

Resident Council Toolkit

For residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities

by the Office of the State Long-term Care Ombudsman



This toolkit was prepared by the Mississippi Office of the State Long-term Care Ombudsman. (January 2024)

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Care Ombudsman Mississippi:
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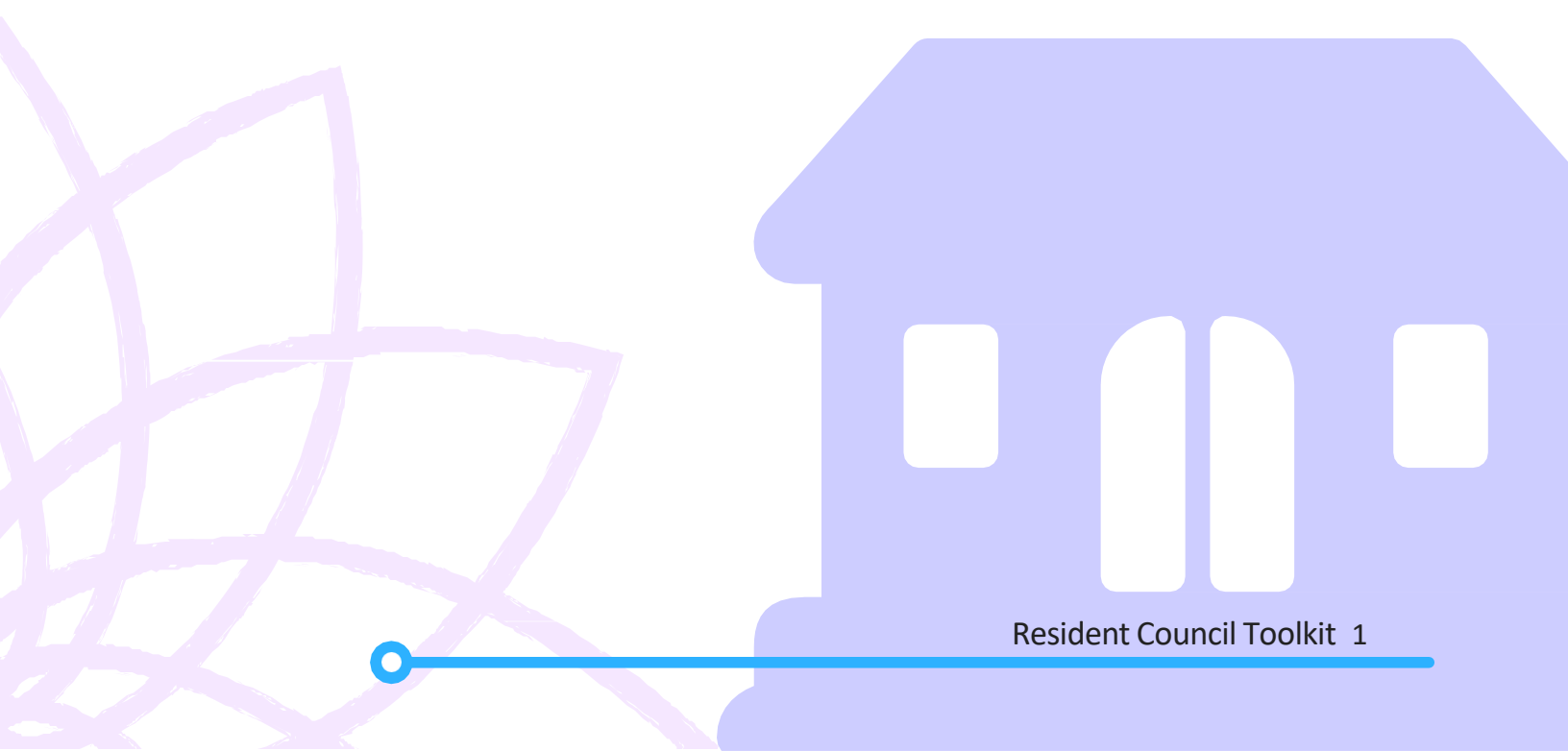
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Introduction

The Mississippi Office of the State Long-term Care Ombudsman created this toolkit to help residents understand the purpose of resident councils and how to start or revive a resident council. Friends, family members, and staff may also find this handbook useful to better understand how to support resident councils.

The purpose of this toolkit is to:

- describe the purpose of a resident council;
- explain the benefits of a resident-run council;
- give advice on forming or improving a resident council; and
- give problem-solving tips for common concerns.



Why Have a Resident Council?

A resident council is an association where people who live in nursing or assisted living facilities join in a united voice to share the resident point of view. It is like a neighborhood association without the fees!

A resident council can have many benefits, such as

- communicating with administrators and staff;
- learning the needs of residents;
- solving problems;
- collaborating;
- meeting, event, and activity planning;
- education of residents, staff, and others;
- information sharing between residents and others;
- committee forming; and
- advocating for better quality of life and care.

Use this toolkit to help you start or improve a council.



Use
this toolkit to
start or
improve a
council.

Laws Protecting Councils

The 1987 Nursing Home Reform Law guarantees residents the right to meet privately and regularly as a resident council.

Section 483.10 of the Code of Federal Regulations gives nursing home residents the right to meet as a resident council and requires a facility to

- help residents attend meetings;
- help find a private space for meetings;
- let staff attend meetings only at the residents' invitation; and
- listen and respond to any complaints or recommendations from the council.²

A facility cannot end a resident council, interfere with a resident council, or retaliate against a resident council or its members.



First Steps

If your home does not have an active resident council, you can start one. Tips to start a council include the following:

- **Read** about resident councils. This booklet is a good start. A long-term care ombudsman can help you find more tools.
- **Recruit** other residents to join you.
- **Discuss** the value of a resident council with residents, staff, and families.
- **Brainstorm** about what a resident council at your home might look like. Think about:
 - why a resident council is important to you;
 - what you want to accomplish in the council;
 - possible obstacles to the council; (resistance, lack of interest, scheduling); and
 - possible leadership.
- **Schedule a planning meeting** to talk about starting or improving a council.
- **Advertise** the meeting to all residents and invite them to attend.
- **Discuss** or vote on a regular time for meetings, the council structure (page 10), and what else needs to be done to prepare.
- **Assign** people to plan and advertise future meetings.
- **Work with staff** to find a private place and choose a time to hold regular meetings.

Role of the Long-term Care Ombudsman in Resident Councils

In this toolkit, "ombudsman" means a **long-term care ombudsman**. Ombudsmen only attend meetings and help with councils **if invited by residents**. An ombudsman can help find resources, advertise and recruit members, communicate with staff and family members, or give a presentation on a topic important to council members.

