

Garden Club President's

Guide for

Effective Meetings



This guide was developed by GCII to support Garden Club presidents, whether s/he is a veteran officer of an established club or a new president of a new club and everything in between.



This resource is simply a tool to help you during your term as club president. Consult your club's bylaws and procedures for dates that may be specific to your own club. Different clubs have different policies and practices...some are dark during the summer months, while other clubs meet during the summer and are dark during the winter (due to unfavorable weather conditions). Some club presidents serve for two years, while others serve for one year. And some clubs have their own procedures and timing for certain items or events.

GCII
January 2018

MEETINGS

Club Meetings

Conducting an efficient and well-managed meeting will promote the interest and involvement of your members.

- Arrive early for club meetings.
- Have a written agenda (**Refer to Parliamentary Procedure, Order of Business, and Sample Agenda**).
- Plan the agenda ahead of time from the minutes of the previous meeting (**the recording secretary should give a copy of the minutes to you at least one week prior to your upcoming meeting**). Use these minutes to assist in the planning of the next meeting, starting with “Unfinished Business.” Provide your Executive Board with a copy of the proposed agenda at least one week prior to the meeting so they may add items if need be.
- The agenda may include timing notes on the side of the agenda. Keep track of the time and do not let the meeting wander or get off track. You will not lose your audience if the meeting is well-paced and on time.
- Make copies of the agenda and place the copies on the table where members sign-in, along with copies of the minutes from the previous meeting, **unless already distributed by mail or email**.
- It is a good idea to have an inspiration at the beginning of each meeting. The inspiration will set the tone for your meeting. Assign members at the beginning of each club year to read the inspiration.
- When appropriate, appoint a door hostess to greet new members or visitors. You may want to assign a longtime member to make the new member feel welcome and introduce the new member to others in the club.
- Every chairman need not report at each meeting. Have chairmen report only if they need to report.
- Engage and involve your officers, chairmen, and members. Give them the “ownership” of decision and membership.
- Use the services of the parliamentarian. S/he is there to give you advice and inform you of the proper way to handle each situation. Have **Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised** with you at all meetings and become familiar with it. In Robert’s Rules you will find proper procedure, how to bring order to the meeting and ways help run the meeting smoothly.

- Have the program speaker introduced on time. It is impolite to have him/her waiting while business is being finished or cut into the time the speaker has been allotted. It is better to interrupt the meeting to have the program (and after the program, finish the meeting). Good planning and timing will prevent these problems.
- When the meeting is finished, thank members and guests and say goodbye as they leave. This is especially important if you have new members or visitors who have come for the first time. The visitors may be thinking about joining!
- Invite your district director to at least one meeting a year. At that time, s/he should be honored by being seated at the head table and also by being greeted at the door. Someone should be designated to welcome him/her upon arrival. This should also be done with any VIP or speaker for the club program. You may need to designate a parking space for this person if parking might be a problem.

District and State Board Meetings

As president, you are on the board of directors of your state and district, and you should plan to attend every meeting or send someone from your club in your place. These meetings are important because they bring vital information from district, GCII, the region, and national to the clubs. The district director is your liaison with GCII happenings and can keep you informed. S/he can also step in to help with club problems and make suggestions for solving them.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE & PROTOCOL

Parliamentary Law is common sense used in a gracious manner. Rules of Parliamentary Law are designed to expedite business and protect the minority while enabling the assembled group to freely debate the question before it. Parliamentary Law should be the servant, but not the master. It should be used as a guide, not a whip. Use *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* to guide this process.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Use Order of Business to structure your agenda:

- ~ Call to Order
- ~ Invocation or Inspiration (if desired)
- ~ Pledge of Allegiance (if flag is present)
- ~ Conservation Pledge (if desired)
- ~ President's Welcome, followed by Introductions
- ~ Roll Call (if desired)
- ~ Reading and approval of the Minutes (if previously circulated, may be approved as circulated or distributed)
- ~ Treasurer's Report (place on file and two copies available at meeting)
- ~ Bills for Approval (to save time, may be presented by Treasurer)
- ~ Executive Committee and other Officer Reports
- ~ Special Committee Reports
- ~ Standing Committee Reports
- ~ Unfinished Business
- ~ New Business
- ~ Program (Presiding Officer (the president) introduces Program Chairman or Coordinator who introduces the speaker or presents the program)
- ~ Announcements
- ~ Adjournment

NOTE:

If your program is during the meeting, recess the meeting, have your program, and then resume the meeting after the program.

