

CONSENT AGENDA BEST PRACTICES

What: According to The Council of Nonprofits, a **consent agenda** “groups the routine, procedural, informational, and self-explanatory, non-controversial items typically found in an agenda. These items are then presented to the board in a single motion for an up or down vote after allowing anyone to request that a specific item be moved to the full agenda for individual attention. Other items, particularly those requiring strategic thought, decision making or action, are handled as usual.”

A consent agenda is a component of a meeting agenda that enables the board to group routine items and resolutions under one umbrella. Issues in this consent package do not need any discussion before a vote.^(CAPLAW Strategies Improving Board Performance and Impact, Walker)

Why: Consent agendas are typically used to streamline meetings by reducing the amount of content discussed at the meeting, while still providing adequate information to the entire board.

Who: It is generally thought of as a best practice for the board chair to develop the consent agenda in conjunction with the executive director or CEO of the nonprofit. The consent agenda should be distributed to all board members before the meeting and voted on at the beginning of a meeting.

- During the meeting before a vote, any board member may request that an item from the consent agenda be removed and discussed separately.^(CAPLAW Improving Board Performance and Impact)

What Should Be Included: Usually, items that should be included in a consent agenda are routine, non-controversial items, that have been previously discussed.^(Board Forward)

- Examples (From Board Forward):
 - Committee and previous board meeting minutes;
 - Office or committee reports;
 - Routine correspondence that require no action;
 - Minor changes in a policy or procedure (e.g., for purposes of clarity or to update without changing intent or meaning);
 - Routine policy revisions (e.g., changes in dates or dollar amounts due to changes in laws);
 - Updating documents, such as minutes, reports or role descriptions;
 - Standard contracts that are used regularly (e.g., confirmation of using the traditional in-house contract with a new vendor);
 - Confirmation of conventional actions that are required in the bylaws (e.g., signatory authority for a bank account or acceptance of gifts);
 - Final approval of proposals or reports that have been fully discussed and vetted at past meetings;
 - Reports provided for information only.