

The image shows the agenda slide for the presentation. It has a white background with a dark red decorative border on the left side that matches the title slide. At the bottom left of the white area, there is a small version of the NHSBA logo. The word "Agenda" is centered at the top in a bold, black serif font. Below it is a numbered list of eight items, each in a bold, black sans-serif font. The first item is "1. Welcome", followed by three bullet points listing speakers: "• Barrett M. Christina, Executive Director", "• William J. Phillips, Staff Attorney", and "• Amanda Hodgman, Operations Manager". The remaining items are "2. Overview of NHSBA", "3. Meeting Goals and Meeting Planning", "4. Agenda Setting", "5. Sticking to the Agenda – Practice Tips", "6. Parliamentary Procedure – Rules of Order", "7. Role of the Board Chair", and "8. Public Participation at Board Meetings - “Public Comment”". In the bottom right corner of the white area, the text "Slide 1" is written in a small, italicized black font.



Meeting Goals and Meeting Planning

Slide 2

Meeting Goals

Effective and productive meetings do not simply happen. They require forethought about:

- meeting objectives and required actions – i.e., agenda items
 - “Agenda” = *a list of matters which are to come before the meeting for consideration and/or decision;*
 - *Distinct from “notice” as used in RSA 91-A:2, which only requires date, time and place of meeting.*

Meeting Goals

- What are the board's desired outcomes for each meeting?
- What are the administration's desired outcomes for each meeting?

Meeting Goals

- Adopt a policy?
- Finalize the budget?
- Receive reports?
- Ratify a contract?
- Vote on a committee's recommendation?

Meeting Goals

- For most meetings there will be more than one desired outcome for a meeting.
- When an urgent item that takes priority, the agenda should be prepared to assure that ample time is left for the required business, with non-essential items left to another day.

Meeting Planning

- Planning for an effective meeting includes:
 - Identification of items (agenda setting);
 - the order in which items should be discussed;
 - required personnel for each item;
 - the amount of time that will be needed to adequately discuss each item;
 - the information that board members need prior to the meeting; and
 - proper wording of motions or resolutions.
- Meeting goals and agenda items should relate to one or more of a school board's roles or functions.

Meeting Planning – Board Roles

Primary Roles Of School Boards

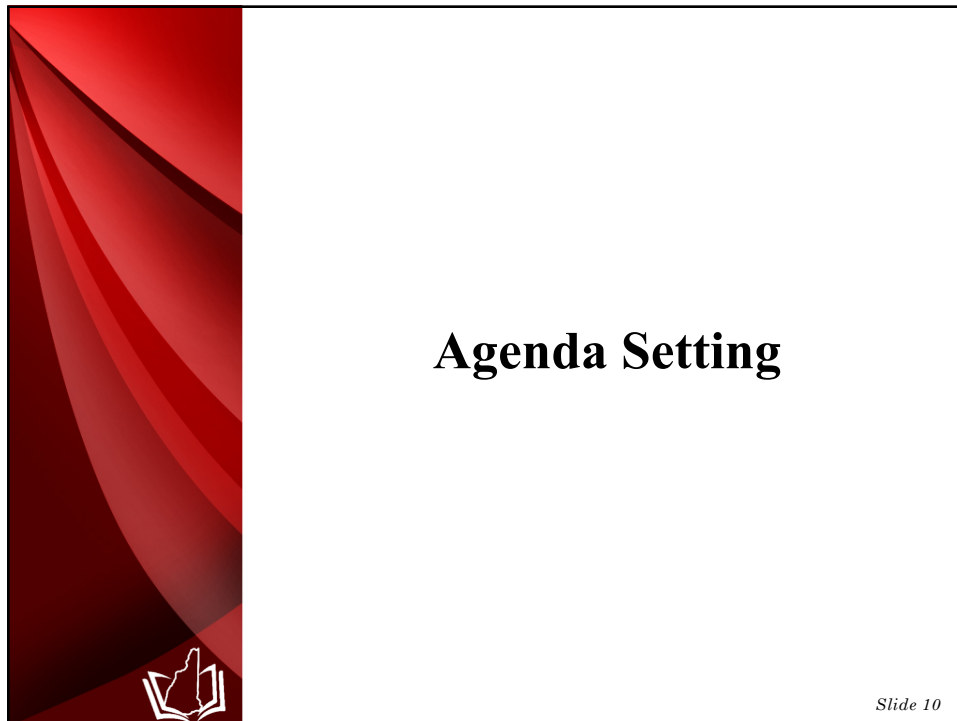
- 1. Establishing policy (Ed 302; Ed 306; bullying; truancy; etc.);
- 2. Setting a district budget and related fiscal oversight (Ed 303; RSA 32);
- Hiring a superintendent (Ed 303.01 (k)); and
- and evaluating the superintendent (RSA 194-C:4);

Meeting Goals – Board Roles

Primary Roles Of School Boards

Continued....

