

# Leadership Training

## Running an effective business meeting

Joe Margraf

President, Fish Habitat Section  
American Fisheries Society

## Your role as meeting Chair (President):

Before the meeting:

- Be prepared.  
Know your organization's purpose, objectives, bylaws, history, pending issues.
- Be professional.  
Act diplomatically and be objective, never betray your personal biases.
- Do your homework prior to a meeting, BUT be prepared for the unexpected.  
Appoint a Parliamentarian.

***Learn Robert's Rules of Order!***

## The (very) basic tenets of Robert's Rules for parliamentary procedure

- Maintain impartiality as Chair.
- Follow an established agenda.
- Encourage brevity.
- Keep on the topic.
- Maintain control and decorum.
- Majority rules, but minority has their say.
- Follow the established hierarchy or precedence for motions.

## How to keep the meeting moving and under control

- All reports should be written & handed out (email).
- All verbal presentations should be held to a maximum of 3 minutes
- Committee reports do not require approval.
- Keep questions and answers to the point and moving along – do not allow extended discussion – suggest talk after meeting.
- Use unanimous consent when appropriate.

## Conducting business: Motions & Debate

Discussions from the floor should accompany motions.

Chair must not enter into discussion or debate.

Only allow motions when appropriate.

Only allow discussion from one person at a time – chair must recognize (call on) the person who will have the floor.

An individual has the right to speak twice on any motion – the maker of the motion has the right to speak first on the motion (if they so desire).

## Motions and debate (cont.)

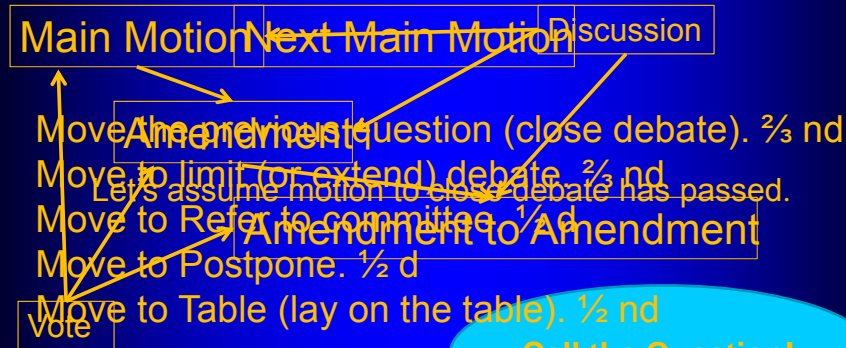
Speaker should stand when addressing the group (microphones for large meetings).

Keep debate to the topic and on the issues.

An Individual's oratory on a motion should be accomplished in no more than 3 minutes or so (mover of the motion can take longer to present the case).

Maintain meeting decorum at all times.

# Hierarchy of Motions



Joe Margraf  
U. S. Geological Survey  
Box 25046 MS 406 DFS  
Denver, CO 80226-0046

Email: [jmargraf@usgs.gov](mailto:jmargraf@usgs.gov)

Phone: (303) 236-1454

## Agenda

Call to order.  
Quorum.  
Approval of minutes.  
Treasurer's report.  
President's (other officers') report(s).  
Committee Reports: Standing, Special.  
Unfinished business.  
New business.  
Announcements.  
Adjournment.

## Dealing with "difficult" members:

Rules of Order dictate that while everyone has the right to have their say, no one has the right to dominate a meeting and decorum must always be preserved.

Yelling loudest and most often does not mean that you must call on that person to speak.

Remember they only have right to speak twice on a motion, and you are not required to recognize them when other people who have not spoken wish to speak.

## Obstreperous member (cont.)

All discussion must be to the motion and be objective; discussion to or about individuals is not appropriate – violations should be ruled as out of order.

Initial offences should result in the Chair cautioning the group about such behavior.

A Repeat offence should result in the Chair demanding that meeting come to order, with an additional reminder about decorum

Finally you can ask a repeat offender to leave or be escorted out, or you can call a short recess to regain control of the meeting.