WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH COMMITTEES

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Lou Tutt

What is the Purpose of Committee Meetings?

- Serve as operating system of an association
- Represent member opinion in decision making
- Group problem solving and forum for different points of view
- Reviewing and reporting
- Training for future leadership
What are the Types of Committees?

- Standing Committees – continuous function and operates indefinitely
- Special Committees – “ad hoc” or task force with a specific purpose in mind and a time limit
- Administrative
- Project
- Problem Solving Liaison

What is the Best Committee Composition?

- Get the Right People on the Bus - a core of five to eight members who are selected with the desire to complete the task at hand
  - Smaller committees for prompt action
  - Larger committees for wide member participation and for more viewpoints
  - Usually no more that 12-15 (allows breaking into smaller groups)
  - Communicate the obligations of the committee to potential members
  - Should set term limits for committee membership with staggered appointments
- Staff from AER can provide needed support
- AER Liaison can provide helpful information
How do Committees fit into the Association?

- Accountability to the Board of AER
  - Purpose should be linked to the strategic plan of the association and work toward measurable outcomes
  - Standing committees serve the major functions
    - Program
    - Finance
    - Membership
    - Etc.

How Does One Prepare for the Committee Meeting?

- Orientation for new committee members
- Provide minutes of past meeting(s)
- Set meeting dates well in advance
- Committee members should receive an agenda in advance
- Provide all needed materials ahead of time
What Should Go Into the Agenda?

- Agenda
  - Establish times for each topic
  - Identify who will present on each topic
  - Identify items requiring a decision and those for information or discussion
  - Relevant papers or information should accompany each agenda item

How should the Agenda be Ordered?

- Call to order or begin the meeting
- Roll Call
- Approval of minutes
- Reports from members
- Old business
- New Business
- Announcements
- Adjournment
What Additional Planning is Needed as Meetings Proceed?

- Provide written committee description that includes the charge, composition, selection procedure, and duties
- Establish agreed upon schedule for regular meetings
- Involve members in planning an annual committee plan of work
- Prioritize the agenda
- Establish strategic focus for discussions
- Agree on what items will be put on the agenda of the upcoming meeting
How does One Start the Meeting?

- Start on time
- Conduct roll call roll and introduce everyone by name and role
- Overview of goals by the chair at beginning of meeting
- Review background materials

What is the Role of the Chair?

- Serve as gate keeper for participation
- Draw out silent members
- Treat everyone fairly
- Remain neutral and don’t take sides
What are the Characteristics of a Good Committee Chair?

- Committee Chair has to develop content knowledge and experience; leadership skills, and interaction skills (willingness to resolve conflict, commitment to write reports)
  - Communicates effectively
  - Active participation and interest
  - Willingness to listen
  - Ability to inspire and gain respect
  - Can control a group without dominating
  - Basic knowledge of parliamentary procedure
  - Operates as a self-starter
  - Understands group process
  - Puts organizations goals ahead of her own
  - Can commit the time

What Strategies should be Employed?

- Assign tasks and expected completion dates
- Consider subcommittees for specific tasks
- Pay attention to group dynamics and process issues
- Keep meeting moving and on task “We’ve already spent our allotted time on this issue. Would people like to continue on this topic for another five minutes, or should we go on to the next topic?” – take the group’s pulse on the matter.
- Have a member keep a running list of items that will need attention at a later meeting
- Wrap-up each agenda item by summarizing the decisions
- Summarize major points at conclusion of the meeting
What Interaction Approaches work Best?

- Use open ended questions to encourage discussion
- Avoid being defensive
- Talk to group as a whole and not one person
- Solicit opinions and experiences
- Make sure no person dominates – special assignment
- End on time

How does One Prevent Poor Committee Meetings?

- Avoid meetings that take forever and have no outcomes
- Don’t waste meeting time
- Don’t meet for the sake of meeting
- Don’t make decisions without adequate information
- Avoid uneven participation
How does One Handle Passive Members?

- Member who has poor attendance
  - Call the person to determine why he or she has not attended
  - Explain need to have fully functioning committee
- Member doesn’t contribute
  - Discuss role of committee members
  - Reaffirm confidence in member
  - Call upon member at next meeting

How does One Handle Aggressive or Disruptive Members?

