

Special Olympics Indiana

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL HANDBOOK



This handbook has been published in February 2021 to serve as a resource for the creation and operation of Athlete Leadership Councils throughout Special Olympics Indiana.



“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

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Athlete Leadership Councils

Answers to important questions in starting an Athlete Leadership Council



What is an Athlete Leadership Council?

An Athlete Leadership Council (ALC) is a group of athletes who meet regularly using a well-thought-out agenda to discuss Special Olympics topics important to them and make recommendations to the State or County Program leadership.

Why should you have an Athlete Leadership Council?

Having an Athlete Leadership Council provides athletes opportunities to develop leadership skills, serve as volunteers, provide valuable leadership to the operation of Special Olympics and be role models for other athletes. Having athletes involved in meaningful ways conveys how much we respect and value them as an integral part of our organization. It also gives Program leaders valuable insight into what interests and motivates athletes in the Program.

How to select athletes for the Athlete Leadership Council?

ALC members should be athletes who demonstrate leadership qualities. This does not mean that the athletes all need high levels of ability; just that they are motivated to take on a role as a leader. Some of the selection requirements to consider are:

- At least 18 years old
- At least of 5 years of Special Olympics experience
- Knowledgeable about Special Olympics
- Effective communication skills (oral, written or listening) and able to contribute to meetings
- Ready to commit to time required, do assigned work, and attend ALPs University classes

How many athletes should be on an Athlete Leadership Council?

The number of athletes on the council will vary depending on the size and needs of the Special Olympics Program. It is important to have enough athletes to get different perspectives from your Program. The recommended size of a County ALC is 8 to 12 members.

How to find an Athlete Leadership Council Facilitator?

The Athlete Leadership Council will get best results if there is a volunteer who works closely with the ALC Chairperson and helps facilitate meetings. It is important that the Facilitator strongly believes athletes should have a voice in the organization and is able to listen, probe, restate comments and helps to keep discussion on track – all without giving any hint about their personal views.

How often should Athlete Leadership Councils meetings take place?

It is suggested to hold monthly or quarterly meetings during regularly scheduled dates and times.

What to consider in planning for Athlete Leadership Council meetings?

- Secure a time and location that is fairly central and convenient for the athletes.
- Decide how to notify the ALC members (and mentors) enough in advance of each meeting so that they can make arrangements (transportation, avoid work conflicts, etc.)
- If needed, meetings can be conducted using Zoom – though face-to-face is best.

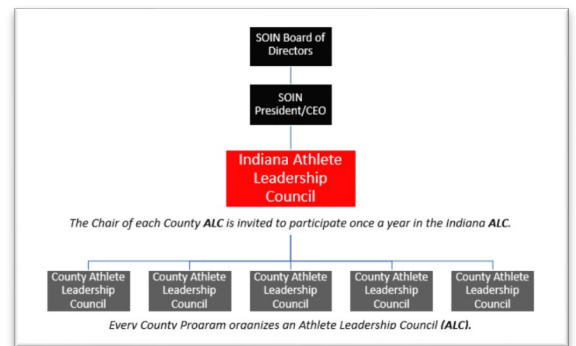
How should an Athlete Leadership Council meeting be structured?

Special Olympics makes the athletes' voice heard best when there are Athlete Leadership Councils at all levels of the organization – local, state, national, and global.

All ALC meetings should be structured in a way that ensures ideas are clarified and actions planned. A typical agenda will include:

- **Attendance.** Members are accountable to attend.
- **Reports/Announcements:** What's new that everyone should know? Is there a new member, cancelled event, an issue since the last meeting, or upcoming Athlete Leadership training deadline?
- **Old Business.** Review (and approve) the minutes of the last meeting, and pick up the conversation where you left off. This is a chance for members to report on work they were assigned. Old business remains on the agenda from meeting to meeting unless it is completed or abandoned.
- **New Business.** Have any new topics been added to the agenda? Is there a new issue or opportunity that either a member or the management team has asked to be on the agenda?
- **Review of Action Items.** Remind everyone of the actions assigned to be done. Be clear about what is to be done, who will do it, and date of completion.
- **Next Meeting / Adjournment.** Make sure everyone knows the date and location of the next ALC meeting. If there is no further discussion, adjourn the meeting.

