

The
CO-OPERATIVE
HOUSING
FEDERATION
of Canada



The Art of Chairing

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CHF Canada AGM 2015
Charlottetown, PEI

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
 - focus on members' meetings
2. Good meetings/bad meetings
3. Participating at meetings
4. Effective chairing
 - Pre-meeting preparation
 - Role of the chair
 - Goals for chairing
5. Rules of order
6. Learning to chair
7. Wrap-up and evaluations

What makes a good meeting?

- Quorum
- Trusted and respected chair
- Knowledgeable and respectful members
- A reasonable agenda
 - Real decisions to make
 - Having enough information to make decisions
 - Starting and finishing on time

What makes a good meeting? cont.

- Good organization
 - Comfortable seating arrangements
 - Breaks and refreshments
- Keeping a positive atmosphere

What makes a meeting bad?

- Poor organization
 - arrangement of the room
 - no extra agendas
 - no by-laws available
 - no reminder notices
- No support for the chair

What makes a meeting bad? cont.

- Not following Rules of Order
- No meeting guidelines (behaviour)
- Not enough information to make decisions
- Long and unproductive meetings
- Overloaded agenda
- No chance to be heard
- Lots of complaining

A good meeting participant...

- Arrives on time with package and stays to the end
- Stays calm and reasonable
- Shares the air so everyone has a chance to give their point of view
- Listens to and respects the ideas of others
- Doesn't repeat what others have said

A good meeting participant...cont.

- Stays on topic
- Makes motions and votes
- Respects the chair
 - Follows the Rules of Order and Meeting Guidelines
 - Speaks only when acknowledged by the chair
 - Speaks to the chair and not others

Meeting guidelines

- Adopt meeting guidelines
 - Have them posted so all can see
 - Suggestions: only address the chair, don't interrupt, stick to the agenda, no side conversations, no personal attacks, be concise and to the point



Two keys to having a good meeting

1. Effective pre-meeting planning:

- Create a checklist for logistics and details
- Plan the agenda

2. Effective chairing:

- Educate the members and help them participate
- Achieve the goals for a good meeting
- Know your role

Pre-meeting planning

- Use a checklist
 - To cover all logistics from setting the date to getting donuts
- Set the agenda
 - Get board approval
 - As chair you may be asked for input
- Preparing the chair and speakers
 - Notes



Typical agenda

- Call to order
- Approval of the chair (if an outside chair)
 - Introductory and educational comments
- Approval of the agenda
- Approval of the minutes
- Business arising from the minutes
- New business (the reason for the meeting)
- Other business

Pre-meeting planning for the chair

- What's on the agenda?
 - Does it belong on the agenda?
- Is it a legal topic for members' meetings?
- What is the recommended decision?
- What information should be included?
- Where should it be on the agenda?
- Who is responsible for presenting the item?
 - Not the chair

Pre-meeting planning for the chair

- Timing
 - Make sure there is enough time to discuss each item
 - Be realistic about what can be achieved



Pre-meeting planning for the chair

- Think about or get information about
 - possibly contentious items
 - who will be speaking to each agenda item
 - when motions are required
 - what previous meetings have been like

If you have an outside chair...

- They don't know your co-op, so prepare them
- Send meeting package to them when you deliver it to members
- Have quorum and by-law information for them
- Have a detailed agenda with times and speakers noted
- Take time for a discussion before the meeting
 - What items could be tricky
 - What's happening at the co-op
 - What previous meetings have been like

You're prepared... now chair the meeting

- Educate the members
- Achieve the goals for chairing a good meeting

Educate the members

- New members at every meeting?
- Poorly behaved members?
- At the beginning of the meeting or when you are appointed chair
 - Review the rules of order
 - Have a handout
 - Have power point slides
 - Review the meeting guidelines
 - Describe how you will run the meeting
 - Time limits
 - Speakers' list

The goals for chairing a good meeting

- Start and finish on time
- Deal with every item on the agenda
- Help the members to make good decisions
- Make sure members have a chance to express their opinions
- Make sure members feel respected and satisfied with the process

Achieving the goals

The chair should

- be prepared
- have fundamental co-op information
 - know the Rules of Order
 - know the meeting guidelines for behaviour
- set the tone
- involve everyone
- control the meeting and keep track of the time
- be aware of the mood of the meeting
- communicate well
- evaluate themselves

Fundamental co-op information

In order to help members make good decisions the chair should know

- what's in the co-op's by-laws relating to items on the agenda
- what's in the Co-op Act that applies to the items on the agenda
- How to handle the discussion by using the
- Rules of Order



Key rules of order

- Motions
- Amendments
- Voting



Rules of order exercise – 1

1. Members cannot hear the debate because of a discussion going on in another part of the room
2. Estimates on the cost of a motion to buy new chairs for the meeting room were not available by the meeting time.
3. A motion by the security committee to build a fence may result in a property line dispute with the neighbour.
4. Members have begun repeating the same points of argument in discussion of a motion.

