

Get Your Public Meetings Back on Track! Tips and Tricks for Effective Meetings

ILG Webinar

April 12, 2018

11:00AM-12:00PM



INSTITUTE FOR
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
FOUNDED 1955

Speakers

Supervisor Joe Simitian, County of Santa Clara

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Moderator

Hang Tran, Program Coordinator, Institute for Local Government

The Institute for Local Government

**ILG is the non-profit
research and education
affiliate of**



**California Special
Districts Association**

Districts Stronger Together

ILG Mission

- Promoting good government at the local level
- Practical, impartial and easy-to-use materials



Have a question for our panel?

- Please type your questions into the question box at any time during the webinar.
- We will read your questions during the question period at the end of the webinar.



Quick Poll – Who's online?

Which of the following best describes you?

- Local government official or staff
- State, regional or other governmental agency
- Nonprofit or community-based organization
- Private sector or consultant
- Other

What Will You Learn More About Today?



- Best practices in chairing a meeting; key duties of chair
- Components of a successful meeting
- How to deal with disruptive audiences and divisive topics

Why Engage the Public?

Better identification of community values and needs

More informed residents

Improve local agency decision-making

More community buy-in and support



Why Engage the Public?



Faster project implementation

Increased community participation and leadership development

Increased trust in local government

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Tools and Tips for Effective Meetings

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What is the role of the meeting chair?

Job #1: Traffic Cop & Air Traffic Controller

Get everyone from where they are to where they want to go and keep them from crashing into one another.



Remember: You are not the star.



What is the role of the meeting chair?

Job #2: The Play-by-Play Announcer

Keep everyone *refreshed* as to where you are and where you are headed.

Keep everyone *refreshed* as to the rules of the road.

What are the goals of the meeting chair?

Make sure everybody thinks they got a fair shake
(because they did!)

- ✓ Were they heard? If possible, ask each member by name.
- ✓ Was their point of view allotted the time it was entitled to?
- ✓ Was it a safe space to be heard?

The importance of being extra prepared

Know the rules

The 80-20 rule applies

Know the material

Wait and listen

**Synthesize what you
have heard**

Get the body to yes

The Chair can help find the common thread and pull together what seem to be disparate thoughts but are often a coherent view of the body.

The importance of good working relationships



Have you fostered a good relationship with your colleagues before you sit down at the dais?



Have you made public comments that will make it hard to be collegial?

How to handle hostile public comment

Remember, it's not personal – even when it is.

Not always a representative sample.

Don't engage.

Be open to legitimate criticism that may come your way.

How to handle hostile public comment

There may be something worth listening to, albeit its delivery in a rough package.

Be polite, clear and firm.

The power of a recess.

Create a safe space.

How important are procedural rules?

You need to have at least a basic sense of the rules governing the body.
Again, remember the 80-20 rule.

Make sure everyone at the table has the same basic sense of the rules.

Do you have a parliamentarian? If so, use them. Let them take the heat.
But remember, the parliamentarian is not the presiding officer.

The rules are means to an end, not an end in and of themselves.

Be consistent, but don't be too rule driven.

Focus too much on the rules and you've lost sight of the real purpose of the rules: to have a good meeting and a good result.

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Thomas D. Jex



April 12, 2018

Case Study

A Contentious Public Meeting

- Some tips and strategies to help the meeting run better



Case Study

A Condo Project



Case Study

Mayor

- Review Agency's procedural rules
- Go through some "what if" scenarios
- Set the tone at beginning of meeting



Case Study

City Manager

- Behind the scenes meetings and planning
- City staff helping audience



Case Study

Council Member

- Statements from fellow council members to remind audience
- Everyone deserves a chance to share their comments



Case Study

City Attorney

- Brown Act allows a legislative body to remove persons who willfully interrupt a meeting (Govt. 54957.9)
- Members of the press or “other news media” must be allowed to stay



Enhancing Public Participation

- Community outreach
 - Meeting format, location, time
 - Methods of engagement
- www.ca-ilg.org/pebasics
 - www.ca-ilg.org/enhancing-public-participation

Enhancing Public Participation

Local agencies inform, consult or deliberate with the greater community in a variety of ways. Resources in this section provide decision makers information on how to enhance their public engagement efforts.

For officials interested in understanding the options and opportunities associated with broadening and deepening their public engagement activities, please check out the Institute's [resources on public engagement](#).

