

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION



MARYLAND 4-H

OFFICERS' HANDBOOK



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The 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 each officer role.

The Club Officer

Good officers are enthusiastic, responsible and friendly. They work 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.

The President will:

- ✓ Serve as a “guide” or “pilot” for the meeting, leading the discussion in a tactful and courteous way. Avoid voicing personal opinions on motions under discussion. Remember, your role is to facilitate the meeting.
- ✓ 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 leader.
- ✓ Work with the members and the leader to plan the program for the year.
- ✓ Meet with the leader and the other officers to plan the order of business for each meeting.
- ✓ Delegate responsibilities and make sure everyone serves 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.
- ✓ Serve as chair of the Program/Education Committee.
- ✓ Assure that all members and advisors 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 with those putting on a program to see if they are ready or need any help.
- ✓ Work with the club at the beginning of the year to set club goals.
- ✓ Assure that a program or presenter is properly introduced and thanked.

The Secretary will:

- ✓ Roll of members: Enter the names and addresses of all club members. During the year, add the names of new members. Add additional pages as needed.
- ✓ Call the roll when requested by the president. Record attendance by placing a check mark opposite members' names in the date column. Leave blanks for those absent.
- ✓ As soon as possible, obtain the necessary information from previous secretary's workbook.
- ✓ Minutes: Keep minutes of all meetings. Stand when reading them at the meeting. Minutes should be brief but should contain an interesting account of the meeting. Minutes should include:
 - a) *Date and location*: Kind of meeting (regular or special).
 - b) *Business*: Include all motions and action taken on each, 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*: Tell about the games, stunts, refreshments, and the persons in charge of them.
- ✓ Attach a report of the club's participation in picnics, tours, 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.
- ✓ Take care of all club correspondence. Some clubs may elect a corresponding secretary for this job.
- ✓ With the help of other officers and leaders, complete the annual report in the back of this book.
- ✓ 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 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 Program for the Year” 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 4-H Club Meeting Agenda

Planning the 4-H club meeting is an important responsibility of a 4-H club's officers and 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 (15-25 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 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.

Steps in Making 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. The following steps are used to “entertain a motion” and to decide if club members are in favor of the item of business brought before the club:

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.

Different Ways 4-H Clubs May Vote

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 what is said. They should contain:

- ✓ 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?

Sample Club Meeting

PRESIDENT: Will the meeting please come to order? John Jones will lead us in the pledge of allegiance and Martha Martinez will lead us in the 4-H pledge.

MEMBER JOHN JONES: Let's all stand and say the pledge of allegiance.

MEMBERS: I pledge allegiance.....

MEMBER MARIA MARTINEZ: Let's all say the 4-H pledge.

MEMBERS: I pledge my head.....

PRESIDENT: The secretary will call the roll.

SECRETARY: Today we will answer the roll by telling what we did on our project last week. (There are many different ways of answering the roll, which you plan in the 4-H Secretary's Workbook.)

MEMBER NANCY TATE: I dyed different kinds of cloth and put the samples in my record book.

MEMBER KEN WASHINGTON: I taught my dog to heel.

MEMBER DICK LEE: I set out some tomato plants in my garden.

OTHER MEMBERS: (Tell what they did.)

PRESIDENT: Will the secretary read the minutes of the last meeting?

SECRETARY: The meeting was called to order by

PRESIDENT: Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes? (Waits a minute.) If not, they stand approved as read.

PRESIDENT: We will now have reports from the officers and committee chairperson.

- ✓ President – reports on coming 4-H events, etc.
- ✓ Vice President – reports on other activities.
- ✓ Secretary – reads letters.
- ✓ Treasurer – reports on money received, money paid out, and the amount of money on hand.
- ✓ Committee Chairmen – report on activities of committees since the last meeting.

After each report, the president asks if there are any questions. If there are no questions, the president says, "The report is accepted as presented."

If there are no questions and if the report needs something done about it, the president asks for a motion, a request that something be done.

Each motion must be seconded, discussed, and voted on before another motion can be made.

PRESIDENT: Is there any unfinished business? (Business left from the last meeting can be discussed at this time.)

PRESIDENT: Is there any new business? (Club members discuss new business – future plans for club activities, things to be done before the next meeting, etc.)

PRESIDENT: Are there any announcements? (Club members or leaders make announcements.)

PRESIDENT: If there is no further business, is there a motion for the meeting to be adjourned?

MEMBER: I move that the business meeting be adjourned.

MEMBER: I second the motion.

PRESIDENT: All those in favor of the motion say "AYE." Those opposed say "No." The motion is passed (if more members vote "Aye" than "No"). The business meeting is adjourned.

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