Ombudsman presentation topics include:

- care planning;
- individualized care, resident-directed services, and culture change;
- residents' rights;
- physical and chemical restraints;
- abuse and neglect;
- role of the ombudsman; and
- advocating for yourself.

Residents
should run
the council!

It is best for residents to do the work themselves.

Ombudsmen support and advocate, but **the council should be run by and for residents**.

Resident Council Story:

When an ombudsman was invited to a meeting, she heard that a resident wanted to resign from the council. The resident said that at 94 years old he could no longer hear what was happening at meetings and thought he could no longer contribute.

The ombudsman and activity director asked if they could help and the council agreed. The activity director found an unused amplifier and helped the resident set it up.

With the headphones and microphone on the table, it was clear that the resident could now hear the meeting! He asked to take back his resignation and the council agreed.

The ombudsman was invited back and says that the resident continues to be an active and involved member of the council.

Staff Commitment and Training

When it comes to resident councils, facility staff may be supportive, hesitant, or somewhere in between. Remember, it is the residents' right to meet as a council privately and regularly. However, staff “buy-in” can add value to the council and help the council run better.

**Educate staff
and get their
support!**

Meet with the administrator and staff and explain to them why a resident council is important to you. Share goals for the council.

Ask if staff have any concerns. If there are specific concerns that you agree could be a problem, work with them to find a solution. Provide group or one-on-one training to staff about residents' rights and resident councils.

An ombudsman can help if needed.

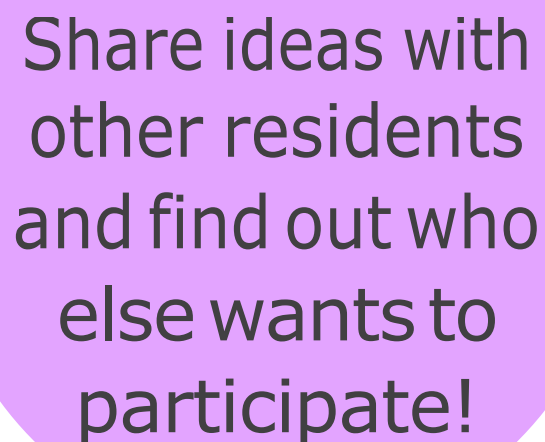
Get a written commitment from administration or have a manager attend a meeting to let residents know the facility supports the council.⁴ Ask the administrator to provide private meeting space at least monthly and to only attend if invited.

Planning Meeting

Share ideas with other residents and find out who else wants to participate. Schedule a planning meeting when many people will be available, and you will have a private space. Advertise (page 22) and invite all residents to the meeting.

At the planning meeting do the following:

- **Talk** about the importance of the resident council.
- **Share** information about staff commitment.
- **Give** examples about how other councils have worked together and solved problems.
- **Listen** to suggestions and ideas from attendees.
- **Give** information about what the next steps are and how people can participate.
- **Follow-up** with attendees (page 23).



Share ideas with
other residents
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participate!

Resident Council Story:

Last year, only eight residents regularly attended the monthly council meeting at a large facility. The Activity Director led the meetings and they only lasted ten minutes. Residents were not comfortable expressing their concerns. The only officer in place was the Secretary.

In the last three months, the council has completely changed. Residents learned more about councils and improved the council by nominating and electing a President, Vice President, and Treasurer. They asked the Activity Director to only take and read the minutes. The President now creates the agenda and leads the meeting. Now, more than 25 residents regularly attend and are more comfortable sharing.

The council recently worked with staff to find a private place for bible study meetings, suggested balanced meal plans, and taught residents how to advocate for their rights. For example, a council member told another resident about his right to stay up as long as he likes after a nurse told him he had a specific bedtime.

Different Structure Types

Structure is how you organize the people in your council.⁴ Do only officers attend or is the meeting open to everyone? Do officers represent groups or projects? Who votes during meetings?

Every council is different. Work together to decide what structure type is best for your home.

When picking a structure, think about

- the number of interested residents;
- how formal you want your meetings;
- how often you will meet;
- a few leaders vs. everyone sharing the responsibilities;
- the level of staff involvement; and
- the space available.

Pick a
structure type
that works
best for your
council!

Town Hall Structure Type

Every resident is a member of the council. Officers, called the Executive Committee, direct the council. Officers are often elected. All residents have a chance to attend meetings, make suggestions, and participate in decision making. Subcommittees work on specific problems as needed.

Characteristics of a town hall structure include

- everyone can attend and participate in meetings;
- the meetings are often less formal and more communal;
- Officers are elected to roles like president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer;
- homes might not have the space to hold meetings with large amounts of people;
- it might be harder to hear others; and
- It might be harder to follow formal rules and procedures.⁴



Representative Structure Type

The representative structure type works when there is not enough space for town hall meetings. Chosen residents from different areas of the home, such as floors, hallways, or neighborhoods, represent the residents in those areas.⁴

These residents are called representatives and are elected to be on the council.

Representatives are responsible for, participating in council meetings, knowing the concerns and wishes of residents they represent, and informing and reporting to residents about the council.

Non-representatives can still be involved by:

- having an open meeting for all residents every few months;
 - allowing time at each meeting for communication from residents who are not representatives;
 - discussing their concerns and ideas with their representative;
 - voting for representatives; and
 - participating in committees.
- Characteristics of a representative model include
 - they are good for larger homes with limited space;
 - selected or elected members may be more invested and reliable;
 - all residents can still participate and bring concerns to their representatives; and
 - it can be easier to divide tasks.

Committee Structure Type

Committee models are like representative models because members are elected. However, the members do not represent any group like a floor or wing.

The committee meets regularly and communicates with staff. Each member is also the chair of a subcommittee (page 15) that works on specific topics.⁴ Any resident can be a member of a subcommittee.

Use the tips on page 12 for involving non-representatives in this structure type.

Characteristics of a committee structure type include

- elected people may be more invested in the council;
- other interested participants can also serve on subcommittees;
- this can work for facilities with less space; and
- it may be easier to have more formal rules and procedures.



Officers and Leadership Duties

Residents elect other residents as officers to represent them. The positions should be taken seriously and with respect. Officers have duties, but all of the work should not go to one or two people.