ALC meetings are normally run by an elected Chairperson (athlete leader) with help from the Facilitator. Once your ALC is formed, elect members to serve as **Chairperson** and **Vice-chairperson**, from a list of candidates usually approved by the County Coordinator. Officers may serve up to a 3-year term.



Can the County Program bring issues for athlete comment?

Yes! The Athlete Leadership Council exist so the Program can hear athletes' ideas and opinions.

Can athletes bring issues for Program consideration?

Yes! If the Leadership Council identifies an issue shared by members, they should develop a recommendation, vote on it, and present it to the Program. In this manner, ALCs help create an environment where athletes, volunteers and staff all work together in a unified fashion to improve Special Olympics.

What follow up is required?

Regular reports (minutes) should be completed after each ALC meeting. Copies of the minutes should be distributed to all members and the management team. Usually, the Facilitator assists by taking minutes and distributing them.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact Mike Furnish – mfurnish@soindiana.org – (317) 260-8247



**ATHLETE
LEADERSHIP**

Introduction

On November 9, 2018 the Special Olympics Indiana Board of Directors amended the SOIN by-laws to ensure that athletes are heard in deciding the direction of the organization.

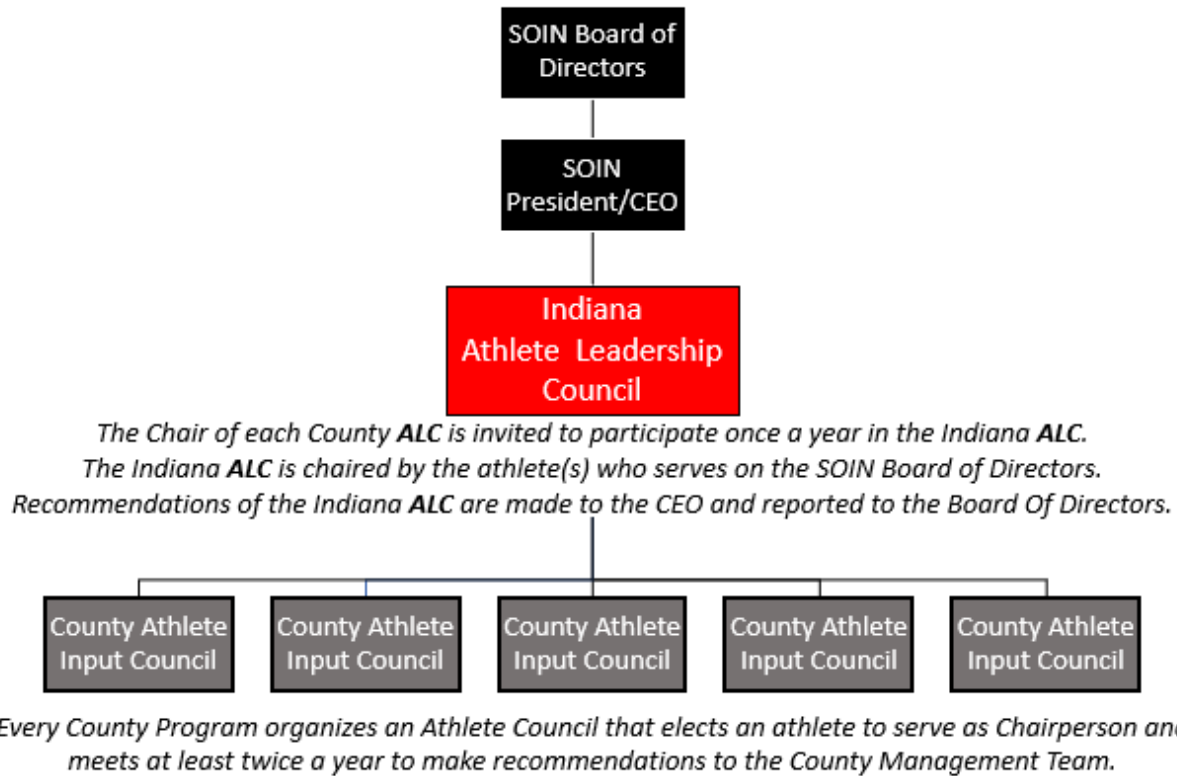
Special Olympics Indiana (SOIN) believes that participating athletes have an important voice in making decisions on how to grow and improve the Special Olympics Indiana Program. The best way to ensure athletes' opinions are heard and impact every level of the organization is to implement Athlete Leadership Councils (ALC) for all levels of the organization.

