



ISAAC Leadership Material

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
General Committee Structure	4
Why do we have committees or Boards of Directors?	4
Voting power/decision making/responsibilities of the organization	4
Each officer’s role (responsibilities, delegating power, etc.)	4
What are the duties of the other members on the committee?	5
Appointments/recruitment/elections to committees and elections of committee officers	5
Robert’s Rules of Order ¹	6
What is parliamentary procedure?	6
Why is parliamentary procedure important?	6
Four basic types of motions.....	6
How are motions presented?.....	7
Voting on a motion:.....	8
Knowing Your Rights as a Committee Member	9
Voting	9
Rights of people who use AAC	9
If I don’t have a way to communicate, how can I participate?.....	9
How can I communicate with members outside of meetings?	9
Leadership for People Who Use AAC	10
Etiquette	10
How do I act during a meeting?	10
Right vocabulary to use in committee meetings	10
Recommendations for Natural Speakers	11
Barriers	12
Accessibility	12
Buildings	12
Documents	12
Time.....	13
References	14

Introduction

The ISAAC Leadership Development Program is for anyone who wants to build skills as a leader. The program is aimed at facilitating the development of leadership skills for people who use AAC and others within the AAC community.

This document is an amalgamation of documents developed by the People Who Use AAC (PWUAAC) Committee.

General Committee Structure

A committee has a general structure with a chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer, and committee members.

Why do we have committees or Boards of Directors?

- A Board of Directors is the body that makes final decisions.
- Committees serve as an important means to actively involve all board members (and non-board members) in the organization's work, and for board leadership to emerge.
- Committees can play a helpful role in building teamwork among larger boards. While they require more administrative management from the staff and board president, they also divvy up tasks and expertise efficiently.
- In some cases, an ad hoc committee or task force is formed to complete a particular task within a few months. Many feel more comfortable signing on to a temporary, ad hoc committee than to a permanent standing committee.

Voting power/decision making/responsibilities of the organization

- The board or committee member has a right to vote on any issue that is up for a vote.
- Committees have the power to make certain decisions designated by the board.

Each officer's role (responsibilities, delegating power, etc.)

- The chair of the committee is responsible for ensuring that the following tasks are done (whether by the chair or delegated person):
 - contacting people
 - scheduling the meetings
 - writing the agenda
 - facilitating meetings
 - reporting back to the board
- The vice-chair has the second seat on the committee and if responsible for:
 - helping the chair to prepare for meetings
 - representing the organization by going to meetings
 - taking over responsibilities of the chair when needed
- The secretary takes the minutes (notes) and keeps records of all minutes and documentation.
- The treasurer oversees the financial position.

What are the duties of the other members on the committee?

Other committee members have the right to:

- have a say on the governing of the organization
- attend, speak and vote on the issues
- have their names on the minutes
- Get notices of meetings

Appointments/recruitment/elections to committees and elections of committee officers

- An appointment is a position or task you are given without a general election by the membership (usually you are appointed by the committee or board).
- Recruitment occurs when a position is vacant or more people are needed for a particular committee or project.
- An election to a committee is when the board or committee votes for people to join the committee.
- Election of the officers is when everyone on the committee votes for the chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer

Robert's Rules of Order ¹

What is parliamentary procedure?

“Parliamentary procedure” is a set of rules for conduct during meetings, which allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

Why is parliamentary procedure important?

It is a time-tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings. It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization. Today, Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised, is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs, organizations and other groups. So it's important that everyone knows these basic rules!

Organizations using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed order of business. Below is a typical example:

1. Call to order
2. Roll call of members present
3. Approval of minutes of last meeting
4. Officer reports
5. Committee reports
6. Special orders – Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting
7. Old business
8. New business
9. Announcements
10. Adjournment

The method used by members to express themselves is in the form of moving motions. A motion is a proposal that the entire membership take action or a stand on an issue. Individual members can:

1. Move to propose idea/issue
2. Second the motion
3. Debate/discuss motion
4. Vote on motions

Four basic types of motions

1. Main Motions: The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the membership for their consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor, and yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.
2. Subsidiary Motions: Their purpose is to change or affect how a main motion is handled, and is voted on before a main motion.
3. Privileged Motions: Their purpose is to bring up items that are urgent about special or important matters unrelated to pending business.

4. Incidental Motions: Their purpose is to provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other motion.

How are motions presented?

