



MARYLAND 4-H

OFFICERS' HANDBOOK



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4-H Pledge

I pledge...
my head to clearer thinking,
My heart to greater loyalty,
My hands to larger service,
and my health to better living,
for my club, my community, my country,
and my world.

The 4-H Motto

To Make the Best Better!

Welcome 4-H Officers

Congratulations on being elected as a 4-H club officer! You have been given an important job – to work with your fellow officers to ensure everyone feels welcome and is engaged with your club’s meetings and activities. These officer positions require honesty, integrity, attention to detail, and cooperation with your fellow officers, club members, and club leaders and volunteers.

About this Handbook

This handbook provides important information and guidelines that will help you succeed in your new role as club officer. This handbook also includes an overview of: 1) each officer role, 2) committees, 3) member responsibilities, and 4) the club meeting.

Club Officers

Good officers are enthusiastic, responsible, and friendly. They try to include each member of the club so that everyone feels like they belong. They accept and respect each member and encourage everyone to contribute to the club. Officers should be proud of their role as a youth leader. It is important that officers are always prepared for each meeting and club event. Common 4-H officers include: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Reporter, and Song Leader.

The President will:

- ✓ Serve as a “guide” or “pilot” for the meeting, leading the discussion in a respectful and engaging way.
- ✓ Remember, your role is to facilitate the meeting. Avoid voicing personal opinions on motions under discussion. Cast the deciding vote if there is a tie.
- ✓ See that the room is ready and that the meeting starts on time.

- ✓ Notify the leader and vice president if you’re unable to attend a meeting.
- ✓ Appoint committees with the help of the adult leader.
- ✓ Work with the members and the adult leader to plan the program for the year.
- ✓ Meet with the adult leader and the other officers to plan the order of business for each meeting.
- ✓ Delegate responsibilities and make sure everyone has an opportunity to serve on a committee or has a job at some point during the year.
- ✓ Give other officers a helping hand with their jobs.

The Vice President will:

- ✓ Assume the duties of the president in his or her absence.
- ✓ Work with the club at the beginning of the year to set club goals.
- ✓ Serve as chair of the Program/Education Committee (to develop an educational program plan for the year).
- ✓ Assure that all members and adult leaders receive a complete club program.
- ✓ Work with all standing committees and special committees. Standing committees are a permanent part of the club. Special committees form to do a task then disband once completed.
- ✓ Assure that the club has a well-rounded program, including social activities, community service, demonstrations, project work, recreation, and education.
- ✓ Check in with those putting on a program to see if they are ready or need any help.
- ✓ Assure that a program or presenter is properly introduced and thanked.

The Secretary will:

- ✓ Complete the roll of members by recoding names and addresses of all club members. During the year, add the names of new members.
- ✓ Call the roll when requested by the president and record attendance of members.
- ✓ As soon as possible, obtain the necessary information from previous the secretary's workbook.
- ✓ Keep the meeting minutes. Meeting minutes are the detailed notes that serve as an official written record of a meeting. The secretary should stand when reading the minutes during the business meeting. Minutes should include:
 - a) Date, location and the type of meeting (monthly meeting, special meeting)
 - b) Business: Include all motions and action taken on each motion, summary of committee and other reports given and plans made, and list of members' names appointed to committees.
 - c) Program: Give the titles or subjects of talks, demonstrations, or other activities and the names of the persons who gave them.
 - d) Recreation: Describe the games, activities, refreshments, and include the names of those who coordinated them.
- ✓ Attach a report of the club's participation in field trips, service-learning projects, and any other activity in which the club participated.
- ✓ You may attach a sample of newspaper articles about the club and pictures showing club activities.
- ✓ Coordinate all club correspondence (communication through letters, cards, e-mail, etc.). Some clubs may elect a corresponding secretary for this job.
- ✓ With the help of other officers and leaders, complete the annual report.

- ✓ See that this record is filled out neatly, accurately, and completely. Submit this record on time to the 4-H office, if requested.

The Treasurer will:

- ✓ Keep track of all money the club receives and all money the club spends.
- ✓ Pay for things out of the club treasury only as voted by the club and with a bill or receipt.
- ✓ Prepare and present a treasurer's report at each meeting that includes how the club earned the money and the amount (income), how the club spent the money and the amount (expenses), and the current balance (ending balance).
- ✓ Keep records neat, organized, and in a safe place so they cannot be lost or damaged.

The Reporter will:

- ✓ Let the community and the public know about what your club does.
- ✓ Write club stories to send to the County/City 4-H Office or local paper.
- ✓ Send advance information to local papers or radio stations when you plan a special event, such as a demonstration day or a community service project.
- ✓ Write a follow-up story after a special event is over.

