

# OFFICER'S HANDBOOK

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## GOOD MEETINGS ARE FUN!



### What Are Your Meetings Like?

Do you have fun? Do the other 4-H members have fun, too? Do they look forward to the meetings? Do they get a chance to take part?

What do you do at your meetings? Are you getting important things done? Do you have demonstrations, presentations, or discussions on members' projects? Do you ever talk about other things, such as citizenship or health? Do you plan a picnic or a tour, or talk about the club's fair exhibit or achievement day program? Do you always learn something new?



### What Are Meetings For?

4-H meetings give your club members a chance to think and act together, to plan and do things together. Meetings let members learn from each other.

You couldn't very well learn to lead a discussion, or work out the ideas for a picnic or party by yourself. You need club members thinking and acting together to get things done. That's what a club meeting is all about: to learn, to make plans, and to have fun.

### How Can You Have Better Meetings?

Make sure officers, committee chairs, and members know their jobs. Learn what makes a good meeting. Everyone must pull together, doing his or her share. Using parliamentary procedure helps govern the club's business.

Plan interesting meetings that start and end on time: opening, business, educational program, recreation.

Plan the program for several months ahead.

Involve each club member in a meeting program sometime during the year.

# JOBS FOR EVERYONE

## Officers

Good officers are enthusiastic, tactful, and friendly. They work to get each member of the club involved in plans and to give everyone a fair chance to participate. They accept and respect each member and encourage everyone to contribute to the club.

Club officers are proud of their jobs and always do their best. They get things done right and on time.

*President.* The president helps everyone in the club work together and does everything possible to make each member feel at home and take part in the discussion.

The president doesn't just put in his or her own ideas, but acts more like a referee. He or she watches, listens, and tosses questions addressed to the president back to the group. The president asks questions that make the group think.

When the president feels that the group agrees fairly well on a plan, he or she asks, "Are we agreed that we should do this?" Any member may say, "I think we ought to talk about it more," or "I like this part, but not that." The president lets the group talk some more and then asks again, "Are we all agreed on this new plan?"

This approach helps the group come up with a plan on which everyone, or nearly everyone, agrees. Members will not feel they have been overruled.

In doing his or her job, the president:

- presides at meetings;
- sees that the room is ready and that the meeting starts on time;
- arranges to have the vice president take over if he or she can't be there;
- appoints committees with the help of the leader;
- works with members and the leader to plan the program for the year;
- meets with the leader and the other officers to plan the order of business for each meeting;
- casts the deciding vote if there is a tie;
- helps other officers with their jobs.

*Vice President.* The vice president is the president's assistant. He or she:

- presides at meetings when the president is absent;
- handles other jobs, such as chair of the program committee;
- records the club's plans for the year in the *4-H Club/Group Program Planning Book (C0227)*.

*Secretary.* The secretary keeps a record of what the club does and handles its correspondence.

As part of the job, he or she:

- keeps minutes of all meetings;
- keeps a complete list of all members and calls the roll;
- reads letters to the club at meetings;

- reminds members of special meetings—by phone, by postcard, or in person. He or she makes sure each member knows when and where the next meeting will be;
- writes the club's letters, such as thank-you letters and requests for information;
- fills out, with the help of members, "Our Club's Application for a Seal" in the *4-H Secretary's Book* (C0240);
- turns the completed *4-H Secretary's Book* over to the club leader.

**Treasurer.** The treasurer is responsible for handling the club's money. He or she:

- receives all money;
- keeps a record of the amount received in the *4-H Treasurer's Book* (C0231);
- puts the money in a special club bank account or keeps it in another safe place;
- pays out money only when approved by the club;
- records the amount paid in the *4-H Treasurer's Book*;
- reports at club meetings on money received, money paid out, and the amount of money on hand;
- gives the new treasurer complete and accurate records.



**Reporter.** The reporter tells the public about what your club does. Your club's reputation for going places and getting things done depends mainly on the reporter. He or she:

- talks with your leader about how to handle club stories;
- writes a story about club meetings if something important happens;
- sends advance information to local papers or radio stations when a special event is planned, such as a demonstration day or a community service project;
- writes a follow-up story after the special event is over.

