Effective Meetings

Volunteer Board Development Workshops
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Permissions
The participant materials are for the use of participants of courses offered through the Volunteer Board Development Workshops project. The intent of the material and the workshop series is to support board development in Prince Edward Island and the materials may be freely used or modified by voluntary and non-profit organizations. The information contained in this work has been developed, compiled, adapted and built upon from multiple sources. It was designed and developed by Paula Gallant, Training and Facilitation, www.trainingandfacilitation.ca.
How to Run Effective Board Meetings

Effective meetings can create motivation among board members, improve the quality of decisions made, and inspire members to act. So why is it that many board and committee members state that meetings are too long, unfocused, and do not achieve results? Well-planned, productive meetings are possible, and in this 3-hour workshop you will discover how to make them happen.

What you will learn?

You will learn about:

- Preparing for the meeting: its purpose and agenda
- Running effective discussions during meeting
- Making decisions effectively based on the organization’s mission
- Keeping effective records
- Determining next steps and follow-up
- How to ensure participants are prepared, present, and participate
- How to promote teamwork
- How to use rules of order or ground rules

Who should attend?

This workshop is designed for volunteers who serve as board members for community-based and volunteer-led organizations and groups. It is specifically designed for board members from organizations that often have modest budgets, few (if any) part-time staff, and rely heavily on volunteers.

Benefits of attending

Whether you are new to board service or are an experienced board member, there are many benefits to attending this workshop. You will leave with new ideas, easy-to-use materials and tips sheets, and motivation to share with fellow board members. This workshop is a chance to see and utilize new tools and tips to help you plan, lead, and follow-up on effective meetings. It will also provide an opportunity to meet others in your area who serve on boards, and learn from their experiences and good practices.
The different types of boards

A **policy board** governs through a partnership between itself (its Chair) and an executive director. Both the board and the operational organization have a hierarchical structure. The board develops broad policies that guide its own work and the operation of the organization.

A **policy governance board** follows a set of guidelines developed and promoted by John Carver. The board develops policies that establish ends for the executive director to achieve and proscribes limits to the means that may be used to achieve the ends. The intent is to give the widest latitude to the executive director to use professional judgment in carrying out the day-to-day work of the organization.

A **working or administrative board** has some degree of involvement in operations, in addition to its policy and mission role. These boards may be smaller and their members may serve the organization as volunteers.

A **collective** is a group of individuals who share responsibility for direction and policy, administration and work to achieve common goals. Board and staff/volunteers are the same individuals.

It should be noted that with the exception of policy governance, few boards would identify with these titles and their specific characteristics. Boards will have evolved with their own structures and processes and their own cultures and capacities. The benefit of thinking about a board within the four part model is that it sets the stage for a board to be more thoughtful and intentional about its own work and form, and to take responsibility for its own capacity and ongoing development.

Source: Boards and Board Governance -- BLSmith Groupwork Inc. Used with permission.
Preparing for a meeting

It is important to ask yourself certain questions while planning a meeting:

What?
What is the purpose of the meeting? What are the desired outcomes of the meeting?

Why?
Is the meeting necessary or is there another way to achieve the purpose? Can the meeting be replaced by other forms of communication such as memos, letters, conference calls, face-to-face discussion, and email?

Most of the time, a board meeting should be held for the purposes of:
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Planning at the organizational level
- Evaluation

Other purposes (idea generation, data-gathering, sharing, planning for specific events and projects, etc.) can be done by committees or in other ways.

Who?
Who are the people responsible for each item? Who are the decision-makers and who is knowledgeable when it comes to discussing the items on the agenda?

When?
When is the most appropriate time for the meeting? Keep in mind participant schedules and deadline dates for action.

Where?
Select a facility that is both convenient and appropriate. What type of support services or equipment will be required? (e.g. flip charts, equipment for power point presentations, conference call capability, etc.).

A meeting is defined as the coming together of two or more persons for the transaction of a common lawful order of business.

Meetings are either public or private.

Types of meetings
- Regular board meetings
- Special meetings
- Public meetings
- Annual meetings
- Committee meetings
- Planning meetings

2014
How?
Usually prepared by the chair of the meeting, the written agenda will guide the discussions and decisions of the meeting. Its distribution prior to the meeting with the minutes from the previous meeting is a critical factor in ensuring that participants arrive prepared and ready to contribute in a meaningful way.

