

# A Basic Introduction To Club Meeting Procedures



**USASA  
Clubs &  
Societies**

**Find your flock.**



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# Introduction

Meetings are an important part of running your club. They offer your members an opportunity to share their thoughts and are designed to encourage constructive debate that, leads to informed decision-making. Meetings are intended to turn good ideas into better ideas.

The purpose of this guide is to help your committee run an effective meeting through providing an understanding of:

- Meeting terminology
- The agenda
- The minutes
- Meeting types
- The meeting process from start to finish

# Meeting Terminology & Basics

## Agenda

You may wish to use or adapt the USASA agenda template, which includes the important components of a meeting, or develop your own.

The agenda outlines what the committee intends to discuss at the meeting, and it forms the basis of the minutes. Therefore, it is a good idea to release your agenda well in advance of the meeting, to give attendees time to prepare.

## The Chairperson

The role of Chairperson usually falls to the President. The Chairperson runs the meeting, ensures that the agenda is followed and keeps discussion on topic.

## Minutes

The minutes are a summary of the meeting and should detail exactly what occurred in the meeting as a record for your club and USASA.

The minutes should follow the order of the agenda, stating the main issues, items discussed, and decisions made. The minutes need to provide an accurate record of attendance and apologies received. They should include the executive reports and details of any topics addressed during the meeting.

Following meetings, the secretary should write up and circulate the minutes. It is best if this is done as soon as possible after a meeting as this provides information and details of the meeting to those who were absent, as well as a reminder of the decisions made at the meeting.

You may wish to use or adapt the USASA minute template.

After the minutes have been drafted, people represented should be given the opportunity to suggest amendments to the minutes to ensure the minutes are a true and accurate record of what took place in the meeting.

## Quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of attendees required for a meeting to be able to proceed. This is to ensure that any decisions made at the meeting represent the interests of the club.

As per the club Rules of Governance, quorum for executive meetings is the presence of a majority of members of the executive at the time, including at least one of the President, Treasurer and Secretary.

# Meeting Terminology & Basics

The quorum for General Meetings, including AGMs and SGMs, is a minimum of six members of the club or 15% of the club membership, whichever is the larger number of club members, of which at least 3 must be a member of the executive committee.

## Motions

Anyone who wants the meeting to decide something needs to put that desired decision on the agenda as a motion. Motions should be worded as decisions, not topics. The best way to think about how to write a motion is to simply ask yourself, "What do I want the meeting to 'decide'?".

Motions should:

- Be specific
- Not be in the first person
- Not contain more than one sentence

When the appropriate time in the meeting arrives, the chair moves the motion (i.e. 'I move that we accept the minutes from the last meeting'). Moving the motion is the official way to introduce the motion to the meeting. The mover of the motion then speaks to the motion by explaining their reasons for wanting that decision made.

After the motion is moved, it is seconded by someone else. The purpose of seconding a motion is to confirm that there is enough support to warrant the meeting debating the motion. If there is no seconder for a motion, that is an indication that it is only one person's idea, so the motion lapses. This can prevent a waste of time in lengthy discussions during the meeting.

Once a motion has been moved and seconded, it is opened for further debate. Amendments to the motion may be debated until the meeting is satisfied with the wording of the motion and it can then be put to a vote.

## Returning Officer

The Returning Officer (RO) is the person who is responsible for managing the election process in an AGM or SGM.

The RO should be impartial to result of the election and will ensure that the integrity of the election is maintained.

USASA clubs should provide notice to USASA of the election taking place at a meeting, so that USASA may provide a staff member or representative to be RO at the meeting.

# Meeting Terminology & Basics

## Location

The location for your meeting can influence the tone and productivity of your meeting. Holding meetings in a café or bar can cause distractions that not only extend the duration but also detract from the importance of your meeting. Consider these elements when choosing a location for your meeting:

- Appropriate size for number of attendees
- Enough seating available
- Convenient location
- Quiet and private

On campus meetings can be practical for student members. Meetings using online platforms such as Zoom may also be practical for Executive Committee Meetings.

# Meeting Types

There are multiple types of meetings. The one you choose to hold should be influenced by what you are aiming to get out of the meeting. Regardless of the type, there are several procedures that should be followed in all meetings. These include:

- Sticking to a set agenda
- Motions, resolutions and voting
- Reports from the executive committee
- General business

## Executive Committee Meetings

Executive committee meetings should be held every one or two months, depending on how active the club is. Executive committee meetings involve members of the executive committee and any other club members who have been invited to attend. These should be the most regular formal meetings that your club holds. The executive committee should use these meetings to set the club's long-term plans, review how things are going and make decisions on behalf of the club.

