

BEACON UNITARIAN CHURCH
GUIDELINES FOR CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS
(Revised May 2009)

The Board is responsible to call congregational meetings when it is necessary to involve the congregation as a whole in the affairs of the church. The Board should distinguish between two main types of meetings:

1. **Meetings for information and/or discussion**

These meetings may be called to either present information or conduct discussion in preparation for decision-making meetings. The congregation needs to be well-prepared to ensure a constructive discussion and decision-making process takes place at these meetings.
and

2. **Formal meetings to make decisions affecting the church**

Decision-making meetings must be called according to guidelines in the By-Laws (e.g. amount of notice required, etc.). They are more formal in nature.

1. Meetings for information and/or discussion

- a) The Board will ask an appropriate person to facilitate the meeting. It could be a member of the Board Executive, a committee chair, a qualified member of the church, or an outsider depending on the nature of the subject to be discussed.
- b) The Board or facilitator will arrange to have someone take minutes.
- c) The facilitator will present and enforce the Beacon Discussion Guidelines.
- d) No motions are entertained at these meetings.
- e) The Board or the facilitator will arrange for someone to focus the discussion by giving a brief presentation of the issues or the information needed to kick off the discussion.
- f) The facilitator's responsibility is to manage the process and stay out of the discussion.
- g) The facilitator should advise members when discussion does not pertain to the issue.
- h) At the end of the meeting the facilitator can ask the group for some general direction or if more information or processes are needed or can sign up volunteers if appropriate.

2. Decision-making meetings

The Board President (or designate) chairs the meeting in accordance with Beacon By-Laws and

- a) plans the meeting agenda and process
- b) calls the meeting to order
- c) has a count of the meeting taken to ensure there is a quorum
- d) advises attendees that only congregation members may move motions or vote. Others may discuss the motion if they so desire.
- e) informs the congregation that the Beacon Discussion Guidelines along with Robert's Rules of Order will be in force
- f) asks someone to take minutes and assigns the job of parliamentarian
- g) can entertain a motion to set any extra discussion guidelines (time limits on contributions, pro and con speakers, time limits on the meeting or the decision process, etc.)
- h) will invite a designated person to present the issue to focus the discussion. If the meeting is initiated by a committee chair, with the approval of the Board, that committee chair should prepare a statement of intention and move their motion.
- i) will concentrate on facilitating the meeting and must avoid getting involved in discussing the motion under consideration. It is the role of the chair to make rulings or provide

information according to Robert's Rules of Order pertaining to motions. It is not the role of the chair to judge on the content of discussion unless it does not directly pertain or is not germane to the motion under consideration.

- j) will entertain motions, facilitate discussion pertaining to motions and hold votes.
- k) will entertain a motion of adjournment when the discussion is complete or a decision has been made.