1. Obtain the floor.
 - a. Wait until the last speaker has finished.
 - b. Rise and address the chair by saying, "Mr/Madame Chair, or Mr/Madame President."
 - c. Wait until the chair recognizes you.
2. Make your motion.
 - a. Speak in a clear and concise manner.
 - b. Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we ..." rather than, "I move that we do not"
 - c. Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.
3. Wait for someone to second your motion.
4. Another member will second your motion or the chair will call for a second.
5. If there is no second to your motion it is lost.
6. The chair states your motion.
 - a. The chair will say, "It has been moved and seconded that we ..." thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
 - b. The membership then either debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
 - c. Once your motion is presented to the membership by the chair it becomes "assembly property" and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.
7. Expanding on your motion.
 - a. The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it.
 - b. The mover is always allowed to speak first.
 - c. All comments and debate must be directed to the chair.
 - d. Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.
 - e. The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the chair.
8. Putting the question to the membership.
 - a. The chair asks, "Are you ready to vote on the question?"
 - b. If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
 - c. On a motion to move the previous question may be adapted.

Voting on a motion:

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the by-laws of policy of your organization. There are five methods used to vote by most organizations. They are:

1. By Voice – The chair asks those in favor to say, "aye", those opposed to say "no". Any member may move for a exact count.
2. By Roll Call – Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person's vote is required.
3. By General Consent – When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the chair says, "if there is no objection ..." The membership shows agreement by their silence, however if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.
4. By Division – This is a slight verification of a voice vote. It does not require a count unless the chair so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.
5. By Ballot – Members write their vote on a slip of paper. This method is used when secrecy is desired.

There are two other motions that are commonly used that relate to voting:

1. Motion to Table – This motion is often used in the attempt to "kill" a motion. The option is always present, however, to "take from the table," for reconsideration by the membership.
2. Motion to Postpone Indefinitely – This is often used as a means of parliamentary strategy and allows opponents of motion to test their strength without an actual vote being taken. Also, debate is once again open on the main motion.

Parliamentary procedure is the best way to get things done at your meetings. But, it will only work if you use it properly:

1. Allow motions that are in order.
2. Have members obtain the floor properly.
3. Speak clearly and concisely.
4. Obey the rules of debate.
5. Most importantly, *BE COURTEOUS*.

Knowing Your Rights as a Committee Member

Voting

As a member of a committee you have the right to vote on every issue presented before the committee. Voting is saying “yes” or “no” to a proposal – or deciding not to take a side (abstaining) – based on what YOU believe. As long as you are present at a meeting, you have the same right to vote as every other member at the meeting. If you are not at a meeting, you still have a right to vote by asking a fellow member, who will be at the meeting, to voice your vote (called a *proxy vote*).

Rights of people who use AAC

A person who uses AAC has the right to have an attendant accompany him or her to the meetings. The attendant can have access to any materials privy to the member, and assist that member in reading/reviewing the materials. The attendant may also communicate on behalf of the member, if so requested by the member. It is up to the member to decide whether or not he or she needs somebody to assist at the meetings. He or she has the right to have somebody there to assist with note-taking, organizing materials that are handed out, etc.

If I don't have a way to communicate, how can I participate?

Having someone to facilitate communication is very important when you have no high-tech device available to facilitate your participation

How can I communicate with members outside of meetings?

When you are outside of committee meetings, you can communicate via e-mail. You may want someone to copy their notes for you. You can ask guest speakers to provide a printout or electronic version of their presentations.

Leadership for People Who Use AAC

Having people who use AAC on committees is important because they need to have a voice. They bring thoughts that the other members might not bring to the discussion.

Etiquette

- Be aware that communicating with AAC takes longer than speech. Allow extra time for the person who uses AAC to communicate.
- Providing an agenda and/or notes ahead of the meeting can help the person who uses AAC to prepare their thoughts ahead of time and speed up communication.
- Taking notes can be difficult for someone who uses AAC. Providing notes after the meeting can help.
- Discuss with your team members how they want to indicate that they have something to add to the discussion and what they like their communication partners to do while they compose their words.
- Scheduling personal care is difficult to do, so make sure when you are scheduling a meeting that everybody can attend. It is helpful to schedule a meeting a month in advance.
- The communication partner also plays an important role, but it is still the primary responsibility of people who use AAC to take ownership for their communication. Please respect the person who uses AAC as an equal member of the team.

How do I act during a meeting?

- Be yourself.
- Put sentences into your device:
 - If you are using a homemade board, have your personal assistant write down the sentence before getting everyone to listen.
 - Getting noticed to talk – establish a means to get the attention or the group or interject into a discussion:
 - You have to get noticed, so raise your hand when you have something to say. If you aren't able to do that, just start speaking. It is better to speak up, so that others will be able to hear your input. The same goes for an online meeting or conference call.

