

# ***Making Meetings Work***

## ***Using Parliamentary Procedure***

Ronald E. Roberts  
National Association of Parliamentarians

### **References**

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This was a collaborative effort with help from my friends and fellow Parliamentarians, they are Ms. Joanne Toebe, and Mr. Joe Pangborn. Many thanks for their help and invaluable feedback.

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# Chapter 5 : Robert's Rules of Order

## Making Meetings Work — Using Parliamentary Procedure — Ronald E. Roberts

### Purpose of Parliamentary Procedure

- To facilitate the transaction of business.
- To promote cooperation and harmony.
- To protect the rights of the members.

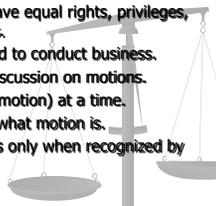


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### Basic Principles

- All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.
- Quorum needed to conduct business.
- Full and free discussion on motions.
- One question (motion) at a time.
- Right to know what motion is.
- Member speaks only when recognized by the chair.

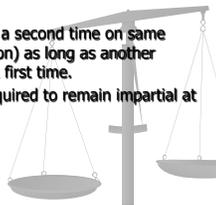


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### Governing Rules of an Organization

- National, State, and Local laws.
- Organization's Charter.
- Organization's Constitution and By-laws.
- Organization's Standing Rules.



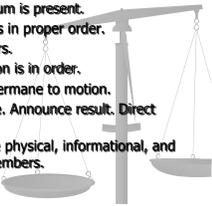
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**Role of Presiding Officer (Chair)**

- Determine if quorum is present.
- Introduce business in proper order.
- Recognize speakers.
- Determine if motion is in order.
- Keep discussion germane to motion.
- Put motion to vote. Announce result. Direct disposition.
- Be sensitive to the physical, informational, and social needs of members.

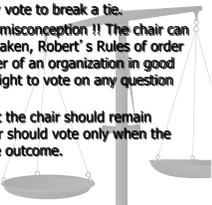


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**When the Chair can vote**

- The chair can only vote to break a tie.
- This is a common misconception !! The chair can vote on any vote taken, Robert's Rules of order says, "Any member of an organization in good standing has the right to vote on any question before the body."
- Remembering that the chair should remain impartial, the chair should vote only when the vote will affect the outcome.



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Remembering that the chair should remain impartial, the chair should vote only when the vote will affect the outcome.

**Rules Governing Debate**

- Debate means the discussion on the merits of a pending question (motion).
- A member may not speak until recognized by the chair.
- Member's rights in debate are not transferable.
- No member can speak more than twice on a motion, and then only if everyone has had a chance to speak first time.

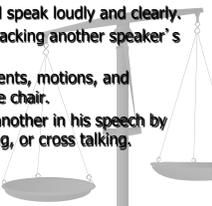


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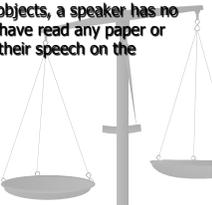
- Speakers should speak loudly and clearly.
- Refrain from attacking another speaker's motives.
- Direct all comments, motions, and discussion to the chair.
- Do not disturb another in his speech by coughing, hissing, or cross talking.



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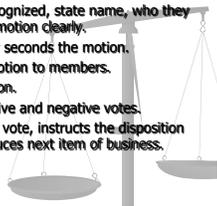
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### Six Steps to Every Motion

1. Stand up, be recognized, state name, who they represent, state motion clearly.
2. Another member seconds the motion.
3. Chair restates motion to members.
4. Asks for discussion.
5. Asks for affirmative and negative votes.
6. Chair announces vote, instructs the disposition of matter, introduces next item of business.