Notice: For a meeting to be valid, a notice of a meeting must be sent to everyone entitled to attend. The preferred method of giving notice should be stated in the by-laws, and the notice should be sent well in advance. It should include the date, time, and location of the meeting.

Quorum: A certain number of people must be present at meetings, this is known as quorum. Without quorum, the decisions made are not considered binding or valid. A majority of members must be present in most cases, unless the organization has a rule that states otherwise.

Points of order: Many organizations manage their meetings using Robert’s Rules of Order (see Appendix C, page 29 for details). Points of order can be raised by any member of the quorum at any stage in the proceedings.

Preparing for an effective board meeting involves two types of tasks:

1. Preparing an agenda (see Appendix A for an example)
   - Review past minutes and consider items to come forward
   - Confer with staff and the committee chairs or staff liaison
   - Ask members if there are any other items that need to be on the agenda
   - Allocate a time limit to each item
   - Ensure that the person responsible for each item will attend the meeting
   - Circulate agenda prior to the meeting

A good agenda meets the following requirements:

- All items should relate to the mandate of the board – make sure the board is not spending time on tasks that are really the responsibility of staff, committees, or volunteers.
- Most items should focus on an action or a decision.
- The purpose of each item should be clearly indicated on the agenda.
- A realistic time limit should be set for each item.
2. Providing background material

The board must establish what information it wants to receive from staff and committees.

✓ Which items are reported to the board and which are not?
✓ How detailed does the information need to be?
✓ What format is most helpful?

In considering these questions, keep in mind the purpose of board meetings, outlined on the page 5, to ensure that the information relates to the purpose. Ensure that there is sufficient relevant information to allow a full discussion of each item, but not excessive information that drowns the board in detail – experiment a little to find the right balance for your board.

The person responsible for each agenda item normally prepares the background material.

Sample Agenda

Agenda, Board of Governors Meeting

Wednesday, September 26, 20 6 p.m.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
4. Business Arising from Previous Minutes
5. Report of Standing Committees
   a. Budget
   b. Education
6. Reports from Ad Hoc Committees
   a. Chapter Boundaries
   b. Website
7. New Business
8. Date of Next Meeting
9. Adjournment
**Tool: Checklist for all members**

**Before meetings:**

- Reread the minutes of the previous meeting as a check on whether you have completed all task assignments.
- Make necessary arrangements to avoid being called out of the meeting.
- Plan appropriately in order to be at the meeting on time.
- Be prepared with any materials or data needed to help them deal with agenda items.
- Study the agenda ahead of time and prepare to discuss the agenda items intelligently.
- If you must be absent, inform and prepare the group.

**During meetings:**

- State opinions and concerns honestly and clearly, do not withhold them.
- Stay on the agenda item being discussed and help others stay on it.
- Ask for clarification when you do not understand what someone is saying.
- Participate actively.
- Volunteer for action items.
- Encourage the participation and involvement of all members.

**After meetings:**

- Keep respective stakeholder groups updated on progress.
- Follow through with assignments or action items.
- Support the decisions of the members.
**Tool: Checklist for the Chair**

**Purpose:** The chair has the additional duty of helping the group reach effective decisions, ensuring that discussions stay focused and on track.

**Before meetings:**

- Be fully aware of the bylaws of the organization
- Ensure each meeting has an agenda and distribute it to all members.

**During meetings:**

- Open the meeting
- Introduce any guests
- Conduct the meeting in a regular and proper manner, as outlined in the bylaws or according to Robert’s Rules of Order
- Keep the discussion focused on the topic and on accomplishing objectives.
- Encourage balanced participation.
- Maintain an appropriate pace.
- Make sure follow-up activities are planned.
- Post and review the meeting agenda.
- Use consensus to make all major decisions.
- Be sure accurate meeting minutes are being taken.

**After meetings:**

- Ensure that minutes are distributed to members and others as appropriate.
- Follow up with members between meetings to provide support with completing assignments.
Tool: Checklist for the Secretary

The secretary performs invaluable services to the chair and members of the meeting and is instrumental in ensuring that the meeting runs smoothly.