The Song Leader will:

- ✓ Keep the song books and distribute them during each meeting.
- ✓ Lead songs at club meetings or special events.

Committees

A strong committee structure will enable all members of the club to actively shape club programs, events, and activities. Club committees offer a chance for members to work together toward accomplishing goals with the support of 4-H adult volunteers. The types of committees that a club has, the number of members, and how the members are selected should be included in the 4-H club's bylaws.

Why Have Committees?

Committees can help 4-H groups function well by making recommendations and suggesting plans for the group while getting more members involved.

How are Committees Formed?

In many cases, the president, with help from the organizational club leader, appoints committees. However, your club may also permit members to volunteer. Either the president or the committee itself may name the committee chairperson.

What Kinds of Committees May 4-H Clubs Have?

The Executive Committee

The officers and the organizational leaders make up the club's executive committee. This committee should meet, plan and begin training soon after new officers are elected.

Standing Committees

Standing committees are appointed each year and they serve for the entire year. Examples include:

- Program Committee – Plans the program for the year, including the program for each meeting. After the plans are approved by the club members, they are written in the "Club Annual Report" form. The programs should

also be shared with each family in the club and with the county/city Extension office. The vice-president serves as this committee's chairperson.

- Recreation Committee – Plans recreation for each club meeting and social activities for the club. The recreation leader chairs this committee.
- Membership Committee – Makes plans to enroll new members in the club and talks with prospective members and their parents. This committee helps invite new members and to get them acquainted with others in the club and participate in club programs.

Special Committees

- Special committees are appointed to study problems and recommend solutions. For example, special committees might be appointed to plan a group tour or trip, a local club celebration, a fundraiser, or a parent appreciation activity.

Club Members

Club members are also important. Without active members, the club won't function. Encourage them to take an active part in club meetings and special events. That means they speak up during meetings, share their ideas and volunteer for service opportunities.

Members also have an important role during meetings. They can make suggestions and come up with new ideas. You can encourage members to share new ideas by making the meeting friendly and positive. That means saying things like "I like John's idea, but maybe it would work even better if we did ..." instead of something like "That won't work" or "That's the wrong way."

The Club Meeting

4-H club meetings offer a variety of experiences for 4-H members. Meetings allow 4-H members to grow as leaders, learn new skills, engage in community service and recreation activities, and of course have fun!

The 4-H Club Meeting Agenda

Planning the 4-H club meeting is an important responsibility of a 4-H club's officers and adult leaders. The club meeting should include a balance of the Business Meeting, Program, and Group Building activities. A 4-H club meeting may be arranged this way:

Part 1: Pre-Meeting Activity (5-10 minutes)
– This is a hands-on activity to get members to help members feel welcome, get to know each other, and encourage engagement in the meeting.

Part 2: Business meeting (15-20 minutes)
– The group sets goals, brings up new ideas, reports activities, and makes decisions during this part of the 4-H club meeting.

Part 3: Program (30-60 minutes) – This part of the meeting can include guest presenters, member talks and demonstrations, tours, community service projects, etc.

Part 4: Recreation (15 minutes) – Like the Pre-Meeting Activity, recreation helps members get to know each other and build cooperation. Recreation should be fun and get members active and engaged and can include games, mixers, sports, etc.

Part 5: Refreshments (5-10 minutes) – snacks add fun to the meeting and provides a great way for members to take active roles in the club by serving as a host/hostess.

The 4-H Club Meeting Agenda Planning Worksheets in the President/Vice President workbook will help you plan your club meetings.

The Business Meeting: Order of Business

The business portion of the 4-H club meeting is divided into segments conducted in a specific order. An example of the most commonly used order of business is listed below:

1. Call to order
2. Opening song and/or pledges
3. Roll call and introduction of guests
4. Reading and approving the minutes
5. Treasurer's report
6. Committee reports and their acceptance
7. Unfinished business from the previous meeting
8. New business
9. Appointing committees (if needed) and checking on assigned individual tasks for next meeting
10. Adjourn business meeting

Your 4-H club's youth members make all of the club's decisions, with leadership provided by the club's officers.

What is a Motion?

During the business meeting, when a member has an idea for the club to consider or when the club members need to make a decision, a motion is used. Below you will find the steps to use when a motion is raised during the meeting. These steps will allow club members to decide if they are in favor of the item of business brought before the club.

Steps in Making a Motion

1. Make a motion

- A club member will raise his or her hand and wait for the president to call on them before saying
"I move _____."

Note: The proper way to move a motion is to say, "I move," not "I motion."