**Recreation Leader.** The recreation leader plans and leads a fun activity at meetings. He or she:

- plans an activity or game that involves all group members at each meeting;
- may serve as chair of a recreation or social committee to plan larger social events throughout the year.

## Other Officers

Depending on the size of your club, other officers can be elected to carry out specific responsibilities. These might include:

**Historian.** The historian keeps a scrapbook as a record of the club's activities. This may involve taking photos as well as organizing news clippings, mementos of events and programs, etc.

**Parliamentarian.** The parliamentarian's responsibility is to be knowledgeable about parliamentary procedure, clarify rules, and help the president conduct an orderly business meeting.

## Committees

Your club should have several committees. The exact number will depend on how big the club is and what you want to do.

*Program.* This committee goes to work after the club has made its program plans for the year. Committee members may schedule speakers or videos on subjects the club wants to know about; they may ask a 4-H'er who has been to a special conference to talk to the club about it; or club members may give demonstrations or presentations on projects they are taking. Whatever they do, program committee members should check with the leader before the meeting to be sure the program is set.

*Membership.* Every active club is a growing one. The membership committee makes sure other boys and girls know how to join your club. They try to reach everybody in the area. They get other members to help. The club could have as its goal: "Each one reach one."

*Recreation.* The recreation committee, led by the recreation leader, plans some fun for each meeting. It can also suggest and plan special activities—swimming parties, overnight camps, trail rides, holiday events, etc.

*Community Service.* This committee finds out what your club can do to make the community better. To get ideas, committee members talk with leaders, parents, neighbors, and local public service organizations. Then they present their ideas to the club. Once the club decides on a project, the committee plans for work days, reports on how much has been done, and coordinates the club's efforts.

*Health.* Some clubs plan a special health activity during the year. This might be checking sight and hearing, or balance and coordination, learning how to lose weight safely, reducing air or water pollution, learning about drugs or smoking, or a tour of the county health department. Committee members get ideas, investigate to see if help is available, and then make suggestions for the club to consider. After the club decides, they work out the program in detail.

*Safety.* If your club wants a safety program, you may want to set up a special committee to handle it. The committee can check out various ideas—highway safety, home fire drills, safety near irrigation canals, environmental concerns, safety in consumer products, recycling practices, etc. The committee finds out what resources are available, or may get someone from the community to talk on the subject. Then it presents their ideas to the club. After the club decides on a subject, the committee makes the arrangements.

*Special Events.* The president can also appoint committees for special events, such as parent's night, achievement day, demonstration day, fund-raising events, or social functions.

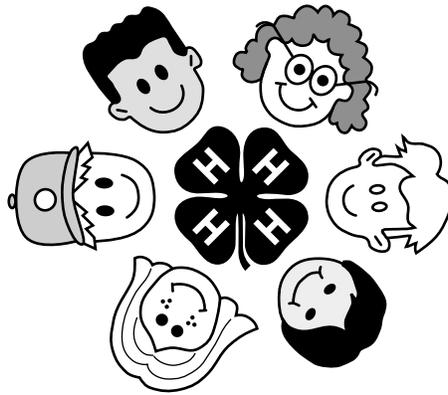
## Members

Encourage members to be active in the club. That means they speak up in meetings and make their ideas known. And they volunteer for jobs without having to be coaxed.

Every member should be on a committee or hold another important job. Try to allow members to serve on committees that interest them the most. Members will be happiest and most enthusiastic if they can do something that challenges them to use and develop their individual abilities and interests.

To involve members in meetings, make the meeting friendly and positive. Say things like “I like Sue’s idea, but maybe it would work even better if we did . . .” instead of something like “That won’t work,” or “That’s the wrong way.”

Encourage members to attend all the club meetings and activities if they possibly can. Help them feel that their attendance is really important to the success of the club.



# ALL ABOUT MEETINGS

## Order of a Meeting

Parliamentary procedure is an orderly way of conducting a business meeting. Club officers should become familiar with the basics of parliamentary procedure. A good source of information is *Robert's Rules of Order* or EM4875, *Parliamentary Procedure Made Easier*.