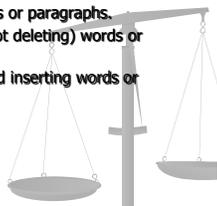


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### Three Ways to Amend a Motion

- Inserting words or paragraphs.
- Striking out (not deleting) words or paragraphs
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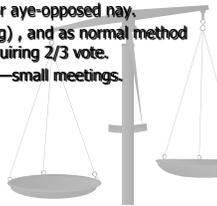


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### Voting Methods

- Voice -- in favor aye-opposed nay.
- Rising (standing) , and as normal method on motions requiring 2/3 vote.
- Show of hands—small meetings.
- Ballot.
- Roll call.

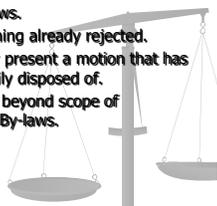


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### Four Motions Always Out of Order

- Conflict with laws.
- Present something already rejected.
- Conflict with or present a motion that has been temporarily disposed of.
- Propose action beyond scope of organization's By-laws.



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- I make that motion !!
- I move to table it !!
- Call for the question !!



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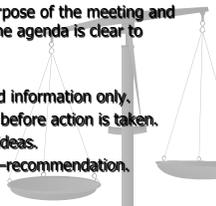
**Holding Productive Meetings**

- Have meeting only if necessary.
- Members must commit themselves to group purpose.
- Listen to what others have to say.
- Plan in advance, both the chair and members.
- Members actively engage in discussion.
- Pre-meeting with principal officers.



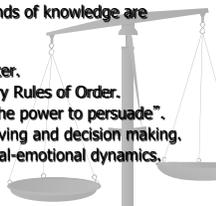
**Holding Productive Meetings**

- Be sure the purpose of the meeting and each item on the agenda is clear to members.
- Share ideas and information only.
- Brief members before action is taken.
- Generate new ideas.
- Make decision—recommendation.



**Holding Productive Meetings**

- Recognize 5 kinds of knowledge are necessary.
- 1. Subject matter.
- 2. Parliamentary Rules of Order.
- 3. Rhetoric—"the power to persuade".
- 4. Problem solving and decision making.
- 5. Human social-emotional dynamics.



**Purpose of a Committee**

- Complex topics can be handled by a committee efficiently.
- There are three types of committees:
  1. Research committee.
  2. Recommendation committee.
  3. Decision making committee: after research and examining the alternatives, makes a decision for the body.



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### How to Keep Minutes From Taking Hours

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2. Does not need details of ceremonies, defeated motions, or detailed committee reports.



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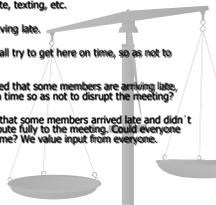
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### That meeting from Hell--Interventions

- Cross talking, arriving late, texting, etc.

Example—arriving late.

1. At beginning: Let's all try to get here on time, so as not to disrupt the meeting.
2. During: It was noticed that some members are arriving late, could we try to arrive on time so as not to disrupt the meeting?
3. End: It was noticed that some members arrived late and didn't have a chance to contribute fully to the meeting. Could everyone please try to arrive on time? We value input from everyone.



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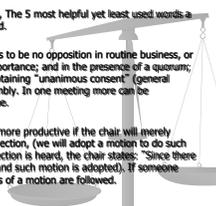
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### Unanimous Consent

"If there is no objection—", The 5 most helpful yet least used words a chairperson will ever find.

In cases where there seems to be no opposition in routine business, or on questions of little importance; and in the presence of a quorum; you can save time by obtaining "unanimous consent" (general consent) from the assembly. In one meeting more can be accomplished in less time.

Any meeting can be much more productive if the chair will merely state, "If there is no objection, (we will adopt a motion to do such and such. When no objection is heard, the chair states: "Since there is no objection,...(such and such motion is adopted). If someone objects, then the 6 steps of a motion are followed.



