

<b>10 Commandments of Parliamentary Procedure (Basic Principles)</b>
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1. The organization is paramount as opposed to the individual.
  2. All members are equal.
  3. Quorum must be present to take valid action.
  4. Only one main proposition can be on the floor at a time.
  5. Only one member can have the floor at a time.
  6. Full debate on all questions (unless parliamentary rules do not allow debate on a question).
  7. The issue and not the person is always what is under discussion.
  8. A question once decided cannot come back before the same assembly in the same session in the same form except by use of reconsideration.
  9. A majority vote decides (unless a larger percentage is required).
  10. Silence gives consent.
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# PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

## What is It?

A set of rules for conducting business at meetings and public gatherings.

## Do We Need It?

It helps expedite business. It allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion!

**It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization.**

## Parliamentary Procedure Means:

- ▶ democratic rule
- ▶ flexibility
- ▶ protection of rights
- ▶ a fair hearing for everyone

## Fundamental Principles of Parliamentary Law

Justice to all  
Courtesy to all  
One thing at a time  
Rule of the majority  
Right of the minority to be heard  
Partiality to none

## Established Rules and Customs

One question considered at a time  
Speaker must obtain floor properly  
Speaking time is limited  
No second time to speak unless permission is granted by the group and only if all others who wish to have spoken (main motion, amendments)  
Must address remarks to presiding officer, not to members  
Questions must be properly disposed of.

## Eight Steps to a Motion

1. Rise and address the chair
2. Be recognized by the chair
3. State the motion (“**I move** that ...” or “**I move** to...”)
4. Second the motion (not required for committee motions or recommendations)
5. Chair restates the motion (enters it into record)
6. Chair calls for discussion (opens debate)
7. Chair restates the motion and takes the vote
8. Chair announces the vote and the effect of the decision.

<b>Ranking Motions</b>	Can interrupt	Requires second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote required	Can be reconsidered
<b>Privileged Motions</b>						
Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn		S		A	M	R
Adjourn		S			M	
Recess		S		A	M	
Raise a Question of Privilege	I				C	
Call for the Orders of the Day	I				C	
<b>Subsidiary Motions</b>						
Lay on the Table		S			M	
Previous Question		S			2/3	R
Limit or Extend Limits of Debate		S		A	2/3	R
Postpone to Certain Time		S	D	A	M	R
Commit or Refer		S	D	A	M	R
Amend		S	D	A*	M	R
Postpone Indefinitely		S	D		M	R Aff
<b>Main Motion</b>		S	D	A	M	R
I = Can interrupt another who has the floor      C = Chair decides      A* = Amendable once						

### **Closing Debate**

Chair may say “Are you ready for the question?” (No vote required)

Member may move to close debate: “I move the previous question.”

Chair conducts vote on the question to close debate. Two-thirds vote required.

Chair then conducts vote on the original question.

### **Unanimous/General Consent**

Used to expedite business (e.g., approval of minutes, routine motions, when no opposition is apparent)

Always use it for approval of minutes:

“Are there any corrections to the minutes?”

“If there are no objections, the minutes are approved as submitted/read (or, as corrected).”

“The question is on the adoption of the motion to ...”

“If there is no objection, the motion will be adopted.” (*Pause*)

“Since there is no objection, the *(action mentioned in the motion)* will be ...”

## **Minutes**

Secretary records the corrections in the minutes of the current meeting

Correcting electronic files: always rename file, e.g., add “corrected”

## **Treasurer’s Report**

Do not adopt or approve it. It is filed for review (audit).

## **Informal Consideration** (a form of the motion to commit)

Used in a small meeting

Suspends the rule limiting the number of times a member can speak on the main question and any amendments

Motion: “I move that the question be considered informally.” Requires a second/debatable/requires a majority vote

Votes are still formal. A motion can be disposed of during informal consideration.

Informal consideration can end by a motion that the question be considered formally

Proceedings are recorded in the minutes

## **Quorum**

A quorum is the number of members required to conduct business.

