

Grange Success

A Journey of Excellence in Leadership

III. Getting Things Done



The Meeting

Presiding:

As a leader you have set a vision and goals and it is now time to make it happen. The one of the first major challenges you will face is in conducting the meetings of the Grange. A well run meeting is the presiding officers duty. If the meeting is time consuming, boring, chaotic, or unorganized, it will be your fault.

There are five critical components of a good meeting that members will enjoy and will want to attend. Every good meeting has these components if the Grange wants to have long term success:

1. **Organized**
2. **Civil**
3. **Productive**
4. **Efficient**
5. **Enjoyable**

1. Organized Meeting: The first lesson that a presiding officer must learn is that it is best to conduct the meeting from a standing position. Standing makes you the center of everyone's attention and helps you keep control of the meeting. From a psychological point you have the advantage when you are standing, if everyone else is sitting.

Use the agenda (Order of business). As the presiding officer, always be prepared with a written agenda for your use. Know what is going to be presented by you and your fellow officers.

During the meeting note down ideas and items that will need attention later in the meeting. It is very easy to forget things in a meeting and taking notes will aid you in helping your members have a great meeting.

Open your meetings on time with pride making sure that you and your fellow officers do it well. The tone of a meeting is often set in the first couple of minutes.

When the agenda is complete, close the meeting. Do not draw out or try to shorten the meeting. The members control the length of the meeting, as the leader you control the efficiency of the meeting.

2. Civil meeting: The presiding officer must keep the meeting civil and extend an attitude of courtesy to every member. Every member must treat all others with respect and consideration and anyone who fails to do so must be quickly corrected by the presiding officer.

As the presiding officer the gavel is your tool of control during the meeting. A simple rap of a gavel can get the meeting back on track and reduce tempers.

Debate and discussion of the issues before the meeting is critical to the health of the Grange. The more members who offer their experience and opinions in these discussions, the better decisions will be made.

The quickest way to drive members off is to allow someone to verbally attack someone. If members believe that it is acceptable to at-

tack others, they will know that they too can become a target.

A civil meeting will allow everyone the opportunity to discuss the topics before the group without fear of ridicule. If each speaker is treated with dignity the Grange will be able to develop leaders from within.

3. Productive meeting: A good meeting will proceed smoothly and efficiently and at it's conclusion, the members will feel that they did something useful or productive with their time. People are less worried about the length of a meeting than what is accomplished during the meeting.

As the presiding officer, urge committees to inform the group about issues and problems and to suggest actions for the Grange to take. Appoint special committees before the end of the meeting so everyone knows who the committee consists of.

Especially, make sure that any decision the group makes is carried out following the meeting. Action between meetings will go a long way to showing members that their time is productive.

4. Efficient meeting: To have a successful meeting, you must keep the meeting moving and not allow your members to sidetrack the discussion. The basic principle you must abide by is that only one thing at a time can be before the group. If someone wants to change the subject, take a note and tell them after this current issue is dealt with, their issue is next. Giving everyone the opportunity to participate and yet keep things running smoothly will take practice.

5. Enjoyable meeting: While every meeting has its dry spots, it must be enjoyable to your members. No matter how well you do the first four components of good meetings, most people will not attend your Grange's meetings if they don't enjoy them. Have fun

at your meetings. A dry, uninteresting meeting can often be livened up with laughter.

Make sure that the fun isn't aimed at anyone and that it is "politically correct" for the Grange. Your members will remember the laughter and good feelings at your meetings far longer than that dry report.

The key to having fun at meetings is that you must enjoy yourself. It may not be fun the first couple of meetings, but train yourself to enjoy them.

Facilitator: Your job as the presiding officer is to facilitate the meeting. You must help members accomplish their goals in the meeting. If a member wants to propose an idea, help them make a motion and walk them through the process. As the presiding officer it is your duty to teach, help, and encourage people to be an active part of the meeting.

The more people that participate in the meeting, the easier it will be to attract more members to attend the meetings. Meetings are the place where action is decided upon. The projects, activities, and events happen because they started in a meeting.

Empower others especially your officers. Make sure that each officer is given credit for their efforts and encourage them to excel.

Help the officers and committees to perform their duties and to be prepared at the meetings. Your example will help them do the same with the membership.

Be aware of how you can help members present their ideas. The more members you assist, the more potential leaders the Grange will have.

Learning to conduct a meeting is a skill anyone can learn. If you make sure that you have the five components of a good meeting and have confidence in yourself as a facilitator, you will be successful.