An ALC is a group of athletes who meet using a pre-determined agenda to discuss Special Olympics topics important to them and make recommendations to the State and/or County Program leadership. The ALC is designed to give every Special Olympics Indiana athlete a vehicle to communicate their ideas and concerns.

SOIN will host at least one face-to-face **Indiana ALC** meeting per year open to the Chairperson from each County Program's ALC for the purpose of obtaining recommendations regarding SOIN policies, programs, events, issues, and initiatives.

ALCs are advisory and exist to make recommendations to the appropriate level of SOIN management (County or State). ALC recommendations are considered by the SOIN staff. ALC members can expect to be provided with a follow-up response from management. ALC members are asked to understand that not all recommendations will be accepted. These members can expect to be provided with a rationale for any recommendation not accepted.

Structure for Athlete Leadership



The *first* Indiana Athlete Leadership Council - 2019



The Chair and Vice-Chair convene the meeting. Heather and Mitch are also members of the SOIN Board of Directors.



Presentations are made on each of 3 recommendations being considered at this meeting.



Small breakout groups discuss the pros and cons of each recommendation



All ALC members had a chance to speak for or against each recommendation.



Votes were held, and results were not always unanimous.

County Athlete Leadership Councils

Operating Guidelines

(*) denotes items that are required for County ALCs.

1. **Purpose.** All Special Olympics Indiana County Programs are strongly encouraged to form a County Athlete Leadership Council (ALC). The purpose of a County ALC is:
 - a. Provide feedback on ideas/policies that would significantly affect Special Olympics athletes,
 - b. Present ideas to the County Management Team from athlete leaders, and
 - c. Promote Athlete Leadership throughout the County Program.
2. **Membership.** County ALC meetings may be open to any interested athlete in the County Program
 - a. The ideal size for a County ALC meeting is 8 – 15.
 - b. Participants in a County ALC should be at least 18 years old, seeking an opportunity to have their voice heard, and have developed the ability to participate independently in meetings. Exceptions to the age limit may be made in special circumstances, subject to approval of the County Coordinator.
 - c. Members are expected to attend calls/meetings regularly, gather feedback from other athletes, read agendas and minutes, and accept assignments for committee work as needed.
 - d. All athletes interested in an ALC are encouraged to participate in Athlete Leadership University.
3. **(*) Officers.** Each County ALC elects a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. It is recommended that officer elections are held in January or February.
 - a. The Chairperson responsibilities include: establish a meeting schedule, help develop the meeting agendas, and run each County ALC meeting, and take recommendations to the County Management Team.
 - b. The Vice-Chairperson assists the Chair, and assumes his/her responsibilities if he/she are unable to attend a meeting.
 - c. **(*)** The ALC Chair is the official representative of the County Program for the annual **Indiana Athlete Leadership Council**.

- d. (*) An athlete may serve as Chair and member of the Indiana ALC for a **term** of up to three years, after which they must rotate out of the role for at least a year. At the conclusion of three years, SOIN will notify the County Coordinator.
 - e. The ALC Chairperson is usually included as a member of the **County Management Team**.
 - f. Athletes serving as Chair and Vice-Chair are encouraged to attend **Athlete Leadership University** for Governance training.
4. (*) **Meetings.** County Athlete Leadership Council meetings with a written agenda must be held at least twice a year; but, can be held more often for the purpose of providing feedback to their respective County Management Team.
- a. Items for the **agenda** can be submitted by the athletes and/or the County Management Team.
 - b. County Programs document their required ALC meetings by submitting **minutes** to the designated person at SOIN.
 - c. By a majority **vote** of those in attendance ALCs may make recommendations to the County Management Team at regularly scheduled CMT meetings.
 - d. If the ALC plans **fundraising** or other activities, they must work with the approval of County Management Team and implement activities according to Special Olympics policies and procedures.
5. **Mentors.** While every ALC member is expected to be able to participate independently in meetings, each may choose to be accompanied by a Mentor for conference calls and in-person meetings as a non-participating listener. The role of the Mentor is to provide support as needed for the ALC member's preparation and successful participation in meetings and calls.
- a. The Mentor's support can be as minimal as help with travel or conference call logistics; or as much as sitting in ALC meetings as an observer and assisting with pre- and post-meeting analysis.
 - b. At no time should Mentors insert their personal views in a meeting or during preparation.
 - c. ALC members are not required to have Mentors if they are able to attend and participate without one.
6. (*) **Facilitator.** The County Management Team should work with the ALC to provide a volunteer Facilitator who assists the Chairperson in planning the meeting, taking notes, and supporting the work of the group without inserting his/her own opinions into the discussion.