Bylaws (page 17) set rules for selecting officers, term limits, and what to do when an officer can no longer meet his or her duties. Bylaws describe the expectations, responsibilities, and time commitment for each position. The following are examples of common officer positions:

President/Chairperson: The president creates the agendas and leads the meetings. The president is responsible for keeping to the agenda and schedule. The president often speaks for the council.

Vice President/Vice Chair: The vice president or vice chair fills in for the president if needed. Sometimes, the vice president is also the chair of important committees.

Secretary: The secretary is the record-keeper for council meetings. The secretary distributes minutes and agendas, calls the roll, and takes meeting minutes. If the secretary is unavailable another member takes the minutes.

Treasurer: The treasurer keeps records of council funds, reports to the council on the funds, and keeps the funds separate from other funds.

Staff Advisor: The staff advisor is an optional member. The council can always invite staff as needed as a resource or request physical assistance for activities like writing minutes.

Volunteers: People who are not residents are sometimes asked to attend or become a member of the council. Residents are still leaders of the council.⁵

Committees and Subcommittees

Committees and subcommittees are groups assigned to work on specific tasks. Committees can be permanent or temporary. Subcommittees are smaller -- between two and six members -- and present reports and updates to the council regularly. The following are examples of common subcommittees:

Resident's Rights Committee: Educates others on resident's rights, promotes and monitors resident's rights in a facility.

Quality Care Committee: Reports on quality of care issues. Works with staff to fix problems and start programs to improve quality of care.

Grievance Committee: Listens to complaints of any resident and files complaints on behalf of the council. Can operate a suggestions or complaints box.

Food Committee: Asks residents about likes and dislikes; takes food complaints and suggestions; makes suggestions to dietitian; and plans special meals.

Birthday Committee: Provides recognition to all residents on their birthdays or special milestones.

Activities Committee: Works with activities staff to plan and help with activities.

Sunshine Committee: Sends well wishes to residents and staff who are ill or hospitalized and condolences to those who have lost loved ones.

Welcoming Committee: Greets and supports new residents.

Volunteer Service Committee: Coordinates volunteer activities and finds new volunteer opportunities.⁴

Interior Decorating Committee: Recommends facility decorating and advises on seasonal decorating.

Parliamentary Procedures or Rules of Order

Parliamentary procedures (or rules of order) are the rules for conducting a meeting, suggesting a vote or discussion, and voting.

Councils use parliamentary procedures to make sure meetings are orderly, all have an opportunity to speak, and that minority opinions are heard but majority votes rule.

The four most basic steps to find a majority opinion are:

- making a motion;
- seconding the motion;
- discussing the motion; and
- voting on the motion.⁴

See pages 36 - 39 for a parliamentary procedures “cheat sheet” on how and when to use these steps.


Council members choose how formal they want to be. Some councils choose to stick to traditional parliamentary procedure during meetings, while others use it only when voting on an issue or election. No matter what option works best for your council, say what rules you will follow in your bylaws (page 17).

Bylaws

Bylaws are the rules that the council follows. Bylaws are very important to an active council.

Create bylaws that are a good fit for your council. Bylaws should be simple to follow and to the point.⁶

Each bylaws section should only contain one idea. See pages 35- 36 for sample bylaws.



Have rules for running the council.

Bylaws sections usually include the following:

- The name of the group
- The purpose of the group
- When and how meetings are run
- Membership requirements
- Officer titles, responsibilities, and term lengths
- Nomination and election procedures
- How to replace an officer who can no longer serve
- Names and duties of permanent committees
- How to choose residents to serve on committees
- Management of funds
- Procedure for amending bylaws

Have the council discuss and vote on bylaws before adopting them.

Vision, Values, Mission

Councils use vision, values, and mission statements to tell the world what they do and why they do it. Create a vision, values, and mission statements to guide the work your council does.

Vision Statement: A statement of the future you want to create with the help of your council.⁸

You can start with the basic formula: “The resident council’s vision is a community where ____.”

The following are some examples of vision statements:

- ASPCA: That the United States is a humane community in which all animals are treated with respect and kindness.
- Habitat for Humanity: A world where everyone has a decent place to live.
- VFW: Ensure that veterans are respected for their service, always receive their earned entitlements, and are recognized for the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made on behalf of this great country.

Values: Values are shared beliefs and principles that your council believes in no matter what the setting or issue.¹⁰

For example, perhaps your council values collaboration, integrity, respect, caring, and hard work. It is especially important to work together to identify and choose values as a group.

Mission Statement: This is a statement of how you will achieve your vision. The mission statement describes the overall purpose of the council. Some mission statements are one sentence, others are a short paragraph. The best statements are clear, memorable, and to the point.¹⁰

Effective mission statements include:

- who you are;
- what you do;
- what you stand for; and
- why you do it.

The following are some examples:

- **AARP:** To enhance quality of life for all as we age. We lead positive social change and deliver value to members through information, advocacy and service.
- **The Humane Society:** Celebrating Animals, Confronting Cruelty.
- **Livestrong:** To inspire and empower people affected by cancer.
- **New York Public Library:** To inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen our communities.
- **Wounded Warrior Project:** To honor and empower wounded warriors.

Writing the vision, values, and mission will have more meaning if created as a group. During a meeting, members can submit and vote on ideas. See page 40 for a Vision, Values, Mission worksheet.

Example from a council:

Look at the vision and mission of the Austin Neighborhood Council (ANC).

Vision Statement: Austin Neighborhood Council is a leader in preserving the quality of life in Austin.

Mission Statement: ANC leads and promotes a culture of civic engagement by connecting and supporting all Austin neighborhoods in the following ways:

By working together in harmony;

By sharing vital information with citizens;

By honoring diversity;

By seeking support from and cooperation with other groups, as well as elected officials;

By advocating neighborhood-friendly public policies and the neighborhood right of self-determination;

By speaking out and speaking up;

By endorsing candidates who support our mission;

And by striving to build and sustain inclusive, safe, affordable, and livable neighborhoods and communities throughout Austin—now and for many generations to come.

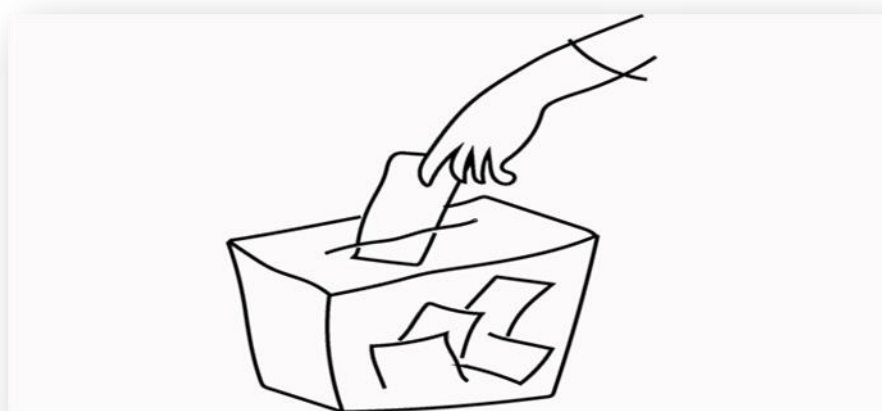
The ANC's motto is "Strength through Unity".