For a board or a committee, a quorum is the majority of the members of the board or committee unless the bylaws establishes otherwise. If the League is incorporated under California laws, the quorum for board meetings is a majority of the number of members **authorized in the bylaws**, not the number actually serving, unless the bylaws specify otherwise. Thus, it is a good idea to specify that the quorum for board meetings is a majority of those currently serving on the board.

For annual meeting or other business meetings, the quorum should be in the bylaws. If it is not, a majority of the total membership is required to conduct business. You don’t want that!

The quorum should be relatively small—either a specific number or a percentage of the total membership. According to Robert’s Rules of Order, the number required “should be as large a number of members as can reasonably be depended on to be present at any meeting, except in very bad weather or other exceptionally unfavorable conditions.”

If a quorum is not present, business cannot be transacted.

To change the quorum in bylaws, do not amend by striking the old provision first. Use a single motion to strike out the old provision and insert the new provision and vote on it as one question.

## **Resources**

Local League bylaws/articles of incorporation

*Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, current edition (12<sup>th</sup>)

\*\*\**Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, In Brief*

LWVC Publications:

*How To...For the President*

*How To...For League Secretaries*

*Writing for League*

## **When/How do Leagues Use Parliamentary Procedure?**

### Always: President and board members must be familiar with:

- Corporate charter (if applicable) and non-profit corporation laws
- Bylaws
- Standing rules (e.g., board policy, nonpartisan policy, voter service policy)
- Parliamentary authority (usually, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, current edition)
- General principles of parliamentary law

### Annual Meeting: (see sample agenda and procedures)

- Most formal meeting of year for local Leagues
- Determine deadlines and activate committees
- Establish procedures and rules for the day (from bylaws and custom)
- Procedure for motions on budget, bylaws amendments, program
- Procedure for nominations and elections

### Board Meetings: (see sample agenda)

- Formality depends on the size of the board
- Large board (over 12 members) uses more formal parliamentary rules
- All proposed action should be approved by vote recorded in the minutes (unanimous consent is OK when it is clear there is no dissent, e.g. approval of agenda, minutes)
- Minutes are "approved" as submitted or as corrected.
- Treasurer's reports are not "approved" or "accepted." They are "filed for financial review (or audit, if applicable)."

### Committee Meetings:

- President usually ex officio member of all committees except nominating committee
- Committee chair conducts meeting.
- President has right, but not obligation, to participate. Votes, but does not count in quorum.

### Outside the Board Meeting:

- Approvals, even if unanimous, are not actions of the board. Need ratification at meeting.

### Study and Consensus Meetings:

- Members express opinions, discuss and come to decisions.

### Electronic meetings:

- Teleconference/videoconference OK if all members hear each other simultaneously.
- E-mail/fax/postal mail is not a meeting, not recommended.

## **The President as Facilitator:**

Make sure board members and committee chairs have information they need to plan and prepare, e.g., UPDATES from LWVC, mailings from LWVUS or ILOs related to portfolio. Be sure that materials are distributed promptly. Use e-mail to keep board informed.

Carefully plan meetings in advance. Consult or meet with the executive vice-president or other designated person(s) to plan the agenda.

Have a written agenda. Send agenda and minutes of previous meeting out in advance. Attach proposals for action (e.g., adoption of consensus reports, action letters or proposals, policies to be adopted) and background material for other decisions.

Use an “action agenda” instead of the traditional agenda for board meetings. Put business which requires decisions at the beginning while people are alert. Vary the order of reports, putting the most important first. Require reports only when pertinent to current activities or those in the planning stage about which the board needs a progress report. Ask for reports in writing to assist the secretary in recording minutes.

Call the meeting to order on time and end on time. Allot a specific amount of time for agenda items and indicate that on the agenda.

Do not participate in debate—give factual information to clarify a point or to tell members how to accomplish what they want to do.

At business meetings, do not turn meeting over to another (except to participate in debate). Call on a member to present a report or introduce a program, but call for the discussion following, as appropriate.

Know the Eight Steps to a Motion so all members can follow the proposed action.

Assist to reword or clarify motions if they are poorly worded.

Enforce the rules relating to debate, order and decorum. Do not allow a few to monopolize the debate or to disturb the meeting.

