



Board Meeting Agendas

An important action in preparing for meetings is discussing meeting agendas, structure, and support materials as tools for the board’s work. Each board’s meeting space will look and feel differently based on the board’s culture and organizational values. The board should identify a meeting format and content that facilitates decision-making, learning, and meaningful board experiences for all board members.

In crafting a meeting agenda, the board may use a “consent agenda” to expedite routine items like meeting minutes, financials, or committee reports, which saves time during meetings for more strategic discussions. Consent agenda items are typically things discussed at every meeting and are likely non-controversial. If your board uses a consent agenda, make sure all board members understand the consent agenda process including how to deal with any requests to move an item off the consent agenda for further discussion.

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Resources Links

BoardSource

- Board Meetings - FAQs: <https://boardsource.org/resources/board-meetings-faqs/>
- Consent Agendas: <https://boardsource.org/resources/consent-agendas/>
- Board Meeting Preparation: 10 Tips for Chief Executives and Board Chairs: <https://boardsource.org/board-meeting-preparation-ten-tips-for-chief-executives-and-board-chairs/>

National Council of Nonprofits

- Effective Board Meetings for Good: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/effective-board-meetings-good-governance>
- What Makes a Great Meeting?: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/thought-leadership/what-makes-great-meeting>



Think about your board's most recent meeting agendas as you respond to the following questions. Use the space provided to write down your answers and any action steps.

Ask yourself...

- Do the agendas reflect the conversations the board needs to have at this time or stage of organizational development?
- How do the agendas balance discussion around the nonprofit's past, present, and future?
- Do the agendas have a mix of oversight items, strategic work, and bigger picture connection to cause conversations?
- At meetings as the board moves through agendas, is the board checking tasks off or taking action towards meeting specific goals?

Notes & Next Steps



Activity: Build Your Meeting Agenda

To get the most out of your board's valuable meeting time, there are actions to take before, during, and after board meetings. An important action in preparing for meetings is shaping the agenda. Use the prompts to organize your thoughts as you prepare for your next board meeting.

Mission: What is your nonprofit's mission? Reinforce your mission by having it front and center on the agenda when making decisions.

Leads: Who is leading each portion of your meeting? Do they have access to the information, materials, and/or supports needed to facilitate the agenda item?

Meeting Goals: What are a few tangible goals for the meeting?

Welcome: How will you create space for warm-up conversation and engagement?

Consent Agenda: What routine items are included on your consent agenda (e.g., meeting minutes, financials, or committee reports)? Remember, consent agenda items are typically things discussed at every meeting and are likely non-controversial.

Decision Points: At this meeting, what items require a decision of the board?

Discussion Topics & New Business: Are there items that need deeper board discussion, which may or may not require a decision at the meeting? Are there new business items to introduce?

Learning: How is the board continuing their learning and development about the organization, nonprofit practices, and the larger cause in which your nonprofit is working?

Wrap-Up: How will you review what was accomplished at the meeting, clarify any actions or work needed before the next meeting, and identify goals for the next meeting?

Connection: What connects your board members with each other? Are you leaving time for conversation, celebration, and relationship?