

9.7.22-710

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TO: Western Cass Fire Protection District

RE: Meeting Assessment

I watched the video of the 9-7-22 regular meeting of the Western Cass Fire Protection District. Below is my overall assessment of the meeting and suggestions for improvement in the future.

- The agenda states that the meeting is called to order by the secretary. Calling a meeting to order is the job of the president.
- During the public comment portion of the meeting a person asked several questions and then a conversation occurred between the president and the person asking the questions. Finally, the president informed everyone of the rules for public comment. I suggest that at every meeting, before the public is given the chance to comment, the secretary is asked by the president to read the rules for public comment.
- On the agenda, under the heading "Discussion Protocols and Organization Rules for Meetings," it states that questions from the public must be in writing with the following information and then lists name, phone number, physical address, and e-mail address. If there is a rule that allows the public to ask questions by using these procedures, then this should be explained at each meeting, and it should also be explained how this differs from making comments during the meeting.
- The president should have an agenda for the meeting and announce what is next on the agenda rather than asking the secretary.
- When a motion is made it is processed by the president and not the secretary. If a motion is made by a person other than the president, then the president should restate the motion and then ask for discussion. During discussion members may ask questions, debate the merits of the motion, and make any subsidiary motions, such as motion to amend, to perfect the main motion. I don't believe that the president asked for discussion on any of motions that were processed during this meeting though some discussion did occur by members just jumping in when they had questions or comments. At one point a member of the board tried to amend the motion while in the middle of the vote on the motion. It is my opinion that the meeting would flow much better if the members of the board know exactly when the time for discussion begins and when it is over.

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- Questions must be germane, or relevant, to the pending motion. The meeting got off track at one point when a board member started asking questions about a subject not germane to the pending motion. It is the job of the presiding officer to ensure that the meeting stays on track.
- If there are any amendments made to a motion, then they must be discussed and voted upon before voting on the main motion.
- When discussion is finished on a motion, which occurs when no one else wants to discuss the motion or there is a motion adopted to end debate, the president should ask the secretary to restate the motion and then call the roll for the vote. After the secretary calls the roll for the vote the secretary should announce how many members voted in favor of the motion and how many voted against the motion. The president should then announce that the motion was adopted or not adopted. I don't believe that the outcome for any motion was announced during this meeting.
- Approval of the minutes is not considered unfinished business. Unfinished business is an item that was pending when the previous meeting was adjourned or items on the previous meetings agenda that were not reached during that meeting.
- Approval of the minutes should happen before Reports and New Business are considered. I suggest listing it after Public Comments. This is done to close out the business of previous meetings before getting into the business of the current meeting.
- Approval of the minutes is handled by the president asking if there are any corrections to a set of minutes. If members have any corrections, they state them. The corrections are automatically made by the secretary unless there is a disagreement among members as to whether the correction is valid. If there is a disagreement on a correction, the president then puts the correction to a vote among the members. When no other corrections are being offered, then the president states that the minutes stand approved as either distributed or as corrected, without a formal vote.
- Minutes should only contain what happened in a meeting and not what was said. The minutes of the Western Cass Fire Protection District contain subjective comments and a synopsis of what was said in a meeting. I believe that if the minutes just contain what was done in the meeting, then the board will find that the adoption of the minutes will be less contentious. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* details what should and should not be in minutes.
- It seems that the secretary is overstepping the bounds of his position during the meeting. The secretary is not a member of the board and therefore is not entitled to enter into discussion. The secretary should only speak when asked by the president to call the roll, restate a motion, or perform some other duty.

I appreciate the opportunity to help you assess this meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Chris Dickey  
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