Elections

If your council chooses to hold elections of officers, it is important to make sure running for office and voting are **open to every resident, fair, and transparent.**

Fair election procedures usually include the following:

- Rules posted before the election
- Defined term limits
- Clear roles and responsibilities for officers and what to do if the officer can no longer meet her duties
- An accessible and confidential voting process
- Well publicized voting information
- No compensation for votes
- Focus on issues, not people
- A process of recognizing and thanking outgoing officers⁵





Advertising, Recruiting, and Encouraging Participation

It is important that residents and staff are aware of the council, when meetings are, what the council does, and how to participate.

The opportunities for advertising are endless. The council could write a story for the home's newsletter, put out flyers, go door to door, make announcements at activities, give presentations at other meetings, create buttons or t-shirts, and plan special events and meals.

Recruiting and keeping members is often the most important activity for a council. It is important to understand why some participate and others do not.

People say they participate in councils for the following reasons:

- Having a voice in one's environment
- Ability to be creative and work together
- Building relationships
- Helping others
- Results and recognition⁵

Use these tips to maintain and increase participation:

- Inform and invite new residents and residents who stopped attending or never attended meetings.
- Have a well-known meeting time and place.
- Be organized.
- Publicize activities and accomplishments.
- Hold membership drives.
- Run meetings efficiently.
 - Meetings that are disorganized, don't stick to schedule, and let a few people control the conversation discourage participation. Allow all to contribute but follow the agenda.
- Follow up.
 - Check in with people who had ideas and issues that were not resolved at the meeting.
- Recognize the work of participants.



Effective Meetings Tips

Running effective meetings will help to keep participation and morale high.

• **Create a culture of respect:**

- Talk about what respect looks like as a group.
- Decide on shared expectations such as only one person speaking at a time, staying on topic, and not having side conversations.
- Have a facilitator who can gently redirect the conversation when needed.
- Thank members and participants for their work and time.

• **Advertise clearly and noticeably**

- Be prepared:
- Have an agenda (page 25) and stick to it.
- Have clear goals and objectives.
- Know who will be leading the meeting and taking the minutes.
- Make sure members understand the parliamentary procedures.
- Have the tools needed to make the meeting accessible for everyone.

• **The process:**

- Start each meeting by briefly going over the agenda and rules.
- Explain clearly how to participate.¹²
- Have a way for nonmembers or people who want to discuss items not on the agenda to have some time to speak or submit their ideas in writing.

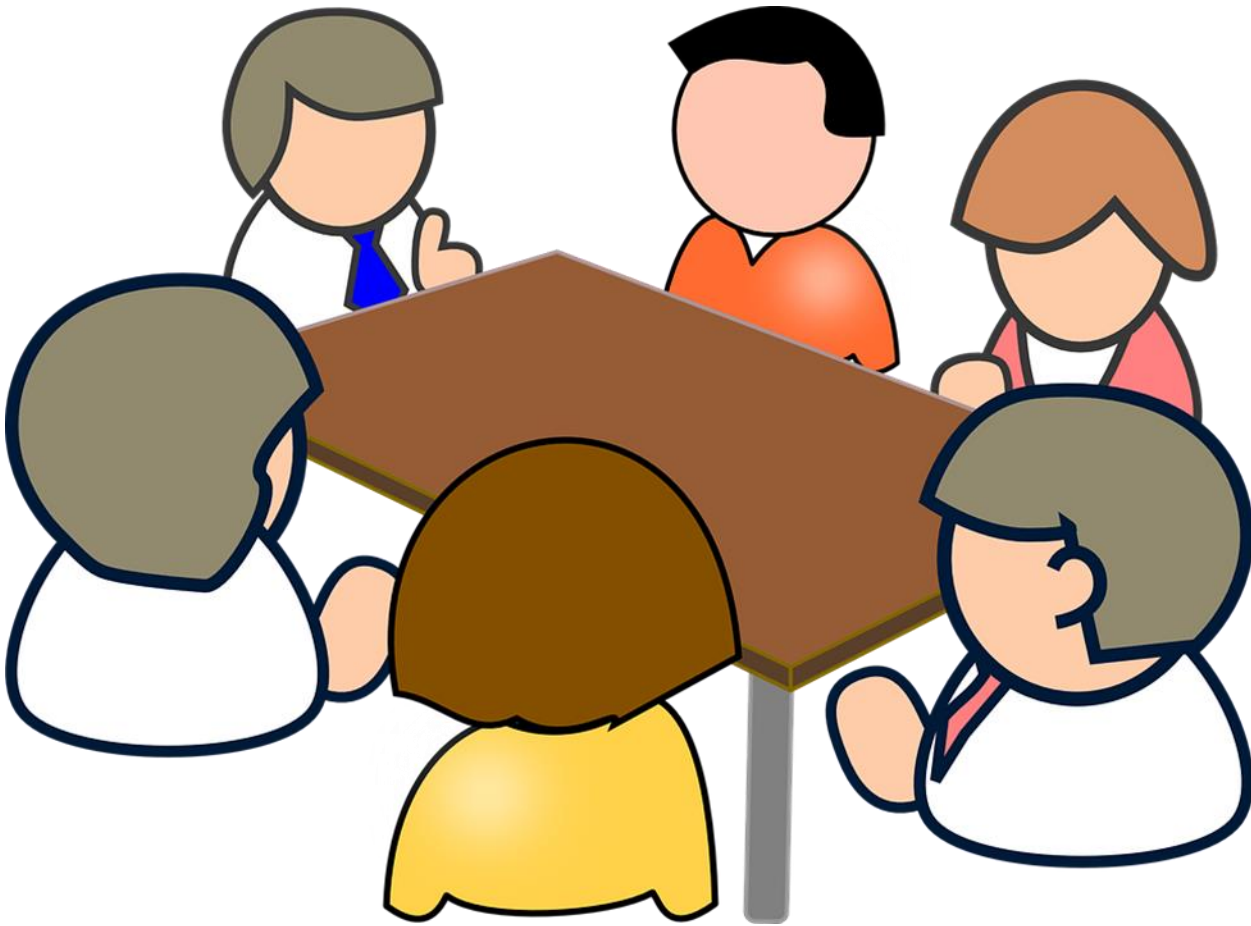
• **Start on time and end on time.**

• **Present facts and challenge rumors:**

- The council has the responsibility to represent residents. Keep the meetings professional and goal based. Encourage individuals to advocate for themselves on personal issues by providing them resources.