Keep track of those who are speaking. Allow a member to speak a second time only when all who wish to have spoken.

If a member asks a question of another, repeat the question yourself and ask the person to whom the question is addressed to answer.

If two or three members start talking among themselves, tap with the gavel and ask for quiet or ask that all remarks be addressed to the chair.

Expedite the meeting by using general consent.

When discussion goes on too long, draw attention to the time and the need to come to a decision

and ask that only new points be made.

Be efficient, courteous and impartial. Have willpower to enforce the rules.

Don't use the first person in a formal meeting. Say, "the Chair appoints," or "rules" or say, "it is the opinion of the Chair" instead of "I think," "I appoint," or "it is my opinion."

In a small board or committee meeting, the rules can be relaxed, but the Chair needs to keep control of the meeting. Small board (under 12 members) can use less formal procedure and recognition of those wishing to speak. Usually there is no limit on the number of times a member can speak to a question. Informal discussion is OK when no motion is pending. Chair can speak to the question.

## BOARD MEETINGS

### 10 RULES FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

(These are general rules for any type of meeting.)

1. Clearly state the objectives.
2. Set and adhere to a length of time for each meeting.
3. Publish agendas and timetables in advance.
4. Determine and follow a policy for extending meeting length if it becomes necessary.
5. Choose a leader with clearly defined power.
6. Have someone facilitate the meeting by supporting the leader in keeping time.
7. Develop a set of ground rules for participation.
8. Write down agreements, requests, and commitments.
9. Have a five minute review at the end of each meeting to assess what worked and what didn't.
10. Acknowledge yourselves, individually and as a team, for accomplishments.

### BOARD AGENDA

- Send out written agenda in advance.
- Include/attach background information on items requiring action. Make it clear what action the board is expected to take.
  - Basic information needed to make the decision.
  - Consensus reports proposed to be submitted to appropriate level of League.
  - Policies proposed for adoption.
  - Outline of project: purpose, cosponsors, financing (if it is not in the adopted budget).
- Set an estimated time for each item.
- Designate a person to be responsible for each report/item.

### WHAT THE INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBER CAN DO TO EXPEDITE BUSINESS

- Request time on the agenda when board action/report is needed.
- Submit background material for the agenda if action is required, e.g., adoption of consensus report.
- Read agendas and background material ahead of time.
- Be on time and stay until the end of the meeting.
- Bring short written report for the secretary.
- Give notification and send written report, if unable to attend.
- Avoid "committee work" at the board meeting.
- Observe time limits for reports.
- Keep to the topic.
- Respect others when they have the floor. Avoid side conversations.

### BOARD DECISIONS

- Record in the minutes (see sample action summary):
  - Decision/Goal (What?)
  - Actions (What specifically is to be done) (How?)
  - Responsibility (Who?)
  - Due date (Schedule for completion) (When?)
  - Budget (How much?)
  - Dates for progress reports
- Follow up with progress reports and evaluation upon completion of the project.



#### OTHER IDEAS TO INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS OF BOARD MEETINGS

- Allow time on the agenda for socializing, exchange of papers, picking up materials. Take a break.
- Before putting an item on the agenda, ask yourself: Is it an item that needs board action or is it committee work? Does the agenda item concern at least three members of the board? If not, it can usually be dealt with one on one.
- Appoint a board member to be the resource at board meetings for policies, bylaws questions, and references to League publications, such as *League Basics*.
- Appoint a Leadership Trainer/Mentor to the board:
  - ▶ An experienced Leaguer who has held different League jobs.
  - ▶ Provides training one-on-one to new Leaguers/board members.
  - ▶ Review job descriptions and portfolio materials to keep them current.
  - ▶ Can be a resource/mentor for committees.
- Spend five minutes at each board meeting reviewing policies, League procedures, League “lingo” as a help to board members who are new to the League (and not-so-new).

## ANNUAL MEETING: SAMPLE SCRIPT

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF \_\_\_\_\_

*(The material in **standard** type is what the president says. Material in **italics** indicates notes for conduct of business, or motions or business presented by another board member or committee chair.)*

#### **Call to Order:**

The Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of \_\_\_\_\_ will come to order.

