Chairing a Meeting

by Steve Munzel

Here are the "magic words" you use to make things happen.

Starting

[GAVEL once or twice]

"I call this meeting to order."

[Lead the Pledge of Allegiance.]

Taking Roll

Say:

"Will the Secretary please take the roll?"

Seating Alternate Commissioners

[Ask the Secretary which Commissioners are absent. Then appoint Alternates to take a seat in order of seniority.]

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Approving the Agenda

"Are there changes to the agenda?

[If there are changes tell the commissioners to add them to their paper agendas.]

[If no one speaks up with a change, then say:]

"Is there a motion to approve the agenda?"

Then,

"Is there a second to the motion?"

Then,

"All in favor of approving the agenda say, 'Aye'."

Then,

"All those opposed say, 'No'."

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Approving the Minutes

Say:

"Are there any changes to the minutes?"

[If there are some changes, tell the commissioners to write them on their paper copy of the minutes.]

Then say:

"Is there a motion to accept the Minutes as amended?"

Then,

"Is there a second to the motion?"

Then,

"Those in favor of the motion say, 'Aye'."

Then,

"Those against the motion say, 'No'."

[If there are no changes, say:]

"Is there a motion to accept the minutes as submitted?"

Then,

"Is there a Second to the motion?"

Then,

"Those in favor of the motion say, 'Aye'."

Then,

"Those against the motion say, 'No'."

Getting someone to make a motion:

"The Chair will entertain a motion on this issue."
 or
"Is there a motion to…?" *[Say a sample motion.]*

[To make a motion at this time a commissioner may simply say:]

"So moved."

[This means the commissioner is making a motion for the issue as it was announced by the Chair.]

Seconding a motion:

Say:

"Is there a second to the motion?"

If there is no second to the motion say:

"If there is no second the motion dies."

—go back to getting someone to make a motion—

Beginning discussion:

Say:

"The motion has been made and seconded. Is there discussion of the motion?"

To continue discussion or to get more people to speak up:

Say,

"Is there any further discussion of this motion?"

To have the Secretary read the motion:

Say,

"Will the Secretary please read the motion?"

To begin the voting:

Say:

"All those in favor of the motion say 'Aye.'"

Then say:

"All those opposed say 'No'."

[Or ask for a show of hands for the Yes and No votes.]

To count the votes:
[If you used a show of hands:]

"Will the Secretary tally the votes and announce the results?"

If it <u>passes</u>:
"The motion has passed."

"The next item of business is *…" [see the agenda.]*

If it <u>fails</u>:
"The motion does not pass." *[see the agenda.]*

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For a Substitute Motion:
"There is a motion for a substitute motion. Is there a second?"

Once the Substitute Motion is seconded say:
"It has been moved and seconded to have a substitute motion. Those in favor of the substitute motion raise a hand."

"Those against a substitute motion raise a hand."

To count the number of delegates standing:
"Will the Secretary count the commissioners voting in favor/against?"

Then:

"Secretary, how many commissioners are in favor/against?"

If there is a proposed AMENDMENT to a motion being discussed:
"There is a proposed amendment to the motion. Does the maker of the motion accept the amendment as stated?"

If the maker says <u>no</u>:
"The amendment to the motion is declined. Is there further discussion of the main motion?"

If the maker says <u>yes</u>:
"The amendment to the motion is acceptable to the maker of the motion, does the seconder to the motion accept the amendment?"

If the seconder says <u>yes</u>:
"The proposed amendment to the motion has been accepted by the maker and the seconder. Will the secretary please read the motion as amended?"

If the seconder says <u>no</u>:
"Commissioner. *(maker's name)* , the seconder of the motion declines the amendment. Is there a second to the motion as amended?"

Once there is a new second say:
"The motion as amended has been seconded will the Secretary please read the motion as amended?"
—go back to *DISCUSSION OF A MOTION.*—

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Calling for the question.

A commissioner may say, "I call for the question." It can only be made once during discussion of a motion. This is an advisory suggestion. The Chair may choose to stop the discussion or to continue it.

<u>To end discussion:</u>
"The chair calls an end of discussion." [go to voting on a motion]

To continue discussion:
"Thank you, Mr. _(fill in the name of the maker of the motion)_, the Chair chooses to continue discussion of the motion. Is there more discussion?"

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Moving to end debate.

This is a procedural motion that requires a second. It can only be made once during discussion of a motion on the floor.

"It has been moved to end debate, is there a second?"

If there is no second:
"There is no second. The motion to end debate dies. Is there more discussion?"

If there is a second:
"It has been moved and seconded to end debate. Will every commissioner in favor of ending debate raise a hand?"

[Count them. If more than half have hands raised the motion passes.]

If the motion to end debate fails:
"The motion to end debate fails. Is there more discussion?"

If the motion to end debate passes:
"The motion to end debate passes." _[go to voting]_

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To end the meeting:
"Is there a motion to adjourn the meeting?"
"All in favor say, 'Aye'."