

Board Meeting Motion Language

Motions and Resolutions

- Motion and resolutions form an important part of a meeting.
- They enable business decisions to be reached and actions to progress. While a summary of the motion and resolution process is provided below it is recommended either Roberts Rule of Order or Joske Rules of Order referred to for further guidance
- **A motion can be**
 - Procedural - Relating to the conduct of the meeting "**That the question be now put**"
 - Substantive - 'Ordering something to be done'
- **Wording the motion**
 - All motions start with That
 - Normal indicatives "is" and "are" replaced by "be"
 - For other verbs a form not ending in s is used eg write rather than writes
 - In the case of negative expressions in the passive voice the not should follow the auxiliary verb "**That the draft letter be not sent**"
 - If an explanation to the motion is required, this is known as "Preamble"

Board meeting motion language is an essential aspect of conducting effective meetings within organizations, whether they are non-profits, corporations, or community groups. Understanding the nuances of motion language can facilitate clearer communication, enhance decision-making processes, and ensure that all members are on the same page. In this article, we will explore the components of board meeting motion language, the types of motions, and best practices for crafting and presenting motions effectively.

Understanding Board Meeting Motion Language

Board meeting motion language refers to the formal wording and structure used when proposing, discussing, and deciding on actions during a meeting. The use of specific language is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Clarity:** Clear motion language helps prevent misunderstandings and ensures that all members know exactly what is being proposed.
2. **Efficiency:** Well-structured motions streamline the decision-making process and keep meetings on track.
3. **Record Keeping:** Accurate motion language provides a reliable record for minutes, which is vital for future reference and accountability.

Components of a Motion

When crafting a motion, certain key components should be included to ensure it is clear and actionable. Here are the primary elements:

1. The Motion Itself

A motion typically begins with a clear and concise statement of what is being proposed. It should be straightforward and devoid of jargon. For example:

- "I move that we allocate \$5,000 for community outreach programs."

2. The Mover

The person who proposes the motion is known as the mover. It is essential to identify the mover, as they may need to speak to the motion later.

3. The Secunder

After a motion is made, it usually requires a second to indicate that another member supports the discussion of the motion. A simple statement suffices:

- "I second the motion."

4. Discussion

Once a motion is made and seconded, the chairperson typically opens the floor for discussion. This is crucial for clarifying the motion and addressing any concerns.

5. Voting

After discussion, the chair will call for a vote. The outcome—whether the motion passes or fails—should be clearly recorded in the meeting minutes.

Types of Motions

Understanding the different types of motions can help board members navigate discussions more effectively. Below are some common types:

1. Main Motions

These are the primary proposals that bring new business before the board. Main motions require a second and are subject to debate.

2. Subsidiary Motions

These motions modify or affect the main motion. They can include:

- Amendments: Changes to the wording of the main motion.
- Postponements: Delaying the discussion of a motion to a later time.

3. Privileged Motions

These are urgent matters that do not relate directly to the main motion but require immediate attention. Examples include:

- Point of Order: Calling attention to a rule violation.
- Adjournment: Ending the meeting.

4. Incidental Motions

These motions arise from other motions and relate to the procedure. They include:

- Appeal: Contesting a decision made by the chair.
- Suspend the Rules: Temporarily set aside the rules to facilitate a specific action.

Best Practices for Crafting and Presenting Motions

To ensure that motions are effective, board members should follow these best practices:

1. Be Specific and Clear

When drafting a motion, specificity is key. Avoid vague terms and ensure that the motion clearly states what action is being proposed. For example, instead of saying, "We should improve our marketing," say, "I move that we increase our marketing budget by 20% for the next quarter."

2. Use Formal Language

Motion language should be formal and adhere to the established procedures of the organization. Using a consistent format helps maintain professionalism and clarity.

3. Prepare in Advance

If you know you will be proposing a motion, prepare it in advance. This allows you to articulate your proposal clearly and anticipate questions or concerns from other members.

4. Encourage Discussion

Once a motion is made, encourage an open discussion. Allow members to voice their opinions, ask questions, and suggest modifications. This not only fosters a collaborative environment but also leads to better decision-making.

5. Be Respectful

During discussions, maintain a respectful tone even when disagreements arise. Acknowledging differing viewpoints and addressing them constructively can help build consensus.

6. Keep Records

Ensure that motions, discussions, and votes are meticulously recorded in the meeting minutes. This documentation is critical for accountability and future reference.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

While understanding motion language is crucial, avoiding common pitfalls can further enhance the effectiveness of board meetings:

1. Ambiguity

Avoid using vague language. Ensure that the motion is specific enough to guide action without leaving room for interpretation.

2. Overcomplicating the Motion

Keep motions straightforward. Overly complex motions can confuse members and hinder decision-making.

3. Neglecting to Follow Procedures

Always adhere to the established procedures for making motions. Skipping steps can lead to chaos and dissatisfaction among members.

4. Ignoring Input

Failing to acknowledge or consider other members' input can create resentment and reduce engagement. Encourage participation and value diverse opinions.

Conclusion

In summary, **board meeting motion language** is a fundamental component of effective governance and decision-making. By understanding the components of a motion, recognizing the different types of motions, and adhering to best practices, board members can enhance their meetings' efficiency and effectiveness. By fostering a culture of clear communication and respect during discussions, organizations can navigate the complexities of decision-making with confidence, ensuring that all voices are heard and that decisions are made in the best interest of the organization.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a board meeting motion?

A board meeting motion is a formal proposal put forward for discussion and decision during a meeting, requiring a second and a majority vote to be passed.

How do you properly phrase a motion in a board meeting?

A motion should be clear and concise, typically starting with 'I move that...' followed by the specific action being proposed.

What is the difference between a main motion and a subsidiary motion?

A main motion introduces a new item of business, while a subsidiary motion provides a means to modify or dispose of the main motion.

Why is seconding a motion important?

Seconding a motion indicates that at least one other member supports the discussion of the proposal, ensuring that the motion is worthy of the board's time.

What are the common types of motions used in board meetings?

Common types of motions include main motions, amendments, motions to table, and motions to adjourn.

Can a motion be amended during a board meeting?

Yes, a motion can be amended by proposing changes before the board votes on the original motion.

What happens if a motion fails?

If a motion fails, the board may choose to discuss alternatives or take no action on the matter.

How can a member introduce a motion in a virtual board meeting?

A member can introduce a motion in a virtual meeting by stating it clearly in the chat or verbally, ensuring to follow the meeting's rules and protocols.

What role does the chairperson play in handling motions?

The chairperson facilitates the discussion of motions, ensures proper procedure is followed, and manages the voting process.

What are the best practices for writing motion language?

Best practices include being specific, using clear and direct language, avoiding jargon, and stating the intended outcome of the motion.

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