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Consensus Decision Making
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Welcome
 &
 Introductions

Context of Decision-making





*Legal Obligations for the
 Co-op Board of Directors*

- 1) Duty of Care
- 2) Duty of Loyalty
- 3) Fiduciary Duty





Duty of Care

“Prudent Persons” Standard:

- Act in good faith, in the best interests of the cooperative, and with such care—including reasonable inquiry, an ordinary prudent person in a like position would use under similar circumstances.



Duty of Loyalty

- Make decisions based on what is good for the co-op (and therefore all members).
- Disclose & seriously consider excluding (RECUSING) yourself from any decision that might imply a bias.





Fiduciary

- Review & Consider Financial Statements
- Ask Questions
- Budget
- Financial Plan
- Carefully manage co-op’s money & property (“Assets”)—don’t put assets at risk





Decision Making: Meeting Process

Agree upon, & Consistently Use the Same Process EG—Roberts Rules Style

- 1) Motion
- 2) Second
- 3) Discussion
- 4) Vote—Modifications

“Abstain” “Recuse”



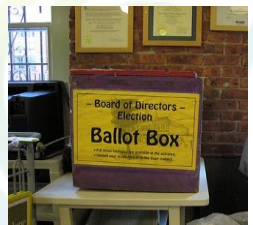
Democratic Decision-making Methods/ Practices

BEST PRACTICE: Vary democratic methods to fit situation & strengths & weakness of method

- Majority
- Unanimous Vote
- Consensus



WRITTEN BALLOTS: + & -





Simple Majority

50% + 1

Critique: Pluses & Minuses



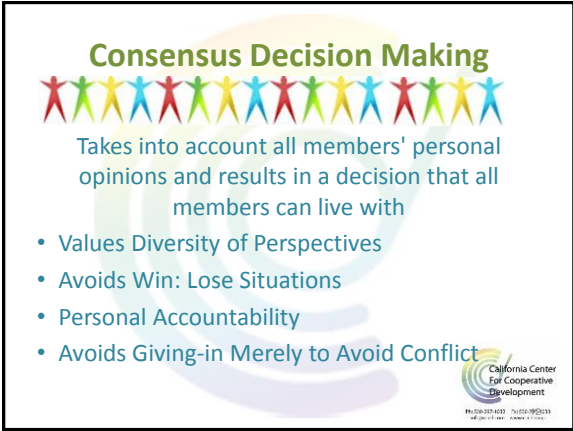


Unanimous Vote

100% Agreement; all in favor

Risk:






Consensus Decision Making

Takes into account all members' personal opinions and results in a decision that all members can live with

- Values Diversity of Perspectives
- Avoids Win: Lose Situations
- Personal Accountability
- Avoids Giving-in Merely to Avoid Conflict



Encouraging a Positive Culture

- Acknowledging the unspoken
 - What promotes a positive feeling in a meeting?
 - What happens in meetings that turn you off?
 - a. Getting outside of the meeting box
 - b. Promote "WE" within meetings



Positive Culture/Productive Meetings

- Promote camaraderie by recognizing individuals
 - Begin meeting with 30 second "check-in"
- Well organized, planned meeting with clear roles & responsibilities



Consensus Toolbox



Testing for consensus/survey:

- Talking Stick
- Fist of Five
- Up/Down Sideways
- Simple Voting & Blocking
- Rules regarding Blocking
- Supermajority voting





Consensus, general agreement is always the goal on decisions

TALKING STICK





Fist of Five

- 5= For it & will work hard for it.
- 4= For it, will work hard for it, have some reservations.
- 3= Have serious reservations but will go along w/it.
- 2= Don't like it, won't work for it but will not work against it.
- 1= Don't like it, probably won't work against it, but unsure
- Fist= Will not actively work against it.

Discussion/Modifications?





Thumbs up/Down/Sideways

- Up= Yes vote
- Sideways = Unsure or have reservations
- Down= Against

Discussion/Modifications?



Consensus Decisions



Premise: Involvement → Commitment → better decisions
 = Respect; listening; consideration of dissent



- Motion with second is clearly presented
- Reasons are shared for dissent with majority
- Discussion
- Modifications--?





Simple Voting

Ultimately a decision must be made – work to consensus—a decision everyone can live with





Can Block lead to a better Proposal?

Once Members listen to and understand it they:

- 1) Discuss & decide how to move forward
- 2) Modify/find common ground?
- 3) Have procedure to move forward at current meeting or table to next meeting:
 - Vote to over-ride and move forward immediately (may be simple majority; suggest supermajority such as majority +2; two-thirds, three-quarters...);
 - Vote to table to next meeting for consideration—have specific process if tabled to next meeting





Blocking Rules

ACCEPTABLE REASONS FOR BLOCKING:

- 1) Profound moral objection
- 2) Believing enactment of the proposal would cause grave injury to the cooperative
- 3) Believing it is vital for the co-op to get more information and/or give more consideration before making a critical decision.

NOTE: A blocking Member **MUST** explain the bases for each of the acceptable reasons



Effective Meetings Basics



- ❖ Commonly Understood Goals
- ❖ Good Facilitation
- ❖ High Level of Participation
- ❖ Keep Minutes of Meeting



Commonly Understood Goals



- Set time & location (Bylaws)
- Prepare Agenda—include estimated time for each agenda item (board approves: agenda, minutes from last meeting, all motions)
- Stick to standard decision-making process
 - Modify consensus methods according to proposals






Good Facilitation & Participation

- Have designated facilitator (can rotate)
- Have a timekeeper
- Someone to take minutes (can rotate)
- -Vibe-watcher/monitor?
- Begin board meeting with check-ins
- Stick to agenda topics — if someone brings up a new topic, group decides whether or not to add it to the agenda and how much time will be given to the topic (usually added as last item on agenda).
- Encourage diverse participation;
goal=consensus





CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING

Review & Evaluation

- Most Imp points?
- Lingering questions?
- What should have Been covered?

