



HOW CAN I SHORTEN COMMITTEE MEETINGS?

Ray Burniston suggests ways to complete the business swiftly.

Secretary At Work: February 2002 *(reviewed November 2011)*

Secretaries often ask this question invariably after they have just had a committee meeting, which started at 7pm and finished at midnight. Very occasionally there are matters of extreme importance and a meeting can last more than the norm of not more than two hours.

The following points are suggested to help but I have no doubt you will come up with others.

- ✎ Make sure that the Chairman is fully briefed if possible prior to the meeting.
- ✎ See that all notices and minutes are sent out well before the meeting. Make sure you avoid someone arriving at the club minutes before the meeting and picking up their notice and any reports. If you have a small committee, try and get them all on email and use this method of sending out notices.
- ✎ Ensure that all minutes of sub-committees, financial and other reports are circulated if possible well before the meeting. Where possible, use the very latest technology to send these items out.
- ✎ Suggest to the sub-committee Chairman the main items to bring up for a decision.
- ✎ Ensure that all new members' applications are in order and that they have gone through the selection procedure in place at the club. If they are all recommended by the membership sub-committee they should literally go through on the nod.
- ✎ If the meetings are held on a week day evening try and start around 6 pm to avoid committee members having any or little alcohol before the meeting.
- ✎ Ban alcohol from the committee room.
- ✎ Finishing the meeting with a dinner timed for about 8 pm is another way of making sure that the meeting will not drag on.
- ✎ If you have meetings only every quarter then major items may well need to be discussed at a specially arranged meeting in which you only discuss the matters involved.

Sticking to the same agenda for every meeting can also mean time wasting. Try to vary it so that items that come up are important rather than spend time on mundane matters.