A secretary’s duties include:

√ sending notices of meeting to all persons entitled to receive them

√ preparing the agenda (in discussion with the chair)

√ ensuring that a meeting place is available

√ arranging for the meeting room to be adequately set up

√ ensuring that all subcommittees have submitted their reports for the meeting

√ having a copy of the bylaws, previous minutes and orders, etc., at meetings for purposes of reference

√ following up with various committee members to ensure tasks assigned at the last meeting are acted upon

√ reading any document that may be required at the meeting

√ taking adequate notes of the proceedings of the meeting in order to prepare the minutes

√ preparing accurate minutes; and

√ carrying out instructions arising from the meeting that pertain to the secretary.
Good Practices for Running Effective Meetings

Principles

Opening the Meeting
Meetings should begin on time. If quorum is not present, meetings should be adjourned.

Impartiality
A chairperson is like a judge in a court. He or she should ensure that all participants have an opportunity to express their point of view. It can be difficult to leave your own opinions at home, but if you can’t remain impartial, you shouldn’t have taken the job.

Collaboration
The board works together and with staff in a professional, collegial and collaborative manner. Collaboration is needed to get results and build relationships with a combination of patience and discipline, and listening deeply while speaking assertively.

Assertiveness
Ensuring that everyone gets a hearing will almost certainly involve stopping someone from dominating the proceedings. The more contentious the issue the more likely you are to require firmness. You don’t need to be rude or dogmatic. Phrases such as “I think we should hear from Ms. Smith on this” or “can we have some comments from the engineering department on this” should be sufficient in most cases. Once you provide this opening, however, you need to ensure that there are no interruptions while the next speaker has their say.

Regularity
Volunteers have many demands on their time. If an organization persists in a pattern of unproductive, listless, unclear or dreary meetings, it will soon begin to lose its volunteers. It is important that meetings be as effective as possible. Successful meeting results are determined not only by what happens during a meeting but by events before and after the meeting as well.
Techniques for balancing participation

Ground rules

Purpose: Ground rules are guidelines for individual and group behaviors. They define the expectations members have for themselves and each other regarding how they will work together.

When to use and whom to involve: Ground rules must be developed and agreed upon by all members at the initial meeting(s) and must be reviewed regularly. Ground rules should be used as a tool any time you bring a group of people together on a project of any nature.

Ground rules should be written down and posted at all meetings. As the work progresses and as the group develops or adds new members, the group may revise their ground rules to address issues that arise such as handling differences of opinions in more open and supportive ways, reaching true consensus before moving to new topics, and ensuring equal airtime for all members.

Tool: Ground Rules

After understanding the purpose of ground rules, get input on how the board would like everyone to work together. Record responses on a flip chart and post the ground rules at the beginning of each meeting. Below are a few examples to trigger your thinking about some areas for ground rules; in other words, how a group functions with respect to:

ISSUE #1: How decisions are made
RULE #1: We will seek group consensus on all major decisions.

ISSUE #2: Dealing with conflicts, listening, giving and receiving feedback
RULE #2: We will respect each other’s opinion and focus on the issue, not the person.

ISSUE #3: Participation of members
RULE #3: We will be honest in our communication.

ISSUE #4: Use of agendas, minutes, record keeping, etc.
RULE #4: The Chair will set the agenda and distribute it to all members prior to the
meeting. The recorder will be responsible for distributing the minutes from the meeting.

ISSUE #5: Communication between meetings  
RULE #5: We will have periodic check-ins (via phone) so that members can keep each other updated.

ISSUE #6: Member attendance and promptness  
RULE #6: Except for unforeseen circumstances, all members must attend meetings at the agreed-upon time.

ISSUE #7: Length, frequency and timing of meetings  
RULE #7: All meetings will begin and end on time.

**Directly asking silent members**

The direct approach is to simply ask silent members if they have anything to say and request that dominating members refrain from speaking at times. It is helpful if this is one of the ground rules.

**Rounds**

Rounds are an effective way to balance participation while not singling out quiet people. Everyone takes a turn to speak on a subject without interruption or comment from other people. Go-rounds are useful for equalizing participation and giving everyone some clear space to express their opinion. Allowing people to “pass” means that quieter people don’t feel put on the spot. To keep the round focused clearly state its purpose and write it on a flipchart where everyone can see it. You can set time limits as necessary.

