

## **Introduction**

The mission of the Idaho 4-H program is to empower youth to reach their full potential through working and learning in partnership with caring adults. Leadership and citizenship activities are important experiences youth gain through 4-H club participation. The minimum number of youth needed to function as a club is five. This is a sufficient number of members to provide essential elements of interaction, discussion and teamwork opportunities for developing leadership life skills of the youth. Each member should be given many opportunities during his or her 4-H career to develop leadership qualities.

One way that 4-H clubs provide members the opportunity to develop leadership is through organizing as a body, electing officers and conducting business meetings. The 4-H club officers and adult partner(s) work together to plan, organize, and conduct business, service-learning and social activities. By working together as officers and with adults, youth learn to interact with people of all ages and

assume the roles and responsibilities of being a good citizen. The leadership skills youth gain through these experiences are helpful in filling out scholarship applications and are often valued by college scholarship committees. In addition, 4-H alumni who have held offices in 4-H clubs have the ability and often become active and hold leadership positions in civic and community organizations as adults.

4-H leaders sometimes wonder about their role as it relates to club officers. Should officers be given total responsibility for organizing club meetings? Will a 12-year old follow through with responsibilities? What happens when club meetings get out of control? How much responsibility can be expected of adolescent and pre-adolescent boys and girls?

These questions have no easy answers, particularly since each youth brings to the office different interests, abilities, and previous experiences. Leadership (and the responsible behavior needed by a leader) is not an inborn trait. Leadership and responsible behavior develop through experience. Only by

gradually being given more responsibility does a young person learn to be responsible. When teaching a child to ride a bike, the adult must provide some support until the youth gains enough confidence and experience that he or she can manage on his or her own. The same is true of leadership.

### **The Role of the Adult Leader**

When working with club officers, the role of the adult leader shifts to that of an advisor providing shadow leadership. How the leader functions in this role depends on how they relate to the group of young people in the 4-H club. Here is a formula for being a successful advisor:

1. The leader believes that the club truly belongs to the young people and exists for their benefit,
2. The leader believes that young people are capable of managing their own affairs but need the guidance of an interested, knowledgeable adult in making choices and decisions, and
3. The leader thinks of the club as “our” club instead of “my club”.

Becoming a partner to the youth is an exciting and engaging experience. Adult

partners find that the youth are able to clarify issues, provide a different focus and fresh interpretation, resulting in enhanced connection to the community.

### **Nominating, Electing and Installing 4-H Club Officers**

4-H club officers need to know the expectations the adult partner and the club members have of the officers and what officer duties and responsibilities are to the club.

Before election of club officers it is a good idea to inform club members what the duties of the officers are. These duties are listed starting on page 7. Using the lists of duties, the members will know who would be most qualified to take on the responsibilities of serving the club and a popularity contest can be avoided. Besides the specific duties that each office requires, characteristics of a 4-H officer are that they are willing to attend meetings and planning meetings, have shown and completed responsibilities for the 4-H club in the past, have the age and maturity to assume officer leadership. Younger members can be encouraged to take on more leadership each year, progressing from lesser offices to those requiring

more responsibility. A 4-H member should serve in an office only one year, if possible; that way other members are allowed to develop leadership responsibilities.

Youth develop formal reasoning skills similar to adults between ages 11 and 15. Therefore, a 4-H club with all young members should function like a committee and make decisions by consensus. As the youth gain more maturity and reasoning skills, the 4-H club can transition into a club that elects officers who have the ability and are capable and dedicated to carrying out their roles and responsibilities.

Sometimes, a 4-H club uses a nominating committee to carefully consider each member and perhaps contact each member to find out their willingness and availability to serve as a club officer. The nominating committee should try to find two or more members for each office. In addition, at the time of the election, the president also indicates that nominations may be made from the floor. One of the best ways to vote is by secret ballot. This assures that everyone gets to vote and is not influenced by how others vote.

The best time to have elections is at the end of the 4-H year or at the beginning of the new 4-H year, which for Idaho is October 1. When elections are held at this time it assures that the new officers will be prepared to assume leadership and present their plan of work for the new 4-H year. An induction ceremony may be held at the first meeting of the year to install the officers (Installation of Officers #91613).