#### **Welcome and Introductions:**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ president of the League of Women Voters of \_\_\_\_\_.

The following guests are present:

The following past presidents are present:

The parliamentarian for today's meeting is:

#### **Credentials Report:**

*Secretary, Treasurer, or Membership Records Chair says:*

*"Our bylaws require a quorum of \_\_\_\_\_ (number of members).*

*The number currently in attendance is \_\_\_\_\_. A quorum is present/not present."*

If there is no objection, the credentials report will be adopted...(pause)...The credentials report is adopted.

#### **Adoption of the Rules of the Day: (majority vote required to adopt)**

The Rules of the Day are printed on page \_\_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit. Are there any proposals to change the Rules of the Day?

*Try to use unanimous consent as much as possible to speed business when there is no controversy. If there are amendments to the Rules, they should be voted on by a voice vote of the members. However, if there are no changes, or if the changes are not substantive, unanimous consent may be used to approve the Rules, as in the example below.*

If there is no objection, the Rules of the Day will be adopted...(pause)...Hearing no objection, the Rules of the Day are adopted.

**Adoption of the Order of Business: (majority vote required to adopt)**

The Order of Business is printed on page \_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit. Are there any changes to the Order of Business?

*See note above regarding adoption of the Rules by unanimous consent.*

If there is no objection, the Order of Business will be adopted as printed/as amended...(pause)  
...Hearing no objection, the Order of Business is adopted.

**Appointments:**

Committee to Approve the Minutes:

Timekeeper:

Elections Committee:

**Procedural Announcements/Parliamentary Advice: (as needed)**

**President's Report:**

*Use this time to present a short report on the state of the League and its accomplishments during the past year.*

**Treasurer's Report:**

The Treasurer's Report will be presented by \_\_\_\_\_.

*Treasurer presents a financial report of income and expenditures to date in the fiscal year.*

Are there any questions regarding the Treasurer's Report?

The final Treasurer's Report will be submitted for a financial review after the end of the fiscal year and will be sent out to the members within the time required by law and the bylaws.

**Presentation of Proposed Budget: (majority vote required to adopt)**

The Budget Committee report will be presented by Budget Chair \_\_\_\_\_. The proposed budget is printed on pages \_\_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit. This year, the members of the Budget Committee are: \_\_\_\_\_

*Budget Committee Chair moves adoption of the proposed budget:*

*"I move to adopt the \_\_\_\_\_ (fiscal year) budget as printed on pages \_\_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit."*

*A second is not required since the proposed budget is recommended by committee and the board.*

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The motion is to adopt the budget as printed on pages \_\_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit. Is there discussion?

*The Budget Chair speaks first to explain the budget. Follow parliamentary procedure for handling any amendments. Amendments are voted first; an amendment may be amended only once.*

Are you ready for the question?... (pause)...

The question is on the motion to adopt the budget as printed/amended.

Those in favor of the motion, say aye.... Those opposed say no.

The ayes/noes have it and the motion passes/fails.

The budget for fiscal year \_\_\_\_\_ is/is not adopted.

Thank you to the Budget Chair and committee members.

**Presentation, Discussion and Adoption of Recommended Bylaws Amendments: (2/3 vote required)**

The Bylaws Chair \_\_\_\_\_ will present the Bylaws Committee report. Proposed amendments to the bylaws are printed on page(s) \_\_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit.

The members of the Bylaws Committee were: \_\_\_\_\_

*The Bylaws Chair moves to amend the bylaws as proposed.*

*"I move to amend Article \_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_ of the bylaws by \_\_\_\_\_ (or as printed on page \_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit.)"*

*A second is not required for bylaws amendments that are recommended by the Bylaws Committee or the board.*

*(The wording of the motion depends on the complexity of the change. See Robert's Rules of Order for the correct form.)*

The motion is to amend Article \_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_ of the bylaws by \_\_\_\_\_ (or as printed on page \_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit).

Is there discussion?

