

Tricks of the Trade—Using Your Agenda Well

1. Adapt the standard order of business (see Robert’s Rules) to work for you.

The standard agenda is a good starting point. But if it doesn’t work for your particular local governing body, you do have the power to change it.

Here’s a basic plan:

- Reading and approval of minutes
- Reports from officers, boards, and standing committee
- Reports from special committees
- Special orders of business
- Unfinished business and general business
- New business

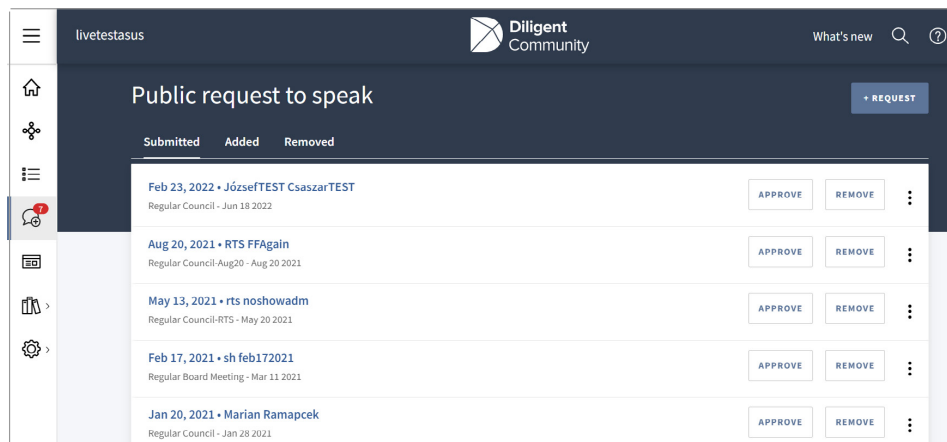
2. Set a start time and stick to it.

If your agenda states the meeting starts at noon, then start at noon, not 12:01. Meetings tend to start late for two main reasons: (1) an essential person is unprepared, or (2) members are late. The solution to both is simply to establish a pattern of punctuality.

Warning: Your first attempt to adjust to the new normal of “the agenda start time is the actual start time” may be rough. Members will walk in after the meeting has started. It’ll be a wake-up call that you’re actually starting on time. But it won’t take long for people to adapt, and you’ll find this aspect of agenda management to be extremely helpful in supporting meeting efficiency.

3. Repeat each agenda item. And repeat any motions.

Repeatedly. Members can often be confused as to what agenda item you’re on, what’s being discussed, what motion is on the floor. So, it’s your job to fix this by repeating each item ad nauseum. Repeat it right after it’s seconded, repeat it again during debate, and repeat it again before taking a vote. No matter how clear you think you’ve been, at least one member hasn’t been paying attention and is confused. Keep everyone on the same page by constantly clarifying where you’re at on the agenda.



The screenshot shows the Diligent Community interface for a user named 'livetestasus'. The main heading is 'Public request to speak' with a '+ REQUEST' button. Below this is a table with columns for 'Submitted', 'Added', and 'Removed'. The table lists five requests, each with a date, meeting name, and meeting details, and buttons for 'APPROVE' and 'REMOVE'.

Submitted	Added	Removed
Feb 23, 2022 • JózsefTEST CsaszarTEST		
Aug 20, 2021 • RTS FFagain		
May 13, 2021 • rts noshowadm		
Feb 17, 2021 • sh feb172021		
Jan 20, 2021 • Marian Ramapcek		

A Step-by-Step Guide to Making a Motion

According to Robert's Rules of Order, a motion is a proposal that a council or governing body take a specific action. Making a motion can be summarized as a six-step process



1. Be Recognized. The first step in making a motion is to seek recognition by the chairperson to speak. Any member of the local governing board may speak up and address the chairperson.



2. Make a Motion. After recognition, the member of the council may propose the motion by saying, "I move that funds be allocated for repaving Main Street."



3. Second the Motion. A different member of the council needs to speak up and offer a second to this proposed motion. And all this second member needs to say is, "Second."



4. Repeat the Motion. Once a second has been given, the chairperson repeats the motion back to the group, officially stating by this repetition that the idea as proposed is now available for consideration by the group. The chairperson simply says, "It has been moved and seconded that funds be allocated for repaving Main Street."



5. Discuss the Motion. The head of the council next invites debate about this motion by asking, "Is there any discussion?" Consideration of a motion could include various members offering their ideas and opinions, or it might include referral of the proposal to a committee, or postponed consideration until a later meeting.



6. Vote on the Motion. And as a final step after discussion, the group needs to take some action to dispose of the motion. The chairperson should lead by saying, "If there is no further discussion, we will take a vote. All those in favor of allocating funds for repaving Main Street say, 'aye.' All those opposed say, 'no.'" Then, the chairperson should state the results of that vote, by saying, for example, "The 'ayes' have it and the motion is adopted. Funds will be allocated for the repaving of Main Street."

Hear From Our Customers:

The Top Benefits of Our Technology

We asked some of our local government customers what they love most about partnering with us.

Here's what they had to report.



Efficiency

“It has truly made our work more streamlined, and allowed us to actually have time to pay attention other matters that are very important, such as records management, and public disclosure, and policy and procedures, and things that when you're spending two or more days publishing, and printing a packet, that eats away a lot of time.”

“It makes it easier to have conversations, to have discussions, to have debates. Because there's so much information out there, and because it's timely ... it's about efficiency, and transparency, and accuracy. Those are the three big ones in my experience with this technology. And it helps improve all three of those.”



Transparency

“There's more information going out to the citizens, therefore they can make better decisions when they talk to their elected officials about projects, programs, an initiatives that the city is contemplating and that the board is facing making a decision on.”

“It's hugely transparent, because everything we do as local government, especially in California, it's based on transparency... And, it really helps [council members] to be able to follow the rules, and the regulations, and it really ensures that the public sees that they're being transparent, that they do take these actions in the public's eye. Having that portal, that front facing portal is just great.”

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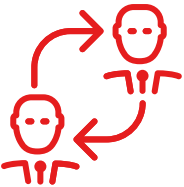
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Inclusion

“Once an agenda is ready to go and you click a button, anyone who’s subscribed to the system is getting notified that the agenda is ready, and it’s well in advance of a meeting. So they come in informed, and an informed constituency is an active constituency.”

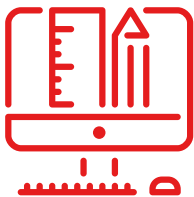
“Accessibility with this is better than what we’ve had. This is one of the hardest things, making sure it’s accessible to everybody. This allows us to do that. The video is closed captioned, where you know, before it wasn’t. It’s just the little things that you don’t really matter that much that when you get them, you realize how important they are.”



Exceptional Support

“I feel like I’ve got a team supporting me, not just a company I’ve hired to produce a couple of things.”

“They really take it to heart, and will help you implement any features that aren’t already in the system to ensure that you are keeping up with your needs, and really doing the best job that you can to fulfill those needs, to your agency, and to the public.”



Innovation

“The board has allowed us to spend what funds we need to, to get into this modern age of government. So hopefully we continue to have a board that allows us to do that, because they’ve now seen the importance.”

“Modern governance to me means that you’re keeping relevant with technology, and with people’s needs, and with the shifting dynamics of how public agencies are working and operating.”

Feedback provided by Curt P., Public Information Officer, Rebekah Barr, City Clerk, Tammy M., Management Analyst, and Louis S., Public Information Officer.

To learn more about Diligent Community, contact us today:

Email: community@diligent.com | Visit: diligent.com/community