### **Officer Training**

A training session should be held with both incoming and outgoing officers in attendance when new officers are elected. Then the roles and responsibilities of each office may be outlined and the outgoing officers can explain ongoing work. Check with your county Extension staff or 4-H leader's council as they may offer a 4-H club officer's training session.

### **Establishing 4-H Club Goals**

The beginning of the year is also the time for every 4-H club to establish goals for the year. It is important to include input from other members and parents as well. Input may be gathered at the end of the year party, by a

telephone survey conducted by the officers, or in an informal manner as part of an icebreaker game. If done at the beginning of the year as an icebreaker activity, the members can have time to brainstorm, discuss and become familiar with possible service-learning activities as well as club social events. One possible icebreaker activity is the Design Your Own Clover activity (#91614). This activity is ideal for clubs with either large or small memberships.

To begin setting goals, the club should use “4-H Club Goals for the Year”, page two of the Secretary’s Record (#91607). Read the suggested goals and select several goals that the club would like to accomplish. In setting goals, it is important not to have too many goals or goals that are too difficult. When first starting out, the club may have only a few members; many who are inexperienced. It is better to start with some goals that are easily attainable and gradually include others that may be more challenging. As the club grows in membership and maturity, the goals may be more comprehensive and challenging.

### **Plan of Work - Annual Plan of Meetings and Activities**

Once the club has set goals, it is time for the officers to formulate a plan of work. The 4-H club officers will meet with their adult leader to review the goals, plan for meetings and club activities and add details for accomplishing the goals for the year. Some helpful tools for this process are the county 4-H calendar which may be obtained from the Extension staff, the 4-H Club Annual Plan of Meetings and Activities (#91612 and in the Secretary’s Record #91607) as well as the previously filled out 4-H Club Goals for the Year. At this meeting, it is good to remember that all the 4-H club officers will have many wonderful ideas and all the ideas should be considered.

It is also important to have a balanced program for the year. From its earliest days, the 4-H program focused on three areas; balancing knowledge, service and fun in roughly equal amounts of time. These three areas are still important for balance throughout the year and in planning 4-H meetings.

To begin, review the county 4-H calendar. This will help you to know the dates of events that are important to the

4-H members. Remembering the goals that were set, use the 4-H Club Annual Plan of Meetings and Activities, and write the plan of work for the year. The back page shows a suggested year that a 4-H club might plan. The plan of work should include the entire year, but allow flexibility to accommodate unforeseen events. Accomplishing each goal and activity will require involvement by all club members.

The plan of work and goals should be approved by the club. The secretary keeps track of club accomplishments on the 4-H Club Goals page. At the end of the year, the club evaluates the goals they attained and submits the records to the county extension staff by the county deadline.

### **Forming Committees**

An excellent way to work towards accomplishment of goals is to establish committees composed of members to do the work. Using committees saves time in business meetings because it allows most of the planning of activities and events to take place in the committee. Usually committees spend time brainstorming for options and solutions. Then each option/solution is clarified

and similar ideas are combined. Finally the best ideas are selected to act upon. Clubs usually form committees for planning programs, organizing events (Community Service-learning, Fair Display booth, parade float) recruiting members and raising funds. 4-H Clubs have several common committees. .

The Program committee, led by the Vice-President, is responsible for scheduling club member demonstrations, speakers or videos on subjects that the members want to learn about.

One of the main focus areas of 4-H clubs is to plan and complete specific projects to improve the community. Therefore, the purpose of the Community Service-Learning committee is to find out what the club can do to help the community and help plan and organize the project.

Ideas are gathered from parents, leaders, other 4-H members, local agencies as well as by brainstorming. Several ideas are presented by the committee to the club. Once the club members have decided on a service-learning project, the committee plans the details for accomplishing it and also reports back to the club on progress that is being made.

A Health committee and/or a Safety committee are sometimes formed by clubs to focus on aspects of health and/or safety. Clubs may select an area such as nutrition, environmental quality, physical fitness, obesity prevention, fire safety, safety procedures in thunderstorms, etc. The committee presents ideas to the club and once members decide on an idea, the committee meets to work out the details.