Right vocabulary to use in committee meetings

- Store pre-programmed vocabulary and sentences into your device for effective communication during committee meetings. It is very important to have appropriate vocabulary pre-programmed. For example:
 - I want to put my two cents in this discussion.
 - I have new business or I have new business to introduce. (*Having new business means you have something new to introduce to the committee or board.*)
 - The question “can we table this discussion for next meeting?” (*Means hold off on a discussion.*)

Recommendations for Natural Speakers

- Be normal! Communicate with people who use AAC in your normal voice and manner. Do not attempt to communicate in the form they are using (unless they ask you to).
- You need to give people who use AAC the time to develop sentences:
 - People who use AAC typically communicate at a rate of ten words per minute rather than 200 words a minute, like someone who uses speech. Patience is important, so that the person who uses AAC is able to give input as well.
 - If you do not understand what is being said, ask for it to be repeated.
- Understand why people who use AAC may not have the expected literacy skills:
 - Many AAC devices don't have a lot of the vocabulary pre-programmed for effective communication at committee meetings.
 - As with anyone new to committee or group meetings, make sure the person who uses AAC understands the different vocabulary associated with Robert's Rules of Order or a particular organization/issue. If there is any concern ask, "Does everyone understand what I mean by (insert word, phrase)?" Leave time for people who use AAC to respond.
- Make sure people who use AAC have access to all materials being presented:
 - Make a copy of your documents for fellow committee members.
 - Make sure the document is legible and in large enough print.
 - Offer assistance to people who use AAC who do not have an attendant and need help in reading a document, holding it or turning pages.
- Remember that everyone on the committee has the same rights and an equal say in all issues. If you see that someone – a person who uses AAC or a natural speaker – is being denied their rights, speak out and make sure the person knows their rights. This is a "level playing field" and everyone, including you, should be heard.
- Try to create as many ways to communicate with people who use AAC as possible. Set up the same instant messaging account for all committee members to use. Share your email addresses.
 - During conference call meetings, make every attempt to be at a phone and in front of a computer so that you can communicate by voice and over instant messaging.
- If you are facilitating a meeting, go around the group for individual votes to ensure everyone has a chance to respond, especially during phone/online meetings. If meeting in person and everyone is mobile with their hands, you can also ask for a show of hands during a vote.

Barriers

Accessibility

Accessibility is a key aspect in facilitating the participation of people with disabilities.

Buildings

For most countries:

- All public buildings have to be accessible.
- A building where the committee meeting takes place has to have an accessible way in.
- This includes a ramp or an elevator if there are stairs to the door or room.
- Doors must open wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair.
- The room has to be well-lit.
- The bathrooms have to be accessible, i.e., grab bars, higher toilet and sink, etc.

Documents

Having the documents understandable for everyone is very important because people have to know what is going on:

- The documents have to be legible:
 - If the person has low or no vision, the documents have to be in large print or Braille.
- Everyone has the right to request the material in a format accessible to them:
 - If new material is introduced at a meeting, request that it be read to you or ask for any decisions to be tabled until the next meeting so that you can have adequate time to review the materials in the same way other committee members were able to.
 - If the documents are sent via e-mail they are usually in a format like .pdf or .doc (WORD). You can copy and paste them into reading programs.
- There are a couple of programs that read:
 - Write:Outloud is a text-to-speech program, or "talking word processor" that people use when they need assistance with writing. It helps the user to hear what they are typing in order to produce written language.
 - Intellitalk and Clicker 5 are additional examples of "talking word processor" applications. Many users will use word prediction software to provide this same benefit along with the actual word being predicted from a window. Common word prediction programs include Co:Writer, Penfriend and SoothSayer.

- People who have trouble with reading will choose programs such as Kurzweil 3000, Wynn, CAST and TextHelp. They use these programs to have the contents of electronic text read back to them using the computer's speech synthesis function. These programs are commonly referred to as "e-readers" and frequently have a number of additional tools to support both reading comprehension and written language.

Time

Allowing time to understand the issues and materials is important to everyone, including people who use AAC:

- People should allow time for you to get ready for the day.
- You need to have time to set up your communication device before the meeting starts, if needed.
- People should allow additional time to the agenda to allow a person who uses AAC to talk.
- The agenda and materials should be sent to everyone at least 72 hours in advance.
- Extra time should be allotted to review new materials in a meeting.

References

1. Robert's Rules of Order. (n.d.). *Introduction to Robert's Rules of Order*. Retrieved from <http://www.robertsrules.org/rulesintro.htm>.