Making Your Open Public Meetings More Effective

This tip sheet outlines the basics of California's open meeting laws as well as tips for both local officials and the public to help ensure a successful meeting.



Making Your Open Public Meetings More Effective

Tools for Effective Meetings

- Chairing a Meeting
- Enhancing Public Participation
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Technology and Meetings
- www.ca-ilg.org/MeetingResourceCenter

The screenshot shows the website for the Institute for Local Government. The header includes the logo and the text "INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT™ Promoting Good Government at the Local Level". A search bar is in the top right. The navigation menu has "Home", "Subject Areas", "About the Institute", and "Support Our Work". The "Subject Areas" menu is expanded, listing various topics, with "Effective Meetings" selected. The main content area features the title "Meeting Resource Center: Tools for Effective Meetings" and a paragraph explaining the center's purpose. Below this are two sub-sections: "Chairing a Meeting" and "Enhancing Public Participation", each with a brief description and a "Read more" link.

INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT™
Promoting Good Government at the Local Level

Home **Subject Areas** About the Institute Support Our Work

SUBJECT AREAS

- > Ballot Measures and Campaigns
- > Beacon Program
- > Budgeting and Financial Management
- > CCS Partnership
- > Children and Youth
- > Climate Action
- > Economic Development
- ▼ **Effective Meetings**
 - Chairing a Meeting
 - Enhancing Public Participation
 - Parliamentary Procedure
 - Technology and Meetings
- > Ethics & Transparency
- > Healthy Communities, Land Use and Planning
- Homelessness
- > Inclusive Public Engagement
- > Leadership and Governance
- > New to Public Service
- > Recycling

Meeting Resource Center: Tools for Effective Meetings

Meetings are central to democratic decision-making. Leaders can increase the effectiveness of public meetings with thoughtful advance planning and by taking a few simple steps. The Institute's Meeting Resource Center aims to help local officials and agency staff in these efforts by providing practical tools and useful materials.

Chairing a Meeting

In this section, the Institute offers resources for chairing a meeting, codes of conduct, preparing for successful meetings and ideas on getting meetings back on track. Video interviews with current and former officials supplement written materials with tips on making meetings productive, maintaining civility and engaging the public.

[Read more >](#)

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Q&A



Tools for Effective Meetings

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- Enhancing Public Participation
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The "SUBJECT AREAS" section is expanded to show "Effective Meetings", which includes links for "Chairing a Meeting", "Enhancing Public Participation", and "Parliamentary Procedure". Other subject areas listed include "Ballot Measures and Campaigns", "Beacon Program", "Budgeting and Financial Management", "CCS Partnership", "Children and Youth", "Climate Action", "Economic Development", "Ethics & Transparency", "Healthy Communities, Land Use and Planning", "Homelessness", "Inclusive Public Engagement", "Leadership and Governance", "New to Public Service", and "Recycling".

The main content area features the title "Meeting Resource Center: Tools for Effective Meetings". Below the title is a paragraph: "Meetings are central to democratic decision-making. Leaders can increase the effectiveness of public meetings with thoughtful advance planning and by taking a few simple steps. The Institute's Meeting Resource Center aims to help local officials and agency staff in these efforts by providing practical tools and useful materials."

Two sub-sections are visible: "Chairing a Meeting" and "Enhancing Public Participation". The "Chairing a Meeting" section includes a "Read more >" link. The "Enhancing Public Participation" section includes a paragraph: "Local agencies inform, consult or deliberate with the greater community in a variety of ways. Resources in this section provide decision makers information on how to enhance their public engagement efforts." and another paragraph: "For officials interested in understanding the options and opportunities associated with broadening and deepening their public engagement".

Stay updated!

- Additional upcoming 2018 webinars.
- Slides and materials to be posted on ILG's website and email with link sent out.
- If you have additional questions, please contact Hang Tran at htran@ca-ilg.org.



The image displays four social media contact options for the Institute for Local Government, arranged vertically on a green background with a white hexagonal pattern. Each option is contained within a white rectangular box. The top box features the Twitter logo and the handle @InstLocGov. The second box shows the Facebook logo and the handle @InstituteForLocalGovt. The third box includes the LinkedIn logo and the text "Institute for Local Government". The bottom box contains the text "Sign up for our newsletter:" followed by the URL "www.ca-ilg.org/news" and a yellow icon of a newspaper.