Other committees may be formed to work on special events or activities such as club picnics/parties, parade floats, display booth at the fair or fund-raising events.

Each 4-H member should serve on at least one committee. 4-H members can volunteer to be on a committee that interests them or the president can appoint members to committees to insure that all members have the opportunity to serve each year. Five to seven is a good number of members to serve on a committee. One of those members, usually the first one to volunteer or be appointed, is selected as chairperson. The chairperson is the one who leads the committee and reports on committee work and progress. All committees should have a 4-H adult

leader or teen leader serving as advisor, partner and helper to the group.

### **Planning Business Meetings and Using the Agenda**

In addition to the general plan of work for the year, the officers and the adult partner(s) should hold a planning meeting prior to the club business meeting. The agenda is the plan for what will happen at the meeting. An outline of an agenda is found in page 6 of the 4-H Secretary's Record (#91607), and may be copied for use each time the club officers meet to plan the business meeting. The club officers and leaders should review the minutes of the previous meeting and any unfinished business included on the agenda. At the club meeting, it is helpful to have copies of the agenda for everyone, or to have it written on a board or poster so that everyone understands the order of business. The most effective club meetings are those that run a maximum of 60-90 minutes and consist of three segments: recreation and song (15-20 minutes), club business (20-30 minutes), and educational program (no longer than 30-40 minutes). The meeting may conclude with refreshments.

## **President**

The president is the key officer, the one whose effectiveness, more than any other, determines the group's success or failure. The president's main job is to help everyone in the club work together and to encourage each member to contribute to the club. Making each member feel accepted and respected by the group is the president's concern.

President's duties include:

1. Attends the Plan of Work meeting with officers and adult and teen leaders at the beginning of the club year to set goals and plan what the club will do during the year.
2. Plans business meetings with other officers and leaders before each meeting.
3. Checks on meeting arrangements such as seating, lighting, and room temperature.
4. Calls meetings to order and presides over business.
5. Courteously introduces guests.
6. Decides points of order fairly and objectively.
7. Appoints committees and periodically checks on their action.

8. Casts the deciding vote in cases of ties (the president always has the right to vote, but usually doesn't except in a tie).
9. Guides meetings courteously, tactfully, and properly, while not talking too much and not pressing his/her opinions on subjects discussed.
10. Delegates responsibilities so that each member has some job at one time or another.
11. Closes meetings on time and puts the meeting place in order.

## **Vice President**

Since the vice president takes the place of the president whenever the president is absent, the vice president must know how to do the president's job. In addition, this officer is usually the chairperson of the "program committee". This group arranges for guests to meet with or talk to the club; plans special parties or tours; and arranges for the program for each meeting.

Vice president's duties include:

1. Attends the Plan of Work meeting with officers and adult

- and teen leaders at the beginning of the club year to set goals and plan what the club will do during the year.
2. Participates in pre-meeting planning to plan business meetings with other officers and leaders before each meeting.
  3. Presides at business meetings in the absence of the president.
  4. Works with the program planning committee to arrange for interesting speakers, tours or field trips, recreational or social activities, community projects, and special programs.
  5. Gives responsibilities to club members, with authority of the president.
  6. Consults with adult and teen leaders before each meeting to finalize the details of the program.

### **Secretary**

The secretary is responsible for keeping a record of what happens in the club meetings, including the attendance of members, and for handling any necessary correspondence for the club. Some clubs with a large membership

split the duties of the secretary into one or two positions. There may be a general secretary responsible for recording the minutes, a corresponding secretary responsible for club correspondence and an attendance secretary responsible for taking attendance. In some clubs, the secretary is responsible for notifying members of meetings and special activities, either by postcard or through a telephone committee or telephone tree.

Secretary's duties include:

1. Attends the Plan of Work meeting with officers and adult and teen leaders at the beginning of the club year to set goals and plan what the club will do during the year.
2. Participates in pre-meeting planning to plan business meetings with other officers and leaders before each meeting.
3. Calls the roll at each meeting and records attendance (Secretary's Record #91607).
4. Keeps the minutes of business conducted during club meetings and reads minutes from the last meeting for approval and correction (each time the club

- meets). See Secretary's Record #91607.
5. Writes letters, requests, invitations, and thank you notes in the name of the club.
  6. Sends out notices or activates a telephone calling committee to remind members of upcoming meetings.