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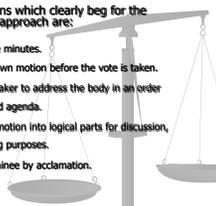
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### Unanimous Consent continued

- Examples of situations which clearly beg for the unanimous consent approach are:

1. To correct or approve minutes.
2. To withdraw one's own motion before the vote is taken.
3. To allow a guest speaker to address the body in an order contrary to the approved agenda.
4. To divide a complex motion into logical parts for discussion, amendments, and voting purposes.
5. To elect a LONE nominee by acclamation.



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## The Squadron meeting basics

Roberts Rules of Order Revised is The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion accepted authority for applying parliamentary procedures. Every person running a meeting, known as the Chair, should have an understanding of Roberts Rules of Order Revised.

Insistence of strict observance of this procedure in a peaceable meeting can be observed as a hindrance to the progress of the meeting.

Along with Roberts Rules of Order Revised, the Constitution and By-laws of the organization and its parent organizations are to be utilized to manage the business of the meeting. These rules guide the organization to assure orderly business is conducted to achieve the goals of the organization by determining the most cost effective way and least time consumption way to achieve an action. *All persons should have the opportunity to voice their opinion, before a person steps forward to address the organization a second time.*

### Meeting Management

All meetings of the Sons of The American Legion should follow the same basic structure.

- 1 Call Meeting to Order a. Prayer  
b Pledge of Allegiance  
c SAL Pre-Amble  
d POW MIA  
e Blue Star  
f Role Call of Officers
- 2 Reading of Minutes – It is ok to motion to ‘accept as printed’ or ‘subject to correction’.
- 3 Finance Report
- 4 Executive Committee Report or Officer Reports
- 5 Reading of any communications
- 6 Committee, Standing Committee and Special Committee Reports.
- 7 Unfinished or Old Business
- 8 New Business
- 9 Good of the Sons
- 10 Adjournment
  - a. Prayer
  - b Closing remarks by the Chair

## Making a Motion

The most important thing to remember when making a motion is to be clear on what is the motion and start the motion with “I move that we perform action ‘ABC’ ”.

The Chair should repeat the motion By Stating “We Have a Motion to perform action ‘ABC’. Is there a second?”

Following the Second the Chair again repeats

- “It has been moved and seconded that we perform action “ABC”. Is there any discussion?

“It has been moved and seconded and discussed that “we perform action “ABC”.

- All in favor say “Aye”
- All opposed Say “No”

If the Voice Vote is close, members or the Chair may call for a Division, which would result in a Raising Vote, Role Call or Ballot Vote.

Occasionally, during the discussion a point is brought up that is considered to be prudent to the Motion and it is decided to change the motion. This is called an Amendment.

It starts by a member stating “I move to amend the motion by replacing action C with action D. The Chair will then call for a Second by repeating the Amended motion and once it is seconded. The chair will repeat the amended motion “We have an amended motion to perform action “ABD”. Is there any discussion? If none Call for the vote. Followed by closing the original Motion by calling for a Vote.

Technically, someone could amend the amended motion to replace Action D with Action E and you could repeat the process. The national organization of the Sons of The American Legion only allows one amended motion to a motion at a time. Allowing more than one amendment gets confusing with multi layered amendments to the motion. Therefore, we advise to only deal with one amendment at a time. It should also be noted, that if someone motions to amend Action A or B once the motion to Amend to Amend action C is requested, *it is an out of order motion.*

The above are online Guidelines and are not necessarily the Letter of the Law. Roberts Rules of Order Revised is the Standing Authority.