- a. The Facilitator's role is to draw out knowledge and insight from group members using different skills, tools, exercises and natural abilities to keep the group discussion moving smoothly.
 - b. The Facilitator will implement strategies to assist each member in becoming as much of an independent thinker as possible, ensuring that each member's opinion is heard and offer strategies to the council for full engagement and participation as needed
7. **Operating Guidelines.** Items listed with a (*) are required operating guidelines. All other guidelines for County ALCs are written flexibly so that the County Program under the leadership of the County Coordinator, in conjunction with ALC leadership, can adjust rules to fit local circumstances.

Helpful Hints for Operating a County Athlete Leadership Council

1. Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the ALC is subject to the approval of the County Coordinator. It is best practice to have the County Coordinator identify 3 to 5 acceptable candidates who are voted on by the athletes.
2. It is best practice to elect the Chair and Vice-Chair in at the beginning of the year (January) so he/she has time to settle into the position before the Indiana ALC meeting in the Fall.
3. County ALC meetings can be any size, but the best discussions take place in a group of 8 to 15. A council that includes 2 or 3 athletes from each sport might be a way to ensure the right number and good representation.
4. Two meetings a year are required, but monthly or every-other-month meetings keep people more engaged.
5. The best way to prepare athletes for leadership roles is to get them involved in Athlete Leadership University which is held twice a year, usually in April and October. Check out the Program Information Guide for more information.



How to Register your County Athlete Leadership Council

Go to: <https://soindiana.org/athlete-Leadership-council-registration-form/>

Athlete Leadership Council Registration Form

- 1) County Athlete Leadership Council (ALC) meetings must be held at least twice a year but can be held more often.
- 2) County ALC meetings may be open to any interested athlete in the County Program
- 3) Items for the agenda can be submitted by the athletes and/or the County Management Team (CMT).
- 4) Work with the County Management Team to plan and implement local fundraising activities according to Special Olympics Indiana policies and procedures.
- 5) The County Management Team should work with the ALC to provide a volunteer Facilitator who assists the Chairperson in planning the meeting, taking notes, and supporting the work of the group without inserting their own opinions into the discussion.
- 6) By a majority vote ALCs may make recommendations to the CMT at a regularly scheduled meeting.
- 7) County Programs document their required ALC activities by submitting meeting minutes to SOIN.

- **County Program*** _____
- How often will the County ALC meet? *
 - ☐ Monthly
 - ☐ 6 times a year
 - ☐ 4 times a year
 - ☐ 2 times a year
- When is the County ALC Chair elected annually? * _____
- Approximately, how many athletes will participate in the County ALC? * _____
- Would you like for a representative of SOIN to help as you get started? * ☐ Yes ☐ No
- **Chairperson Information**
 - Name of ALC Chair * First _____ Last _____
 - Email * _____
 - Phone Number * _____
 - Date Elected * _____
- **Vice-Chairperson Information**
 - Name of ALC Vice-Chair * First _____ Last _____
 - Email * _____
 - Phone Number * _____
 - Date Elected * _____
- **Facilitator Information**
 - Name of ALC Facilitator * First _____ Last _____
 - Email * _____
 - Phone Number * _____
 - Date Selected * _____
- **Submitted/Approved by the County Coordinator**
 - County Coordinator Name * First _____ Last _____
 - Email * _____
 - Phone Number * _____
 - Date Submitted * _____

