



THE STATE OF ALASKA
MIKE DUNLEAVY
GOVERNOR

Boards and Commissions
Office of the Governor

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Ground Rules for Successful Meetings

Thank you for volunteering to serve Alaska, as a designee of the State, on behalf of the Office of the Governor. The simple, yet effective, rules below serve as a set of expectations to keep board and commission meetings productive and respectful. Most important, the consistent use of the cornerstones of Robert's Rules builds the public's trust and reflects positively on all involved.

1. **Everyone participates.** As the Chair, encouraging the full participation of team members allows your support staff and the public to have a clear understanding of everyone's view of the issue at hand. Call on quiet team members, as they may only need a clarification or an explanation.
2. **Different opinions are welcome, but the board must stay on track.** The Chair helps guide the team to places of agreement, so the discussion should focus on areas that need clarification, legal advice, or further vetting. Keep the discussion on track or you may find yourself in the middle of a disagreement in which there are no winners and no productive actions.
3. **Limit side conversations.** A quick question or clarification is one thing, but it can be disconcerting when whispered conversations are held between members of the board during an open meeting. It does nothing to encourage trust between the board and the public, and the Chair should not allow it.
4. **Re-state the motion and clarify amendments.** This is a simple way for the Chair to be sure that everyone on the team is on the same page as you move through the process. It also gives support staff the opportunity to clarify the language or intent if needed. It can be surprising how often people are halfway through an argument before they realize they didn't have a clear understanding of the motion or amendment before them. As a member of the board or commission, don't hesitate to ask for clarification if you are unsure.
5. **Hold team members accountable.** If a board member is interrupting others, rude to staff, or refusing to keep their comments on track, the Chair should call for a brief at ease and address it with them directly. Honest mistakes or over-eagerness can be quietly corrected at a break, but deliberate bad behavior by anyone should never be tolerated by the Chair.
6. **Listen respectfully and thoughtfully to public testimony.** Remember that the public has an important role in the process. They have given their time and effort to be heard, and the issue at hand is probably very important to them personally. If testimony gets heated, the Chair can always call for an at ease so that tempers can cool.
7. **Cell phones off.** Ringing phones are annoying, but texting someone in the audience or another board member during the meeting is disconcerting and secretive. This does not encourage trust between the team members themselves or the public.
8. **Speak clearly.** When before the public, always speak so that they can hear you. You may not have a good sound system to amplify your voice, so speak loudly and clearly.