority vote.
Basics…

• **Quorum**
  ◦ A quorum of the membership is a majority of the members
  ◦ The chapter members will define the “quorum” for decision-making votes based on the size of the membership of the specific chapter, i.e., number of members in attendance.

• **Agenda**
  ◦ The *Chapter President/Chair* will prepare meeting agendas describing the “business” to be considered during the meeting.
  ◦ Each item of business on the agenda will come before the membership unless:
    • No one objects to withdrawal,
    • A motion to delete an item from the agenda is made and passed with a quorum or larger majority, or
    • The meeting runs out of time before the item can be discussed.
Roles (suggested)

- Chapter President
- President-Elect
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- **Parliamentarian** - ensures the meeting follows Robert’s Rules and intervenes and provides suggestions to the chapter (via the President) when needed
What does a meeting look like? ...

• The **Chapter President** (or other designated officer)
  ◦ **Calls** the meeting to order;
  ◦ **Provides** attending members with the agenda;
  ◦ **Provides** an “overview” of the goals of the meeting;
  ◦ **Requests** any discussions/revisions to the “minutes” from the previous meeting;
  ◦ **Asks** for a motion/second/vote to approve the minutes.
  ◦ **Moves** to the next agenda item.
What does a meeting look like? …

- The **Chapter President** (or other designated member)
  - **Introduces** the next agenda item
  - **Facilitates** discussion;
  - **Requests** additional questions;
  - **Clarifies** understanding;
  - **Requests** a motion on the issue;
  - **Requests** a “second” on the motion;
  - **Calls** for a vote;
  - **Tallies** the vote and announces the outcome.

- **Presents** the “next” agenda item… and moves on through the agenda.
What does a meeting look like?...

- The **Chapter President** (or other designated member)
  - **Confirms** that all agenda items are completely introduced, discussed and voted upon;
  - **Requests** any “new business” to be introduced by the attending members.
  - **Facilitates** the discussion of any new business.
  - **Asks** for a motion/second/vote to adjourn the meeting.
  - The **Chapter President or other designated officer** creates and distributes a draft of the meeting’s minutes.
Important Points to add

• When a member makes a motion, s/he needs to state the item as accurately as possible to ensure all understand the motion they are voting on.

• Typically, officers’ reports do not need a motion unless revisions are necessary.

• All officers can vote, including the President/Chair of the meeting. The President has all the rights of a regular member, and does not just vote in a “tie.”
Meeting Process Example

- **Chapter President:**
  - “I would like to call the October meeting of the Gamma Zeta Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota to order.”
  - “Our meeting agenda today will cover the following:”
    - “Approval of the minutes from our last meeting”
    - “The treasurer’s report”
    - “The suggestion to send delegates to the April state conference, and”
    - “Any new business.”

- **Treasurer:**
  - “Our balance on hand as of September 30\(^{th}\) is $532.00. We have new receipts from t-shirt sales of $200 and expenditures for bake sale of $100 our current balance on hand as of October 25\(^{th}\) is $632.00."

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Meeting Process Example - 2

• President:
  ◦ “Are there any questions related to the treasurer's report?”
  ◦ “If not, do I have a motion to accept the report?”

• Member 1:
  ◦ “I move to accept the treasurer’s report.”

• President:
  ◦ Is there a second?

• Member 2:
  ◦ “I second the motion.”

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Meeting Process Example

• President:
  ◦ “All in favor please indicate by saying ‘yes’,”
    • <responses tallied by Chair>
  ◦ “All opposed please indicate by saying ‘no’,”
    • <responses tallied by Chair>
  ◦ “The motion to accept the treasurer’s report is passed.”

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Meeting Process Example - 4

• President:
  ◦ “The first business agenda item we need to consider is if we want to send five delegates to the state conference as discussed in our last meeting and is described in the minutes form that meeting. Is there any discussion related to this issue?”

• Member 3:
  ◦ “Based on our current treasurer’s report and the current balance on hand I would suggest that we send only 2 delegates so that their expenses can be more fully covered.”

• President:
  ◦ “Is there any discussion related to this suggestion?”

• Members in general:
  ◦ <general agreement was indicated with no further discussion>

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Meeting Process Example

- President:
  - “Is there any further discussion before we call for a motion?”

- Attending Members:
  - <none indicated>

- President:
  - “If not, do I have a motion to send 2 delegates to the state conference in April?”

- Member 5:
  - “I move to send 2 delegates to the state conference.”

- President:
  - “Is there a second?”

- Member 8:
  - “I second the motion.”

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Meeting Process Example - 6

• **President:**
  - “All in favor please indicate by saying ‘yes.’”
    - <responses tallied by Chair>
  - “All opposed please indicate by saying ‘no.’”
    - <responses tallied by Chair>
  - “The motion to send 2 delegates to the April state conference is passed. We will accept suggestions for the 2 specific members to serve as delegates to the state conference, so please submit those recommendations to the secretary prior to our next meeting.”
Meeting Process Example

- **President:**
  - “Is there any additional new business?”
- **Attending Members:**
  - <none indicated>
- **President:**
  - “I would like to confirm the date and time for our next meeting which will be November 21\textsuperscript{st} at 3:00pm. I hope to see you all there!”
- **President:** (Calls for adjourning a meeting, with agreement)
  - “We are adjourned.”
Another Helpful Resource

• Rules of Running an Organization: An Insider's Understanding
  ◦ By Dr. Don C. Locke

• View materials at: www.csi-net.org