### **Treasurer**

If the club has funds, the treasurer takes care of the club's money. Accurate record keeping is necessary.

Treasurer's duties include:

1. Attends the Plan of Work meeting with officers and adult and teen leaders at the beginning of the club year to set goals and plan what the club will do during the year.
2. Participates in pre-meeting planning to plan business meetings with other officers and leaders before each meeting.
3. Receives all money for the club and keeps a record in the treasurer's account book (Treasurer's Book/Report Forms #91615) of the amount received, from whom, and for what.
4. Deposits all money in a special club bank account. If the club has a bank account, the account should be in the club's name and needs an identification number from the Internal Revenue Service. It is important not to use a personal SSN (social security number) for a club account.
5. Pays all bills upon the approval of the club members or as specified in the club bylaws. (Check with the county extension educator to learn what your county may require for records and the handling of club money.)
6. Keeps a record in the treasurer's account book (#91615) of all transactions including date, amount, to whom paid, and for what.
7. Make a treasurer's report at each meeting indicating the money received, money paid out, and the current balance.
8. Provides records at the end of the club year to an appointed audit committee. Following the audit, the records are submitted to the extension office by November 1.

## **Reporter**

The reporter is the club's link to the community, serving as its public relations chairperson. The reporter informs the public about club activities. This helps to build community support, respect, and goodwill for the club and its activities. All public media may be used – newspapers, radio, television and Internet.

Reporter's duties include:

1. Attends the Plan of Work meeting with officers and adult and teen leaders at the beginning of the club year to set goals and plan what the club will do during the year.
2. Checks with club leader about making a personal visit to newspaper, radio, and/or television offices, meets the people who will handle the club news, and determines specific expectations and deadlines.
3. Submits news releases about club activities emphasizing what the club is planning to do or what the club members have done. See example in 4-H Club Reporter Sample Press Releases # 91616.

4. Contacts media people regarding special events. Requests a photographer to take pictures and/or a radio operator to make a radio tape,
5. Writes news releases to give the basic facts – who, what, why, where, when and how. Spells all names correctly.
6. If the club does not have an Historian, the reporter keeps a scrapbook of all club newspaper stories printed. The scrapbook belongs to the club and should be passed on to successive reporters. When the scrapbook is full, it should be entrusted to the leader to keep it in a safe place.

## **Sergeant at Arms**

The main duties of Sergeant at Arms are to assist the President in making sure that the meeting goes smoothly.

Sergeant at Arms' duties include:

1. With the president, insures that the meeting room is set up and comfortable. Check lights, heat and ventilation.

2. Cares for club equipment.  
Makes sure club flags are displayed properly.
3. Greets guests and sees that everyone is comfortable.
4. Assists president in maintaining order during the meeting.
5. Knows correct parliamentary procedure and assists the president with procedural questions if needed.
6. Helps president count votes. If paper ballots are used, collects and counts ballots with another person.
7. Distributes and collects materials.
8. Assists refreshment committee.
9. Directs cleanup after meeting.

### **Song Leader**

The song leader is responsible for including songs at every meeting.

Song Leader's duties include:

1. Keeps, distributes, and collects club songbooks.
2. Leads singing and teaches new songs.
3. Selects songs for special occasions.
4. Encourages everyone to sing.

5. Uses talented members to make singing more fun.
6. Plans and arranges for special musical numbers.

### **Recreation Leader**

The recreation leader is responsible for including recreation at every meeting.

Recreation Leader's duties include:

1. Has some form of recreation planned for each meeting. It is best to have recreation planned for people as they arrive. Alternatively, have the total group involved in recreation activities after the meeting is over.
2. Selects games suitable for the space and time available.
3. Has necessary equipment or materials on hand and ready.
4. Makes sure everyone is included and involved.

### **Historian**

The historian is responsible for keeping a scrapbook of club newspaper clippings and photographs.