2. Second the motion

- President says, **“Is there a second to the motion?”**
- A different member says, **“I second the motion.”** If no second is made the motion dies and no further action is taken. If the motion receives a second, move on to the next step.

3. Discuss the motion

- President says, **“It has been moved and seconded to _____ . Is there any discussion?”**
- President allows discussion on the motion.

4. Vote on the motion

- When the discussion ends, the president says, **“It has been properly moved and seconded that we _____** (President states the motion or has the secretary read the motion).”
- President says **“All in favor say ‘aye’.”** Aye means “yes”. (Pause for vote and record the count).
- President says **“All opposed say ‘nay’,”** Nay means “no”. (Pause for vote and record the count).

5. State the results

- When the count of the ‘aye’ votes yields a majority (usually a majority is more than half of the number of members voting), the President says, “Motion passes.” or “Motion carries.” This means that the group will do what was stated in the motion.
- When the count of the ‘nay’ votes yields a majority, the President says, “Motion fails.” or “Motion is lost.” This means that the group will not do what was stated in the motion.

Amending a Motion

Sometimes group members want to change a motion while it is in the discussion phase. This is called an amendment. It is recommended that only one amendment to a motion be permitted. An amendment generally strikes out, adds or substitutes words in the main motion after it has been moved and seconded and is being discussed. To amend a motion:

1. A group member is recognized by the president to speak, then says **“I move to amend the motion to _____.”**
2. A second to this amendment is required.
3. Discussion follows and is for only the amendment, not the original motion. Members should discuss the merits of the amendment.
4. When it is time to vote, the president conducts a vote to determine if the amendment passes. A majority is needed to pass it.
 - If the amendment passes, discussion follows on the motion as amended
 - If the amendment did not pass, discussion on the original motion continues and a vote is taken on the motion

Keep in mind, it may be best to introduce complicated ideas by discussing them before a motion is made. This eliminates the need for most amendments.

Voting in the Club Meeting

Voting is the process that allows each 4-H member to express their opinion. The voice vote is a quick way to vote, but if the vote sounds close between the ‘ayes’ and ‘nays’, the president may want to use another way to vote.

Here are a few ways commonly used to vote during 4-H club meetings:

- Voice Vote – Members call out their vote when prompted by the president.
- Show of Hands – Members raise their hands so the president can count their votes.
- Standing Vote – Members stand so the president can count their votes.
- Secret Ballot – A blank slip of paper is given to each member so they can write down their vote. A ballot is typically used when voting during an election or on motions about sensitive ideas.

Discussion Groups

Discussion groups allow all members to feel that they are helping in shaping club decisions. The group talks about something until everyone – or nearly everyone – agrees on what to do.

- ✓ Circle Response: This is one way to start a discussion. The discussion leader or president says, “I’ll call on each one in turn for his best suggestion on our plan. If you don’t have a quick idea, you can say ‘pass.’ Will the secretary please write all the ideas on the blackboard (or a sheet of paper)?”
- ✓ Buzz Groups: If your club has 10 or more members, you can use small groups to decide on a plan of action. After all the ideas are up on the board, divide into groups of five or six members in each. Divide the ideas on the board into two or more sections, one section for each group. After buzzing for four or five minutes, each group reports back on its “best” idea.
- ✓ Decision: Discuss the “best” ideas shared by the group. The president asks, “Does the group agree that this is what we should do?” If the members say “yes,” the next step is to ask for volunteers to carry out each part of the plan. Everyone has some of his own ideas in the plan, so it’s easier for him to do his part. After all, it’s his plan.

Meeting Minutes

The minutes of a meeting should be a record of what is done, not just what is said. They should include:

- ✓ Date and place of meeting
- ✓ Number of members and visitors present
- ✓ Approval of previous minutes
- ✓ All reports and what was done about them
- ✓ All motions, with the name of the person who made them, and whether the motion was carried or lost.
- ✓ The time the meeting was adjourned.

Are you ready for your meeting?

- ✓ Were your club meetings planned?
- ✓ Did members help make plans?
- ✓ Did the president and other officers get together to plan the order of business for each meeting?
- ✓ Were materials and equipment ready?
- ✓ Did meetings start on time?
- ✓ Were the officers ready to make the meeting go smoothly?
- ✓ Were committee chairs ready with their reports?
- ✓ Did the president help members take part in the discussion?
- ✓ Did you follow the order for a business meeting?
- ✓ Did you use parliamentary procedure to elect officers?
- ✓ Did you use circle response or buzz groups to work out ideas?
- ✓ Did each member carry out his part of the plans?
- ✓ Did meetings end on time?