- Occasional hearings (discipline, non-renewal, grievance, etc.);
- Collective bargaining (RSA 273-A);
- Communication & outreach; and
- Strategic planning and establishing long-term and short-term goals (Ed 303.01(g)).



Agenda Setting

➤ The Superintendent is responsible for making sure that the board agenda is set and communicated according to district's agenda/chair policies:

- usually in consultation with the board chair;
- contains the items necessary and advisable for the board to consider for the district to provide an education according to state and local standards;

Agenda Setting www.nhsba.org Slide 11

Agenda Setting

- Most districts' policies allow:
 - individual board members to have items placed on the agenda as a matter of right;
 - members of the public to request agenda items but authorizes screening of such requests as part of the ordinary agenda setting process. (*While a board's business meeting is open to the public, it is not a meeting of the public.*)

Agenda Setting

- What are the desired outcomes for each for each agenda item?
- For example, if the desired outcome on an agenda item is to adopt a recommendation, the meeting should be designed so there is a proposal, followed by discussion and a vote.

Agenda Setting

- Consent items addressing the routine matters, such as minutes and monthly expenses, which can be approved together in one motion without discussion;
- Action items on which the board is expected to reach a decision during the meeting;
- Discussion or Presentation items that require comment but do not require action; and
- Information items that require no action or discussion.

Agenda Setting

- When setting the agenda, it can help to identify what category each agenda item falls within.
- Consider whether to include notations for each item. Examples:
 - Finance Committee report. Discussion item. No action needed.
 - Volunteer recruitment and philosophy: Anticipated Action: form committee of 3-4 board members.

Agenda Setting

- Public Policy Committee: Anticipated Action: approve organizational statement to city council on zone changes.
 - Second reading of policies ABC & XYZ. Anticipated action: Review and adopt.
 - Presentation by 5th grade social studies class. Information item. No action required.
- Sketching out the anticipated time for items can be helpful in constructing the agenda but should only be used as guides or benchmarks.

Sticking to the Agenda Practice Tips



Sticking to the Agenda Practice Tips

Start on time and stay on task.

- Parliamentary procedure can help as board members move through the agenda. Certain situations and topics will cause meetings to go much longer than normal. This is to be expected but should be the exception rather than the rule.

More on this later.....

Sticking to the Agenda Practice Tips

Organize the meeting to minimize disruption and delay.

- Issues that will require lengthy debate and discussion should be tackled at the beginning of the meeting, when board members are fresh, and should be limited in number during a single meeting, if possible.

Sticking to the Agenda Practice Tips

Stay on time.

- Stay focused on your desired outcomes identified in the agenda. If you're using a timed agenda, stay on track by ending each item on time.

Sticking to the Agenda Practice Tips

Have an endpoint.

- To avoid unproductive tangents and circular discussions, establish an end time in advance - and adjourn the meeting when you reach it.

Sticking to the Agenda Practice Tips

Resolve unnecessary debate.

- Resolve non-controversial items through “general consent” or “unanimous consent.” The board chair asks if there is any objection to closing discussion on a particular topic. If no one objects, debate is closed.

Sticking to the Agenda Practice Tips

Consent agendas.

- If using a consent agenda, limit to non-controversial items, such as adoption of the minutes, receipt of reports, general information and other items that don't require specific board discussion or board action.
- Items pulled out in a meeting if one or more members requests.

Sticking to the Agenda Practice Tips

No surprises.

- No surprises should come to light at a board meeting, “new business” is not the place for board members to surprise the rest of the board and administration with previously unannounced agenda items or topics.

Parliamentary Procedure - Rules of Order



Parliamentary Procedure

- Parliamentary procedure, i.e. rules of order, help keep meetings efficient, and provide a clearer public record of the board's actions.
- Too much process – e.g., Roberts Rules, can lead to sluggish, unproductive meetings.
- Roberts Rules, by its own admission, does not apply to small legislative bodies.
- Simple rules of order helps maximize meeting efficiency and can engender greater collaboration among board members.