GUIDELINES & DEFINITIONS

Order of Business

- **Call to Order:** The Chairman (President) opens the meeting by saying, “The meeting will come to order.”
- **Invocation or Inspiration:** Invocations are presented prior to the Pledge, inspiration after the Pledge. Invocations are not applauded but inspirations may be. It makes a smooth beginning for the president to ask the members to “rise for the invocation, given by, and to please remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance, led by”
- **Pledge of Allegiance:** When available the flag should be placed to the president’s right when you face members. And, while giving the Pledge of Allegiance, you turn right, face the flag and place your right hand over your heart.
- **President’s Welcome:** This is an opportunity for the presiding officer, usually the president, to set a positive tone for the meeting. Be sure to welcome all, especially new members, invited guests, and program presenters.
- **Roll Call:** The Roll Call is generally the responsibility of the secretary. It can be an opportunity to engage members in a simple but fun activity. For example, “When your name is called please respond by saying the name of your favorite fragrant flower.” Keep it brief.
- **Reading and Approval of Minutes:** Ideally, the minutes are emailed to members in advance to save time by having them read aloud at the meeting. The president, as chairman of the meeting, says the following: Secretary’s Report: “The Secretary will read the Minutes.” The presiding officer guides the members in the process of making corrections or additions to the minutes, concluding with the approval. “Are there any corrections to the Minutes?” If there are no corrections (or “no further corrections”), “The minutes are approved” (or “approved as read,” or “approved as corrected”).
- **Treasurer’s Report and Bills for Approval:** “May we have the Treasurer’s Report?” After the Treasurer’s Report, “The Treasurer’s Report will be “filed” for audit.
- **Executive Committee Members’ Reports, Chairmen’s Reports, etc.:** “The next business in order will be the report” of the Executive Committee Members (officers), committees, and so on through your agenda. Remember, not every officer or Chairmen needs to report at every meeting.
- **Special and Standing Committee Reports:** The agenda should indicate if special or standing committees will report at a meeting. Usually, the president requests the committee chair to report at specified times during the year. Committee chairs should notify the president in advance if they wish to report.
- **Unfinished Business:** “The next order of business will be Unfinished Business. [Avoid using term “old business.”] This should not be announced unless the minutes show that there is pending business from the previous meeting. If a question was

pending when the previous meeting adjourned, the chairman of the meeting (the president) might begin by saying “Under unfinished business, the first item of business is the... which was pending when the last meeting adjourned.”

- **New Business:** “The next order of business will be New Business.”
- **Program:** If your program is during the meeting, recess the meeting, have your program, and then resume the meeting after the program.
- **Announcements:** It’s a good idea to include brief information on the agenda but this is the time to elaborate. Remember to announce the date, location, and time of your next meeting.
- **Adjournment:** Before adjourning, the president may make **brief** acknowledgements such as, “Thank you Jane Doe for joining us today. We hope you will decide to become a member of our club.” Follow with the formal adjournment.