- **Wrap up with action items and next steps.**
- **Follow-up:**
 - Post minutes where all residents and staff have access to them.
 - Meet privately with participants who had lingering concerns.¹¹
- **Recognize contributions:**
 - Recognize and thank current and exiting members.
 - Thank staff, volunteers, and other people that have helped the council.⁴



Resident Council Story:

Residents had many questions about voting in an upcoming national election and what documents they would need to vote. They set up a time when the home's business office manager could speak at a council meeting about what they need to vote, how they can vote, and how the home will help them vote.

In addition to voting, the residents also decided to contact their city representative about an issue affecting their neighborhood.



Agendas

Agendas inform participants, organize meetings, make sure that all tasks are completed, and record what happens.

Simple agendas are best. Include the time, date, and location of the meeting, the times when topics will be discussed, and the time when the meeting will end.

Include a specific time for any person to talk about any topic for a set time (usually two to five minutes per person). This helps keep the rest of the meeting on topic and gives everyone a chance to participate.

See page 41 for a sample agenda.

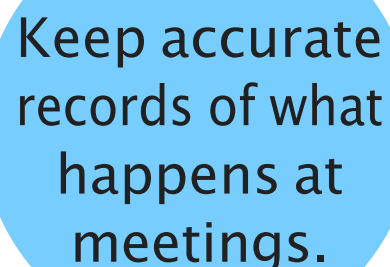


Minutes

Keep accurate records of what happens at meetings. The record-keeper is usually the Secretary. If there is no Secretary, choose someone else to take the minutes. See page 42 for sample council minutes.

Tips for minutes

- Minutes should be brief, complete, and legible.
- Minutes should contain:
 - the name of the person presiding;
 - members present;
 - who took the minutes;
 - date and time of the meeting; and
 - items discussed, actions taken, and date and time of next meeting.
- Minutes should be available for those that want to see them.⁴
- Minutes DO NOT have to include the name of the person making a comment, complaint or request.
- If someone asks to remain anonymous DO NOT include the name in the minutes.



Keep accurate
records of what
happens at
meetings.

Respectful Meetings and Conflict Resolution

Respectful meeting tips include the following:

- Set expectations for meetings that members agree with. For example, no cell phone use and only one person speaks at a time.
- Concentrate on what the person is saying.
- Ask questions if you do not understand. See page 44 for active listening tips.
- Choose a Chair or President who can keep calm, redirect the conversation if needed, and keep the tone respectful.

Basic conflict resolution tips include the following:

- Use the respectful meeting tips above and remind members of expectations.
- Recognize frustration (change in tone, rolling eyes, etc.) and acknowledge everyone's concerns.
- Look for the cause of the conflict.
- Remind everyone that you have shared interests – making a better resident experience.
- Give everyone a chance to speak. Ask questions and listen to the concerns of all.
- Suggest taking a break from the topic.
- Stop or reschedule the topic if conflict becomes unprofessional.

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Ask your ombudsman for ideas and support if needed.



Systems Advocacy

Systems advocacy is the effort to make change throughout larger communities. This might be a facility change, neighborhood change, citywide change, statewide change, national change, and beyond.¹⁵

Some systems advocacy activities include the following:

- Telling the resident story to lawmakers and decision makers by
 - making visits to your legislators' office;
 - calling, writing letters, or emailing lawmakers and decision makers; and
 - testifying at hearings.
- Educating other residents about important issues.
- Educating people on how to register to vote and voting.
- Describing issues from the resident perspective to state agencies.
- Organizing events for other residents, staff, or community members.
- Joining other advocacy groups, such as the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, AARP, or the Center for Medicare Advocacy.

Focus on issues that a majority of members find important.

Ask your ombudsman for resources, tips, and suggestions on how to participate in systems advocacy!

Evaluation

“One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.” - Milton Friedman

Evaluation means setting goals and measuring your work. Evaluation of the council shows strengths and areas for improvement. Use evaluation to celebrate accomplishments and fix problems.

A few ways to evaluate your council include the following:

- Count how many people have been attending meetings and actively participating over time. Are you keeping and growing your participation numbers?
- Create a survey for residents to fill out anonymously. Are residents satisfied with the council?
- List the activities you worked on and what changes were made. What has the council accomplished?
- Create a survey for staff, friends, and family members. What do others think of the council?

Use your findings to make changes, if needed, and report on the accomplishments of the council.

Here are four examples of real councils. What do you see as some of the problems with these situations? What would you do to address these problems?

*Residents are not very involved in council work. Sometimes they talk about a special meal or number of days to play bingo. Sometimes resident rights are read but there is never any discussion or questions. Residents never bring up concerns or complaints (see page 22 for help).

*Only a few residents show up for council meetings. The activities director tries to get residents involved but there is little interest (see page 22).

*Meetings have no structure. Often members just talk about problems without talking about what they can do to fix them (see page 23).

*Many of the members have trouble hearing and there are no tables for writing on (see page 6 and 23).

Common Concerns and Recommendations

Concern: Meeting attendance is low.

Make sure you are advertising and recruiting. Make sure the council is set up to meet the needs of all residents. Ask around, talk to new residents, see if residents will talk about why they can't or don't want to participate.

Concern: Staff are not supportive of the council.

Talk with staff one at a time or at a training for several staff members.

Ask your ombudsman for help. Residents have the right to private and regular council meetings and the facility is required to help them. Hopefully it won't take more than education and talking with staff for them to become more supportive of the council. However, if there is continued resistance, ask your ombudsman for help in advocating for your council.

Concern: There is someone who "hijacks" every meeting and takes over the conversation.

Choose a Chair who can balance letting everyone contribute but not letting one or a few people take over the meeting. Have an agenda with timelines for each topic. Add a time at the end of each meeting for anyone to speak on topics of their choice. If a person is interested in a topic suggest they head a subcommittee and report back.

Concern: Certain family or staff members want to attend every meeting.

You can thank these friends or family members for their interest, but remind them that people who aren't residents only attend if invited. Say this in the bylaws and show family members or friends. Suggest they join or start a family council. If needed, the ombudsman can help council members communicate these things.