*The Bylaws Chair speaks first to the motion.*

*Proposed bylaws amendments cannot be substantively changed from that which is sent out to the members in the notice of the meeting. Except for minor changes in wording that do not change the intent of the proposed amendment, members must either vote for or against it.*

Are you ready for the question?... (pause)

The question is on the motion to amend Article \_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_ of the bylaws by \_\_\_\_\_ (or as printed on page \_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit).

Those in favor of the motion say aye.... Those opposed say no.

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The ayes/noes have it and the motion passes/fails.

The bylaws amendment is/is not adopted.

*Handle each amendment to the bylaws in a similar manner. If a revision (a complete new set of bylaws) is being considered, handle them “ad seriatim.” Each section is discussed and amended, but the vote is not taken on the entire set of bylaws until after all discussion and amendments to individual sections. See Roberts Rules of Order for this procedure.*

Thank you to the Bylaws Chair and committee.

**Presentation, Discussion and Adoption of Recommended Program: (majority vote)**

Program Chair \_\_\_\_\_ will present the recommended local (or county, if applicable) program for \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

*General procedures for Adoption of Program:*

*Program Chair/presenter moves adoption of the proposed program item(s).*

*“I move to retain all local positions as printed on pages \_\_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit.”*

*A second is not required on recommended items since they were recommended by the board.*

*(Positions may be moved and voted on individually if preferred.)*

The motion is to retain all local positions as printed on pages \_\_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit.

Is there discussion on the position(s)?

*The Program Chair speaks first to the motion.*

*Divide time among items. Members vote only on the position – not its objective – and cannot change the intent of the position. Wording may be changed for clarification. Members may move to re-study if appropriate. Votes are taken on proposed amendments as they occur, e.g.*

*“The motion is to amend the \_\_\_\_\_ position by \_\_\_\_\_.”*

*Ask for discussion. Vote on the amendment.*

Are you ready for the question?... (pause)...

The question is on the motion to retain all local position as printed on pages \_\_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit (or as amended).

Those in favor say aye... Those opposed say no.

The ayes/noes have it and the motion passes/fails.

The League’s local positions have/have not been retained.

**Recommended New Study: (if applicable)**

*The Program Chair moves to adopt a new study.*

*“I move to adopt the study of \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ (year).”*

*A second is not required because the study is recommended by the board.*

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The motion is to adopt the study of \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

Is there discussion?

*The Program Chair speaks first for the motion.*

Are you ready for the question?...(pause)

The question is on the motion to adopt the study of \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

Those in favor say aye... Those opposed say no.

The ayes/noes have it and the motion passes/fails.

\_\_\_\_\_ will/will not be the local study for this League during the coming year.

**Recommended Issues for Emphasis:**

*The Program Chair moves adoption of the action priorities.*

*"I move to adopt action on \_\_\_\_\_ as an Issue for Emphasis for \_\_\_\_\_ (year)."*

*A second is not required because it is recommended by the board.*

The motion is to adopt action on \_\_\_\_\_ as an Issue for Emphasis for \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

Is there discussion?

*The Program Chair speaks first to the motion.*

Are you ready for the question?...(pause)

The question is on the motion to adopt action on \_\_\_\_\_ as an Issue for Emphasis for \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

Those in favor say aye... Those opposed say no.

The ayes/noes have it and the motion passes/fails.

\_\_\_\_\_ will/will not be this League's Issue for Emphasis during the coming year.

**Non-Recommended Program:** *Non-recommended program may be either an Issue for Emphasis or a study. Requires a motion for consideration. Requires a second. The member who moves consideration may present a statement of reasons for granting consideration. Members must then vote on whether to consider a non-recommended item. Check rules/bylaws for votes required to consider.*

*If consideration is granted, the motion to adopt is on the floor. The maker of the motion speaks first for the motion. If the motion is for a new study, the maker of the motion needs to identify a Study Chair and committee.*

*Debate continues in the normal manner using the standard format for motions.*

The motion is to adopt \_\_\_\_\_ as an Issue for Emphasis/study for \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

Are you ready for the question?...(pause)

The question is on the motion to adopt \_\_\_\_\_ as an Issue for Emphasis/study for \_\_\_\_\_ (year).

