

Making Board Meetings Work



1. Preparation

- a. Meet with the board chair a minimum of one week before the meeting to:
 - i. Discuss agenda items.
 - ii. Identify who will present different agenda items, e.g. financial and development reports.
 - iii. Discuss possible challenging issues or items that might emerge at the meeting and approaches for addressing these challenges. (e.g. A proposal to reduce staff may receive significant push back from one or two members. Consider reaching out to these members in advance of the meeting to explain the reasons for the cuts).
- b. Prepare and distribute background information (budget and development reports, program updates, etc.) 5-7 days in advance of the meeting.
- c. Create an annotated agenda. While meetings should not be fully scripted (as these meetings take on a stilted, uninteresting quality), think through how each item will be presented and what action you would like the board to take at the meeting. See the attached draft outline for annotated agendas.
- d. Confer with each individual who will be reporting/presenting in advance to review the annotated agenda and discuss his/her presentation.

2. At the meeting

- a. Provide snacks or a meal and beverages. Like all of us, board members can get surly when hungry.
- b. Ensure a clean and comfortable setting.
- c. Start and end on time.
- d. Stick to the agenda and the allotted time for each agenda item.
- e. Meetings should never be longer than 1.5 hours.
- f. Ensure that each meeting has a minimum of one strategic or generative item for discussion.
- g. Provide opportunities for board members to engage with clients – such as students. Avoid “show and tell”, rather, provide questions to allow board members and clients to interact. Depending on the

size of the board and presenters, small group discussions can be enormously effective.

- h. Keep accurate board minutes and distribute to the board in advance of the upcoming meeting.
 - i. Promote vibrant discussions around complex issues.
 - j. Table discussions that become perseverative or unproductive for a future meeting. Alternatively, ask the appropriate committee or an ad hoc task force to explore further and make a recommendation to the board.
3. After the meeting
- a. Prepare and distribute minutes.
 - b. Discuss follow up with the board and committee chairs to assure that decisions made by the board are put into action.



Board of Directors: Proposed Outline of Annotated Agenda

Agenda Item One: _____

Time allotment: _____ Who will present: _____

Background: _____

Any agency involvement/actions to date: _____

Discussion Items:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Board action required

Agenda Item Two: _____

Time allotment: _____ Who will present: _____

Background: _____

Any agency involvement/actions to date: _____

Discussion Items:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Board action required

Agenda Item Three: _____

Time Allotment: ____ Who will present: _____

Background: _____

Any agency involvement/actions to date: _____

Discussion Items:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Board action required

Agenda Item Four: _____

Time Allotment: ____ Who will present: _____

Background: _____

Any agency involvement/actions to date: _____

Discussion Items:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Board action required

Jewish Community Council of Chelm Board of Directors Meeting - Annotated Agenda

Agenda Item One: Fiscal Report

Time Allotment: 10 minutes

Who will present: Daddy Warbucks, Chair Financial Management Committee

Background:

1. The Financial Management Committee met last week to review the budget vs. profit and loss statement.
2. Two important items came to our attention:
 - a. Because of global warming our building's utility bills have increase by 25%, far more than had been budgeted for. At this point, we are 10,000€ over budget.
 - b. Additionally, for the first quarter, fundraising was 4,500€ below predictions.

Any agency involvement/actions to date:

1. In consultation with the Executive Committee, we have asked Executive Director Golda Meyerson to prepare two different proposals for cutting expenses or raising additional funds. Those two proposals have been sent to you in advance of the meeting.
2. Alternatively, we can run a deficit for the year and thus reduce our cash reserve.

Discussion Items:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the three different options available to the agency
2. Are there other possible alternatives?

Board action required

1. Vote to endorse one of the options offered for addressing the projected budget shortfall.

Agenda Item Two: Report on the "Advancing Religious Life" Task Force

Time allotment: 30 minutes

Who will present: Malka Shabbat, Chair "Advancing Religious Life" Task Force

Background:

1. At our last meeting, the board endorse the establishment of the "Advancing Religious Life" Task Force, to (1) carefully review our Shabbat practices and programming and (2) develop strategic recommendations to invigorate Shabbat programming and activities at our agency.
2. Task force members have held a series of meetings with key members of our community, have consulted with different religious and educational leader and, additionally have spoken to religious leaders from other communities.
3. While they are not yet prepared to present their final report, given the feedback to date, we felt it would be of value for them to report on initial findings.

Discussion Items:

1. The key finding of the task force is that our organization must explore ways to dramatically revitalize Shabbat programming – both at our organization and at the homes of our members.
2. Most significantly, the free Shabbat dinner program held at our facility at an annual cost of 80,000€ does not have a strong impact on the Jewish identities of our community and has not increased the number of families participating in Shabbat services and programming. By and large, community members would prefer eating Shabbat dinners at home with their family and friends.
3. The immediate question that arises is whether free Shabbat dinners held at our agency is an effective use of agency resources and, if not, what are options should we be exploring to explore this goal.

Board action required: Discussion of the task force's findings to date.