Common Concerns and Recommendations

Concern: Someone can no longer fulfill his or her duties as an officer.

The bylaws should contain policies and procedures for when someone can no longer fulfill his or her duties as an officer. If the bylaws do not, vote as a council.

Concern: The meetings turn into “gripe sessions” where everyone complains without solutions.

Include agenda items that focus on actions and events. Celebrate accomplishments and plan events to give back or socialize. Set up a specific time when concerns can be heard and limit the amount of time each person can share, such as 2-5 minutes.

Concern: We ran out of ideas for projects and activities.

There is always work to do! Talk to residents who do not attend council meetings for ideas and unmet needs. Ask your ombudsman for help finding activity ideas.

Concern: There seems to be a lack of dedicated leadership on the council.

Try and understand the root cause of this problem. Are people not aware of the council? Is the council mostly staff run? Do the positions require too much of one person? Work to solve these issues.

Concern: Staff are unresponsive to resident concerns.

Facility staff are required to listen to and consider the complaints and suggestions of resident councils. Submit your concerns in writing. If you need help getting staff to respond, contact your ombudsman for support.

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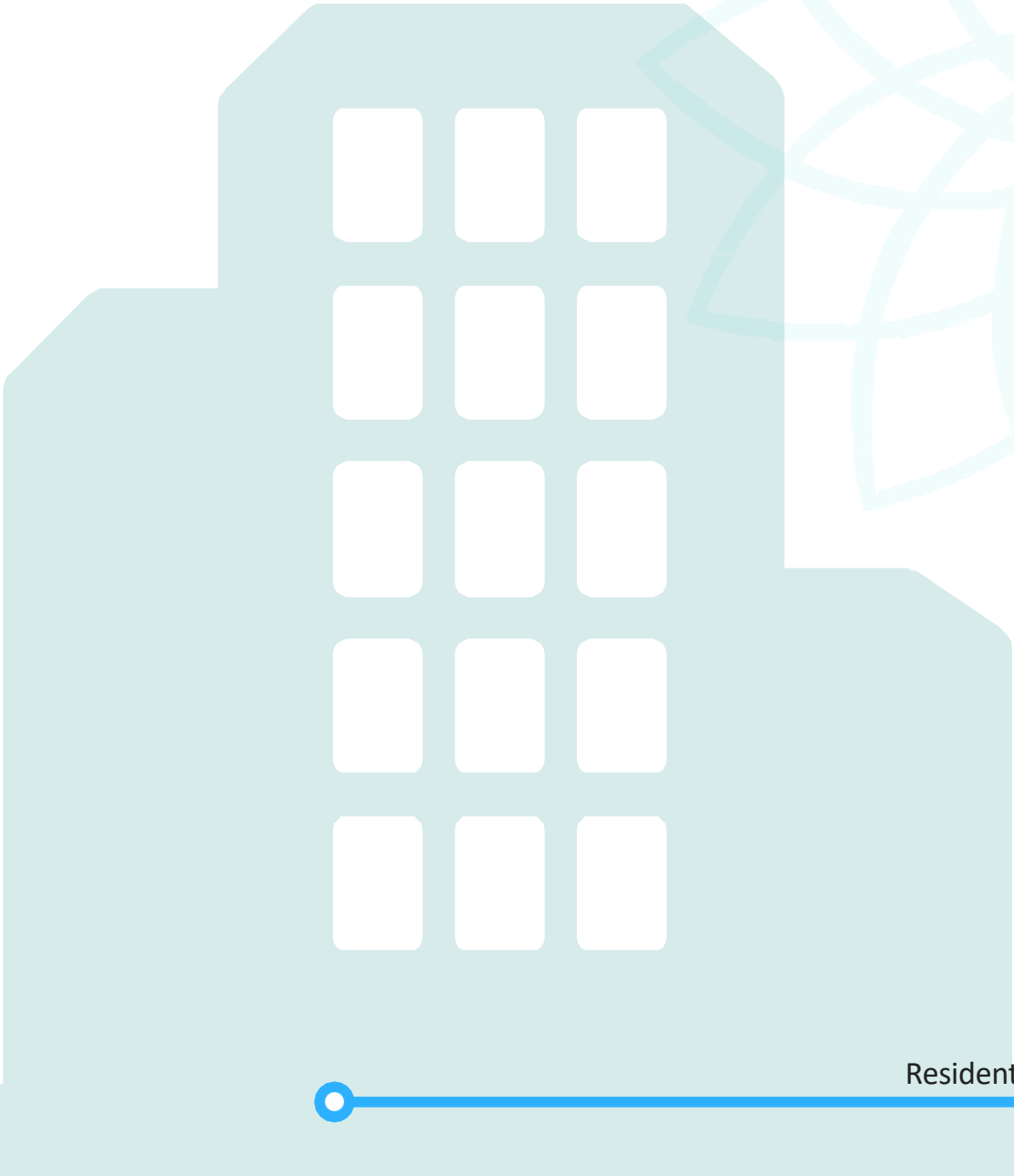
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Sample Resident Council Bylaws ¹⁶

I. Name

The name of our resident council shall be (name of council)

II. Purpose

The purpose of the resident council is to:

- Give residents greater participation in affairs within their own home
- Suggest improvements and assist administration in providing better programs surroundings, and services
- Promote friendship and understanding among residents
- Provide and receive necessary information for the benefit of all residents

III. Membership

Every resident of (name of facility) is a member of the resident council. Every member shall be given the opportunity to vote.

Note: Some councils have representative council members from each wing, building or floor who make up the council. This structure needs to be developed before bylaws are written. See pages 10 - 13.

IV. Officers and Their Duties

Officers of the council shall be:

- President (Chair) – shall preside over all meetings
- Vice President (Vice Chair) – presides in the absence of the president
- Secretary – records and maintains minutes of each meeting
- Treasurer – responsible for all financial business of the council

V. Committees

Executive Committee:

The council shall have an Executive Committee whose purpose is to give direction and organization to the council.

The Executive Committee will include:

(Note: The Executive Committee is generally made up of the Officers, and if the council so chooses, the Committee Chairs).

Standing Committees:

The Council shall also have the following standing committees as needed:

Welcoming – to greet new members and orient them to the facility;

Sunshine – to prepare greeting cards for residents in the hospital, and those who have birthdays. They may send cards to families who have lost a loved one.

Activities – to serve as a liaison with the activities staff to plan and set up recreational programs.

