

4-H Club Officer Elections and Committee Appointments



Club Officers

Successful club meetings depend on leadership from effective officers. 4-H club officers are usually elected each year near the beginning of the club's program year. Allowing 4-H groups to elect their own officers serves several purposes. Members:

- learn about and participate in elections.
- learn to be responsible to their group, develop leadership skills, and practice basic parliamentary procedure.
- establish ownership in their club meetings.

Before elections take place, an advisor or teen leader should do the following:

- 1) explain the duties of each office;
- 2) share any qualifications needed to run for office; attendance, participation... ;
- 3) discuss the need to elect members for their ability rather than for their popularity; and
- 4) discuss the procedures to be followed in the election.

4-H clubs usually elect the following officers:

*President-Prepares an agenda and presides at all meetings. Understands and follows basic parliamentary procedure. Appoints committees. Works with leaders to insure that each meeting runs effectively.

*Vice President-Presides over the meeting in the absence of the president. Serves as chairman of the program planning committee, and introduces program at club meetings.

*Secretary-Keeps complete and accurate minutes of each business meeting. Writes club correspondence. Records attendance of members and advisors.

*Treasurer-Handles club money. Maintains accurate and current financial records.

*News Reporter-Writes interesting and accurate reports of the club meetings and special activities. Sends reports of meetings and activities to local media. Maintains a club scrapbook.

*Historian-Keeps items of historical significance to the club and arranges them in a scrap book.

*Recreation Leader-Plans and leads recreation at each meeting. Plans special events and parties. Involves other members in leading recreational activities.

*Song Leader – Plans and leads songs at each meeting.

A club may elect additional officers. The size of the club and the age of the members may determine the number and kinds of officers to be elected.

As one of the goals of 4-H is to develop leadership skills, it is a good idea to pass jobs around so members gain different experiences. This usually means that a member should not hold the same office in successive years. A variety of experiences will help the member grow in leadership and develop new skills.

One common problem in clubs of mixed ages is the tendency to elect the youngest members in the club to one of the three following jobs – Recreation and Song Leaders. A club may want to elect both an older and a younger member to these offices. This can help meet the needs and interests of the different age groups.

Election of Officers

Time is needed for members to become acquainted with potential officers. It may be best to elect officers at the second or third meeting of the year, after members have had a chance to get to know each other. Clubs that meet throughout the year may elect officers at any time during the year. There are several acceptable methods to elect officers, and several of these ideas might also be used in combination.

The first method, often used in larger clubs, is a nominating committee. This committee of three to five members is usually appointed by the president. The committee meets with the organizational leader prior to the club meeting when the election of officers is to take place. Two persons are usually nominated for each office. Each prospective officer is asked if they will serve prior to completing the slate of candidates. The slate of officer candidates is then presented at the club meeting as a committee report. It is always acceptable to nominate others from the floor.

If it is a small club a slate of officers (1 person per office) is appropriate, but nominations should still be taken from the floor. In larger clubs the slate should list two or more candidates for each office.

The second method is to have members at one meeting sign up for the offices for which they would like to be elected, ahead of time. A short questionnaire/application works very well with this method. Ballots are made based on who applied for each office. At the next meeting, these members give a short statement as to why they should be elected to the office. Nominations are also open from the floor.

The third method of electing officers is by nomination from the floor. In this method, the past president (or in a new club, organizational advisor) calls for nominations from the floor for president. After nominations are closed for president, the nominees are voted on prior to receiving nominations for vice president.

For all methods, voting should be by secret ballot as members write the name of their choice on a slip of paper. One by one, each office is filled by members elected by the majority of votes cast.

Any member not voted into an office can be nominated for another office from the floor. Candidates should be given the opportunity to address the club about why they wish to be elected.

Club Committees

Committees are an important part of a 4-H club. Committees can help all members develop a sense of teamwork as they become actively involved in the club. These groups plan and supervise various club activities, helping members develop a sense of teamwork. Parents and club leaders can also be appointed to help committees be successful. If the club is of mixed ages, it is good to include younger and older members on the same committee.

Committees may be appointed by the president with the assistance of the leader or members may volunteer to serve on committees. All members should serve on at least one committee each year.

Some clubs may have standing committees which are appointed each year and serve throughout the entire year. Special Committees are appointed when a need arises.

Following are suggestions for club standing committees:

- **Program committee:** Finds speakers, plans field trips, etc.
- **Membership committee:** Helps recruit new members, including planning membership events like project fairs or welcome events.
- **Community service committee:** Identifies community needs and presents ideas for service project.
- **Fundraising Committee** – Plans, presents and organizes club fundraising projects

Sources:

4-H Club Officers and Committee, Ohio State University Fact Sheet, 4H-101-99

4-H Volunteer Leaders' Series – Election of Officers, University of Arkansas, 4HCH8-PD-10-02RV

4-H Volunteer Information Series – Selecting 4-H Club Officers and Committee and Members, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

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