EFFECTIVE MEETINGS
● Background in running a meeting
  – Mayor
  – Councilman
  – MML President
  – School Board President
  – Committee Chairman
  – Registered Parliamentarian
The Disclaimer

- The views expressed in this presentation, although absolutely correct, do not reflect the views of LGIT, MML, or MACO - These are things they don’t want you to know!

- The stories contained herein are not stories about real towns, people you know, or towns I represent – even if I use their names by accident!

- I’ve been in municipal government so long I’m jaded – so don’t get upset when I belittle the public and elected officials.
Municipal Officials love meetings?

- Council Meetings
- Staff Meetings
- Committee Meetings
- MML Meetings
- Workgroup Meetings
- Community Meetings
What is “Effective”? 

- Producing a desired result
All meetings should have an objective

Wrong Objectives:

Elected Officials → Publicity

Staff Members → Interruption of job

Press → Information to misinterpret

Public → Berate officials
Proper Objectives for Meetings:

- Meet Charter obligations
- Debate and exchange ideas
- Conduct public business
- Make decisions
- Inform the public

To Accomplish Something!!!
This is a Business Meeting!

- Board of Directors of a company
  *Focus on business items; deal with unrelated items on your own time*

- Public comment/input is limited
  *Public has a right to watch; not always the right to comment*
A meeting should be like theater, where the audience can follow the storyline, the actors know their roles, and the slips-ups and mistakes are taken as part of the plot.
So How Do We Get There?
Taking The Trip

- Pick Destination
- Packing List
- Travel Arrangements
- Take the trip
- Prepare for unexpected
- Photo Album

- Goal for meeting
- Agenda
- Meeting set-up
- Conduct meeting
- Contingency plan
- Minutes
Goals for Meeting

What do you want to accomplish?

Pass a resolution/ordinance
Discuss a problem
Approve a purchase
Plan budget priorities

● Set in advance
  – Allows for preparation
  – Focus
  – Better participation
  – Shorter meetings
Contents:

✓ Specific Detail
✓ Identification of speaker
✓ Time limits
✓ Discuss/Review/Action
7:30 PM  Opening – Pledge – Roll Call

7:35 PM  Review of Minutes for September 5, 2007 and September 10, 2007

7:55 PM  Review:
- Resolution No. 2007-19, State Retirement System Tax Pickup Program
- Resolution No. 2007-20, Water Allocations through November 1, 2007
- Ordinance No. 7-2007, General Obligation Bond Anticipation Notes
- Ordinance No. 8-2007, General Obligation Bonds

8:00 PM  Legal:  See Attached Written Report for October 2007

8:20 PM  City Manager’s Report:  See Attached Written Report for October 2007

8:35 PM  Unfinished Business:
1. Financial Report
2. Other

8:45 PM  New Business
1. Accounts Payable
2. Police Car Bids
3. Other

8:55 PM  Council Comments

9:30 PM  Adjournment

9:05 PM  Closed Session for Legal Advice and Property Acquisition by Authority of Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 10-508 (a) (7) and (3) and Personnel Discussions by Authority of Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 10-508(a)(1) Personnel

9:30 PM  Adjournment
A Good Agenda:

- Allows body to be prepared
- Alerts the public
- Informs the media
- Keeps the meeting on track
AGENDA

October 17, 2007 Pre-submittal Meeting

9:00

9:30 Cole Property – Allendale Lane; sketch plan update

10:00 Staff discussion – Nextel antenna upgrade status, next steps

10:30 Nelson Property – Fairview Avenue; minor subdivision

11:00

11:30

12:00

1:00

1:30

2:00

2:30

3:00
The Key Factor ....

You need to follow the agenda!
Final Thoughts on Agendas

● Set an Agenda Policy
  – Deadline for submission
  – Requests in writing
  – Approval process for Agenda

● Post the Agenda

● Distribute Agenda/materials in advance
MEETING SET-UP

- Perfection/Professionalism is in the details

- “All the world is a stage and we are merely players upon it”
Items to Consider:

- Agenda for public
- Charts/Exhibits for public
- Nameplates
- Speaker podium
- Codebook
- Sign-in sheets
- Space/seating
- Dress code
- Clock
Subtle items to consider:

- Who’s coming?
  - Quorum
  - Issue passage
- Recent hot button issues
- Dignitaries and Protocol
- Newspaper deadlines
Visualize the Meeting

“Blue Angel’s Strategy”
“The Five “P” Rule”

- Prior
- Planning
- Prevents
- Poor
- Performance
Be Prepared for Mr. Murphy

*Of Murphy’s Law Fame*

- “Things that can go wrong, will go wrong”

- “The best laid plans of mice and men sometimes go awry”

- Stay one step ahead of the pack

- Figure out and prepare for all possibilities
THE MEETING

- TIME
- RULES
- RECORD
TIME

- Most people detest meetings because they are a “waste of time”

- Most people don’t attend meetings because they “don’t have the time”

- Most people believe that instead of participating at meetings their “time can be better spent”
Tips on Time