A suggested order of a club meeting might be:

- meeting called to order,
- pledge of allegiance, 4-H pledge, song, or other opening,
- roll call,
- reading of the minutes of the last meeting,
- reports of officers,
- reports of committees,
- unfinished business left over from the last meeting,
- new business,
- adjournment of business meeting,
- program (including demonstrations, project work, etc.),
- recreation,
- refreshments (optional).



## If There's No Business

When there is no business to be discussed, the president can call the meeting to order and ask the secretary to read the roll. Then the business meeting can be adjourned and the rest of the time spent on the educational part of the program or other activities.

The president and the club leader can decide ahead of time if a regular business meeting is necessary. Don't have a long meeting when a short one will do.

## Making and Voting on Motions

A member who wants the club to vote on something makes a motion.

The member raises his or her hand, or stands, and waits to be recognized. When the president calls on the member he or she says, "I move that . . ."

Another member says "I second the motion." This means this member thinks the club should consider it. (If the motion is not seconded, it is dropped.)

The president then asks for discussion. When discussion is over, the president asks, "Are you ready for the question?" If no one wants more discussion, the club is ready to vote.

The president states the motion so everyone can hear it. The members vote when the president says "All in favor say 'Aye,' all opposed say 'No.'"

The motion is passed if more members vote "Aye" than "No." If the president is in doubt about the vote, he or she should ask for a show of hands or a standing vote.

The president then says, "The motion is carried," or, "The motion is lost," according to the vote.

## Nominations and Elections

There are two ways to nominate officers.

Members may suggest, or nominate, someone for an office during the election meeting. The member says, "I nominate Penny Pretty for treasurer." A nomination does not need a second, although a second can be made to show support.

The other way is for the president to appoint a nominating committee. The committee chooses candidates for each office and asks them to run. It presents its nominations as a report at the meeting. Other nominations can then be made from the floor.

When there are no more nominations, a member says, "I move to close the nominations." If the motion is carried, the members then vote on the candidates.

Voting for officers is usually by ballot. It takes a majority—one vote over half—to be elected. If you have 17 members, a majority is 9.

Nominations and elections are important club business. Tell the members about the election ahead of time. Then they can be thinking about the kinds of officers they want to have. Make sure everyone knows what the duties of each office are.

## Ways to Vote

*Voice vote.* The president says "All in favor of the motion say 'Aye.'"

*Standing vote.* The members stand so their votes can be counted.

*Show of hands.* The members raise their hands so the president can count their votes.

*Ballot.* The president has helpers hand out blank slips of paper so the members can write down their votes. The ballots are then counted by a few individuals appointed by the president. This group tallies the results and reports back to the club members.

*Roll call.* Each member votes as his or her name is called.

*Honor system.* Members close their eyes and vote by raising their hands.

## Minutes of a Meeting

The minutes of a meeting should be a record of what is done, not what is said. Minutes should contain:

- date and place of meeting,
- number of members and visitors present,
- approval of previous minutes,
- all reports and what was done about them,
- all motions, with the name of the person who made them, and whether the motion was carried or lost,
- the time the meeting adjourned.

## Discussion Groups

Rules for meetings are fine, especially for electing officers. But many clubs like to work and plan together without using these rules. Voting—especially if the vote is close—can make some members feel that they didn't have any part in the decision.

Discussion groups let all the members feel that they helped shape the decision. The group can talk about something until everyone—or nearly everyone—agrees on what to do.

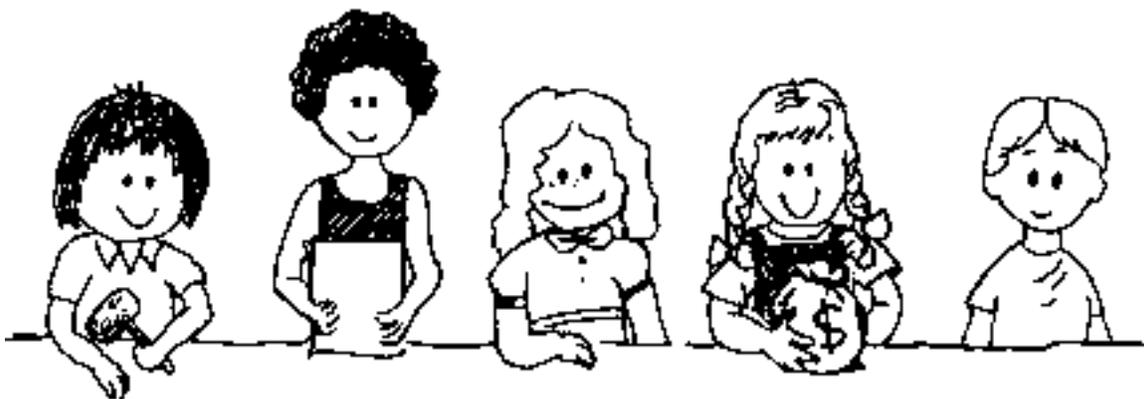
*Circle response* is one way to start a discussion. The discussion leader or president says, "I'll call on each one in turn for a suggestion on our plan. If you don't have a quick idea, you can say 'pass.' Will the secretary please write down all the ideas?"