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Those in favor say aye...Those opposed say no.

The ayes/noes have it and the motion passes/fails.

\_\_\_\_\_ has/has not been adopted as an Issue for Emphasis/study during the coming year.

Thank you to the Program Chair and committee.

**Report of the Nominating Committee:**

The Chair of the Nominating Committee \_\_\_\_\_ will present the committee's report. It can be found on page \_\_\_\_\_ of the Annual Meeting Kit.

*The Chair of the Nominating Committee presents the report for officers and directors:*

*"The Nominating Committee submits the following nominations:*

*For Officers:*

*President* \_\_\_\_\_

*Vice President* \_\_\_\_\_

*Secretary* \_\_\_\_\_

*Treasurer* \_\_\_\_\_

*For Directors:*

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ *etc."*

You have heard the report of the Nominating Committee. Nominations from the floor are now in order. Remember that you must have obtained prior permission from any individual you are nominating.

*Note the names of any nominees from the floor. If there are nominees from the floor, the vote must be by paper ballot. It is the responsibility of the Elections Committee to manage the election process.*

-or-

If there are no nominations from the floor, nominations for officers and directors are closed. The following are nominees for officers and directors. Please stand as I call your name.

President \_\_\_\_\_

Vice President \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_

Directors \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ *etc.*

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The question is on the election of the slate of nominees for officers and directors.

Those in favor of election of the slate say aye... Those opposed say no.

The ayes/noes have it and the slate of nominees has/has not been elected.

*The Chair of the Nominating Committee presents the report for the next Nominating Committee:  
“The Nominating Committee submits the following nominations for the next Nominating  
Committee.”*

*Nominating Committee Chair \_\_\_\_\_*

*Nominating Committee Members \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ etc.”*

You have heard the report of the Nominating Committee for the chair and members of the next Nominating Committee. Are there any nominations from the floor?

*Follow the same process as above for any nominations from the floor.*

-or-

If there are no nominations from the floor, nominations for the Chair and members of the next Nominating Committee are closed. The following are the nominees. Please stand as I call your name.

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Members \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, etc.

The question is on the election of the slate of nominees for the next Nominating Committee.

Those in favor of election of the slate say aye... Those opposed say no.

The ayes/noes have it and the slate of nominees has/has not been elected.

Thank you to the Chair and members of the Nominating Committee for your work and thank you to all the newly elected nominees for accepting your office!

**Introduction of the New Board:**

**Remarks by the President-Elect:**

**Directions to the New Board:**

To guide planning for the coming year we encourage members to give direction to your new board. Please put your ideas in writing so that they may more easily be recorded by the Secretary.



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**Announcements/Reports/Other Business:**

*If not done previously, this is an appropriate time to thank outgoing board members, off-board chairs, anyone involved in making arrangements for the meeting, etc.*

**Adjournment:**

If there is no objection, the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of \_\_\_\_\_ will be adjourned....(pause)....Hearing no objection, the meeting is adjourned.

*It is not necessary to have a formal motion to adjourn when it is apparent that the business of the meeting is completed.*

## **FOR THE NEW AND NOT SO NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

Every local League board is a working board. Some boards have dual assignments where one is a board member first and holds a portfolio second. Others are boards that share responsibilities equally and pick up ad hoc assignments as needed. Division of responsibilities lightens the burden on leadership, and allows for the board to share equally in fundraising, member recruitment and attending membership meetings.

If you are a new board member, you may be uncertain about your responsibilities and wonder if you will ever know as much as others seem to know. It will all become clearer shortly; but to hasten this prospect, here are some suggestions to help you...

### ***BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES***

- ☑ Carry out your own portfolio assignment.
- ☑ Attend all board meetings, coming on time and staying until the end. All board members take part in decision-making - you are needed!
- ☑ Participate in policy decisions, and develop an understanding of all parts of League program, policy, and purpose. Prepare for board meetings by reading the agenda material and any pertinent reports suggested for your review between board meetings. This will allow for more intelligent decision-making.
- ☑ Safeguard the League's reputation for non-partisanship.