* required information

Indiana Athlete Leadership Council

Operating Guidelines

1. **Purpose.** Effective November 2018 Special Olympics Indiana adopted the Indiana Athlete Leadership Council (ALC) for the purpose of:
 - a. Providing feedback on ideas/policies that would significantly affect Special Olympics athletes,
 - b. Presenting ideas to Special Olympics Indiana from athlete leaders, and
 - c. Promoting Athlete Leadership throughout Indiana
2. **Membership.** The Indiana ALC shall be composed of the Chairperson of each registered County ALC as of one month before the scheduled annual meeting date.
 - a. Members of the Indiana ALC should be at least 18 years old. Exceptions to the age limit may be made in special circumstances, subject to approval of SOIN.
 - b. A County ALC Chair may be a member of the Indiana ALC for a term of up to three years, after which they must rotate out of the role for at least a year. (*) At the conclusion of three years, SOIN will notify the County Coordinator. *Special provisions have been adopted to establish staggered terms at the start of the Indiana ALC and allow for the interruption created by the COVID pandemic.*
 - c. Members are expected to attend calls/meetings regularly, gather feedback from other athletes, read agendas and minutes, and accept assignments for committee work as needed.
 - d. All athletes interested in an ALC are encouraged to participate in Athlete Leadership University.
3. **Officers.** The athlete representative(s) on the Special Olympics Indiana Board of Directors will serve as the officers of the Indiana ALC.
 - a. The athlete on the SOIN Board with the longest tenure will serve as **Chairperson**.
 - b. The athlete on the SOIN Board with the second longest tenure will serve as **1st Vice-Chair**.
 - c. The athlete on the SOIN Board with the third longest tenure will serve as **2nd Vice-Chair**.
 - d. Duties of the Chair include: establish a meeting schedule, help develop the meeting agendas in collaboration with the SOIN President/CEO, run each Indiana ALC meeting, and report recommendations to the SOIN President/CEO and SOIN Board of Directors.

4. **Meetings.** SOIN will host at least one face-to-face Indiana ALC meeting per year open to the Chairperson from each County Program's ALC. If a County ALC Chairperson is unavailable to attend any Indiana ALC meeting, the Vice-Chairperson may attend.
 - a. Annual meetings (usually in October) are held for the purpose obtaining recommendations regarding SOIN policies, programs, events, issues, initiatives, and selection of the next athlete leader to serve on the SOIN Board of Directors.
 - b. Quarterly conference calls/Zoom meetings open to all Indiana ALC members will be held to review progress on existing recommendations, discuss current or future issues and ideas, and plan for the annual face-to-face Indiana ALC meeting. Quarterly calls are held on the last Wednesday of January, April, and July at 6:00pm EST, unless otherwise agreed.
 - c. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.
 - d. Items for the annual Indiana ALC face-to-face **agenda** can be recommended by any Indiana ALC member or the President/CEO of SOIN. The Chairperson and CEO will decide the final agenda.
 - e. The agenda for quarterly **interim calls** will be established by the Facilitator in collaboration with the Indiana ALC chair and SOIN President/CEO.
 - f. By a majority **vote** of those in attendance the Indiana ALC may make recommendations to Special Olympics Indiana.
 - g. The Indiana ALC documents its annual meeting with **minutes**, usually taken by the Facilitator and submitted to the Indiana ALC for approval.
5. **Selection of SOIN athlete Board Member.** One Indiana ALC member is selected annually at the Indiana ALC Meeting (usually in October).
 - a. The invitation to participate in the lottery selection process is open to all current Indiana ALC members provided:
 - 1) they understand the responsibilities of service on the Board of Directors
 - 2) they volunteer to participate in the lottery, and
 - 3) they are endorsed by their County Program with assurance that their Board service will be supported as necessary for the entire term of service
 - b. Time between selection in October and official election the following May will be dedicated to a comprehensive Board Orientation guided by the SOIN President/CEO.
 - c. An athlete completing their third year on the Board may be selected for a second 3-year term (as allowed in the by-laws) only through participation in that year's Indiana ALC lottery, even if they are no longer the Chair of their County ALC.

