



How to Organize a Club

When it is desired to form a Women's Democratic Club, it should usually be limited to persons whose interest in forming such a club is known. For this reason, it may be desirable to solicit attendance for these meetings by personal contact or by letter rather than public announcement.

The First Organizational Meeting

The first organizational meeting, at which the business portion should be kept brief, sometimes follows a luncheon or dinner. Since the purpose of this meeting is to organize the call to order can be delayed for a few minutes beyond the scheduled time, if desired.

When the person designated for the purpose has called the meeting to order, she announces, "The first business is the election of a temporary chair." The person who has called the meeting to order will call for nominations from the floor, and the nominees are voted on by voice. After the chair pro tem has taken the chair, a secretary is elected, also by voice vote.

The chair then provides background information on the formation of the club or may invite the individual most interested in the formation of a club to speak. Others can also be asked to give their opinions on the subject, but the chair should not allow any one person to monopolize the meeting.

After a reasonable time for such informal discussion, someone should offer a resolution proposing definite action. Those who planned the meeting should have prepared in advance a suitable resolution, which may be in a form essentially as follows:

RESOLVED, That it is the sense of this meeting that a women's democratic club be formed.

Once seconded, the resolution is stated by the chair and is then open to debate an amendment. For instance, the participants may want to decide the name of the club. It should be noted that such a resolution is only a declaration of intention: its adoption does not bring the club into being, which is only accomplished by the adoption of bylaws and the signing of the membership roll by those who initially join the club.

After the resolution to organize the club is adopted, the succeeding steps generally are:

- a. Introduction and adoption of a motion that a committee of five (5) be appointed by the chair to draft bylaws for the club.
- b. Introduction and adoption to fix the date, hour and place of the next meeting at which a report of the bylaws committee will be presented. If it is impractical to set a time

and place for the next meeting, the motion can be that “when the meeting adjourns, it adjourns to meet at the call of the chair.”

- c. Introduction and adoption of a motion authorizing the bylaws committee to provide reproduced copies of the completed draft for distribution to all who attend the next meeting. Persons seeking to form a club should take into account the fact that expenses may be involved whether or not a club materializes. Dues cannot be collected or received in the name of the club until its organization is completed. Expenses advanced can be reimbursed.
- d. Other business before adjournment may include informal discussion of aims and structure of the proposed club, which may serve to guide the bylaws committee.
- e. When the business of the first meeting is concluded and a motion to adjourn is adopted, the chair says either:
 1. “The meeting stands (or is) adjourned to meet again at (date, hour and place of next meeting),” or
 2. “The meeting is adjourned to meet again at the call of the chair.”

The bylaws drafting committee may find it helpful to procure and study copies of the bylaws of other women’s democratic clubs. You need to also procure copies of your district and state bylaws in order to not be in conflict with either. The bylaws committee may also find it advisable to consult with a professional parliamentarian.

It is advisable to prepare double spaced reproduced copies of the proposed bylaws, as drawn up by the committee, for distribution to each person entering the room for the second organizational meeting. If desired, such copies may be mailed in advance to everyone who attended the first meeting.

Second Organizational Meeting

The temporary officers elected at the first organizational meeting continue serving until the regular officers are elected. The first item of business at the second meeting is the reading and approval of the minutes of the first meeting, with corrections if necessary.

The next order of business is usually the report from the bylaws committee chair.

- a. The bylaws committee report may begin as follows:

“Madam Chair, the committee appointed to draw up the proposed bylaws has agreed upon the following draft and has directed me to move its adoption.”
- b. The bylaws committee chair reads the proposed bylaws in full with members following their own copies (unless the reading has been dispensed with). Following the reading, the bylaws committee chair moves the adoption of the document as follows:

“Madam Chair, by direction of the committee, I move the adoption of the bylaws.”

- c. No second is necessary since the motion is offered by a committee of more than one person. Since a complete set of bylaws is commonly considered by article or section, the chair states the question as follows:

“The question is on the adoption of the bylaws as proposed by the committee. The committee chair (or secretary) will now read the proposed bylaws, one article or section at a time.”

- d. After each article or section is read, it will be open to debate and amendment. When amendment of one article or section is completed, the next one will be read and considered. No section or article will be adopted until all have been opened to amendment.
- e. Each article or section is read separately, each provision being carefully explained by the bylaws committee chair. After the last article or section has been completed, the chair gives opportunity to insert additional paragraphs of sections and to correct any inconsistency or oversight that may have arisen during the process of amendment, as follows:

“The entire set of bylaws is now open to amendment. Are there any further amendments?”

- f. If at any point during consideration of the bylaws important additions or amendments are desirable, it may be in order to recommit the bylaws with instruction that the bylaws committee report at another meeting, which time can be fixed. If however the amendments and questions can be resolved at the meeting, the question is put on the adoption of the bylaws:

“The question is on the adoption of the bylaws (or adoption as amended). As many as are in favor say aye.... Those opposed say no.”

- g. The chair announces the voice vote. The adoption of the bylaws through which a club is brought into being requires only a majority vote. Bylaws take effect immediately upon adoption.

After the adoption of the bylaws, only those who join the organization are entitled to vote in any further proceedings. At this point, therefore, it is necessary to determine who are members. A recess in the order of business may be called to enroll members. Immediate admission to membership is contingent upon signing a permanent record sheet provided in advance by the secretary pro tem. This signature constitutes agreement to abide by the bylaws and is a commitment to prompt payment of the initiation fee (if there is one) and dues for the first year or other period prescribed by the bylaws. Persons thus signing become “charter members.” The secretary pro tem should record and give receipt for payments received from members until the treasurer is elected and takes office. The permanent record sheet of the charter members’ signatures should be filed with the original papers of the organization.

After the recess, the temporary chair calls for the reading of the roll of members. Once the roll has been read by the secretary pro tem, the chair says, “The next business in order is the nomination and election of permanent officers as prescribed in the bylaws.”

The nomination and election process is now in order. The election is by ballot if the bylaws so prescribe (which they usually should). The members for whom one can vote are not limited to nominees, since each member is free to vote for any member who is not made ineligible by the bylaws. After the election is completed, the chair declares the results. Unless a provision attached to the bylaws prescribes otherwise, the newly elected officers immediately replace the temporary one.

When the offices have been filled and the new president has taken the chair, the president should call for any business requiring immediate attention. In a new society, it is generally important that the president have time to give careful thought to committee appointments after examining the list of members. It is therefore often advisable to provide for an adjourned meeting to complete the organization before the first regular meeting. The president may find it essential, however, to immediately name the chairs of certain committees, such as the membership or program committees.

When the business of the meeting has been completed or when an adjourned meeting has been provided for, a motion to adjourn is in order. If it is adopted, the chair announces the result and declares the meeting adjourned.