



LEADING EFFECTIVELY AS THE AREA CHAIRMAN

The Area Chairman must be a person of “big picture” vision—a multiplier—capable of identifying qualified people to lead Committees, and willing to let them succeed (or fail) based on their efforts. Running an effective monthly Area meeting is very important. Here are the basics:

1. How to Operate: Use *Robert’s Rules of Order*. This is widely accepted, easy to understand, and provides order from day 1. Here’s the version for those less-experienced with formal meeting procedure:

<http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/roberts-rules-for-dummies-cheat-sheet.html>.

If desired, Google *Robert’s Rules of Order* for a more in-depth reference.

2. Frequency of Meetings: Initially, your inner circle of Committee Chairs will meet frequently, then less often as routine operations become the norm. In your start-up phase, meet every two weeks. Once you get early policies and initial assignment issues ironed out, shift permanently to meeting monthly. This shift will hinge on the competence, independence, and reliability of your Committee chairmen. [In today’s digital world, much can be accomplished electronically instead of face-to-face. But for these monthly meetings, having everyone together in one room is best. There is no substitute for group interaction.]

3. Order of Business: Here are common components:

- a. **Opening** (Chairman) – call to order, prayer, and a devotional thought...skip the “small talk”; move on quickly to the business items.
- b. **Approval of Prior Minutes** (All) – these should be sent out ahead of time for all to review.
- c. **Area Service Team Chairman Report** – He and his team of *Direct Service Advisors* guide Troops as needed; they are Coaches/Mentors/Counselors from the Area Team—and can connect the adult leaders to Area volunteers who have “been there and done that” regarding their specific roles. Direct Service Advisors keep Troops informed about national and regional news releases, and carefully communicate changes in policy to the unit. They stand ready to help Troops establish and carry out a dynamic program.
- d. **Breakout Discussions by Committee** – The main part of the meeting—time to discuss what’s been done, what needs to be done—and to solidify commitments of who will complete the action, and by when. *This part should take 30 minutes.*
- e. **Reports of Committees** (all Chairmen) – Each Chair covers a specific responsibility, working with his own team of specialists needed to assist with his tasks. All members of his team should attend, but *only one person*—the Chairman—should briefly report for his whole team.

- Membership development/recruiting – This group is on fire for growing TLUSA, driving new Troop opportunities in the Area; filled with “idea people” who are always looking for new ways to get the “Come Join!” message out and connect with new families—plus “retention-minded” folks who make sure everyone does all they can programmatically to *keep* the Trailmen who join Troops.
- Development (Fundraising) – What are the needs? What are the options to raise money? How can we help local Troops? This team is not made up of “bean-counters” (although they will make sure the Treasurer knows their plans). They are people of vision who listen to needs and establish ways to fund them! They also stay up to date on Trail Life USA fundraising policies.
- Leadership – This team trains and supports Troop Committee Chairs, and provides guidance to other Troop Committee members as needed. They concentrate on the “business side” of Troops, while the Area Training team (see below) addresses the program.
- PR/Marketing (Communications) – Public awareness of TLUSA is in its infancy. This team will promote TLUSA through newspapers, radio, and social media. Coordinate information distribution with every ministry within local churches (Upward sports, AWANA, Sunday School classes, gift bags to visitors, etc.). Churches can also keep your social media and website presence alive, display TLUSA signage on their property, and spread the word in the community at large. Empower churches! Work closely with the Membership Committee. Oh yes, you will want to establish regular *internal* communication to Troops, too!
- Community service – Create partnership projects with neighborhood associations, local/state/national parks, nursing homes, food pantries; handle trash clean up at Area events – there are so many ways for Trailmen to become highly visible while doing good!
- Program Support – This Chairman oversees the following four subcommittees. There is always a lot going on here, and a lot to report! He may give a summary of all reports, or choose to allow each subcommittee chair to report on their own progress:
- Camping – We KNOW the main reason boys join programs like TLUSA: they want the outdoor adventure. This team focuses on identifying places to camp, people who own property, firewood to burn, transportation to get people and stuff to camp, and all the local area options for this type of activity. The TLUSA website will soon display a massive list of Christian Camps for registered members—many alliances are already being identified for TLUSA. Since you are the outdoor experts, plan an Area Camporee each spring and fall, assist Troops in planning high adventure treks, and teach an outdoor skills session at the next Training!
- Training (for Troop program leaders) – Every leader needs to understand his specific role. Leaders need a quick start primer in addition to the Biblical mentoring model—the nuts and bolts of how we conduct ourselves and how we accomplish the goals of the TLUSA program. Early training sessions are completed online, but some sessions need a personal touch! This team will also keep records of who is trained for what position—so you know who needs it. They must also *promote* the training sessions—even calling leaders individually to get them there. Initial training resources will be available through www.TrailLifeUSA.com.
- Advancement – This subcommittee keeps track of Area-wide Troop advancements and awards, so they know when Troops need help—and are ready to provide it. Become familiar with the many levels and recognitions offered within TroopTrack. Appoint Freedom Award Review Board members for Troops, and oversee the process for handling this highest level of advancement consistently.
- Activities planning (non-camping events for multiple Troops) – Organize special meetings and gatherings. What’s going on in your community...festivals, parades, Veterans Day or Memorial Day remembrances? National Day of Prayer? See You At The Pole? Get

