



## CTC Cohort — Session 14

### Annual Business Meeting

By Gene Roncone

In this session, you get to listen in as Superintendent Gene Roncone teaches his weekly cohort on how to have a successful church annual business meeting. Gene gives advice, practical and customizable resources, and answers questions about how to plan, chair and follow up after your church's annual business meeting. **This document has many hyperlinks to pre-class reading, the video recording and customizable examples and companion resources you can download.** To start,

1. Download Charles Crabtree's chapter on business meetings as a re-class assignment. The PDF of this short chapter can be accessed by [clicking here](#).
2. Download the link to the video and watch this session by clicking here <https://youtu.be/v7fHOrPIR7Y>.
3. Follow along using this document as session notes. In the video Gene breaks this lesson down into the following three parts
  - **Pre-meeting preparation** (covered today)
  - **Mid-meeting** (covered today)
  - **Post-meeting follow-up** (covered today)

## 1. PRE-MEETING PREPARATION

You will need about eight (8) weeks of lead time to prepare for your annual business meeting. Ministry has lots of unexpected emergencies and interruptions, so be sure not to procrastinate and give yourself margin to adequately prepare and plan. Remember, great meetings are not great because of what happens in them as much as what happens before them.

1. **Read your bylaws and prepare the "call to meeting"**. The first thing you should do is to read your bylaws over again, even if you feel you know them well, and prepare your "call to meeting" carefully.
  - **Reread bylaws and underline specific requirements.** Be sure to sit down and read your entire bylaws again highlighting any requirements or applications to your current meeting. This will include things like votes needed, quorum, requirements for amendments, qualifications, terms, and votes needed to secure an election.
  - **Call to meeting.** "Call to meeting" is a parliamentary term used to describe the official notification of the annual business meeting. Because the purpose stated in that letter, email or post determines what can be addressed in that meeting, it is important that it be focused and clear. It must state the date, time, location, and specific purpose of the meeting and be mailed out and advertised to all members by the date or time specified in your bylaws. Remember, this document determines what is "germane" or acceptable for business. So, draft it carefully.

To view a customizable sample of the correct format for a "Call to Meeting" [click here](#).

2. **Finalize your end-of-year financial report and audit.** I always liked to present this document to the board BEFORE the annual business meeting so they can ask questions and get information before the meeting. This enables them to have confidence to and field any questions they may have before the meeting and “off-line”. If you have an auditor, ask if they would be willing to present the audit to the board before your meeting.
3. **Update the membership roster and create sign in sheet.** Make sure you budget time in a board meeting a month before your business meeting to update your membership roster. Then create a numbered list of members listed last name first and first name second in alphabetical order in a word document with a long line after each name. This enables people to quickly find their name and sign on the line after it as being in attendance and receiving a badge to vote.
4. **Complete deacon vetting.** You will need to start 5-6 weeks before the meeting vetting potential deacons, interviewing them, formalizing nominations, and preparing a short bio for each candidate. We covered recommended vetting steps in a previous session. To access customizable vetting forms in Microsoft Word Document, click the links below. Depending on your browser they will be downloaded into your computer’s download folder.
  - [Board Nomination Memo](#)
  - [Nomination Discussion Guidelines](#)
  - [Nomination Evaluation Sheet](#)
  - [Candidate Interview Sheet](#)
  - [Initial contact letter](#)
  - [Sample of info needed to write biographical paragraphs](#)
  - [Sample of deacon nominee biographical page.](#)
5. **Prepare the annual report.** There are a few things that should be made available to all your official church members for the meeting. You will need to decide whether you will email them before the meeting or make them available in printed form at the meeting. I did both 2-3 weeks prior to the meeting.
  - **Premeeting information.** You should also determine a way to either mail or make available electronically at the same time the annual report, minutes from the previous year’s meeting, financials statements and nominee bios BEFORE the meeting.
  - **Sample resources.** To view a sample of the correct format for
    - Call to Meeting sample [click here](#).
    - Cover letter to annual report sample [click here](#).
    - Annual audit report sample [click here](#).
    - Annual budget worksheet sample [click here](#).
    - Annual business meeting minutes sample [click here](#).
    - Nomination report sample [click here](#).

Remember great meetings are not great because of what happened in them, but because of the preparation before they ever started.