It is important to note that the executive committee are the only people allowed to vote in these meetings.

## Annual General Meetings

Annual general meetings (AGMs) are held once each year. For USASA clubs these meetings must be held between January 1st and April 30th. The AGM is a way to formally update club members on how the club has proceeded in the past year and make decisions about the club that are needed on an annual basis. All club members must be invited.

At the AGM you will need to address the following items:

- Reports from the President, Treasurer and Secretary
- Electing a new executive committee
- Voting on any proposed changes to the Rules of Governance

## Inaugural General Meetings

Inaugural General Meetings (IGM) are only relevant to new clubs who have never had a meeting before. An IGM is like an AGM except that that agenda will be slightly different. Providing reports at this meeting won't be necessary as the club has no history to share. Instead the club will:

- Discuss its objectives, name and committee structure
- Move a motion to adopt proposed Rules of Governance
- The club will elect its first ever committee members

# Meeting Types

## Special General Meetings

Special general meetings (SGMs) should be held to deal with significant issues for your club, such as:

- Amending your Rules of Governance
- Changing your club's name
- Dissolving the club
- Filling a vacancy on your club's executive committee.

SGMs should only be held as required. The executive committee was elected to lead the club, so it is appropriate for most operational decisions to be made at executive meetings.

## General Meetings

USASA clubs are required to have at least three general meetings each year, including the AGM or IGM and any SGMs. A general meeting includes members of the club, as well the executive committee. It is a good way for the executive committee to keep club members up to date with how the club is running and allows club members the opportunity to share any thoughts or concerns they may have.

Many clubs fall into the trap of holding regular general meetings, instead of executive meetings. This can result in club business not being dealt with effectively, due to too many members being involved in lengthy, unproductive discussions.

## Subcommittee Meetings

The need for a subcommittee depends on the scale of your club and its activities.

A subcommittee may be formed at the discretion of the executive committee, who can choose to delegate decision-making authority to subcommittees for specific areas of operation, such as events or fundraising. Any authority delegated to subcommittees should be recorded in executive meeting minutes, including the expiry date for any delegations.

Subcommittee meetings may be held as required, depending on each subcommittee's operations and responsibilities.

It is important to note that the executive committee is always accountable for the club's actions and, therefore, must know what each subcommittee is doing. Subcommittee meetings can typically be much less formal than executive or special general meetings. However, it is still important to have an agenda, discussions on topic and record minutes.



# Running a Meeting

The following are some tips to help you make your next meeting successful, effective and maybe even fun.

## Before the Meeting

1. Define the type of meeting and the purpose of the meeting.
2. Develop an agenda in cooperation with key participants.
3. Choose an appropriate meeting time. Try to pick a time when the most people possible will be available.
4. Choose a venue suitable to your group's size in a location that suits the most members.
5. Notify the appropriate people of the time, date and location of the meeting at least 7 days in advance of the meeting.
6. Distribute the agenda and circulate background material, lengthy documents or articles prior to the meeting so members will be prepared and up to date.
7. For AGMs or SGMs, notify USASA of your meeting.

## During the Meeting

1. Greet members and make them feel welcome. Take attendance as people arrive.
2. Once quorum is met, start the meeting as close to on time as possible. If the meeting fails to meet quorum within a reasonable timeframe (15–20 minutes), reschedule the meeting.
3. Open the meeting and review the agenda and set priorities for the meeting.
4. Encourage group discussion to get all points of view and ideas. You will have better quality decisions as well as highly motivated members; they will feel that attending meetings is worth their while.
5. Keep conversation focused on the topic. Feel free to ask for only constructive and non-repetitive comments. Tactfully end discussions when they are getting nowhere or becoming destructive or unproductive.
6. Keep minutes of the meeting for future reference.
7. As a leader, be a role model by listening, showing interest, appreciation and confidence in members.
8. Summarize agreements reached and end the meeting on a unifying or positive note.
9. Set a date, time and place for the next meeting.

# Running a Meeting

## After the Meeting

1. Write up and distribute minutes within 3 or 4 days. Quick action reinforces importance of the meeting and reduces errors of memory.
2. Give people represented in the minutes the opportunity to suggest amendments.
3. In the case of an AGM or SGM, send the minutes to USASA.
4. Discuss any problems during the meeting with other club executives; come up with ways improvements can be made.
5. Follow-up on delegation decisions. See that all members understand and carry-out their responsibilities.
6. Put unfinished business on the agenda for the next meeting.