



Running a good meeting

Hints on chairing a meeting

- Have a good understanding of the constitution of the council, the council code of practice and the standing orders.
- In collaboration with the principal prepare the agenda for each meeting.
- Ensure that you are well briefed on complex and sensitive issues.
- Control the discussions to ensure that essential business is addressed. For this, the president must understand the powers of the chair and be willing to use them discreetly to ensure the Council keeps to points at issue.
- Ensure that no councillor dominates a discussion and encourage all councillors to express an opinion
- Before calling for a vote summarise points made in the debate.
- Keep an eye on the scheduled closing time of the meeting and try to pace the discussion to complete the business by that time.
- Call for a specified extension of time if that is required.
- Ensure that councillors know the date and venue of the next meeting before officially declaring the current council meeting closed.
- Ensure that the decisions of the council are correctly recorded. When the minutes are approved by council, the person presiding at the meeting, signs the minutes to this effect.

Stages of a meeting

1. Opening the meeting

At the scheduled time of commencement, check that a quorum is present.

If there is a quorum, call those present to order and declare the meeting open, welcoming members and any observers or visitors. The meeting remains open or in session until the chair either adjourns or closes the meeting or unless there ceases to be a quorum present.

Have the minute taker note those present and call for apologies, which are also recorded.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

To be circulated prior to the meeting. "Can be passed as read" Questioned items from minutes should have been raised with agenda committee prior.

Once the motion is passed, sign and date the record at the conclusion of the secretary's official copy of those minutes.

3. Business arising from the previous minutes

These items should be added to general business later in the meeting to prevent distractions from the essential business of the agenda.

4. Correspondence

Councillors should have been provided with a list of correspondence received since previous meeting with the agenda and, if possible, with a summary note about each item. The correspondence itself should have been tabled prior to the meeting, -so that a councillor might read any item of business. Alternatively, but not advisable, the correspondence may be circulated during the meeting in which case it is appropriate to postpone discussion until later in the meeting. For the purpose of decision-making, the president and the executive officer should have previously noted those items which needed the attention or decision of council. (see Essential Business)

Motion: *That the inwards correspondence be received and the outwards correspondence*

endorsed.

5. Essential Business

The agenda committee meets prior to the meeting to determine which items from those submitted for general business should be included as the first item of business as “Essential”.

6. Reports

Ideally all reports are submitted in writing in time to be circulated with the agenda.

7. Principal's report as executive officer

A written report on progress with Strategic Plan and other policy implementation, or on school issues which may be of interest to the council. Like all reports this is normally circulated with the agenda.

Councillors are asked if they have any questions to raise about the report so that the principal can reply. The principal may have made recommendations for a council decision or for a matter to be referred to a council committee. Any recommendations can only be adopted by a council vote. Councillors also have a right to suggest a motion on any item raised in the report. However, items which involve lengthy discussion are best referred to a council sub-committee or noted as business for the next meeting so that they appear on that agenda.

Motion : That the report be received and recommendations adopted

8. Financial Report

Call on the treasurer to present on the months financial statements

(Note: due to meeting cycle there may be two months data)

CASES reports that are normally tabled

- Statements of receipts and payments- Official Account
- Trial balance (Level -Investment Account
- Cash payments journal list of payments to be ratified.
- Outstanding invoices list of accounts to be passed for payment.
- Annual revenue budget summary comparison between budget and actual receipts.
- Annual expenditure budget summary comparison between budget and actual expenditure.

Other reports often tabled are the:

- Year to date cash flow statement
- Graphical program budget performance
- Cash receipts journal

After the presentation, ask for any questions from the council and then call for a motion to accept the report.

Motion : *That the statement of receipts and expenditure for the period __ to __,--- as circulated be accepted and that accounts be ratified or approved for payment.*

9. Other subcommittee reports

Reports from other subcommittees/working parties are received as appropriate, for example:

- Finance and risk
- Education/curriculum
- Buildings and grounds/environment
- Community

10. Other reports

- Parents Association
- Curriculum
- Teaching team

Allow general discussion on the reports and then put each recommendation to the council. After dealing with the recommendations from a report, a motion along the following lines is put:

Motion : *That the report be received and the recommendations (or the recommendations as amended) be adopted.*

Note: Any discussions of a report should not be a re-hash of the general discussions that took place in the committee meeting. Attention should focus on the recommendations.

11. General Business

Each item is dealt with in the order agreed earlier.

The aim is for each item to reach a decision or to defer the matter to a later meeting or to a sub-committee where recommendations may be made.

Any decision of council must be recorded as a motion of Council

12. Closure of the meeting

Extension of time

If the business is not concluded on time the chair should ask the Councillors whether they wish to defer the rest of business until the next meeting, or to extend the meeting by a specified length of time that evening. A motion is necessary if council wants to extend the meeting time for that evening.

13. Next meeting dates

Dates for committee/working party meetings during the next month should be announced before the meeting is closed.

The date of the next council meeting should be confirmed.

14. Closing the meeting

Whether concluding at the scheduled time or after an extension of time, formally the meeting can only be closed by a statement to that effect by the chair.

The closing time of the meeting should also be recorded in the minutes.