### ***PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES***

- ☐ Obtain the files and seek advice on procedure from the preceding chair. Training on a one-to-one basis between outgoing and incoming chairs is vital. Combining new ideas with practices that have worked in the past is a good way to keep the League current yet consistent.
- ☐ Study the relevant sections of *League Basics*.
  - <https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/league-basics.pdf>
- ☐ Attend board training sessions and as many local, state and national League meetings and conventions as possible.
- ☐ Develop a committee, both to assist you and to nurture participation and leadership. Involve your committee by having regular contacts and meetings.
- ☐ Report to the board any plans made by your committee. Request authorization, if needed, to carry them out.

- ☑ Plan ahead and meet deadlines.
- ☑ Be aware of the lines of communication and jurisdiction of state, national or other League boards.
- ☑ Keep records and files for your reference and for your successor.
- ☑ Prepare annual report materials as needed.
- ☑ Know if there are funds under your purview. Find out how to be reimbursed for expenses.
- ☑ Attend Membership Meetings and other League programs. Not only will you be a more informed, effective board member but your contributions at these meetings are necessary.
- ☑ Make arrangements to obtain all state and national materials pertinent to your portfolio or interest, including links to online list-serves, discussion groups that receive related materials, as well as the LWV and LWVC Updates.

### ***LEAGUE TOOLS YOU NEED***

Basic League tools should be placed in a binder or an online folder that can be referred to at meetings. Suggested basic League tools are:

- ☑ job description
- ☑ local League bylaws
- ☑ local League budget
- ☑ membership list
- ☑ list of your committee members
- ☑ list of board members with their contact info
- ☑ nonpartisan policy and board policies and procedures
- ☑ local League calendar for the year
- ☑ a copy of or link to *League Basics* and your local, state and national action positions
- ☑ LWVC's *How To...* for your portfolio area. <http://archive.lwvc.org/lwvonly/pubs.html>
- ☑ sections of the LWVC UPDATE related to your portfolio area.
- ☑ League management page : <https://my.lwv.org/california/lwvc-members-only/local-league-management>

### ***HOW TO REPORT TO THE BOARD***

In advance of the board meeting, notify the President of the subject and time needed for your report on the agenda.

### ***WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED***

- ☐ Progress of ongoing projects
- ☐ Significant decisions a committee has made.
- ☐ Problems encountered in getting a job done that require input from the board.
- ☐ Information on resources that are significant to the League (Is there another organization taking an active role in this area that might be a resources or partner?)
- ☐ Important information from state or national Leagues relating to your job (e.g., LWVUS has entered litigation in California as a friend of the court or LWVC is participating in a statewide coalition on an issue).

### ***WHEN SHOULD YOU ASK FOR A BOARD DECISION?***

- When you are going to spend a lot of money or are exceeding the amount allowed in the budget
- When you want to hold an unscheduled public meeting
- When you want to publish something or distribute materials to members or the public
- When you want to make a statement in the League's name
- When you want to make any demand on the League's time, money or reputation
- When you want to establish a policy or solve a problem (which sometimes is best done by involving the board)

### ***HOW DO YOU REPORT?***

Be brief.

If the information is extensive, send out a summary with the agenda.

Start the report with what you are going to do ("I'm going to ask the board's approval of a letter to the city council" or "I'm reporting on the committee's progress and some problems we have encountered").

If you want a board decision, state clearly and briefly what led you to your request. Explain why the League should act. Do we have a position and what is it? Do we need a policy? Have we got one already?

***MAKE A RECOMMENDATION!***

You know more about the possible courses of action than anyone except perhaps the President, and s/he cannot give your report and cannot make any motions. **MAKE A MOTION** that your recommendation be adopted, so the board will have something to discuss. Remember to keep committee work at committee meetings prior to the board meeting.

Offer pertinent information to the board and be prepared to answer questions.

Accept the board's decision gracefully. Usually they will follow your recommendations fairly closely, but sometimes other policies or procedures dictate another course be taken which you must accept.

Enjoy serving on your local League board!

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