**Talking item/stick**

You can use a stick or a conch shell or almost any other distinctive object. Place the talking stick in the centre of the group. Speakers take it from the centre, say their piece and return it to the middle. Only the person holding the talking stick is permitted to speak (you can set a time limit if necessary). This tool allows people to consider and take their time in voicing their views, as they don't have to be afraid that some one else might jump in. It also makes people conscious of when they interrupt others and helps them to break the habit.
Keeping a Speakers List

This is a tool that involves asking people to raise a hand when they wish to speak, and noting them down in order. They are then invited to speak in that order. The group will soon become impatient with people that ignore this protocol and just barge in and interrupt.

Observe the pace of proceedings

Sometimes the pace affects people's level of participation – those who are not participating simply need some breathing space to formulate their ideas and put them forward. You can address this problem by occasionally asking the group to sit quietly for a time while they think about a particular issue at hand – it's easy if you formulate a question for them to consider. Restart the discussion by asking the quieter members if they have any comments.

Evaluation

Opportunities for constructive feedback reduce the likelihood of repeating ineffective procedures time after time, increase the likelihood of skill development, and provide an occasion to celebrate success. Taking time at the end of a meeting to discuss what worked and what can be improved will help with the planning of the next meeting.
Techniques for keeping on topic

_Reminding participants of the agreed-upon agenda and purpose_

Make your comment in a way that acknowledges the usefulness of the views being contributed, but suggest that this is not the best forum in which to express them. You might suggest how this view could be channelled to the appropriate person or body (e.g. letter, committee discussion, a further meeting at a later date). Be gentle but firm, and use eye contact to make a friendly connection with the person you cut off. Once reminded, board members will often keep themselves on track. Other times, you will have to be persistent. Developing a good agenda can also assist a chair in keeping on topic.

_The parking lot_

The parking lot makes sure all ideas get recorded and participants don't feel like they've been ignored. Whenever anything comes up that's not relevant to the discussion at hand “park” it in the Parking Lot (a large sheet of paper on the wall). In other words write it up on the paper and deal with it later. This allows you to stay focused but reassures participants they will be heard. Of course if you want to avoid people feeling ignored, make sure you do deal with parked items! Consider having a space reserved on the agenda to deal with parked items.

_Be flexible_

Sometimes an idea is just too good or important though it’s not on the agenda. You can say: “This is not on the agenda, but it seems important. Would you like to continue to talk about it or should we go back to our agenda?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keeping on topic:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Remind participants of the agreed-upon agenda and purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ The parking lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Be flexible</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Techniques for leading difficult discussions

*Clarifying*

At certain times in the discussion board members may not understand each other or may talk past each other. Feelings usually intensify if the miscommunication continues. The board chair needs to help clarify what is being said, essentially acting as an interpreter. In many cases, all that is required is to rephrase or paraphrase what one or two board members have said so that everyone understands their point. Always be sure to check your interpretation with the speaker for accuracy.

*Example:* “If I understand you, Eleanor, your point is that, although these programs are necessary, they are inappropriate for our organization and should be delivered by another agency. Is that right?”

At other times, the board discussion has moved along from its original starting point to a new stage, but is still within the parameters of the established agenda. Just to ensure everyone in the group is clear, it might be helpful to articulate the topic currently being discussed and check it with the group.

*Example:* “We seem to have finished questions of clarification to Beth, and are now moving into debate about the pros and cons of her proposal. Have we answered all of the questions regarding clarification?”

*Summarize*

Summarizing can be used to end a topic, to end a discussion, to limit the need for discussion and at the end of a meeting to ensure that everyone has a clear overview of what took place or what action is now required.

Summaries help the group:
- ✓ See how close they are to agreement
- ✓ Refocus the discussion
- ✓ Move the pace along
- ✓ Identify disagreement to name of areas of further discussion
Neutralizing

When someone is angry, you want to bring down the heat of the argument and draw out the facts as the person sees them. It can be helpful to try to neutralize the statements being made in anger. Examples of neutralizing statements or lead ins are:

- “I sense that there is more about….”
- “I wonder if…”
- “Could it be that…”
- “It sounds like…”
- “Is it correct to say…”
- “So your perception is…”
- “Can you tell me more about the issue that causes…”
- “I can see that you have strong feelings about that.”

Notes:
Make decisions effectively

By law, boards of directors must act as a group. Decisions must be made not by individual directors, but by the whole board or a committee of the board authorized to act on behalf of the board on the matter in question. Boards generally make decisions using either a majority vote (51% of the board members present at a meeting assuming quorum has been established) or consensus.