connected to what's already happening and get Trail Life involved in it! Be a resource, and remember it's your job to supplement, not provide, a Troop's annual program.

- Nominating (to identify new Committee leaders) – This Committee, whether appointed annually for a few weeks or on-going in its role, recommends potential volunteers to the Area Team for discussion and approval. This keeps the Area Chairman from being the only one bringing new people aboard!
 - MEL ("Ministry Expansion Lead"—liaison to AHG) – Don't forget our "sister" organization, American Heritage Girls. They may be actively working in your Area. Find out what they are doing, where they can use help (or teach us something), what churches they are already in, or targeting next...and then work together! She should walk around the room, connecting with various Committees as needed
- f. **Financial Report** (Finance Chairman/Treasurer) – reports should also be sent out ahead of time for review.
- g. **Additional Reports** – Ad Hoc Committees (special purpose/short term committees), as needed.
- h. **Old business:** Carried-over business items from last month's meeting.
- i. **New Business/Calendar Issues:** Review the upcoming 3-month's calendar; conduct regular updates once an 18 month plan is in place. These are typically new ideas that people are putting forth for consideration, calendar adjustments, and newly discovered date conflicts.
- j. **Chairman's Remarks/Inspirational Thought** from the Area Chairman – Some roles cannot be delegated. Vision and inspiration are your responsibility! Your meetings will be characterized by others based on the efficiency and positive tone of the meeting, and on the proportion of time you spend discussing the philosophy of mentoring youth vs. the time spent counting dimes. Consider telling a story of life impact (past experience working with youth, or identifying heroism or talking about the importance of integrity). Leave the group wanting to come back for more!
- k. **Closing/prayer** (Chaplain)
4. Orchestrating the meeting: Remind members that there should be NO surprises in the meetings. If there is an issue to come before the assembly, the Area Chairman must know about it in advance. This helps avoid potentially volatile or time-consuming "rabbit trails". If an unforeseen motion comes up in a meeting, it's best to "table" it, assigning a Committee to review it and report their recommendation at the next meeting.
5. Delegate: Although Area Chairmen hold the official "Secretary" role, feel free to appoint someone else to take the Minutes, freeing you up to lead and facilitate discussion.

... One more thought about time allocation: stay on time—cut it off any discussion if the meeting is running too long. Meetings that drag on are discouraging and may cause members to avoid attending in the future.

Have a strategy for training and encouraging your team as part of the routine meeting. Give them the tools to really do their job well. As an example, your devotional time at the beginning might focus on a brief reading of a portion of the new handbook...and you might end your meetings with a reflection on that topic from a related Scripture. Building Biblical truths into your ongoing structure gives a higher purpose to routine business. It tells your team members the REAL reason you are all spending time together.