Rules of Order – Examples/Considerations


- *NHSBA sample rules BEDD-R*
- Each motion may deal with only one issue or idea.
- Debate must be limited to the motion at hand.
- When a motion is on the floor, no new motions may be made.
- No member can speak twice on the same issue under debate until everyone else wishing to speak as spoken to it once.

Rules of Order – Examples/Considerations

- Limit practice of reconsidering issues that the board has already voted on and acted upon barring new information, or newly constituted boards.
- Should debate follow or precede a motion???
Efficiency may depend as much on the board itself ... as the issue.

Abstentions & Recusals

- Abstentions are not votes.
 - Present and voting
 - Determinative impact is more likely lead to a negative vote
- Elected to decide.
- Reserve abstention for missed meetings, etc.
- Recusal - vote unless a conflict of interest or bias/prejudice issue is present.



Role of the Board Chair

Slide 30

Role of the Board Chair

- Functions of a board chair is largely based upon tradition, reformed by board policy (*NHSBA sample –BBAB*).
- Common roles include:
 - Preside at board meetings;
 - Sign documents on behalf of the board;
 - Consult with the Superintendent re: agenda setting;
 - Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between Board meetings;
 - Committee appointments;
 - Call emergency meetings of the Board as necessary;
 - Board spokesperson.


Role of the Board Chair www.nhsba.org Slide 31

Role of the Board Chair

- Meeting responsibilities:
 - enforce board's meeting procedures, and
 - guide the flow of agenda items, discussions on the same and formal board votes.
- As the moderator of debate, the chair should consider withholding his/her position until after others have spoken;
- Recognize all who have comments or questions;
- Keep the group on the topic;

Role of the Board Chair

- Clarify questions;
- Practice the art of summarization;
- Restate motions to eliminate confusion and help create a clear record;
- Do not make long speeches;
- Vote on all matters!



Public Participation at Board Meetings - “Public Comment”

Slide 34

Public Participation

Public meetings v. meetings of the public.

- The primary purpose of school board meetings is to conduct the business of the board as it relates to school policies, programs, budget, and operations.
- A school board meeting is one that the public has a right to attend, rather than a meeting of the public where everyone might have the right to speak.

Public Comment www.nhsba.org Slide 35

Public Participation

Public comment at board meetings.

- The United States Supreme Court has recognized that nothing in the U.S. Constitution requires public bodies to allow members of the public to speak during meetings of that body.
- Likewise, neither the State's Constitution, nor the Right-to-Know Law, RSA 91-A, create a public right to speak during or at board meetings.
- As there is not legal mandate to do so, the "power" to create the opportunity for public comment is reserved to the school board.

Public Participation

Public comment at board meetings and the 1st Amendment.

- Access and input to decision making by **public** bodies, including **school boards**, is an important part of our democracy, both by tradition and under the State and Federal Constitutions.
- When a board allows time at its meetings for public comment, the board creates a "forum" for speech, which in turn implicates free speech considerations under both the Federal and State Constitutions.

Public Comment

Public comment at board meetings and the 1st Amendment. Continued...

- School boards can enact rules about public comments at their meetings, but when they do so, they must adhere to First Amendment standards.
- Board rules may include “time, place and manner” restrictions, as well as other parameters, provided that in all instances, the limitations are viewpoint neutral.

Note: A full discussion of public comment and the 1st Amendment is beyond the scope of this presentation.

Public Comment

Refer to your own local policy.

NHSBA Sample Policy BEDH.



Public Participation Practice Tips

- Make sufficient copies available of the agenda and other items of general concern (e.g., meeting policies, outline of Right-to-Know Law regarding non-public sessions, report summaries, etc.).
- Place controversial issues early on the agenda.
- Similarly, place participation items (staff, student groups, consultants) early.
- Use language the audience can understand – avoid jargon.

Public Participation Practice Tips

- Summarize public comment rules/policy before the start of public comment period.
- Safest rule to enforce under the 1st Amendment is one limiting speakers to X minutes.
- Administer public comment rules consistently.
- *Public comment is for input, not debate* – Avoid exchanges and arguments. Keep exchanges to a minimum, and never argue.
- For highly controversial topics, consider a “public forum” (special board meeting).

Public Participation Practice Tips

- Be adept at deferring direct response –
 - no single board member can speak for the board until the board has taken a position;
 - deferring reduces the risk of overly emotional responses;
 - deferring – as with agenda setting - helps assure that the information required for meaningful and accurate deliberation is in hand;
 - develop a pattern of integrating meaningful input into future agendas or board business part of the meeting.

Public Comment

www.nhsba.org

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