**Agenda**

For each item on the agenda clearly indicate whether the item is:

- For information only (I)
- For consultation: Requires input from the board but the decision will be made by someone else, e.g. the executive director (C)
- For decision: Requires a decision by the board (D)

In making decisions, it is helpful to follow these steps so that all board members can make an informed decision:

- Clarify the decision and its significance
- Understand the context of the decision and determine who should be involved
- Gather relevant information and present alternatives
- Establish criteria for evaluating the alternatives
- Compare alternatives against the criteria
- Present recommendations
- Boards using traditional parliamentary procedures require a chair who understands the rules of procedure. (See Appendix C for Rules of Order)
- Boards using a consensus model of decision-making require a chair who will summarize each stage of the discussion until consensus is reached. (See Appendix D for further information on consensus)

Adapted from Frequently Asked Questions about Nonprofit Boards, Centre for Nonprofit Management
## Decision-making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Consensus</strong></th>
<th><strong>Voting</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>When</strong></td>
<td><strong>When</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Decisions are important, have large ramifications or affect a lot of people</td>
<td>- It is known that consensus is highly unlikely in the time allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Groups are small (10 or fewer)</td>
<td>- Members of the group are equally informed on the subject matter and understand one another’s viewpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A large group is considering issues of great importance</td>
<td>- It’s been determined that the majority can handle the implementation without the active involvement of those in the minority</td>
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<tr>
<td>- There will be a rich exchange of ideas, whether in person, by phone, by video conference or with groupware</td>
<td>- There is a plan to handle reactions of those who disagree with the outcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The group is informed and individual members feel a similar level of investment or are essential to a good decision</td>
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<tr>
<td>- If consensus cannot be achieved, have a back-up method to reach a decision</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Subgroup</strong></th>
<th><strong>One Person</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>When</strong></td>
<td><strong>When</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A subgroup has the necessary information or expertise to make the decision</td>
<td>- It is an emergency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A subgroup is the only entity affected by the decision and can implement it without the active involvement of the majority</td>
<td>- One person has all the relevant information</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The whole group is comfortable delegating its authority to representatives</td>
<td>- One person is especially trusted by the team to make a good decision</td>
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### What is consensus?

Consensus decision-making is a search for the best decision through the exploration of the best of everyone’s thinking. It means that everyone understands the decision and can explain why it’s best and everyone can live with the decision. It requires time, communication skills, and active participation of all team members, trust and commitment. (See Appendix D)
Keep effective records

Board members of voluntary, non-profit organizations must perform their legal duties with care. **An effective way to minimize risk to themselves and the organization is to ensure permanent official records exist of the board’s activities.** Good record keeping helps an organization function efficiently, effectively and ensures accountability to its members and the public.

**Hard copy vs. electronic records**
Consider using two binders as one way to organize and store all hard copies and accompanying materials.

**One binder could hold official documents such as:**
- Certificate of incorporation
- Letters patent or articles of incorporation
- Constitution and/or bylaws
- Other important organizational documents such as insurance, leases, banking resolutions, corporate seal, etc.

**In a second binder keep:**
- The official listing of the board of directors, their names, addresses, phone numbers and emails, and details regarding each director including their date of election, term reappointments and resignations
- The minutes of all meetings, categorized according to annual general meetings, board meetings and committee meetings with copies of reports and additional information that was filed at the meeting

The information in the binders is part of the organization's official legal records. They are the historical record of the organization, and must be kept and not destroyed. Another option is to scan and save documents on CD or DVD. Be aware that electronic storage does not guarantee long-term retention of your records due to technology changes and degeneration of disks.

Adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture
Minutes

The following is a guide for making the task of taking minutes easier (see Appendix E: example of minutes form):

✓ Capture the essential elements: type of meeting, name of the organization, date and time, venue, name of the chair or facilitator, main topics and the time of adjournment. For formal meetings include approval of previous minutes, and all resolutions.

✓ Prepare an outline based on the agenda ahead of time, and leave plenty of white space for notes.

✓ Prepare a list of expected attendees and check off the names as people enter the room or pass around an attendance sheet as the meeting starts. To be sure about who said what, make a map of the seating arrangement, and ask for introductions of unfamiliar people.

✓ Don't make the mistake of recording every single comment. Think in terms of issues discussed, major points raised and decisions taken.

✓ If you are an active participant in the meeting, be prepared! Study the issues to be discussed and have your questions ready ahead of time.