- When a member acts unilaterally
  - Clarify limits of authority for delegated tasks, which decisions need to be authorized by the committee
- Member who is volatile, or monopolizes
  - Agree on a set of rules that govern how meetings and discussions are run
  - State the importance of all members being able to contribute
- Member with outside agenda
  - Discuss conflict of interest
How Does One Facilitate Committee Decision Making?

- Follow steps decision making steps:
  - Provide all of the necessary information
  - Make sure members understand the goal and that it is consistent with the direction of the organization
  - Discuss the various choices that are available and what are the constraints
  - Determine the steps necessary to achieve the goal and the resources needed
  - If necessary identify issues that have not come up and ask the awkward questions
  - Decision can be made by consensus or by taking a vote but decisions must be clearly identified and recorded

How Does a Committee Reach a Conclusion?

- A decision can be made by consensus
  - Everyone has a chance to speak to an issue
  - Chair proposes a course of action
  - Chair asks if there is consensus
- A more formal approach uses Roberts Rules of Order
  - Motions are made and discussed
  - A formal vote is taken
- Often a combination is best
What are the Steps in Roberts Rules of Order?

Steps:
1. Member makes a motion
2. Another seconds it
3. The chair states the motion
4. Members debate the motion
5. The chair puts the question
6. The chair announces the results

How does a Chair Use Roberts Rules?

PRESIDING WITH ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER

1. Is there any new business
2. After a motion is made, is there a second
3. It is moved and seconded that .......... 
4. Would the maker like to speak to the motion or is there any discussion
5. Is there any further discussion 
6. The question is ............... or are you ready for the question?
7. Those in favor of the motion say aye or As many as are in favor of the motion say aye
8. Those opposed say no or As many as are opposed say no
9. The ayes have it or the nays have it and the motion carries or has failed
10. This means that (paraphrase the motion or amendment) .............
11. Is there any further new business
12. Repeat above
Committee Effectiveness: Motions

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS – Always in Order – usually not debatable or amendable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motion</th>
<th>Interrupt</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Debatable</th>
<th>Amendable</th>
<th>Vote</th>
<th>Reconsider</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appeal</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes if quest</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No 2/3rd</td>
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RESTORATIVE – Always in Order

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<th>Reconsider</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes if quest</td>
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PRIVILEGED MOTIONS – none are debatable, CPR A2

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SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS – PAR PL2

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<th>Debatable</th>
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<td>Limit or extend debate</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Refer or commit to committee</td>
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<td>Yes Yes</td>
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<td>Yes Yes</td>
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Example of Use

**Scenario:**

- The agenda includes an action item to add a new division. Supplementary material is included with the agenda that shows statistics relating to a new group. A membership committee member brings up the concept of establishing a new division to broaden the reach of AER to include Occupational Therapists. The committee member discusses this for a while and finds differences of opinion among the members.

- How should the chair proceed using Roberts Rules of Order?
How does One Determine Committee Effectiveness?

- Feedback Mechanism (email survey) – not necessarily after each meeting
  - Were the issues discussed substantive
  - Were materials helpful
  - Was the discussion future oriented
  - How can the next meeting be more productive
  - What additional items should be discussed in the future
  - What was the most valuable contribution made by the committee today
  - What could be improved upon

How Should Minutes be Recorded?

- Not lengthy and onerous
- Record only significant discussion and decisions
- List follow up actions and agreed upon deadlines
- Record formal motions and their results
- Don’t spend time attributing comments to individuals
What should be Done After the Meeting?

- Send out the minutes with decisions in **boldface**
- Make follow up calls when needed
- Communicate with members regularly
- Answer all correspondence quickly

How Can a Committee Best Utilize AER Liaisons?

- Know Your AER Staff Liaison
- Collaborate With Your AER Staff Liaison
- Know Your Board Member Liaison
- Contact Your AER Board Member Liaison
- Invite Your AER Board Member Liaison To The Actual Committee Meeting
How Can a Committee Communicate with the Board?

- Submit Final Committee Report/Motion To Your AER Staff Liaison At Least Two Weeks Prior To The AER Board of Directors Meeting.

Questions