- d. Indiana ALC members selected for the SOIN Board of Directors shall serve as the officers of the Indiana ALC (Chair, 1st Vice Chair, and 2nd Vice Chair) during their term on the Board.
6. **Mentors.** While every ALC member is expected to be able to participate independently in meetings, each may choose to be accompanied by a Mentor for conference calls and in-person meetings as a non-participating listener. The role of the Mentor is to provide the support as needed for the ALC member's preparation and successful participation in meetings and calls.
- a. The Mentor's support can be as minimal as help with travel or conference call logistics; or as much as sitting in ALC meetings as an observer and assisting with pre- and post-meeting analysis.
 - b. At no time should Mentors insert their personal views in a meeting or during preparation.
 - c. ALC members are not required to have Mentors if they are able to attend and participate without one.
7. **Facilitator.** The Indiana ALC will be supported by a volunteer Facilitator as appointed by the SOIN President/CEO and approved by the Indiana ALC. The Facilitator assists the Chairperson in planning meetings, taking notes, and supporting the work of the group without inserting his/her own opinions into the discussion.
- a. The Facilitator's role is to draw out knowledge and insight from group members using different skills, tools, exercises and natural abilities to keep the group discussion moving smoothly.
 - b. The Facilitator will implement strategies to assist each member in becoming as much of an independent thinker as possible, ensuring that each member's opinion is heard and offer strategies to the council for full engagement and participation as needed
8. **Staff Liaison.** The President/CEO of SOIN will appoint a member of staff to serve as the liaison to the Indiana ALC.
- a. The role of the SOIN staff liaison is to support the needs of the Indiana ALC, while ensuring the overall goals of SOIN are being followed.
 - b. The staff liaison is responsible for utilizing the Indiana ALC members to gather meaningful athlete Leadership on topics relevant to the Indiana program and to ensure the Indiana ALC is utilized in meaningful ways towards reaching the overall goals.
 - c. The staff liaison works closely with the Indiana ALC Facilitator to support and manage Indiana ALC business and operations.
 - d. The President/CEO may serve as the staff liaison.

9. **Recommendations.** All recommendations from the Indiana ALC will be given due consideration by appropriate level of SOIN management.
 - a. ALC recommendations are considered by the SOIN staff or Board of Directors based on the nature of each recommendation. ALC members can expect to be provided with a follow-up response from management.
 - b. Indiana ALC members are asked to understand that not all recommendations will be accepted.
 - c. Indiana ALC members can expect to be provided with a rationale for any recommendation (or part of a recommendation) not accepted.
10. **Operating Guidelines.** Indiana ALC Operating Guidelines may be changed with a 2/3 vote of its members during the annual meeting, subject to the approval of SOIN.

Resources for Athlete Leadership Councils

➡ Getting Ready for a Meeting

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

How many people will be in the meeting? _____

Who is invited to attend? _____

How are they invited? ☐ email ☐ phone call ☐ announcement

The Agenda:

- ☐ Items from the last meeting
- ☐ New items
- ☐ Items from the County Coordinator

Facilitator: _____

Checklist

- _____ Who will take notes (Facilitator or Secretary)
- _____ Minutes of previous meeting (handed out at meeting or sent before)
- _____ Agenda for this meeting
- _____ Meeting room reserved and set-up
- _____ Do we need a flip chart, markers, projector?
- _____ Are any special guests invited? _____

➡ **Sample Leadership Council Agenda** *(for the first meeting of a new ALC)*

1. Welcome and Introductions (15min)

Introduce yourself, and provide some sort of icebreaker activities for the athletes to get to know each other better. You can choose any good icebreaker you know of, but here are some ideas:

1. Have athletes interview each other and introduce their partner to the group.
2. Have a roll of toilet paper. Tell athletes that this is the only roll they have for the meeting and to take as much as they think they will need. Then have each athlete tell one thing about himself or herself for each piece of TP that they took.
3. Play the Name Game – Sitting in a circle each athlete has to tell their name and one thing about themselves. The next person has to tell theirs, and repeat the person's information before them. The next must give theirs, the person's information before them, and all the people who came before that person. It continues around the circle until all people have had a chance. If a person can't remember the information, they can go to the end of the circle to try again.

2. What is an Athlete Leadership Council? (10 minutes)

An ALC is a group of athletes who meet using a pre-determined agenda to discuss Special Olympics topics important to them and make recommendations to the State and/or County Program leadership. The ALC is designed to give every Special Olympics Indiana athlete a vehicle to communicate their ideas and concerns. Discuss this idea, and answer questions.

3. What next? (30 minutes) *This part of the meeting you want to get members interacting and thinking.*

- a. Election of officers. Chair, Vice-Chair, Facilitator **(Vote at the next meeting)**
- b. Rules of Order. (Meetings – *where, when, how often*, Attendance, Membership)
- c. Brainstorm ideas for ALC possible topics

4. Plan for the next meeting

Have the athletes come up with ways to get more athletes involved, and plan a time for the next meeting.