✓ Don't wait too long to type up the minutes; do it while your memory is fresh.

✓ Ask for clarification or reread what you've written to the group to ensure decisions are clearly captured.

Minute writing tips:

✓ Capture the essential elements
✓ Prepare an outline based on the agenda ahead of time
✓ Prepare a list of expected attendees
✓ Do not make the mistake of recording every single comment.
✓ If you are an active participant in the meeting, be prepared!
✓ Do not wait too long to type up the minutes; do it while your memory is fresh.
✓ Ask for clarification or reread what you've written to the group to ensure decisions are clearly captured.
**Minutes checklist**

The form used for minutes is a matter of organizational style or personal preference; however, minutes should include:

- √ date, time and location of the meeting
- √ name of the presiding officer
- √ names of all in attendance or enough names to indicate the attendance of a quorum—at large meetings, members can sign a register or roll as they enter the meeting room
- √ name of the secretary
- √ dates or other suitable identification of correspondence or documents dealt with or referred to in the course of discussion; and
- √ person who makes a motion, the seconder and whether the motion is carried or defeated.

Frequently it is convenient to incorporate items such as financial statements, reports of committees, and other relevant information in the minutes. This may be done by appending them with a suitable reference and identification in the body of the minutes such as Appendix I, Appendix II, etc. The minutes record what is decided, not what is said. The minutes also should indicate if no conclusion is reached.

The following should not be recorded in the minutes:

- o a motion that was moved but not seconded
- o an amendment that was moved, seconded, but not carried
- o an amendment that was moved, but that was ruled out of order by the chair
- o the vote count for and against a motion; or
- o the manner in which members vote, unless a member requests that the manner of his or her vote be recorded in the minutes. If, for any reason, a meeting ends before the agenda is completed, the remaining subjects should be noted in the minutes so they may be deferred to the next meeting.
Determine next steps and follow-up

Follow-up

Before the meeting adjourns, the chair must ensure that items for action are clearly stated and delegated. Between meetings the chair or others may monitor progress on the action items with the individuals to whom they were designated. It is important to discuss how and who will monitor progress.

Set team goals and individual objectives

- Ensure that everyone on the board is working toward a well-defined and articulate goals
- Identify who owns each task or action that relates to decisions or goals
- Identify what tasks and activities are most important for each member

Minutes

In order to provide an accurate and useful record of the meeting the person responsible for the minutes needs to record follow-up actions and indicate who is responsible for each. (See Appendix E for a sample minutes form)
Promoting teamwork

Promoting teamwork is more than following Robert’s Rules of Order. Ask yourself:

✓ Is the board able to have a significant conversation on important issues?
✓ Can the board work toward consensus through patient, respectful, productive discussion?
✓ Is there good teamwork?

What does effective teamwork look like to you?

Members of a team…

■ Are consulted for their opinion or involvement before decisions or plans are made
■ Commit time to developing a consensus in which everyone is involved
■ Voluntarily offer their experience and knowledge to colleagues
■ Regularly acknowledge and celebrate efforts and contributions
■ Are non-defensive and receptive to new ideas, opinions and needs of others
■ Consider the impact of their plans on others
■ Avoid gossiping and talk directly to each other when there are problems or conflicts
■ Come prepared for meetings
References

*Online*
Community Foundations of PEI
http://www.cfpei.ca/index.php

Community Learning Network Innovative Leaders in Lifelong Learning (Alberta)
http://www.communitylearning.info/

Community Sector Council (Newfoundland and Labrador)
http://communitysector.nl.ca/

Non-Profit Sector Leadership Program
http://collegeofcontinuinged.dal.ca/Continuing%20Management%20Education/Non-Profit%20Sector%20Leadership/Resources.php

Charity Village
http://charityvillage.com/cv/research/rbod.html

Volunteer Canada
http://volunteer.ca/home

The Muttart Foundation http://www.muttart.org/board_development_workbooks

Consent Agenda
http://www.boardsource.org/Knowledge.asp?ID=3.70

*Books*

Appendix A: Sample Agenda

Consent Agenda
A consent agenda can turn a board meeting into a meeting of the minds around the things that matter most. A consent agenda is a bundle of items that is voted on, without discussion, as a package. It differentiates between routine matters not needing explanation and more complex issues needing examination. While not difficult to use, a consent agenda requires discipline in working through the following seven steps:

1. Set the meeting agenda
2. Distribute materials in advance
3. Read materials in advance
4. Introduce the consent agenda at the meeting
5. Remove (if requested) an item from and accept the consent agenda
6. Approve the consent agenda
7. Document acceptance of the consent agenda

Sample Agenda: Board of Directors Meeting
ABC Organization  Monday, January 2, 20XX
1234 Main Street, Suite 56 City, PR  78910

9:45 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Board Meeting
9:45 – 9:50 Welcome and Chair’s Remarks
9:50 – 10:00 Consent Agenda
   Minutes of the December 1, 200X Meeting
   President’s Report
   Planning and Development Task Force Update

10:00 – 2:15 Strategic Discussions: Presentations and Feedback
   10:00 – 11:45 Strategic Plan: Measures of Success
   [Noon — Buffet Lunch]
   12:30 – 2:15 New Markets Strategy: Implementation Plan

2:15 – 2:45 Governance Committee: Discussion Items
   ○ Bylaws
   ○ Board Member Recruitment

2:45 – 3:00 Closing

2014
Appendix B: Discussion Techniques

Brainstorming

The objective of brainstorming is to gather large quantities of creative ideas as quickly as possible. The generation of creative ideas requires a particular environment: one that is non-linear, non-judgmental and quick-paced. Brainstorming meets these requirements by encouraging participants to suggest many ideas without limiting them with considerations of reasonableness, accuracy, practicality or cost. To encourage participation from the entire group, it is imperative that there be no initial judgment on or discussion of any of the ideas that are generated.

General Rules for Brainstorming

- Set the objective clearly. It is important that the participants are focused on the same objective.
- Decide on your limits. The limits can be on the duration of the brainstorming session, the number of ideas you want to collect or to stop at the first (or second or third) natural lull in the flow of ideas.
- Generate excitement and enthusiasm. People can only be creative when they are in a positive frame of mind.
- Encourage creativity. Anything goes!
- Do not allow participants to comment, discuss or judge any of the points raised.
- Keep the pace moving. This fosters the feeling of excitement and enthusiasm. You may have to be very encouraging initially and you may have to use many filler words such as: “Give me more.” “Who has some other ideas?” “Say whatever you are thinking right now”.
- Go for quantity. The greater the number of ideas recorded the better.
- Follow your brainstorming with a listing or prioritization exercise to capture the jewels that have come out as a result of this exercise.

Pros & Cons

Got several ideas and can't decide which one to go for? Simply list the benefits and drawbacks of each idea and compare the results. This can be done as a full group, or by asking pairs, or small groups to work on the pros and cons of one option and report back to the group.
**Multi-Voting or Dotmocracy**

This is a very simple and quick method for teams to use in setting priorities when there are many options – Which are most important? What do we need to do this year? Which project should be started first? What core values are most important?

**Steps:**
1. Create a list of possibilities
2. Give each person in the group 10 self-stick dots. (For this exercise, color is irrelevant.) Instruct them that to choose their priorities, they are to use “all 10 dots but no more than 4 on any ONE item.” Therefore, 4 dots would indicate their top priority. Some items will have no dots. Participants actually walk up to the flip charts and place their dots next to their items of choice. (If you have a larger group, split the items on 2 flip charts on opposite sides of the room so as not to take too much time or cause congestion. Start half the group on each side.)
3. When everyone has placed his/her dots, count them for each item and make a priority listing on a new flip chart page. There usually are a few clear winners. You may then discuss with the group if they agree those should be top priorities on which to start working. It does not necessarily mean that the others are eliminated.

If the list is still too long, give each person in the group 2 or 3 self-stick dots and ask them to vote for their top priorities from the existing priority list (one vote per item).
Appendix C: Robert’s Rules of Order

Motions

To propose a motion:

- A member addresses the Chair.
- The Chair recognizes the speaker.
- The speaker says, “I move that...” and delivers or reads the motion.
- Another member raises a hand to be identified by the Chair and secretary and says, “I second the motion,” ensuring the motion has the support of more than one member.
- The Chair says, “It has been moved by ____________ and seconded by ____________ that ____________. Is there any discussion?”
- The mover usually speaks first. Then an opportunity to speak must be given to anyone wishing to support or oppose the motion.
- At the end of the discussion, the Chair says, “If there is no further discussion (pause), the motion is that ____________. All in favour?” The Chair pauses while a count is taken. “Opposed?” Again, a pause, and then, “The motion is carried (or defeated/lost).”