- Start on Time
  - Takes control
  - Easy to do
  - Shows value for others’ time
  - Shows professionalism

“The Moe ‘Go’ Rule”
Set an Informal Ending Time

- Meeting isn’t an endurance test
- Agree to anything just to leave
- Public doesn’t stay
- Press deadlines are missed
MORE ENERGY

BETTER DECISIONS
Time During the Meeting

- Agree on time limit for speakers
  - Remind people before they speak
  - Stick to it

- Avoid excessive unrelated banter

- Keep audience on task
MEETING RULES

- Charter Requirements
- State Open Meeting Law
- Municipal Code Requirement
- Parliamentary Procedure
Charter Requirements

- When meeting shall be held
- Public right of input
- Financial reports approval
- Open Meetings/Closed Meetings
OPEN MEETING LAW

- Section 10, Subtitle 5 of the State Government Article of the Maryland Annotated Code

- Open Session required

- Exceptions for Closed Session
Municipal Code Requirements

- Outline Agenda
- Presiding Officer
- Order of Business
- Matters before Council
- Rules of Procedure
What happens if you don’t follow these requirements?
Parliamentary Procedure

- Set of Rules for the conduct of a meeting
- Ensures a fair hearing
- Uniformity
- Prevents Confusion
Procedure Goals:

- Run the meeting “As formal as necessary, as informal as possible”
- Do not use procedural rules as a weapon
RULES OF ORDER

- Motions
- Debate
- Voting
Motions

- Main Motion
- Subsidiary
- Privileged
- Incidental
Things to consider – all motions

O – Is it in order – can I make it?
S – Does it need a second?
A – Can it be amended?
D – Is it debatable?
V – What vote is needed?
“OSADV TEST”

Oh
Shoot
Another
Disgruntled
Voter
The Main Motion

- Introduces the subject
- Can’t be made when another motion is pending
- Yields to all other types of motions
Example: Main Motion

“I move that the City buy a new white Public Works truck”

O Must have the floor
S Must have a second
A Can be amended
D Is debatable
V Majority vote
Subsidiary Motions

Seven Types:

1. Amend
2. Limit or extend debate
3. Lay on the table
4. Postpone to a time certain
5. Postpone indefinitely
6. Refer to a committee
7. Previous Question
Example – Motion to Amend

Main Motion was:
“I move that the City buy a new white Public Works truck”

Motion to Amend:
“I move to amend the motion by substituting RED truck for a WHITE truck”
Must obtain the floor

Needs a second

Can be amended

Is debatable

Majority vote needed
Motions to “Table”

- Lay on the table
- Postpone to a time certain
- Postpone indefinitely
Motion to table

- is to “lay on the table”
  - Temporarily suspend
  - Move to “Take off the table”
  - Failure to take up subject in the same session causes motion to die

“I move we lay the matter of the purchase of Public Works truck, until we hear the budget report”
Postpone to a time certain

- Postpone definitely
- Will be considered as unfinished business
- Matter is still alive until the time set

“I move to postpone this motion until the next month’s council meeting”
Postpone Indefinitely

- A parliamentary strategy allowing the disposal of a motion without making a decision for or against it

“I move that the issue of purchasing Public Works truck be postponed indefinitely”
Motions and More Motions…..

*Privileged Motions – Five Types
*Incidental Motions – Eight Types
Forget memorizing

Use a chart
Jay’s Pet Peeve #1

Happens all the time at MML Meetings

“I will withdraw my motion, if you will withdraw your second”

CAN NOT DO!

Once made motion becomes the “property” of the entire body
Jay’s Pet Peeve #2

Also happens all the time at MML

“I call the question”

Does not end the debate if someone still wants to speak

It is a subsidiary motion that should be voted upon
DEBATE

- Maker of the motion speaks 1^{st} after there is a second!!!

- Time limitation

- Decorum
  - Use titles; Mr./Ms.; not names!
VOTING

• Voice vote – yeah or nay
• Show of hands (division of the house)
• Roll call
• Ballot
• General Consent
General Consent

- Also called “unanimous consent”

- When opposition isn’t likely

“With no objection, the minutes to the last meeting are approved by unanimous consent”

If someone objects – vote
Final Thoughts on Parliamentary Procedure

- Should be used to assist, not hinder
- Depends on the group size
- Any group type – Council, Congress, Fire Department, School Board, Tribal Council
Public Hearing

- Legal requirements/public input
- It is a **HEARING** not a **TALKING**

Let the public talk
  * Protect the record
  * Reduce debate

Save your comments for action items
Contingency Plan

- The “What ifs”

- The Practical to the Political

“Chance Favors the Prepared Mind”
Taking Minutes

- Minutes **not** hours

- What was done, not what was said

- Legal requirements
  - Open Meeting Law
Conclusion:

The better prepared YOU are, the more effective and efficient your meeting will be.
Resources:

- IGS Municipal Officials Handbook
- ABC of Parliamentary Procedure
- Parliamentary Quick Reference Card, Wolmar Parliamentary Enterprises
- National Association of Parliamentarians

- Jack A. Gullo Jr., Esq.
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