➔ **Sample Leadership Council Agenda** *(for an established County ALC)*

_____ **County Athlete Leadership Council Meeting**

November 4, 2020

1. Minutes from last meeting
2. Announcements – New County Coordinator, Date for 2021 State ALC Meeting
3. Report on the 2020 Indiana ALC (John)
4. Old business
 - a. Proposal to have a Picnic (Jim)
 - b. Athlete Newsletter on Facebook (Jennifer)
 - c. Bowling – what is being done so more can participate? (Brian)
5. New business
 - a. Divisioning of women's state basketball tournament
 - b. Election of ALC officers in January
6. Next meeting date
7. Adjournment

➔ Sample Leadership Council Minutes

_____ County Athlete Leadership Council Meeting

November 4, 2020

Attendance:

- Members: John Doe, Jane Hernandez, Kim Jones, Mary Johnson, Jesse Williams, Jim Brown
- Absent: Mike Miller
- Facilitator: Tim Davis
- Mentor (for Jesse Williams): Fran Jones
- Special Guest: Debi Wise, County Coordinator

Notes

1. The meeting started at 6pm. Minutes from last meeting were read and approved.
2. Announcements –
 - a. Debi Wise is the new County Coordinator (comments from Debi)
 - b. The date for the next State ALC Meeting is October 26 in Noblesville.
3. Report on the 2020 Indiana ALC – ALC Chair John Doe reported that 47 ALC Chairs attended this year's meeting in Noblesville. Three recommendations were approved by the ALC, including 1) starting pickleball as a new sport in 2022, 2) requiring coaches to get through training every other year, and 3) eliminating unhealthy food choices at Summer Games.
4. Old business
 - a. Kim presented the proposal for the County picnic. The council discussed and approved. John and Kim asked Debi to present at the next County Management Team for final approval.
 - b. Jennifer showed a sample of the Facebook newsletter used by another county. She volunteered to create a pilot newsletter for the next meeting.
 - c. Brian did not have a report on Bowling recruitment. He's been sick. Carry over to next meeting.
5. New business
 - a. Jane expressed her concerns about divisions at the women's state basketball tournament. Our team lost 42-10. Debi will contact the State Office.
 - b. Election of ALC officers is scheduled for the January meeting. If any members would be interested in serving as an officer, please let Tim know. John is willing to serve a second year as Chair.
6. Next meeting date: February 5, 2020 (same time and place)
7. Adjournment – 7:08pm

Minutes submitted by Tim Davis (Facilitator)

➡ Fun Facts about Facilitating an ALC Meeting

The ALC Chair and the Facilitator work together to make sure each meeting is fun, informative, and productive. Here are some ways to accomplish these outcomes.

- **Ask Expansion Questions:** To help members make their thoughts clear to the rest of the group as expansion questions, such as:
 - How?
 - Why?
 - Who?
 - Tell me more about.....
 - Tell us how that might work.....
- **Go deep.** Rarely should you accept the first simple answer – always push for more explanation and thought. This not only gives that participant more time to think through a position, but the other participants are more likely to hear something that will spark their thoughts as well.
- **Allow silence:** After asking a “starter” question about a topic, allow the participants’ time to form their responses. Give them a count of 12 before you react. Silence is OK! After the 12 count, restate your question in a different way and wait again.
- **Don’t be the answer man/woman:** As Chair or Facilitator, if you answer your own questions, you are sending the participants the message that you do not want or expect them to answer. You have put the spotlight on you, not the other members of the Council.
- **Listen,** listen, listen!
- **Don’t be a Negative Nelly.** When an idea comes up, don’t start saying all the reasons it won’t work. Give the Council a chance to figure out how it could work.
- **Make a Safe environment.** It is the chair’s role to create an emotionally safe environment for participation. This includes clear behavioral ground rules at the beginning of the session, clearly expressing that there are no bad ideas/opinions, respect all participants, and valuing and rewarding participation.

➡ Different Ways to Conduct a Vote

Voting is the process of formally indicating your choice between two or more candidates or motions. During an ALC meeting, participants normally vote on a motion (a suggestion or proposal) that someone brings during a meeting, which is then debated on and then voted on. There are several ways voting can take place during a meeting.



By Ballot – this type of voting is often used in meetings where members make their decisions secretly regarding a particular issue on individual. After secretly indicating your choice (vote) on the voting paper (ballot), the papers are then collected and counted after all votes are received.

