



# 4-H VOLUNTEER TRAINING SERIES

## Running a Smooth 4-H Business Meeting

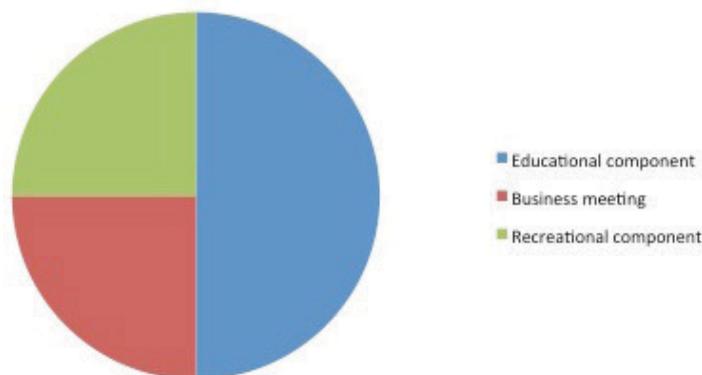
The 4-H program is a youth development component of the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Young people ages 5–18 participate in 4-H clubs throughout Florida. Through their participation, youth develop competencies in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM); Citizenship; Leadership; and Healthy Living. While developing these life skills through participating in 4-H projects and activities, it is hoped young people will become productive and contributing members of society.

Youth ages 9–18 who want to get involved with 4-H can choose to join a local 4-H Club. These clubs are advised by trained, screened, caring adult volunteers. The youth officers, elected by their peers, conduct the meetings. The adults serve in a supportive role. How often a 4-H club meets varies depending on the type of club, time of year, and types of 4-H projects youth are completing in a particular club. Typically, clubs meet monthly, while others might meet bimonthly (twice a month) or even weekly. Youth work on 4-H projects individually in between the 4-H club meetings.

Although young people ages 5–7 years old can join 4-H, they are involved in group activities and do not usually hold business meetings, nor would they elect officers.

A quality 4-H club meeting consists of three main parts: (1) the business meeting, (2) an educational component, and (3) a recreational component. This publication focuses on running a smooth 4-H business meeting.

Use of Time at 4-H Meetings



### Club Officers

Only 4-H club members can vote or hold office in a 4-H club. Developing leadership skills in 4-H club officers is important to ensuring successful clubs and smooth club meetings. Most clubs will have officers like President (who normally chairs the business meeting), Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, Reporter, Parliamentarian, and Sergeant at Arms. The club leader facilitates officer elections and the training of officers. Refer to the EDIS publication 4HGCM10, *Florida 4-H Officer Training Handbook* (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/4h049>), for more information on training and managing club officers.

### Before the Meeting

The club meeting time, date, and location should be established together by officers and adult leaders. The leader, other volunteers, or club officers need to contact all of the club members to notify them of the meeting time. Club members may be notified in a variety of ways,

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such as by telephone, annual club calendar, e-mail notice, website, or blog. The club organizational leader should work with the club president to set the meeting agenda. It is best to plan the agenda ahead of the meeting, because meetings run more smoothly when a clear, meaningful, planned agenda has been reviewed in advance by officers and leaders. A leader, volunteer, or officer can contact a potential guest speaker, prepare an educational activity for the club, and prepare something fun such as snacks, games, and crafts to end the meeting. If the club has active standing committees working from previous business meetings, the leader and club president should communicate with the chair of each committee to check on committee progress and prepare the committee chair to make a report at the business meeting.

### Starting the Meeting

The club leader(s) and officer team should arrive early and set up the room to facilitate the meeting. Often, officers and leaders will sit at the head table, but room setup is flexible to meet the needs of a particular club. Officers and leaders should greet club members as they arrive with a smile and positive attitude. New or potentially new members should feel welcomed and have a pleasant experience.

### Parts of the 4-H Business Meeting

- The 4-H Club President calls the meeting to order.
- Club members recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag and the 4-H pledge. These pledges are led by individual club members or officers.
- The 4-H Club President calls roll.
- The club secretary reads the minutes from the last meeting. The club votes to accept the minutes as read, reject the minutes as read, or amend the minutes.
- The club treasurer reads the treasurer's report. The recorded report is in the treasurer's book.
- The club secretary reads any club correspondence.
- Chairs of various club committees will report any updated information.
- Old or Unfinished Business follows. These items are from previous meetings that still need to be discussed or decided.

- New business, or new items that have arisen since the last meeting, are discussed. Assignments are made on action items that arose during the new business portion of the meeting.
- The Club leader makes any important announcements.
- Adjournment of the business meeting for the educational and fun components of the meeting.

### Sample Club Agenda

The following is a sample 4-H club meeting agenda.

