



ÉCOLE DE LA FONCTION
PUBLIQUE DU CANADA
CANADA SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC SERVICE



APPENDIX

LANGUAGE OF MEETINGS (INFORMAL)

CHAIRPERSON

Getting started

Is everyone here?
I think we're all here.
I'd like to begin now.
Can I have your attention?
Let's get down to business.
Why don't we start?
Okay? (Informal)
Listen up, everyone. (very informal)

Presenting purpose

The purpose/topic today is....
I'd like to....
What we need to deal with / talk about /consider is....

Presenting plan

Initially/ To start with / Let's start with /First
Then/ After that
Finally/ We'll end with/by

Eliciting participation

What do you think?
What about you?
Can I have your reactions?
Let's go round the table and get input from everyone.
Does anyone have anything to say?
Who'd like to go first?
Are there / Do you have any questions/ideas/comments?
Do you agree with that?
How do you feel about that?
Anyone else?
Does anyone have anything to add?

Eliciting a particular person's participation

Dave, I'd like to hear your views.
I'd like to hear what Jane has to say.
I think Dave wants to say something.
Jane, I'd like to hear what you have to say/ your reaction/opinion/view.
How do you feel about it, Dave?
What do you think, Jane?
Do you agree with that, Dave?
How do you react to that, Jane?
Dave?

Keeping proceedings on track

(I'm afraid / I think / I believe) we've gone off topic.
We've strayed from the point/issue.
We're getting off track.
We've moved off the subject.
We have to get back to the main point/topic/subject.
We have to get back on track.
Can we get back to the topic?
Let's stick to the topic. (more direct)

Keeping discussion moving

I think that's enough on this point.
Something else to consider/ think about is....
Another point/factor to look at is....
Let's move on to the next topic/item.
So far we've covered.... Now let's discuss....
On an entirely different subject/matter now, let's look at....
The next topic (on the agenda) is....
Good points/questions. Let's look at them one at a time.

Verifying consensus

It seems we have consensus on that.
Is everyone in favour?

Keeping proceedings on time / Cutting speakers off

We're running out of time.
I'm sorry to interrupt but....
Thanks (for your opinion) but....
We have to continue/ move along.
Let's/ It's time to move along/on.
We have to hear from the others.
We haven't heard from everyone yet.
Can we come back to that later?
George has the floor now.
It's Dave's turn to speak now.

Clarifying

Could you clarify what you mean?

Do you mean...?

What do you mean by...?

Do you mean by that that...? + question or comment rephrased

Does that mean...? + question or comment rephrased

Are you saying...? + question or comment rephrased

Is your point that...? + question or comment rephrased

Let's see if I've got that right. + question or comment rephrased

So you want to know if/ whether...? + question or comment rephrased

Confirming

That means....

You mean....

You're saying/suggesting....

What you're saying is....

So....

Dealing with difficult people

That's an interesting perspective. What do the rest of you think?

You've already had a turn. Let's hear what the others think.

That's a little off track. Can we talk about that later?

Can you show us how that idea relates to the matter at hand?

X was speaking. Your turn will be next.

We can't all talk at once.

Thanks for sharing that experience with us. We'll have to see if it's applicable here.

That idea has already come up.

Does anyone agree with this idea?

Those details are useful. We'll keep them in mind. Right now, we've got to move along or we'll run out of time.

Closing the meeting:

Summarizing

So far, we've considered/ looked at /decided....

So (basically) what we have decided is that....

It seems the consensus is / the majority feels....

Briefly then,....

In short,....

In a word....

To sum up /summarize....

Allocating tasks and responsibilities

I'm going to ask you/Rick to....

Could/ Would/ Will you...?

Can I ask you to....

Would you like to....

Would you mind....

Rick will....

Rick, will you...?

Getting volunteers

I'm going to ask someone/Lynne to....

I'd like someone to....

I need someone to....

Someone will have to....

Who will...?

Who would like to...?

Who's going to...?

Will someone...?

Can I ask someone to...?

Would anyone like to...?

Would someone mind...?

Ending

I think that's it / we've covered everything.

I believe that takes care of everything.

OK. We're done.

Well, we've covered/handled/ dealt with all the important points/issues.

If that's everything then....

Unless there's anything else to discuss....

It's been a good meeting.

That's a good note to end on.

Meeting adjourned.

PARTICIPANT

Getting the floor

Could I say something (here)?

I'd like to add something....

Yes, and...(the speaker gets the floor by agreeing and adding information)

I agree, and...(the speaker gets the floor by agreeing and adding information)

Yes, but...(the speaker gets the floor by disagreeing and explaining)

Just a small point....

I just wanted to add....

Sorry for interrupting but....

Can/Could/May I interrupt/intervene/say something?

If I could (just) add something/ interrupt/intervene.

Note: You can get the floor without using an introductory expression: wait for a pause in the discussion or an indication that the speaker has finished (downward intonation at the end of the last sentence) and then begin to speak.

Keeping the floor

Please, I'm not quite finished yet.

I'm still explaining.

Could I just finish? (Please?)

Just one minute and I'll be finished.

I'm getting to that.

Can I get to that later?

(Just) let me finish.

Just a minute. / Wait a minute. (informal) (adding "please" will soften these)

Hang on! (very informal)

Continuing

To continue with what I was saying....

As I was saying,....

Anyway,....

Let's get back to....

Where was I?

Yielding the floor

That's all I have to say (on that matter).

I think that's it/all.

Are there any questions/problems?

What do you think?

Does anyone have anything to add?

Note: You can indicate that you are yielding the floor without using an introductory expression. Use a downward intonation at the end of your last sentence and pause.

Clarifying

Could you clarify what you mean?

Do you mean...?

What do you mean by...?