Historian's duties include:

1. Keeps the club's newspaper clippings and photographs neatly in a scrapbook.
2. Makes sure that the photographs have captions that include the date, who is in the picture, what is happening in the photograph and where the photograph was taken.
3. Passes on the scrapbook to successive Historians. The scrapbook belongs to the 4-H club. When the scrapbook is full, it should be entrusted to the leader to keep it in a safe place.

### **Committee Chairpersons**

A committee chairperson is responsible for meeting with other committee members to plan and organize activities of the club.

1. Meets with other members of committee to plan and organize activities of the club. The time and place to meet should be agreeable to all members of the committee.
2. Presents a brief report to the club on progress and assistance needed.

### **Procedure for Business Meetings**

For years, the established authority for the conduct of a business meeting has been "Roberts Rules of Order" on parliamentary procedure. Because most groups use parliamentary procedure to some degree, people should have a working knowledge of its use. An incomplete understanding of the procedure or misuse by officers can lead to negative feelings and resentment. Therefore, 4-H groups, especially those made up of young members, should use this basic, simplified parliamentary procedure: For more information consult Parliamentary Procedure Made Easier, #91619.

#### 1. Motion

- Recognition is sought from the president, or the president calls for a motion by saying, "Is there a motion?"
- The motion is stated (e.g., "I move that we have a booth at the county fair").

#### 2. Second

- The president asks, "Is there a second?" or a

member may say, “I second the motion.”

### 3. Discussion

- The president then opens the motion for discussion by saying, “Is there any discussion?”
- At this point, any member may speak for or against the motion. Members should be encouraged to speak up for what they believe, stating facts rather than opinions.

### 4. Question

- After discussion, the president asks, “Are you ready to vote?” or “Are you ready for the question?” If they wish to end discussion, members will answer, “Yes” or “Question.” The president then proceeds to call for a vote on the motion.

### 5. Vote

- The motion is now restated so members know what they are voting on. The president

then says, “Those in favor of the motion say ‘aye’, or raise your hand. Those opposed?”

- The result is announced (e.g., “the ayes have it and the motion is carried”).

### 6. Decision

- The president tells the group what action will be taken because of the vote (e.g., “a committee will be appointed to plan and put up the booth display at the county fair”).

When an issue, problem, or question has a variety of alternatives, you might use a problem solving or consensus approach, not parliamentary procedure. The Total Participation Process (TPP) is one problem solving approach. It is outlined in “Let’s Put Our Heads Together (#91615), a booklet available from your County Extension Office for use by older youth and adults.

### **Problem Solving and Decision by Consensus**

In a problem solving approach the following steps should be followed:

**Step 1.** State clearly the issue, problem, or question that needs a decision or action by the group. It may help to write this out on a display board. This may help identify what the group feels is the problem.

**Step 2.** Collect all pertinent information about the problem. Distinguish between facts and opinions.

**Step 3.** Make a list of all possible solutions or courses of action. Do not overlook any possible ideas by zeroing in on one solution too quickly.

**Step 4.** Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative including the cost, feasibility, and hours needed to implement. Include everyone in the discussion and sorting process. Through a process of elimination, or possibly combining or revising items on the list, a final proposal can be drafted.

**Step 5.** Make a decision. When the final proposal is designed, it should be written out and read to the group so everyone is clear on what is proposed. If desired, the final decision can be voted

on using the formal procedure for motions.

Most routine decisions can be made with little fact-finding and not too much discussion. However, the more complex the problem and far reaching the consequences, the more important it is to collect all the facts and consider all possible solutions.

Decision by consensus is sometimes appropriate and may avoid debates and taking sides, especially when using a problem solving approach. In addition, many smaller clubs find that making decisions by consensus rather than by parliamentary procedure works well. When reaching consensus, although formal voting is not part of the process, it is important to gain some kind of visual indication of support for the decision. This can be a head nodding in agreement, a “thumbs up,” or similar gesture.

Levels of consensus can vary from everyone giving enthusiastic endorsement to the decision, to "It's okay", to “I'm not in agreement, but I won't block taking action on the decision.” It is important to acknowledge and understand this difference in support.

As members gain experience and learn more about parliamentary procedure, you may want a copy of Parliamentary Procedure Made Easier (#91619).