Explanation of Motions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Motion</th>
<th>Purpose of Motion</th>
<th>Requires Seconder</th>
<th>Requires Discussion</th>
<th>Can be Amended</th>
<th>Vote Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To table</td>
<td>To clear floor for more urgent business/set aside</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To amend</td>
<td>To improve motion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To refer to</td>
<td>To allow more careful committee consideration</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To limit or extend discussion to certain time</td>
<td>To provide more or less time for discussion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Motion</td>
<td>Purpose of Motion</td>
<td>Requires Seconder</td>
<td>Requires Discussion</td>
<td>Can be Amended</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>To call for the vote</td>
<td>To end discussion immediately and vote</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To raise a question or privilege</td>
<td>To bring up an urgent matter due to undesirable conditions</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To recess</td>
<td>To secure a rest</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To adjourn</td>
<td>To end the meeting</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To raise to a point of order</td>
<td>To enforce rules or call attention to rule violation</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To appeal ruling made by Chair</td>
<td>To determine attitude of assembly on ruling made by Chair</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To suspend rules temporarily</td>
<td>To allow special action not possible within the rules</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To withdraw motion</td>
<td>To prevent vote or inclusion in minutes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To object to consideration of a motion</td>
<td>To prevent wasting time on an unimportant decision</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To rescind</td>
<td>To repeal motion discussion</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ratify</td>
<td>To approve previous action taken</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.boarddevelopment.org](http://www.boarddevelopment.org)
Following are some general rules for conducting meetings that, if not observed, can be raised as points of order:

- Items of business are taken in the order outlined on the agenda. Only the chair, with the consent of the meeting participants, may rearrange the order.

- Any participant wishing to speak must be recognized by the chair.

- No person should speak more than once on a main motion or on each amendment proposed. At a large meeting, it can become time consuming and repetitious if members are allowed to speak a number of times. The one exception to this rule occurs when the mover of the motion is allowed to reply to points raised before the motion is put to a vote.

- Some organizations have standing orders or by-laws stating the length of time a member may address the chair on each subject. In small groups this may not be necessary, but it is advisable for larger groups. If such guidelines do not exist, a time limit should be determined at the beginning of the meeting.

- No discussion should take place unless a motion or an amendment is before the meeting. The object of this rule is to confine discussion to the business at hand.

- The chair should not participate in debates. However, a chair who has strong personal feelings can vacate the chair and express that opinion after informing the meeting of the desire to speak on the particular subject and by asking permission to vacate the chair. If agreed, a temporary chair is appointed: one of the vice-chairs, the secretary or a member of the committee.
Appendix D: Consensus

What is it?
- Consensus is a process for making group decisions without voting.
- Agreement is reached through a process of gathering information and viewpoints, discussion, persuasion, synthesizing proposals and/or developing new ones.

The goal of the consensus process is to reach a decision, which everyone can agree on or live with.

Things to remember
- Blocking consensus: Consensus does not necessarily mean unanimity. A group can proceed without having total agreement.
- If someone cannot agree with a given proposal, they may be asked to “stand aside” so the group can move forward. There disagreements can be noted in the minutes.
- If they refuse, then action is blocked until a substitute agreement can be found.
- The decision could be postponed until a later time.

The benefits
- It produces more intelligent decisions by incorporating the best thinking of everyone.
- It keeps people from taking positions or adversary attitudes.
- It increases likelihood of new of better ideas.
- Everyone has a stake in implementing the decision because all have participated in its creation.
- Lessens the possibility that a minority with feel the decision is imposed.

When seeking consensus
- Encourage presentation of viewpoints.
- Listen carefully for agreements or hesitations.
- Test for agreement as soon as the decision is emerging. State the tentative agreement in question form, e.g. “Do we all agree that we’ll meet on Tuesday evenings for the next two months?”
- When there is not agreement: explore the disagreement, ask for alternatives, and take time.
Appendix E: Example of Minutes Form

Boards assign responsibility for taking minutes in various ways. Options include:
- A staff person (e.g. administrative assistant) prepares draft minutes which are checked by the board Secretary;
- The Board has a Recording Secretary;
- Responsibility rotates among board members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Organization:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Meeting:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date/Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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