6. **Write chairman's script.** Sit down and type out your entire chairman's script as if you were writing a record of the meeting and what you will say in the order that it occurs. The first time is the hardest, but after that it can be used as a template to easily make changes. Three-hole punch this document and put it in a binder. Then read over it, highlight items, and write notes to yourself in the margin. You will literally use it to read and refer too while chairing your own meeting. The binder will help you walk through each stage of the meeting in an organized, calm, and methodical manner. I attribute this one discipline as the reason I have not had one bad business meeting in over 30 years of ministry. A sample of a chairman script in Microsoft Word format that can be customized can be accessed at [this link](#).
7. **Appoint and train roster and teller committees.** There are two committees you will need to have a successful business meeting.
  - **Roster committee and chairperson.** Three people who sign members in, hand out materials as members come to the registration table and give you roster reports when needed. Roster reports are paper reports to the chairman informing them of how many members are present and signed in.
  - **Teller committee and chairperson.** Three to four people who are trusted and competent enough to count ballots and report accurate results to the chairperson.

You will also need to prepare all necessary ballots that are clear, simple and have enough on hand to avoid delaying the meeting. To access customizable roster and teller resources in Microsoft Word Format, click the links below. Depending on your browser they will be downloaded into your computer's download folder.

- [Memo to roster committee outlining their responsibilities](#)
  - [Template for roster committee report](#)
  - [Memo to teller committee outlining their responsibilities](#)
  - [Teller committee counting worksheet](#)
  - [Template for teller committee report](#)
8. **Brief your board on the agenda and assign tasks.** Use a Zoom meeting to brief your board on the agenda, flow of meeting and assign tasks for needed areas. Give your official board secretary a copy of your chairman script in the event something happens to you and that person will need to chair the meeting. This planning and succession mindedness allows your church to have peace of mind and stability in your unforeseen absence.
  9. **Appoint a coordinator.** Appoint and empower one coordinator you trust to take care of all logistical needs while you are chairing the meeting. This might include message delivering, checking on tellers, organizing ballots and anything else that "comes up".
  10. **Prepare inspirational testimonies.** Every business meeting has lulls, stalls, and pauses. Glide through these things by preparing a top ten amazing things that God did through the ministries of your church in the prior year. This could be praise reports, videos, slide shows or testimonies from your ministry leaders. It should also include a list of people you may need to honor for

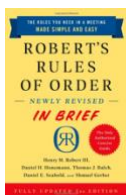
service or past accomplishments. Then use these as “inspirational filler” during your meeting. If you don’t get through the entire list. No big deal. You can use them on Sunday mornings.

## 2. MID-MEETING (DAY OF)

1. **Coach team leads.** An hour before the meeting meet with your two team leads and go over the memo and procedures just to make sure everyone is on the same page.
2. **Set up Chairman post.** Set up chairpersons’ podium with script, bylaws, membership roster, minutes, and Roberts Rules of Order
3. **Divide the house.** Determine how you will distinguish members from non-members (colored name badges are best). This helps secure your voting integrity and the tellers/ushers know who should receive a ballot.
4. **Resource participants.** Provide pens, water, or light refreshments. Make it fun and have annual reports printed on hand.
5. **Work through your script.** Review your script, make notes in the margin to remind you of things you don’t want to forget. Then, work through the script calmly, confidently, and graciously to help participants understand what is happening while keeping order. A sample of a chairman script in Microsoft Word format that can be customized can be accessed at [this link](#).

## 3. POST-MEETING

1. **Finish draft minutes.** Finalize draft minutes within two weeks of meeting so it is fresh in everyone’s mind. Run the draft by the board to ensure it corresponds with everyone’s recollection of the meeting. Then save them for next year’s business meeting. They are not formal until they are received by the members.
2. **Seal and file documentation.** Seal and file all ballots, roster reports, teller reports and the annual reports somewhere safe for the church’s historical archive. You will need to be able to refer to them later.
3. **Orientate new board members.** Schedule an orientation session before your first board meeting. Make sure all your new and existing deacons are present no matter how long they have served. Zoom is a great way to do this and gets everyone on the same page about you, your style, how meetings are run and how to process requests. For an example of the orientation session I do with new and existing presbyters [click here](#).
4. **Thank your team.** Send thank you notes to candidates, board and team leads who helped make the business meeting a success.
5. **Fortify the moral of your leadership pipeline.** You may also want to be prepared to “coach up” any candidates who are disappointed that they were not elected.
6. **Sharpen your parliamentary knowledge and skills.** The book, *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised In Brief*, (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) is only 213 pages and is the only official summary of *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised* (700-page version). There is not better tool to sharpen your chairmanship skills and understanding of Parliamentary Procedure. You can order it at [www.amazon.com/dp/1541797701](http://www.amazon.com/dp/1541797701)



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