Grievance – to listen to concerns and provide an opportunity for discussion before the full council meets; to follow up on complaints with the administrator or ombudsman.

Each standing committee will select a chairperson who will serve for (period of time). Temporary committees can be established by appointment or as needed.

VI. Elections

Elections of officers/representatives shall be held every (month of elections).

The elections will be conducted using written ballots listing nominations for each office. Nominations will be made at the meeting prior to the election.

In the event that an officer is/becomes unable to fulfill his or her duties; a special election will be held at the next regularly scheduled council meeting.

VII. Meetings

General meetings of the Council will be held every (specific day, time, location).

Note: If you have executive meetings or committee meetings, list the day, time, and location for those as well.

VIII. Amendments

Amendments may be made to the bylaws at any regular or special meeting of the council by a 2/3 vote, providing suggested changes have been read at the previous meeting. Amendments will go into effect immediately.

IX. Rules of Order

Each general meeting will be conducted according to a written agenda. Robert's Rules of Order will be followed unless the council wishes to change or add to the rules based on the determination of the group.

Robert's Rules 101

Keeping meetings on track

1.

Start the meeting with an agenda and follow it in order.

2.

Approve the minutes from last meeting.

3.

Report from the treasurer and other standing committees.

4.

Other reports as needed.

Bylaws

Bylaws are the rules that a council follows.

Have bylaws ready during meetings for questions about the rules or procedures.

5.

Business pending from last meeting.

6.

New business to discuss and vote on.

7.

Adjourn.

Voting Procedures

Member makes a motion: *"I move that we hold a movie night."*

Another member: *"I second that motion."* (Every motion needs a second.)

Discussion: *"Great idea!"*

Amendment: *"I move that the movie should be Casablanca!"*

Discussion: *"Great idea!"*

Vote on amendment: amendment passes.

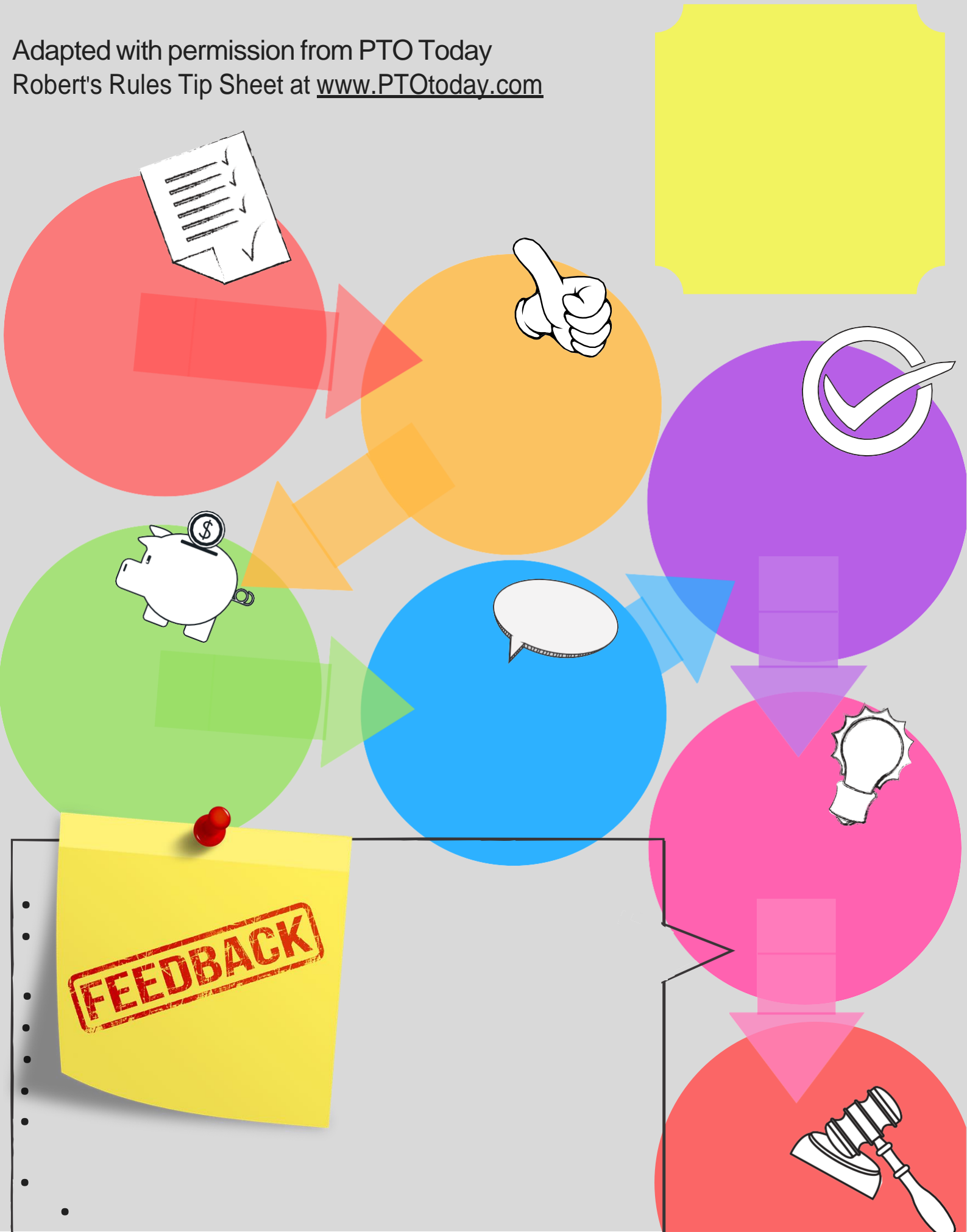
President calls for a vote: *"On the motion to have a Casablanca movie night: aye or nay?"*

Vote on amended motion: motion passes.

Secretary tallies the votes: majority rules.

No cross talk- members speak directly to the chair.

Adapted with permission from PTO Today
Robert's Rules Tip Sheet at www.PTOtoday.com



How to Accomplish What You Want To Do In Meetings ¹⁷

MAIN MOTION

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.

1. After recognition, make a main motion.
2. Member: "Madame Chairman, I move that."

AMENDING A MOTION

You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed.

3. After recognition, "Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by adding the following words ..."
4. After recognition, "Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words ..."
5. After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words, ... , and adding in their place the following words ..."

REFER TO A COMMITTEE

You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation.

6. After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the question be referred to a committee made up of members Smith, Jones and Brown."

POSTPONE DEFINITELY

You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration.

7. After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question until ... "

PREVIOUS QUESTION

You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote.