*Brainstorming.* If your club has 10 or more members, use small groups to decide on a plan. After all the ideas are up on the board, divide into groups of five or six members each. Divide the ideas on the board into sections, one for each group. After brainstorming for four or five minutes, each group reports back on its best idea. Group discussion of the two, three, or four best ideas will narrow them down.

*Decision.* The president asks, "Does the group agree that this is what we should do?" If the members say yes, the next step is to ask for volunteers to carry out each part of the plan. Since everyone has helped form the plan, it's easier to get them to do their part.

## For Better Meetings

Ask your leader or county extension agent for a community officer training workshop. You'll enjoy knowing officers from other clubs and you'll learn even more about planning and holding meetings.



## SAMPLE 4-H CLUB MEETING

PRESIDENT: Will the meeting please come to order? Armand will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance and Maria will lead us in the 4-H pledge.

ARMAND: Let's all stand and say the pledge.

MEMBERS: I pledge allegiance . . .

MARIA: Let's all say the 4-H pledge.

MEMBERS: I pledge my head . . .

PRESIDENT: The secretary will call the roll.

SECRETARY: Today we will answer the roll by telling what we did on our project last week. (There are many different ways of answering the roll; see the *4-H Secretary's Book*.)

MEMBER: I dyed different kinds of cloth and put the samples in my record book.

MEMBER: I taught my dog to heel.

MEMBER: I set out some tomato plants in my garden.

PRESIDENT: Will the secretary read the minutes of the last meeting?

SECRETARY: The meeting was called to order by . . .

PRESIDENT: Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes? (Wait.) If not, they stand approved as read.

PRESIDENT: We will now have reports from the officers and committee chairs.

PRESIDENT—reports on coming 4-H events, etc.

VICE PRESIDENT—reports on his or her activities.

SECRETARY—reads letters.

TREASURER—reports on money received, money paid out, and the amount of money on hand.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS—report on activities of committees since the last meeting.

After each report, the president asks if there are any questions. If there are no questions, the president says, "The report is accepted as presented." If there are questions and if the report requires action, the president asks for a motion, a request that something be done. Each motion must be seconded, discussed, and voted on before another motion can be made.

PRESIDENT: Is there any unfinished business? (Business left from the last meeting can be discussed at this time.)

PRESIDENT: Is there any new business? (Club members discuss new business—future plans for club activities, things to be done before the next meeting, etc.)

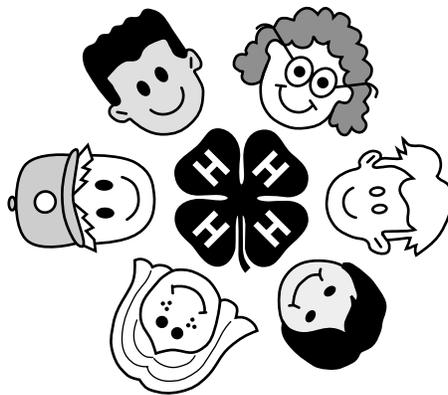
PRESIDENT: Are there any announcements? (Club members or leaders make announcements. )

PRESIDENT: If there is no further business, is there a motion for the meeting to be adjourned?

MEMBER: I move that the business meeting be adjourned.

MEMBER: I second the motion.

PRESIDENT: All those in favor of the motion say "Aye." Those opposed say "No." The motion is passed (if more members vote "Aye" than "No"). The business meeting is adjourned.



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