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Rules of order exercise – 2

5. A motion to amend is before the meeting, but the mover believes the amendment runs against the intent of her main motion.
6. The report of the maintenance committee causes some members to change their mind about supporting a motion to change contractors that was already passed.
7. On a motion to close debate, 18 members vote in favour and 12 vote against. The chair closes debate.
8. A member making a motion has been persuaded by the discussion that the whole thing is a bad idea.

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Motions

- Important motions should be put in writing on the meeting agenda
- Before discussion begins, the motion is made
- A seconder is needed to proceed
- Once a motion is moved and seconded, then members can discuss it
- Speakers must only speak about the motion

Amendments

- Used to change the wording of a motion before it is voted on
 - Take out part of the main motion
 - Add to it
 - Change it
- “Friendly amendment” - if the mover and the seconder agree to the amendment then the amendment does not have to be voted on
- If it is not “friendly”, then the amendment is voted on before the main motion.

Rarely – amendments to amendments

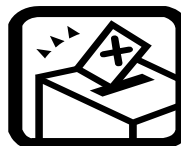
1. Vote on the amendment to the amendment

2. Vote on the amendment to the main motion

3. Vote on the main motion

Voting

- a simple majority
- some votes may require a 2/3 majority
- secret ballot



Procedural motions

- **Withdrawing a motion** – the mover can withdraw a motion before it is voted on if the seconder agrees
- **Calling the question** – a member can try to end the discussion on a motion by calling the question. Must be seconded and voted on. No discussion. Need a 2/3 majority.
- **Defer the question** – the date or time must be included in the motion. Must be seconded, discussed and voted on.
- **Refer the question** – refer the issue somewhere else (usually to the Board). The motion has to state whom the issue is referred to. Motion must be seconded, discussed and voted on.
- **Table the motion** – end the discussion to end and no vote. on the main motion. Motion must be seconded and voted on. There is no discussion.

More on motions

- The chair can rule a motion out of order if it
 - is absurd
 - is wasting time
 - is not worth the members' attention
 - does not deal with something on the agenda
 - is not legally the responsibility of the members

Set the tone

- Warm and welcoming
- Unbiased
 - You care more about the decision-making process than the decision
- Confident and competent

Involve everyone

- In order to make sure that all members have chance to express their opinions, the chair should:
 - keep track of time
 - make sure there is a speakers list that limits the number of times a member can speak on an issue
 - help members to express their opinions
 - keep a parking lot of new topics
 - take straw votes

Control the meeting

- In order to make sure that members feel respected and satisfied with the process:
 - enforce meeting guidelines and rules of order (gently)
 - treat everyone the same
 - do not take a position in the discussion
 - try to stay within the time limits for each item
 - help the members make decisions



The mood of the meeting

- Bored?
- Frustrated?
- Ready to move on?
- Ready to make a decision?
- Need a break?



Communicate well

- Explain things clearly (especially motions and voting)
- Answer questions about procedure
- Adapt to changing situations
- Suggest new ways of proceeding
- Solve problems
- Be flexible
- Be creative
- Summarize and clarify

Evaluate

- Review your own performance and the meeting as a whole
- Learn for the next time
- Strive to always be better

Effective chairing

O
Objective

- Make sure everyone's voice is heard and respected

R
Resourceful

- Help members find solutions

D
Delegator

- Ask for help – keeping a speaker's list, making motions

E
Entertainer

- Read the mood and set the tone

R
Resolver

- Reduce the tension

Learning to chair a meeting

- Learn the rules of order
- Watch a good chair carefully
- Co-chair a few meetings
- Have an experienced chair on hand the first time you chair alone

Resources

- Other chairs
- AGM workshop materials
- Speaking up at meetings

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Core Workshop Summary Sheet

Workshop Title	The art of chairing
Workshop Description	<p>Chairing is a special skill that involves more than following rules of order. It requires training and practice in building consensus, ensuring that all the opinions get heard, knowing when and how to push for a decision, and when to seek more information. Members to do their part by staying on topic, listening carefully and, treating others with respect. The President of your board doesn't have to necessarily chair all your meetings on their own; the key is to have skilled people in place to ensure you get the results you want. Whether you plan to chair meetings or be an effective meeting participant, this workshop will review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the role of the chair • some chairing techniques, and • simplified rules of order.
Target Audience (members, board)	Board members
Outline of Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the role of the Chair • Discuss how to plan and chair meetings effectively • Review key Rules of Order • Identify strategies for difficult meetings • Discuss what makes a meeting good • Discuss being an effective participant
Key Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation by the chair is key to being a good chair • Neutral chairs care more about the process than the decision • The chair should not present the different items on the agenda • Treat all participants fairly
Activities or Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules of order exercise
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking up at meetings • Guidelines for members' meetings • ORDER handout • Excellent meetings for everyone – 20 tips for inclusive meetings



Rules of order exercise

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