

A Guide to Online Meetings

Chairing an online meeting? Here's a quick guide to lead you through the process.

1. Pick a Platform

There are a lot of options for meeting online — some popular platforms include [Zoom](#), [WebEx](#), [Skype](#), [Microsoft Teams](#), and [Google Hangouts](#). We use Zoom — it's user-friendly and has all the features we need to run a good meeting.

2. Go over the rules

The chair should give members an overview of important meeting procedures and how to use the meeting platform effectively. In the overview:

- Review general meeting etiquette. We recommend:
 - Asking meeting attendants to mute their mics unless they're speaking (it's much easier to hear what's going on without background noise from everyone's separate locations).
 - Having people state their names when speaking to the group for the first time.
- Let people know what to do if they lose connection — like waiting a minute and trying to reconnect, or calling in by phone (if your platform allows it).
- Clarify that the chair will lead the meeting, call for motions, ask if there are questions, and invite participants to speak.
- Tell the group if people have questions, the chair will recognize people in turn. You can also let people use the chat function to ask questions — either the chair or an appointed person can monitor the chat throughout the meeting.
- Go over the procedure for making motions and voting — more on that below.

3. Making Motions

If your co-op uses Robert's Rules of Order as a guide for running meetings, you're familiar with how to make motions:

Step 1: "I move that..."

Step 2: "I second the motion"

Step 3: Discussion

Online meetings can make this process a bit awkward, but use your platform's features to your advantage:

- When asking someone to make a motion, get those with a video connection to raise their (real) hands. If you're using Zoom, being in "gallery view" is helpful for this — it allows you to see everyone at once.



- Acknowledge the members who make and second the motion (e.g. “moved by Dan, seconded by Heather”).
- You could also use a ‘Raise Hand’ function if your platform has one, or have people type ‘I so move’ into the chat box.

4. Voting

You can also use various platform features to vote — use a poll, a show of hands, or type ‘yea’ or ‘nay’ into the chat box. As long as every member’s vote can be expressed and recorded, the method of voting is acceptable.

To make things easier — especially if everyone isn’t on video — you could ask that only those who oppose a motion or wish to abstain register their votes. This makes the vote easier to tally — and if no one speaks up, the motion is passed.

If you need to make a decision by secret ballot, ask members to submit their votes before the meeting (by mail) or during the meeting, using a poll or voting feature if your platform has one.

Being comfortable with technology and knowing how to run good, efficient online meetings is a great skill to have, and gives your board increased flexibility.