Motions

- Business is brought before the club by the motion of a member. A motion is a formal proposal by a member in a meeting, that the group take certain action.
- How a motion is brought before the assembled group:
 - ~ A member makes the motion, “I move that...”
 - ~ The president, as the chairman of the meeting, states, “Is there a second?”
 - ~ Another member seconds the motion: “I second the motion.”
 - If there is no second, the president states, “The motion is not seconded. The next item of business is . . .” [No second is needed if this is a recommendation from a committee.]
 - If seconded, the president states the exact motion and indicates it is open for debate/discussion or asks the secretary to state the motion. “It has been moved and seconded that ... Is there debate?” The president then turns to the maker of the motion to see if he/she wishes to be assigned the floor.
 - * After debate, the president puts the question: “Are you ready for the question? The question is... All those in favor, please say ‘Aye.’ Opposed, ‘No.’ The ‘Ayes’ have it and the motion is carried.” [Or “The noes have it and the motion is lost.”] The president may ask the secretary to read the motion if necessary.
 - For votes that require a major change in procedures, policy, or financial, ask voters for a show of hands or to stand
- It is not difficult to learn how to state and put questions, to learn the order of precedence of the various motions, which motions are debatable, those that cannot be amended and those that require a 2/3 standing vote. It will give you poise and confidence to know that you are saying the correct thing and using the correct jargon... and members expect that from you, as president.

TIPS for EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

1. A president who remains cool, courteous and impartial, while some others are quite expressive, can almost always keep a meeting under control.
2. The president sets a positive tone for meetings and avoids negative discussions. S/he fosters a culture where members can comment on anything as long as comments are relevant and constructive.
3. As presiding officer, it is your duty to keep order, to expedite the business of the assembled group and to see that rules are enforced. To perform these duties, be familiar with the fundamental rules of parliamentary law, the bylaws and procedures of your club. Keep a copy of *Robert's Rules, Newly Revised* with you and refer to it when necessary.
3. Be at the place of the meeting well before the designated time. A good presiding officer is punctual! Start your meetings on time, never waiting longer than ten minutes.
4. Carefully prepare your agenda referring to the bylaws and procedures as needed as well as the minutes of the previous meeting.
5. Avoid the use of "I" during meetings. Refer to yourself as "The President" or "Your President."
6. When processing a motion, do not avoid debate by hurriedly stating or putting the question.
7. Remember the club may recess for lunch, recess for dinner, or recess for a speaker (program). After the recess, resume your meeting until all business has been taken care of and then the club "adjourns."
8. Do not rush a business meeting or it may appear that action is being railroaded.
9. As president, you should set an example of courtesy. To control others, it is necessary to control yourself.
10. The president organizes, delegates and supervises but does not interfere and is always impartial.
11. Discourage talking and inattention when reports are being given. It is important for you and officers to be attentive to reporting members and when a member has the floor.
12. Deal with talkers during a meeting by being quiet until everyone else is quiet. Never embarrass anyone in public and always let someone save face.
13. Listen to dissenters and don't dismiss them too fast – they may have a valuable point to be learned. You disarm a dissenter by treating them with respect.

14. Make notes on your agenda. It is better than blanking out and keeps you from bird walking.
15. Do not hesitate to ask someone else an opinion.
16. Do not let the meeting drag on. Otherwise, it may appear that you are unsure of yourself or of a situation.
17. For your own protection, put everything in writing and get everything in writing. Those telephone calls late at night should be backed up with a letter for your files. Keep copies of everything.
18. Keep a notebook beside your telephone to jot down notes of conversations.
19. When thanking a committee chairman, thank him/her for the REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, not his/her report.
20. Answer all mail and email promptly and impress this necessity upon your officers and chairmen.
21. In signing letters, type "Mary Jones, President" and then sign your name above the typing.
22. If the assembly becomes noisy, pause and ask them, "Will the members please come to order?" Always be in control.
23. It requires tact to keep harmony and firmness to see that rules are followed. You must be impartial and fair, putting the welfare and wishes of your club above your personal desires.
24. If you don't have email, ask a reliable member to use their email for important messages from your district and GCII.
25. Remember to invite (in writing) GCII president and your district director to a club meeting, at least once during his/her terms.
26. Send copies of your club newsletters and yearbook to your district director and to the GCII President, Vice Presidents and Gem State Newsletter Editor, if possible.
27. The president is responsible for communication to members. This includes distributing WACONIAH, Gem Newsletter, and any other correspondence.
28. It is important to attend all district and state meetings and events. If you are unable to attend, send a club representative.
29. Make sure the club's GCII dues are paid on a timely basis and before they become delinquent.
30. Consider honoring long time members with 5-10-15-20 or more years of service and having a welcome ceremony for new members that could include giving them a state pin.

