

What to Expect at Your First Central Board Meeting

By Allene Symons, Long Beach Branch

Before you go: begin by making travel plans. The CB meeting begins early on a Sunday, and most CB representatives arrive on Saturday afternoon or evening. Saturday does not involve scheduled meetings unless by special arrangement.

You will be reimbursed for the cost of transportation to the meeting as well as allowable related expenses. See Policies & Procedures XVI in this kit as travel reimbursement and other details are specified in that document. Prior to the meeting, fill out the CWC reimbursement form, provided by email in advance, and bring it to the meeting with a copy of your fare receipt. Give these to the treasurer for reimbursement. Lunch is provided on Sunday. CB does not reimburse you for the cost of meals on Saturday or after the meeting during your return travel.

If traveling from farther than 100 miles away, reserve a room at the designated hotel several weeks in advance. The president will send an email with the meeting date and hotel details, including the group rate. Be sure to call the right hotel as some chains have several facilities in the area. Request the California Writers Club group rate. The hotel will record your credit card number but expense is covered under CWC central billing, unless you charge incidentals. If booking airfare to Oakland, book your flight six weeks to a month in advance to avoid higher fares and the possibility that you cannot obtain the flight you need, especially the return flight. After arriving at the airport, call for the free shuttle from the hotel transportation kiosk near luggage area. The board meeting ends around 4 p.m., so a return flight at 6 p.m. or later allows time to clear security. The hotel is five minutes from the airport, and the return trip via hotel shuttle takes a half hour or less, depending on shuttle cycle.

Preparation: You will receive a meeting agenda via email a week or so before the meeting. Read it and give some thought to the items to be discussed if those pertain to your branch and their concerns.

That morning: Note the time the meeting begins. Complementary buffet breakfast is available in the reception area for those staying overnight at the

hotel. (Beverages such as coffee and tea are available in the same area at all hours.)

At the meeting: Seating at the table/name cards: The meeting is conducted in a conference room with a closed U-shape table. Each rep will be handed a tent card with name and branch. These are positioned facing out.

The meeting follows Robert's Rules of Order with a standard order of business as reflected in the agenda. You might want to pick up a paperback edition if you are not familiar with the terminology, but you need not be an expert on formal meeting procedure. The following is a basic description of Robert's Rules of Order as it pertains to central board meetings:

During the meeting if you wish to make a comment, raise your hand and wait for the chair (president) to acknowledge you, after which you "have the floor." Please stay on topic (called "sticking to the subject"). If you are the person making a formal proposal or "motion" ("I move that...") then you must write the motion on a sheet of paper or on a form provided. This enables the secretary to keep track of exact wording for the record. After the motion is made the chair will call for a "second" by another member of the board, after which the motion is "pending," or on the floor, and debate or discussion will follow. At times there is a motion for an amendment to the main motion. This might be a simple word change, or striking a word or phrase, or adding a paragraph. An amendment also requires a motion (written down for the record) and a second. After debate for a main motion or an amendment, the chair will call for an aye or nay vote.

Breaks and lunch: An informal buffet lunch that includes vegetarian options is served in the meeting room. Beverages and snacks are available in the conference room throughout the meeting, and there are several short breaks as determined by the chair.

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