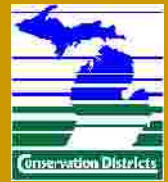


Training Module 8

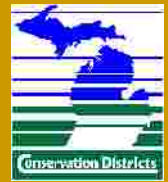
Conducting Board Meetings





What You'll Learn in This Module

- | How to Conduct Board Meetings using Parliamentary Procedures
 - | Example Board Meeting Agenda
- | Making and Voting on Motions
- | Provisions of the Open Meetings Act
 - | Public Forum
 - | Closed Sessions
 - | Board Meeting Minutes



Discussion Questions

- | Why should parliamentary procedures be used to conduct board meetings?
- | What are the methods used by your District to vote on motions?
- | What is the reason why Districts must comply with the Open Meetings Act?
- | Can the public speak out on an issue during your monthly board meeting?
- | According to the Open Meetings Act, District boards can only go into a closed session for a few specific reasons. What are these reasons?
- | To stay in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, are minutes required when a District goes into a closed session?



Board Meetings

Once a month, each Conservation District in Michigan holds a regular meeting of the board of directors.

During this meeting, the business of the District is discussed and decisions are made.



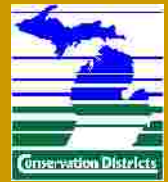
Photo courtesy of
USDA NRCS



Parliamentary Procedures

When Districts conduct board meetings, parliamentary procedures are used. Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules for conduct at meetings. It allows for everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

Districts using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed agenda. An example is on the following slide.



Example Board Meeting Agenda

I. CALL TO ORDER The chairperson says, "The meeting will come to order."	VII. OLD BUSINESS Business left over from previous meetings.
II. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA Members may add topics to the agenda.	VIII. NEW BUSINESS Introduction of new topics.
III. PUBLIC FORUM To hear public comment during the meeting.	VIII. STAFF/AGENCY REPORTS Brief reports from staff /partners
IV. CONSENT CALENDAR Items of a routine nature, i.e. previous months meeting minutes, to be voted on with one motion without discussion.	IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS Informing the assembly of other subjects and events.
V. OFFICERS' REPORTS Often limited to a report from treasurer, but others may report at this time.	X. ADJOURNMENT The meeting ends by a vote, or by general consent.

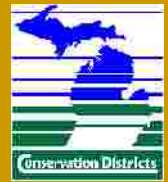


Making a Motion

Members of the board formally adopt positions by making motions. A motion is a proposal on which the board takes a stand or takes action on an issue.

Board members can:

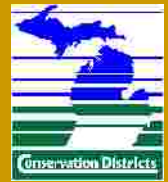
- Present motions: make a proposal
- Second motions: express support for discussion or another member's motion
- Debate motions: give opinions on the motion
- Vote on motions: make a decision



Voting on a Motion

The method of voting on a motion depends on the situation, but typically includes:

- **By Voice:** The chairperson asks those in favor to say “aye” and those opposed to say “no.” (For majority votes only.) A member may move for an exact count. This is the method most often used by District boards.
- **By Show of Hands:** Members raise their hands as sight verification of, or as an alternative to a voice vote. It does not require a count. A member may move for an exact count.



Voting on a Motion (continued)

- **By Roll Call:** If a record of each person's vote is needed, each member answers "yes", "no" or "present" (indicating the choice not to vote) as his or her name is called.
- **By Ballot:** Members write their vote on a slip of paper. This is done when secrecy is desired.
- **By General Consent:** When a motion isn't likely to be opposed, the chairperson says, "if there is no objection..." Members show agreement by their silence. If someone says, "I object," the matter must be put to a vote.



The Open Meetings Act

As an entity of state government, each Conservation District must comply with provisions of Act 267 (P.A. 1976), The Open Meetings Act.

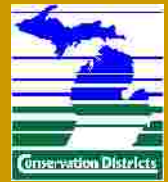
The intent of the Open Meetings Act is to allow the people of Michigan to know what goes on in government by giving them access through open meetings.



The Open Meetings Act (continued)

The Open Meetings Act provides that:

- I All regular and special meetings of a Conservation District board of directors shall be “open to the public and shall be held in a place available to the general public.”
- I Public notice of a meeting, “shall contain name, address, and phone number of the body and shall be posted at its principal office and other locations considered appropriate by the public body.”