By Voice – this type of voting is called the **voice vote**. As the name implies, this type of voting lets participants to state their decision about a particular motion by saying it out loud to the chairperson and the other participants at a meeting. During voice-voting, the chairperson of the meeting would normally ask the participants in favor of a particular motion to cast their votes by saying ‘yes’. The chairperson would then ask those who are against the motion to cast their votes by saying ‘no’. Based on the number of voices that say ‘**yes**’ or ‘**no**’, results are declared.



By Show of Hands – another very common method of voting during meetings is through a show of hands. Voting in this manner is very simple. The chairperson tells those in favor of a particular motion to show it by raising their hands. When their hands are raised, they are counted. The chairperson then asks the participants who are not in support of the same motion to indicate it by raising their hands. They do so and are counted.

Based on the number of hands raised for or against the motion, the chairman then declares the result.

Different methods of voting can be used in the same meeting. It’s usually the decision of the Chairperson for which method to use. The decision is usually based on the need for secrecy. For example, when voting to elect the next Chairperson, members will probably be more comfortable voting by ballot (in secret) so they don’t fear offending the other candidates.

A newer form of voting is available when your group meets by Zoom, as the host can arrange for an online vote that tabulates, he votes and presents them to the group instantaneously.

➔ Working with Difficult People in Meetings



Overly talkative

Why he/she may do this: May be an “eager beaver” or a showoff. Also, may be exceptionally well-informed and anxious to show it, or just naturally wordy.

What to do:

- 1) Don't be embarrassing or sarcastic. You may need his traits later on.
- 2) Slow him down with some difficult questions.
- 3) Interrupt with: “That’s an interesting point . . . now let’s see what the group thinks of it.”
- 4) In general, let the group take care of him as much as possible.

Highly argumentative

Why he/she may do this: Combative personality. Professional heckler or may be normally good-natured but upset by personal or job problem.

What to do:

- 1) Keep your own temper in check . . . don't let group get excited either.
- 2) Honestly try to find merit in one of her points . . . express your agreement (or the group to do so) . . . then move on to something else.
- 3) When he/she makes an obvious misstatement, toss it to the group . . . let them turn it down.
- 4) As a last resort, talk to him/her privately during a recess. . . try to find out what's bothering her. . . see if you can win her cooperation.



Side conversation



Why he/she may do this: May be related to the subject. May be personal. Distracts members and you.

What to do:

- 1) Don't embarrass them.
- 2) Call out by name, ask an easy question or call one by name, then restate last opinion expressed by group and ask his/her opinion of it.
- 3) If you are in the habit of moving around the room rather than in front, go over and stand casually behind members who are talking. This should not be made obvious to the group.

➞ Working with Difficult People in Meetings *(continued)*



Rambler

Why he/she may do this: Talks about everything except subject. Uses farfetched analogies, gets lost.

What to do:

- 1) When he stops for a break, thank him, refocus his attention by restating the relevant points, and move on.
- 2) Grin, tell him his point is interesting, point to the flip chart

or blackboard, and in a friendly manner indicate we are a bit off subject.

- 3) Last resort: Glance and watch and say, "We need to move on."

Personality clash

Why he/she may do this: Two or more members clash, which can divide your group into factions.

What to do:

- 1) Emphasize points of agreement; minimize points of disagreement if possible.
- 2) Draw attention to objectives. Cut across with direct question on topic.
- 3) Bring a member into the discussion that everyone respects.
- 4) Frankly ask that personalities be omitted for the greater good.



Won't talk

Why he/she may do this: Bored. Indifferent. Feels superior. Timid.

What to do:

- 1) Your action will depend upon what is motivating her.
- 2) Arouse his/her interest by asking for her opinion.
- 3) Draw out the person next to him/her, and then ask the quiet one to tell the person next to her what she thinks of the view expressed. If he/she is seated nearby, ask his opinion so that he'll feel he is talking to you.
- 4) If she is the "superior" type, ask for his view after indicating the respect held for experience. (Don't overdo this. Group will resent it.)
- 5) Be sure to compliment her the first time he talks – and be sincere about it.



The 2019 Indiana Athlete Leadership Council

Attended by 25 County ALC Chairs, 16 Vice-Chairs, and 5 Mentors, and 8 Volunteers



The 2020 Indiana Athlete Leadership Council - held via Zoom

For more information, contact: Mike Furnish — mfurnish@soindiana.org — (317) 260-8247

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