8. After recognition, "Madam President, I move the previous question to vote."

LIMIT DEBATE

You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question.

9. After recognition, "Madam President, I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker."

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

You want to end a motion that is being discussed.

10. After recognition, "Madam Moderator, I move to postpone the question indefinitely."

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

You are against a motion just proposed and want to learn who is for and who is against the motion.

11. After recognition, "Madame President, I move to postpone the motion indefinitely."

RECESS

You want to take a break for a while.

12. After recognition, "Madame Moderator, I move to recess for ten minutes."

ADJOURNMENT

You want the meeting to end.

13. After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to adjourn."

PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW A MOTION

You have made a motion and after discussion, want to withdraw it.

14. After recognition, "Madam President, I ask permission to withdraw my motion."

CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY

At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda was adopted. The chairman is not following the order of the approved agenda.

15. Without recognition, "Call for orders of the day."

SUSPENDING THE RULES

The agenda has been approved and as the meeting progressed, it became obvious that an item you are interested in will not come up before adjournment.

16. After recognition, "Madam Chairman, I move to suspend the rules and move item 5 to position 2."

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing.

17. Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."

18. Chairman: "State your point."

19. Member: "There is too much noise, I can't hear."

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

You are going to propose a question that is likely to be controversial and you feel that some of the members will try to end it by various maneuvers. Also, you want to keep out visitors and the press.

20. After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that we go into a committee of the whole."

POINT OF ORDER

It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules.

21. Without recognition, "I rise to a point of order," or "Point of order."

POINT OF INFORMATION

You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

22. Without recognition, "Point of information."

POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

You are confused about some of the parliamentary rules.

23. Without recognition, "Point of parliamentary inquiry."

APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR

Without recognition, "I appeal from the decision of the chair."



Vision, Values, and Mission Worksheet

Our vision is a community where:_____

Five of our shared values are:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Our mission is to:_____



Sample Agenda for Cedarlawn Resident Council

October 4th, 2023

1:30 pm

Woodlake Meeting Room A

1:30 Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions.

1:35 Roll Call.

1:40 Reading of Last Meeting's Minutes.

1:45 Committee Reports: Standing, then temporary committees give reports.

2:00 Unfinished Business: Introduction of new topics, ideas, suggestions, and votes.

2:15 Citizen Communication: Limit to two minutes per person.

2:20 Announcements: Informing the council of other subjects and events.

2:30 Adjourn: The meeting comes to an end by majority consensus.



Sample of Council Meeting Minutes ¹⁸

Name of Council

(Council Meeting Minutes: Month Day, Year)
(time and location)

Board Members:

Present: Danny Smith, Martha Parker, Tiffany Drucker, Pat Dunn, Jack Porter, Mary Ruffin and Leslie Hudson; Quorum present? Yes

Others Present: Staff Representative, Sheila Owens

Proceedings: Meeting called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Chair, Danny Smith (Last month's) meeting minutes were amended and approved.

Chair's Report: Recommends that council should continue efforts to inform other residents of their voting rights. After brief discussion, council agreed.

Drucker mentioned that staff member, Violet's husband is ill and in the hospital. MOTION direct the Cedarlawn Committee to send handwritten cards to Violet's husband, expressing the council's sympathy and support; seconded and passed.

Grievances Committee report provided by Chair, Pat Dunn:

Smith explained that several residents have come forward to complain about the lack of choices for breakfast. MOTION to compile the complaints and present to staff; seconded and passed.

Volunteer Services Committee's report provided by Chair, Mary Ruffin:

Ruffin updated the council about the committee's work to make blankets for the homeless; she explained the council would like to begin a food drive for the month of November. MOTION to begin a food drive in November; seconded; DISCUSSION several members had concerns about how the planning would go, MOTION to assign the volunteer services committee to plan the details and report back to the committee; seconded and passed.

Citizen Communication: Johnson from the third floor explains they have been having temperature issues and that it is too hot in the summer months. MOTION for Danny Smith to meet with Mrs. Johnson and facility staff and report back; seconded and passed.

Assessment of the Meeting: Drucker noted that the past three meetings have ended on time. She thanked the members for being mindful of the agenda and time in their discussions.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Secretary, Martha Parker.

Active Listening Skills

Active listening ensures you are being attentive to the speaker and truly hearing and understanding what they are communicating.

Some signs that you are being an active listener include:

1. Smiling
2. Making eye contact
3. Listening without jumping in to respond or thinking up a response
4. Mirroring facial expression and body language
5. Maintaining open and calm posture
6. Being free of distraction
7. Remembering
8. Questioning
9. Reflecting
10. Clarifying
11. Summarizing

Say:

- I'm hearing you say...
- Can you tell me more about...
- Are you saying...?
- Use the person's name.
- I am going to summarize this conversation to make sure I have everything right.
- Last time we talked I heard you say... but now I am hearing that you... have things changed?
- It sounds like it's important to you that...

Don't Say:

- I know how you feel...
- If I were you...
- I think...
- My advice is...
- You should have....
- I understand.

Speaking and Listening Effectively During Conflict¹⁹

Speaking Skills

Skill 1: Share your story using a calm voice and describe events in chronological order.

Skill 2: Keep your statements short.

Skill 3: Use “I” statements rather than “You” statements.

Skill 4: Use sentences, not questions.

Example: “I worry when you are late.” (As opposed to: “Why are you late again?”)

Skill 5: Be polite and patient: ask them how you can help them.

Skill 6: Be a good listener.

Listening Skills:

Skill 1: Edit out your typical first response.

Skill 2: Just listen. Don’t mentally “rehearse” your speech or prepare your rebuttal.

Skill 3: Do not confuse understanding with agreement.

Skill 4: Understanding happens only when the other person feels understood.

Skill 5: Non-verbally let the other person know you are “with” him or her.

Skill 6: Look at the person speaking.

- i. Find a quiet place to talk.
- ii. Face the person who is speaking.
- iii. Nod your head in agreement when you agree.

Sample Grievance Form

For residents, staff, or family members to file a formal grievance with the council. The council then votes to bring to the home's management.

Date Received:

Name: Grievant's Information

Title:

Phone:

Room Number:

Email:

Grievance Information

Date of Occurrence:

State the policies, procedures, or rules that have been violated:

Please Give a Detailed account of what happened:

What Remedy do you Suggest?

By signing below, I indicate that the information contained on this form is true and factual to the best of my knowledge.

Grievant's Signature:

Receiving Council Member's Signature:

Date Signed:

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