## Regular Squadron Meeting Checklist

### Preparation Prior to Meeting

**Meeting Materials:**

- Meeting Agenda
- Meeting Minutes to be Approved
- Membership Report
- Financial Report
- Officer Reports
- Initiation Materials (if needed)
- Sick Call & Relief List

**Room Set-Up:**

- POW MIA Chair & Visuals placed
- Tables arranged for appropriate seating
- Flags placed, (stanchions and flag bases)



### 1 Regular Squadron Meeting Script

*The Squadron Commander shall announce that the meeting is about to open. Officers shall take their stations. American Legion Post members acting as Advisors will take their places among the membership. Cell phone off or in airplane mode.*

**Squadron Commander**

***The Squadron Commander will seat the membership with one rap of the gavel and doors of the meeting place shall be closed by the Sergeant-at-Arms.***

*The Adjutant shall proceed through those present, and after the membership cards have been examined, shall return to the station of the Squadron Commander, where he shall report, giving the names of visitors, if there are any, and their post and squadron name and number as they are being introduced.*

**Squadron Commander**

***The Commander gives three raps of the gavel and all present shall stand at attention.***

**Squadron Commander**

***Salute.*** *The membership shall continue to stand at attention and render salute while the flags are being advanced and placed in position.*

**Squadron Commander**

***Commander shall give the command “Two” to end the salute.***

**Squadron Commander**

***“The Chaplain will invoke the blessing of God.”*** *(Commander gives the order to “Please Uncover”, members present remove their caps.)*

*In place of the following prayer, the Chaplain may deliver one of his own in the same general tenors.*

**Squadron Chaplain  
Meeting Prayer**

*“Almighty God, Father of mankind and Judge over nations, we pray Thee to guide our work in this meeting and in all our days. Send thy peace of our Nation and all Nations. Hasten the fulfillment of Thy promise of peace that shall have no end. We pray for those who serve the people and guard the public welfare, that by Thy blessings they may be enabled to discharge their duties honestly and well. We pray for our comrades, that by Thy help they may observe the strictest Justice, keep alight the fires of Freedom, strive earnestly for the spirit of Democracy and preserve untarnished our loyalty to our Country and to Thee. Especially do we ask Thy blessing and comfort to those defenders of our Nation on sick beds in hospitals and elsewhere who are suffering mental and physical disabilities. Cheer them and bring back to them the blessings of health and happiness.*

Continued > **2 Regular Squadron Meeting Script**

Squadron Chaplain  
Meeting Prayer

Finally, O God of Mercy, we remember lovingly before Thee our departed comrades and those of our fathers who receive with Thee the reward of life everlasting. May their splendid example of patriotism and sacrifice guide us in our duty to our God and Country now and forevermore, AMEN.”

Squadron Commander

**“In memory of our departed comrades and the comrades of our fathers, let us stand in silence. Please remain uncovered”**

A Moment of Silence

*(Squadron remains standing and stands in silence for 30 seconds.) Following the silence the Commander proceeds with the POW / MIA Empty Chair Ceremony.*

Squadron Commander

“Resolution 288, adopted at the 67<sup>th</sup> National Convention, of The American Legion and Resolution N.C. 2-94, adopted at the 23<sup>rd</sup> National Convention of the Sons of The American Legion, calls for designating a POW / MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of the Sons of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW / MIA’s still unaccounted for, as a reminder for all of us to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty and a full accounting of those missing.” Let us rededicate ourselves for this vital endeavor.

Squadron Commander

**“Please remain uncovered as we recite the Pledge of Allegiance.”**

The Pledge of Allegiance  
by all members present

“I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

Squadron Commander

**“Please Recover”**

Preamble to the  
Constitution of the  
Sons of The American Legion  
by all members present

*Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Squadron Commander will lead the Squadron in reciting the Preamble to the Constitution of the Sons of The American Legion.*

**“Proud possessors of a priceless heritage, we male descendants of veterans of the Great Wars associate ourselves together as “Sons of The American Legion” for the following purposes:**

*To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;*

*to maintain law and order;*

*to foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism;*

*to preserve the memories of our former members and the associations of our members and our forefathers in the Great Wars;*

*to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;*

*to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;*

*to make right the master of might;*

*to promote peace and good will on earth;*

*to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy*

*to consecrate and sanctify our friendship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness;*

