

Best Practices for Board Meetings



Before the Meeting

- ✓ Send out notice 4, 2, 1 weeks in advance so that three notifications have been made.
- ✓ Ask all people submitting reports to get them to you by 2 weeks before the meeting — not bring them to the meeting.
- ✓ In the 2 weeks ahead notice, enclose the agenda and as many reports as you can have available, with a list of additional information they can expect to receive. Clearly mark the documents between reports to be read and understood and items of business. Remind people that if they have questions about the reports, they can contact the writer of the report to get their questions answered ahead of the meeting.
- ✓ Confirm one week before the meeting who is planning to attend so that you can be ready for the appropriate number of people and do not waste time waiting for people that are not coming. Remind members that you are assuming they will come prepared for discussion and decision not for presentation of the material already sent ahead.
- ✓ If you have a significant question coming before the board, schedule a meeting one week ahead to deeply discuss that item and learn what additional information is needed in order to reach a decision at the scheduled meeting.

During the Meeting

- ✓ Have someone tasked with keeping the meeting on track that sits beside the chair for support/counsel/prompting. This person should understand the meeting processes being followed. This helps the chair listen and respond instead of trying to figure out mechanics.
- ✓ Early in the meeting adopt minutes and submitted reports without verbally going through them one at a time. It is the responsibility of the board members to have prepared for the meeting. Offer a time for questions about any of the reports. Stay on track with agenda.
- ✓ Make sure and look through the financials carefully with your board and provide time for questions. Being aware of the finances of the congregation/agency is a major responsibility of the board and should be one of your more detailed items.
- ✓ Balance the time the board spends on their own internal business with items that show the congregation in context of its wider efforts (regional/general church) and community (what is of concern in your local community during this month/quarter).
- ✓ Spend most of your time proactively moving forward business and decisions about your future and less time on items that can be read individually as reports. Don't waste time!
- ✓ Spend your time in visioning/checking on the current status of your movement toward the adopted vision from the most recent planning process.
- ✓ Committees/task groups/teams that have items of business before the board should assume the board is prepared. If concerned about board member prep, attach a 1/2 hour meeting on the front of the formal meeting for Q&A. Those prepared and without questions don't need to have their time spent on rehashing what was sent ahead.

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Between Meetings

- ✓ Send monthly updates to members of the board letting them know of the progress toward your shared work and goals.
- ✓ Set up a place on line where items such as budget, minutes and reports can be referred to between meetings. Most websites have a function of hidden pages which can be accessed with a code or a link. Call you regional office for help with this.
- ✓ Provide your congregational board members with up to date materials about your regional and general church resources and events.
- ✓ Provide updates in the congregational media environment (newsletters/websites/mailings/social media) about the work of the board to provide transparency.
- ✓ When opportunities for church leadership are offered by your regional church, make sure your leaders have the information and encourage them to participate.
- ✓ Remember to thank your board members often privately and publicly for their service.
- ✓ Schedule an annual all day meeting to set the agenda for the year ahead and orient new board members — have the new members come early for orientation with invitation open to any who would like to come for a refresher on board function/scope/process. Include some portion of anti-racism training in your annual retreat day. Call regional office for resources.

For more information about Congregation Board Practices.

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