Business Meeting Script - Example

CALL TO ORDER	
President	<i>Taps gavel.</i> "The meeting of the _____ 4-H Club will please come to order."
PLEDGES	
President	"Will _____ and _____ please come forward and lead us in our Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Pledge?" <i>The president asks two members to lead pledges before the meeting begins.</i>
Member	"Please stand and join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance." Member leads pledge.
Member	"Please remain standing and join me in reciting the 4-H Pledge." Member leads 4-H Pledge. "You may be seated."
ROLL CALL	
President	"The secretary will now call roll."
Secretary	Calls roll and records attendance.
INTRODUCE NEW MEMBERS/GUESTS	
Vice President (or other officer assigned this responsibility)	"We are pleased to introduce _____ who is a <i>(new member, guest, etc.) to our club. Thank you for joining us.</i> " <i>It would be great for the vice president to meet any new members or guests prior to the meeting and learn a little bit of information about them to make their introduction to the group more special.</i>
READING OF THE MINUTES	
President	"The secretary will read the minutes of the last meeting."
Secretary	Reads the minutes from the last meeting.
President	"Are there any corrections or additions to the minutes?" PAUSE. <i>If a member notices a mistake, the member will raise his hand. When called on by the president, he or she will explain the mistake.</i> IF CORRECTIONS: "The secretary will please make the correction. Are there any other corrections or additions?" PAUSE. "If not, the minutes stand approved as corrected." IF NO CORRECTIONS: "If not, the minutes stand approved as read."
TREASURER'S REPORT	
President	"Will the treasurer give the treasurer's report?"
Treasurer	<i>Reports on the balance on hand and explains any money paid out or received since the last club business meeting.</i>

President	<p>“Are there any questions regarding the treasurer’s report?” PAUSE. <i>If a member has a question about the report, he or she will raise his/her hand, and when recognized by the president, will ask the question.</i></p> <p>If questions: <i>The treasurer will answer any questions about the report. After all questions have been answered say, “If there are no further questions, the treasurer’s report will be filed for audit.”</i></p> <p>If no questions: “If not, the treasurer’s report will be filed for audit.”</p>
COMMITTEE REPORTS	
Committee Chairperson	<p><i>Committees are small groups that have been appointed or elected to discuss or investigate a specific topic and make a recommendation to the group. Some of the committees your 4-H club might have are: activity committee, community service committee, fund raising committee, parade committee, etc. Committee chairman should report back to the club to inform them of what their committee has been working on and their suggestions for the club. The club may have to vote on something that the committee suggests.</i></p>
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	
President	<p><i>As the agenda is prepared before the meeting, the president will refer to the minutes of the last meeting to list unfinished business, which is business that was discussed at a previous meeting that still has unfinished details or decisions to be made.</i></p> <p>“Our first item of unfinished business is: _____”</p> <p><i>The president, leader, or another member will help lead the discussion about each business item. Who will lead the discussion is generally identified on the agenda.</i></p>
NEW BUSINESS	
President	<p><i>As the agenda is prepared before the meeting, the president or leader will identify new issues for the club to discuss.</i></p> <p>“Our first item of new business is: _____”</p> <p><i>The president, leader or another member will help lead the discussion about each business item. Who will lead the discussion is generally identified on the agenda. If a decision needs to be made for any business item, the president will accept a motion from the floor and a vote will be held.</i></p>
President	<p><i>After all listed new business on the agenda has been discussed, “Is there any other new business to bring before the club?”</i></p>

Member & President	<p><i>After receiving the floor from the president, any member may bring up new business. If the business requires a decision to be made, the member will say,</i></p> <p>Member: “I move that...”</p> <p>President: “Is there a second to this motion?”</p> <p>Another Member: “I second that motion”</p> <p>President: “The motion has been made and properly seconded to _____ .Is there any discussion?”</p> <p><i>Any member may raise their hand and share their views about the issue when the president calls on them.</i></p> <p>President: “If there is no further discussion, then we will vote. All in favor say ‘Aye.’ All opposed ‘Nay’.” <i>The motion carries (or fails depending of the vote).”</i></p>
ANNOUNCEMENTS	
President or Vice President	<p><i>Your club leader may prepare a list of announcements or prepare a take-home list for each member with important dates and reminders.</i></p> <p>“Here is a list of announcements and reminders” or “Are there any announcements?”</p>
Any member	<p><i>After receiving the floor from the president, any member or leader may make announcements.</i></p>
ADJOURNMENT OF BUSINESS MEETING	
President	<p>“If there is no further business, is there a motion that we adjourn the business meeting?”</p>
Any member	<p><i>Raises hand. After receiving the floor from the president the member will say, “I move that this meeting be adjourned.” This particular motion does not need a second.</i></p>
President	<p>“This meeting is adjourned.”</p>

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