31. Wondering **what to say during your meeting** can be a scary hurdle, especially for new presidents. Please refer to the **sample narrative** on Pages 11-12 of this Guide. It has suggestions for what to say as you move your meeting along.

Program Ideas

- ~ Member Show and Tell (Share garden tips, useful equipment or pictures of your garden)
- ~ Assign points during roll call for: being present, having name badge and yearbook, etc. Reward high point earners at the end of the club year.
- ~ Test Your Horticulture Knowledge
- ~ Open Forum
- ~ Garden Club Exchange of Ideas – meet together with another club
- ~ Garden Club Visitation Day - Bring a Friend
- ~ Winter Reading for Gardeners
- ~ The History of your Garden Club and your local Idaho city or town
- ~ All about GCII and what your membership means
- ~ Do it Ourselves Meeting - e.g. Members assigned a Bird, Flower, Tree, Environmental Issue, etc. to report on
- ~ Invited speakers – expert on topics of interest

Monthly Homework - Bring your answer each month for Roll Call

Examples:

- ~ What is your most successful shade garden plant?
- ~ Describe your worst insect problem this summer and tell us if you found a solution.
- ~ What is your favorite tree?
- ~ How do you conserve water in your garden?
- ~ What is the first thing you see blooming in the spring?
- ~ What is your favorite blooming shrub?

Annual Meeting - Recap past year

- ~ End of Year Reports
- ~ Committee Reviews
- ~ Review/Update Year Book

SAMPLE AGENDA:

The Name of Your Club

Meeting Date

Meeting Location

Agenda

- Call to Order
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Inspiration presented by Mary Smith
- President's Welcome and Introductions
- Roll Call
- Reading and approval of the Minutes
- Treasurer's Report
 - ~ Bills for Approval
- Reports
 - ~Executive Committee and other Officer Reports
 - ~ Special Committee Reports
 - ~ Standing Committee Reports
- Unfinished Business
 - ~ Holiday Luncheon
- New Business
 - ~ GCII Scholarship
- Program: Jane Doe, Program Coordinator
"Native Plants to Attract Pollinators" by John Jones
- Announcements
- Adjournment

SAMPLE NARRATIVE BY PRESIDING OFFICER

The Name of Your Club Meeting Date Meeting Location

Call to Order

The _____ Meeting of the Garden Clubs of Idaho, Inc. will please come to order

Invocation or Inspiration

The Invocation (or) Inspiration will be lead by _____

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag (and the Conservation Pledge)

_____ will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance

Welcome and Introduction

On behalf name of your club, and the Executive Board, I would like to welcome each of you to our meeting. We appreciate your interest and willingness to come join us for today's meeting. We hope that it will be an enjoyable and educational experience for you.

I will introduce those at the head table.

1st VP _____

2nd VP _____

Secretary _____

Treasurer _____

Parliamentarian _____

Past President _____

(Identify the location of the bathroom and if the participants are free to get refreshments during the meeting or to stand and stretch their legs.)

Roll Call of Members

(This is done by the secretary)

Reading of the minutes

Are there any Corrections to the Minutes?

If there are none the Minutes are approved as read.

Treasurer's Report

The treasurer's report will be made.

Are there any corrections to the report?

The report will be filed for review.

Certification of Quorum if vote is anticipated and done before vote is taken

Indicate what defines a quorum based upon you bylaws

Ask the individual assigned if a quorum is present?

Business

Reports

(The President should know in advance if committee reports are to be given)

Unfinished business

New business

*if the business meeting is interrupted for the Program

The Business Meeting will be recessed for our program

Following the Program

The Business meeting will now come back into session

Announcements

Adjournment

If there is no further business, the President declares this meeting adjourned.