*to adopt in letter and spirit all of the great principles for which The American Legion stands*

*and to assist in carrying on for God and Country.”*

Squadron Commander

**One rap of the gavel by the Commander will seat the members.**

Continued > **3 Regular Squadron Meeting Script**

- Squadron Commander** ▶ “I now declare this meeting of Squadron. \_\_\_\_, Detachment of \_\_\_\_\_, regularly convened. Let the record show the time is \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ p.m. Please proceed with the roll call of officers.
- Sr. Vice Commander or Adjutant Roll Call - Quorum?** ▶ **Roll call of officers by ranking from list.** (Officers are one of the following: present, excused absence, not present or squadron everlasting)
- Order of Business** ▶ 1. Reading of minutes of previous meeting.  
**Reports Given** ▶ 2. Membership  
**Motions made, seconded, and vote to accept each report recorded** ▶ 3. Financial Report & Adjutant  
▶ 4. Sunday Breakfast Report  
▶ 5. Committee reports /additional Officer Reports  
▶ 6. Sick call and relief
- Continuing Motions or New Motions made, seconded with discussion period.** ▶ A. Unfinished & Continuing Business.  
▶ B. Balloting on applications. (Additional Scripting in SAL Handbook)  
**State the final motion for clarity, call for vote to accept each motion.** ▶ C. Initiation of candidates. (Additional Scripting in SAL Handbook)  
▶ D. New Business and Correspondence.  
▶ E. For the Good of the Sons.  
1. *The membership shall be permitted to make any suggestions of any kind, character or description, except for religion or partisan politics.*  
2. *Any activity that requires the action of or expenditure of funds by S.A.L. will require re-opening the “New Business” section at which time motions may be made, discussed and voted.*  
3. *After the issue is resolved or tabled, the meeting will resume section E. For the Good of he Sons.*
- Squadron Commander** “Is there any further business to come before the members?” (repeat three times)  
“If not, the Squadron Chaplain will lead us in the closing prayer.”  
**“Please uncover.”**  
***The Commander shall give three raps of the gavel, and membership shall arise, uncover, and stand in silence.***
- Squadron Chaplain** “Our dear Heavenly Father, may we become better Sons of The American Legion, as we learn and teach by words and deeds, the principles of Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Loyalty. Be with us until we meet again. AMEN.”
- Squadron Commander** “Till we meet again let us remember that our obligation to our Country can only be fulfilled by the faithful performance of all duties of citizenship. Let service to the community, state and nation be ever a main objective of the Son of The American Legion. Let us ever be watchful of the honor of our Country, The American Legion, our organization and ourselves, that nothing shall swerve us from the path of Justice, Freedom, Loyalty and Democracy.”
- Squadron Commander** **“Hand salute”** (Colors are retired, as the Color Bearers reach the rear of the meeting hall, the command “two” is given by the Commander.)
- Squadron Commander** ▶ “Let the record show the time is \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ p.m. I now declare this meeting of The Sons of The American Legion Squadron \_\_\_\_, Detachment of \_\_\_\_\_ adjourned.
- Squadron Commander** **The Commander gives one rap of the gavel.**

**End of Script**

## Regular Squadron Meeting Minutes Overview

### How To Take Perfectly Proper Meeting Minutes

At a minimum, the Meeting Minutes should contain the following elements:

1. Meeting Date and the actual start time of the "Official Order of Business."
1. Type of meeting – Regular and/or General Membership, Executive or Committee meeting.
2. Association Name – Record the Squadron's correct official name and the words, "Minutes of the Meeting of (insert Squadron's name)".
3. Event Information – Specify the meeting date, time and location (building & room)
4. Attendees' Names – List the names of the Officers and voting members present, the name of the presiding officer, and secretary or substitute minute recorder. For open meetings, the **non-voting audience should not** be included.
5. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes - Unless the assembly waives the reading of the minutes, they should be read and approved or approved as corrected.
6. Officer and Committee Reports – Reports made by the Officers, Executive Board and Committee members often precede the business of the meeting. Such reports are usually for information only, and, if in writing, can be appended to the minutes with board approval. If not in writing, only the fact that the report was made needs to be stated in the minutes.
7. The Business of the Meeting – The minutes should follow the agenda, unless the board agrees to discuss a matter out of order. The motions returned to committee, etc., should be grouped according to subject matter. There is no reason to include the summary of debates or discussions, drafts and revision of the motions. None of this information constitutes the official action of the Squadron.
8. Adjournment – The last paragraph should state the time of adjournment.
9. Scribes's Signature – The signature of the Scribe, Adjutant or Substitute Scribe of the minutes, preceded by the words "Submitted by:", must be included at the end of the minutes.

### What Are Meeting Minutes and Why Take Them?

- ✓ Meeting Minutes are required by State Law.
- ✓ Meeting Minutes are required by The American Legion.
- ✓ Meeting Minutes are required by the Sons of The American Legion.
- ✓ Meeting minutes are the Squadron's only official record of its board, committee or membership decisions and actions.
- ✓ Meeting minutes reflect board decisions, not what members say.
- ✓ Meeting minutes should be brief (one page if possible).
- ✓ Meeting minutes are not official until the board at a subsequent meeting approves them.
- ✓ It is a primary responsibility of the Adjutant to maintain the squadrons' official records.
- ✓ The Meeting Minute book is the squadron's principal record. The records should be printed on quality paper and placed in an official binder.
- ✓ Publishing of regular meeting minutes is generally not required, but it is recommended so that the membership is aware of the Squadron's actions.
- ✓ Executive Session Minutes of the Executive Board should be placed in a separate binder entitled "Executive Session Meeting Minutes." These minutes are **NOT** openly distributed.
- ✓ Meeting Minutes that are brief allow productive meetings and quick reference for future use.
- ✓ Meeting Minutes are not distributed outside of the Squadron meeting until they are approved and signed by the Commander or his Assignee.
- ✓ Meeting Minutes delivered to the Post Adjutant are distributed to: The Executive Board, The Post Commander, and a copy is placed on file as required of a subsidiary of the Post's organization.

Sons of the American Legion  
Ben Franlin Squadron 4000  
Meeting Minutes  
The Old Post 4000 Lounge  
Thursday 00 Month 2011

The General Meeting of S.A.L. Squadron 4000 was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Roll Call was taken and indicated a quorum was achieved.

In attendance: List officers and voting members with title.

Excused absence: Absence arranged in advance or sick

Squadron Everlasting: List recent passing of SAL Members

Sgt-at-Arms: Attending Guests listed

Meeting Minutes: The minutes from the last meeting

Membership report: Current counts, percentage

towards goal, remaining number to achieve 100%

Finance Report: Bank Balances, Income for the period, expenses for the period, outstanding checks, committed funds by vote, available funds not committed.

Bar Bingo update: (as needed)

Sunday Breakfast: Deposit total less expenses and proceeds to cause (program funding)

Committee Reports (when assigned):

Old / Continuing Business:

Each Item: Motion by, seconded by, discussion is not recorded, only key elements defining the vote are. Tabled or Vote outcome. One line for each vote.

New Business:

Each Item: Motion by, seconded by, discussion is not recorded, only key elements defining the vote are. Tabled or Vote outcome. One line for each vote.

For the Good of the Sons:

Announcements and information exchange with attending membership. No Voting in this section. The next Sunday Breakfast. The next SAL function. The next Post function. The next Squadron meeting. Local SAL activities and Detachment Events.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Scribe's name, Month Day Year.

Minutes accepted and approved as is: Month Day, Year  
**or**

Minutes accepted and approved with corrections:  
Month Day, Year. (corrections, NOT changes!)

Signature after acceptance by vote

Name of Officer Presiding, Presiding Officer Title