



## Chapter Meeting Guide

*Every chapter meeting should be an informative and enjoyable experience. Besides conducting chapter business, good meetings may include entertainment, guest speakers, recreation and refreshments. Variety in programs is essential for maintaining successful meetings and member attendance.*

### PLANNING CHAPTER MEETINGS

The executive committee should plan the agenda and post it in the chapter meeting room several days prior to each meeting. Members should discuss the items of business with the advisor's guidance.

Official opening and closing ceremonies are to be used at all meetings. Well-performed ceremonies build pride and enthusiasm not only in the officer team but within the entire chapter. A majority of chapter business should involve items planned in the Program of Activities.

As meetings are planned, preparations must be made in advance by the officer team. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Placing the meeting schedule on the school's activity calendar before the start of the school year.
- Making sure officer and committee reports are written and ready to present.
- Posting the agenda several days prior to the meeting to give all members a chance to prepare for discussion and encourage attendance.
- Having one or two chapter officers visit with each class prior to the meeting to share the agenda and generate discussion.
- Assigning all responsibilities for special guests, programs, recreation and refreshments.

### ARRANGING THE MEETING ROOM

An organized meeting room will set the stage for conducting chapter business. The correct room arrangement for a meeting is diagrammed on the next page. The following station markers should be placed at the officers' stations:

- Rising Sun – President
- Plow – Vice President
- Ear of Corn – Secretary
- Bust of Washington – Treasurer
- American Flag – Reporter
- Owl – Advisor
- Shield of Friendship – Sentinel

A properly furnished meeting room adds dignity to FFA functions and instills pride in the members. The sentinel should make sure the chairs and podiums are correctly positioned and the stations for each office are in place prior to each meeting. All of this equipment should be kept presentable at all times and properly displayed or stored when not in use. The American flag must be prominently displayed.

A little imagination can transform a traditional meeting room into an interesting depiction of chapter achievement. Many chapters display a "wall of fame" featuring chapter trophies, plaques, ribbons, certificates and other awards. A photographic display of State and American FFA Degree recipients, winning teams or individuals encourages members to excel.

An attractive bulletin board provides a place to post the upcoming agenda, notices, announcements, photos, news clippings, current project status and much more. Some chapters have an executive work area where the officers may meet and keep

their records.

## **THE AMERICAN FLAG**

The American flag is used as a symbol to foster citizenship among members. It should be displayed at all official FFA meetings and functions. The following are some simple rules governing its use:

- The flag shall never be subjected to contempt, disrespect or insult.
- It may not be used for advertising purposes and nothing should be attached to the cloth of the flag.
- No other flag or pennant should be displayed above the flag.
- Never allow the flag to touch the ground or to be used as drapery or as a costume.
- Always carry the flag aloft and free.
- March right in a line of flags or in front of the center of the other flags.
- When the flag is displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall, the stars should be in the top left corner
- A flag in poor condition should be destroyed as a whole, privately, preferably by burning.

For more information please refer to Flag Rules and Regulations [www.usflag.org/flaquetique.html](http://www.usflag.org/flaquetique.html).

## **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

An established order of business should be followed at all chapter meetings. When members know what to expect, they can participate more effectively. The following order is suggested for regular meetings but can be changed to suit individual chapter needs. The most important reason for using this order is so that significant items will not be overlooked and member participation will be heightened.

*Opening Ceremony* should be conducted, including the call to order, roll call and quorum determination.

*Reading and approval of the minutes* of the previous meeting should be prepared and presented by the secretary and approved by the members as read or as amended. Their reading is omitted if they were sent to members in advance.

*Reports of officers, boards and standing committees* —The treasurer, and all other officer reports, should be presented. Standing Committee reports are presented in the order they are listed in the bylaws.

*Reports of special (select or ad hoc) committees* that were established for a specific project should present their findings in the order the committees were appointed.

*Special orders* allow the consideration of specially scheduled business at this time.

*Unfinished business and general orders* are designed to consider motions that were pending and items on the agenda that were not considered when the previous meeting adjourned, motions that were postponed to the present meeting, and motions that were laid on the table.

*New business* allows members to introduce new items for consideration that are on the meeting agenda and others introduced by chapter members.

*Special features*, including speakers, panels, guest appearances, award presentations and other non-business items.

*Ceremonies* are used only when new members are initiated, Discovery Degrees are awarded, Discovery Degree recipients are raised to the Greenhand FFA Degree, Greenhands are raised to the Chapter FFA Degree or officers are installed.

*Announcements*

*Closing Ceremony*

*Entertainment, recreation and/or refreshments* are planned by the recreation committee and should follow the meeting to increase interest in attendance.

\* Guests and speakers frequently are unable to stay through an entire meeting. Special features are positioned early in the program, yet may be changed to suit the needs of the meeting. Official business should be completed before entertainment, recreation or refreshments.

## **PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to promote efficient meetings so that business can be transacted in an orderly manner. Each chapter member should know how to conduct and take part in a meeting in order to protect the rights of all members.

Knowledge of parliamentary procedure not only strengthens chapter meetings but also provides members with valuable leadership tools for participation in the chapter, community and other organizations.

Chapter officers, in particular, need to know the rules of parliamentary procedure. Observing parliamentary procedure will ensure that:

- One item is addressed at a time.
- Courtesy is extended to everyone.
- The majority rules.
- The rights of the minority are protected.

Knowledge of parliamentary procedure becomes a life-long asset, valuable for leading or participating in meetings in an informed and efficient way. At the chapter level, officers and members find it much easier to conduct and take part in meetings when supported by a background of parliamentary knowledge.

## **USE OF THE GAVEL**

All officers and members should understand the use and meaning of the gavel. It is the symbol of authority and, when used correctly, ensures orderly meetings.

**One tap** of the gavel follows the announcement of adjournment, the completion of a business item or is a message to the members to be seated.

**Two taps** of the gavel call the meeting to order.

**Three taps** of the gavel is the signal for all members to stand in unison on the third tap.

A **series of sharp taps** is used to restore order at a meeting. For instance, if discussion ventures away from the main motion and attention needs to be brought back to the matter at hand, the chairman should rap the gavel a number of times to get the group's attention.

## **SUMMARY OF MOTIONS**

For more information on parliamentary procedure, see the Official FFA Student Handbook. Even more detail is available in parliamentary procedure books such as Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