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance/4-H Pledge
3. Roll Call
4. Icebreaker
5. Minutes of Previous Meeting
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Correspondence (read by secretary or president)  
*Note: This includes important items from 4-H newsletter*
8. Committee Reports
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. Date and Time of Next Meeting
12. Adjourn Business Meeting
13. Educational Program
14. Games and/or Snacks

The following sections discuss some parts of the business meeting in further detail.

#### Roll Call

The club secretary or president can take a roll at each meeting and can use the opportunity to help youth learn more about each other. Rather than having youth respond to their name by simply saying, "here" or "present," whoever is taking roll can ask questions to find out the preferences or opinions of members of the club. Examples of this include:

- Favorite vacation
- Favorite snack
- Favorite animal
- Favorite sport

- Good health habit followed

### Meeting Minutes

During each meeting, the club secretary should write down thorough minutes to keep a record of club business. The minutes should reflect important discussion, the vote count or status. Using the agenda as a guide is a tool for the secretary. A good set of meeting minutes include the following:

- Date, time, and location of the meeting
- Names of the members and visitor's present
- Approval of the previous meeting minutes
- Approval of committee and officer reports, as well as any action taken
- All the motions made in the meeting, including the name of the person who made the motion, the name of the person who seconded the motion, and whether or not the motion carried
- The adjournment time
- A list of any programs, guest speakers, refreshments, or recreation that occurred at the meeting

### Old and New Business

Old Business includes items that need further attention from previous meetings. New Business includes items or topics that were not previously discussed. Examples of items appropriate to cover under new business include the following:

- Proposed future programs
- Fundraising ideas
- Possible service projects

After dealing with Old Business on the agenda, the chair will often ask, "Is there any other Old Business?" Similarly, after covering the New Business in the agenda the chair can also ask, "Is there any other New Business?" Asking questions will spark ideas and encourage input from the other club members.

### Handling Motions in the Club Meeting

Any club member that wants the club to vote on something can make a motion. This member needs to get recognized by the meeting chair, typically by raising a hand or standing. After the chair recognizes, or allows

the member an opportunity to speak in the meeting, the member presents his or her motion in a specific way. The person making the motion says, "I move that..." and the club secretary needs to document in the minutes that member made a motion and what the motion was. When another club member agrees discussing on the topic, they will second the motion. The chair would recognize the member and the member would reply, "I second the motion." A required second to a motion indicates that discussion will follow but is not a support for a specific motion. The club secretary should keep track of who seconded the motion. If no one seconds the motion, the motion dies or fails and discussion will not follow.

When a motion is made and seconded, the president or meeting chair opens the motion up for discussion. Any club member in good standing can comment on the issue, but the chair has to recognize whoever wants to speak to prevent chaotic group discussion. Recognizing speakers ensures that everyone in the club has an opportunity to speak and that everyone else in the club will hear what they have to say. When discussion stops, the chair asks, "Are you ready for the question?" If no one in the club requests more discussion, the chair leads the club to vote on the motion.

### VOTING ON A MOTION

The chair states the motion so all club members can hear it one more time. The chair can handle voting in several ways.

- *Voice Vote*—the chair, usually the club president, says, "All in favor say aye." Then, "All opposed say nay." The chair reports the results to the club secretary.
- *Standing Vote*—the chair asks that all in favor stand, all opposed remain seated.
- *Show of Hands*—the chair asks that all in favor raise their hands, then counts hands. Then the chair asks that all opposed raise their hands, then count.
- *Ballot*—the chair passes out paper to each member and the member writes his or her vote on the paper. The chair then counts the paper votes.
- *Roll Call Vote*—the secretary reads through the roll and each member votes.

- *Honor System*—similar to the show of hands, but the chair requests that everyone closes their eyes first.

After voting the motion, the chair will say “the motion carries” if the majority of club members vote for the motion, or “the motion fails” if the majority of the members vote against the motion.

From time to time, the chair will want an issue decided by consensus, which means the chair wants all the members to agree to the item prior to a decision. Reaching consensus requires compromise, because no opposing vote is desired.

### **Educational Programs**

This area should be 50% of your meeting time. It can be a time for club members to give demonstrations or talks. Community or project speakers would also be an educational program. If in doubt as to what would constitute a quality educational program for the club, see your county UF/IFAS Extension 4-H agent.

### **Summary**

Working with 4-H club officers to competently run a smooth business meeting can help encourage these youth to develop leadership and management skills that can benefit them the rest of their lives. A well-run business meeting will also ensure that all of the members of the club have an equal voice and vote. A younger club youth can feel as if his or her voice counts as much as a teenager's, and this younger youth can begin to learn some leadership and management skills as he/she watches the club officers in action. Leaders need to enable and encourage the officers to run a business meeting, and ensure that the club members participate in discussing and voting on club business. Adult leaders need to serve in an advisory role and not run a meeting for the youth. Focus should be on providing opportunity... as well as on inviting speakers to share their knowledge to the club. With a little encouragement, training, and practice, the 4-H club officers can run a smooth, dynamic business meeting.