The Open Meetings Act (continued)

- | Notice of schedule of regular meetings must be made within 10 days after the board's first meeting of the calendar year or its fiscal year.
- | Changes in regular schedule must be posted within 3 days of the meeting from which the date change was made.
- | Special meetings must be posted at least 18 hours in advance.



The Open Meetings Act (continued)

- | Consideration should be given to the use of newspaper, radio and television stations as a means of further publicizing board of directors' meetings.
- | Consideration should also be given to holding District board meetings at a place recognized by the general public as a public meeting place; i.e. a county building, public school, community rooms in banks or other commercial businesses.



Public Forum

The Open Meetings Act also provides provisions for the public to address the District board during the board meeting.

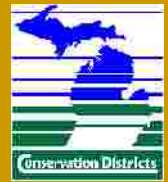
The Act states, “A person shall be permitted to address a meeting of a public body under the rules established and recorded by the public body.”



Public Forum (continued)

The District board may establish rules or *policies* which regulates the conditions under which the public may address the board meeting.

These rules should include such conditions as the length of time any one person may be permitted to speak, the place on the agenda set aside for public address, and a requirement that persons desiring to address the public body identify themselves.



Closed Sessions

The Open Meetings Act allows a very few specific reasons for a public body to meet in a closed session. A Conservation District may only meet in closed sessions for the following purposes:

1. To consider the dismissal, suspension, or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member, or individual agent, when the named person requests a closed session.



Closed Sessions (continued)

2. For strategy and negotiation sessions connected with the negotiation of a collective bargaining agreement when either negotiating party requests a closed session.
3. To consider the purchase or lease of real property up to the time an option to purchase or lease that real property is obtained.



Closed Sessions (continued)

4. To consult with its attorney regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with pending litigation, but only when an open meeting would have detrimental financial effect on the litigating or settlement position of the public body.
5. To review the specific contents of an application for employment or appointment to a public office when the candidate requests that the application remain confidential. However, all interviews by a public body for employment or appointment to a public office shall be held in an open meeting pursuant to this Act.



Closed Sessions (continued)

With the acceptance of 1 & 2 listed on the previous slides, a 2/3 rolls call vote is required for the District board to hold a closed session.

A separate set of minutes must be kept. The minutes may be destroyed 1 year and 1 day after approval of the minutes of the regular meeting at which the closed session was approved.



Meeting Minutes

- A. Minutes must be kept for all meetings and must contain:
 - | Time, date, and place of meeting;
 - | Members present and absent;
 - | Record of all decisions made and all roll call votes;
 - | Explanation for the purpose (s) if meeting is closed.

- B. Except for closed sessions, all minutes are public records and must be ready in draft form within 8 business days of the meeting.



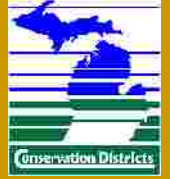
Meeting Minutes (continued)

- c. Corrections to minutes must be made not later than the following meeting.
- d. Approved minutes must be ready within 5 business days of the meeting which they were approved.



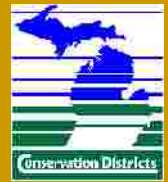
Summary

- | Districts conduct board meetings using parliamentary procedures which allows for everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.
- | Members of the board formally adopt positions and take action by making and voting on motions.
- | As an entity of state government, a Conservation District must comply with The Open Meetings Act.



Summary

- | The Open Meetings Act provides provisions for the public to address the District board during the board meeting.
- | The Open Meetings Act allows a very few specific reasons for a public body to meet in a closed session.
- | Minutes must be kept for all meetings, those open to the public as well as closed sessions.



Review Questions

- | Why should parliamentary procedures be used to conduct board meetings?
- | What are the methods used by your District to vote on motions?
- | What is the reason why Districts must comply with the Open Meetings Act?
- | Can the public speak out on an issue during your monthly board meeting?
- | According to the Open Meetings Act, District boards can only go into a closed session for a few specific reasons. What are these reasons?
- | To stay in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, are minutes required when a District goes into a closed session?



Resources Available

Resource Available	Where to Find It
Book: "In a Public Light: A Guide to Michigan's Open Meetings & Freedom of Information Acts"	Michigan Township Association 512 Westshire Dr. Lansing, MI 48917 (517) 321-6467
Booklet: The Michigan's Open Meetings Act & Freedom of Information Act	In the Conservation District <u>Operations Handbook</u> located in each District office
Book: "Robert's Rules in Plain English" by Doris P. Zimmerman	Local library or bookstore
Conservation District Operations and Directors Handbooks	Located in each Conservation District office.