Do you mean by that...? + question or comment rephrased

Does that mean...? + question or comment rephrased

Are you saying...? + question or comment rephrased

Is your point that...? + question or comment rephrased

Let's see if I've got that right. + question or comment rephrased

So you want to know if/whether...?

Confirming

That means....

You mean....

You're saying/suggesting....

What you're saying is....

So....

RECORDING SECRETARY

Could you repeat that please?

Have I got this right?

So, what's the final decision?

What are those options/alternatives/reasons again?

Who volunteered to...?

Who said they'd ...?

OK. Let me get this straight....

APPENDIX

LANGUAGE OF FORMAL MEETINGS (FORMAL AGENDA, ROBERT'S RULES,...)

CHAIRPERSON

Beginning the meeting

I'd like to call the meeting to order.
The meeting is called to order.
The purpose of the meeting today is....

Dealing with the agenda

Has everyone received a copy of the agenda?
(Are there) any additions to the agenda?
(Is there) any new business to add?
I'd like to add an item to the agenda.
Can we delete item three from the agenda?
Can we adopt/approve the agenda?

Dealing with minutes

Will you please read the minutes?
Would someone move that the minutes (of the last meeting) be accepted.
I so move.
I second it/that.

Dealing with motions

Is there a mover?
Is there a seconder?

Voting

Let's (put it to a) vote.
Let's vote by a show of hands.
(Those) for? (Those) against?
(Any) abstentions?
We'll have a secret ballot.
(The motion is) carried unanimously.
The motion is adopted by a majority.
The motion is carried nine to four with two abstentions.
The motion is rejected.

Consensus

It seems we have consensus on that.
Can I take it everyone is in favour?

Keeping order

Order please!

We can't all speak at once. Ms. Hanson, would you like to speak first?

Mr. Newson, please address your remarks to the chair.

Keeping on track

We have to stick to the agenda.

That's not on the agenda.

That (question) is out of order.

We're losing sight of the main point. The point is....

We're getting off track.

Keeping discussion moving

Has anyone anything further to add?

Could we move on to item three?

Let's proceed to the next item of business / on the agenda.

The next item is....

Giving the floor

I'd like to give the floor to....

Mrs. Smith, would you like to address this issue.

Mr. Brown has something to say on this subject/problem/issue.

Postponing discussion

I propose we defer this matter to another time when we have more information.

I suggest we leave this matter until our next meeting.

Concluding the meeting

Is there any further business?

That concludes our business for today. Thank you everyone.

The meeting is adjourned.

PARTICIPANT

Dealing with the agenda

I'd like to add an item to the agenda.

Can we delete item three from the agenda?

Dealing with minutes

I move that the minutes be adopted.

(In response to a request for adoption of the minutes) I so move.

I second it/that.

Dealing with motions

I'd like to make a motion/proposal.
I move that....
I second the motion.

Postponing discussion

I propose we defer this matter to another time when we have more information.
I suggest we leave this matter until our next meeting.

Taking the floor

Excuse me, Mr. Chairman, may I say/ add something here?
With the Chair's permission, I'd like to take up the point about....

RECORDING SECRETARY

May I read the minutes
Could you clarify that please?
Could I verify that I have this recorded correctly?

APPENDIX

GETTING INFORMATION

Yes/No Questions

Do you/we / Does he/she/it...?

Did you...?

Are you/ Is she...?

Have you/ Has he... ?

Wh-questions

Who...?

What...?

When...?

Where..?

Why...?

Which...?

How...?

How long...?

How much...?

How many...?

How far...?

Indirect questions

I don't understand who/what/when/where/why/how/whether/if....

I'd like to know who/what/when/where/why/how/whether/if....

Do you know who/what/when/where/why/how/whether/if....

I wonder who/what/when/where/why/how/whether/if....

Could you tell me who/what/when/where/why/how/whether/if....

APPENDIX

GIVING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

SENSITIVE TOPICS, DISCUSSING

There seems to be a problem with ...
It seems as if there've been problems with...
It would seem that...
It's been pointed out that...
It was felt that...
I know this is a touchy subject, but...
You're not going to like this, but...

GIVING BAD NEWS

Introductory words, statements, questions to prepare the listener for bad news:

I'm afraid...
I'm sorry....
Unfortunately,...
I have some bad news;...
I've got some bad news;...
I have to tell you something you won't want to hear.
I know this is a touchy subject, but...
I'm sorry (I've got / I have) to tell you this, but (, unfortunately,...)
I'm sorry / I hate to tell you this, but...
I hate to do this to you,...
There's some bad news.
There's something I have to tell you.
You're not going to like this, but...
Are you ready for bad news today?
Can you take bad news today?
The worst has come to pass.

Distancing yourself from responsibility- use passive voice and/or impersonal words:

It looks like/ as if...
It seems (that)...
It was felt that...
It would seem (that)...
It's been pointed out that...
There seems to be...
Unfortunately, (a freeze) has been placed on...

Explaining your position/action/decision (and accepting responsibility):

I have/had no alternative.

If I could do things differently, I certainly would.

If I could have done things differently, I certainly would have.

I'm awfully sorry but there is/was nothing (else) I can/could do.

I'm afraid I haven't been able to protect you.

I've tried to avoid this (problem/situation).

I've been put in a terrible situation.

I would have preferred it if things had worked out differently.

I would have preferred things to have worked out differently.

Expressing sympathy or empathy:

I know what this means to you (and I'm very sorry.)

I know how bad you feel (and I'm very sorry.)

I know what a blow this is (and I'm very sorry.)

I know what you're up against (and I'm very sorry.)

(I recognize that) this must be very hard for you.

I wish things had worked out differently.

I understand the difficulties....

I'm not unaware of the difficulties....