

Writing Better Resolutions

GUIDELINES FOR DRAFTING AND ADOPTING RESOLUTIONS

Please follow these guidelines in drafting resolutions for adoption at PSATS' Annual Conference:

- **Select the issue(s)** — Decide what issue you want to address in your resolution and what you want PSATS to do about it: support or oppose legislation, amend current laws, or hold discussions with state or federal agencies.

- **Ask PSATS for help** — Upon request, PSATS will provide legislative citations, research, and background on the issue to help your county formulate its resolution.

- **Draft the resolution** — Be as brief as possible in the resolution but include an explanation of why your county association wants to pursue this course of action.

- **Submit resolutions to PSATS** — Following the adoption of resolutions at

your county convention, the county association secretary should type or print each resolution on the form provided by PSATS and send it to PSATS as soon as possible. You can also give them to the PSATS staff representative to hand-deliver back to Enola.



Generating Publicity

GETTING THE MEDIA TO COME OUT

Why seek publicity?

- News coverage of your convention is important because it establishes credibility for the county association and its members and results in good public relations for your association and townships in general.
- It lets the public know what issues are important to townships, what townships are doing to tackle these issues, and how these issues might affect residents.
- Everything that local government does is the people's business. Try to get news coverage for any activity that will have a positive impact on townships.

What will grab the media's attention?

- **Important issues** — Focus on timely issues and how these issues are affecting your communities.

- **An interesting program** — Have speakers focus on interesting topics.
- **A workshop involving the media** — Hold a workshop for the local media and township officials to have a panel discussion to air problems and improve communication and rapport. Consider holding this workshop every few years to keep the media involved and interested and to show you care that townships have a good relationship with the media. This will also serve to establish credibility with them and increase their awareness of township government and its importance to their customers.

How do you notify the media?

- Fax or email a news release on county association letterhead to the news editor of your local papers and the news director of your local radio and television stations. Explain the who, what, when, where, and why of your convention and give as many details as you can about the speakers and the subjects they will discuss.
- Get the release to the media far enough ahead of your convention so they can assign a reporter to cover the event and place an advance article or notice in the papers and online.
- Follow up three days out to confirm who has been assigned to attend the convention.
- List a contact person and phone number on the news release.

A sample news release and this brochure are posted at www.psats.org. Go to "Links" and click on "County Associations of Township Officials."



A Short "Rules Reminder"

WHO MAY ATTEND

Section 1401 of the Township Code authorizes the following township officials and employees to attend county conventions: supervisors, secretaries, treasurers, managers, solicitors, engineers, auditors, and tax collectors.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

Township officials and employees who are authorized by Section 1401 of the Township Code to attend annual or semiannual conventions are entitled to collect \$50 per day (*up to two days*) for each day's attendance at a convention. You can also be reimbursed for the registration fee and mileage for the use of a personal vehicle or actual transportation expenses going to and returning from the convention, plus all other expenses that the board of supervisors agrees to pay.

Every delegate attending the convention must submit an itemized account of expenses to the board of supervisors to receive reimbursement.

The board of supervisors may also authorize supervisor-employees and other township employees to be compensated at their regular employee rate while attending the county convention if the convention is held during the employees' normal work schedule. However, supervisor-employees and other township employees who receive their regular employee rate **may not** also receive the \$50-per-day attendance compensation.

COMPENSATION OF COUNTY SECRETARY

The secretary of a county association of township officials may be compensated for services in an amount determined by the members of the county association.



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Make Your Next County Convention ONE TO REMEMBER



TIPS TO HELP YOU:

PLAN BETTER

INCREASE THIRD-PARTY REVENUE

BUILD A BETTER AGENDA

PRODUCE A USEFUL DIRECTORY

WRITE GOOD RESOLUTIONS

GET BETTER MEDIA COVERAGE



Laying the Groundwork

HOLD A PLANNING SESSION

Good planning is essential to a successful, well-organized convention.

The first step in preparing for a county convention is to hold a planning session at least six months before the convention. Don't limit this meeting to just association officers. Be sure to invite representatives from all townships in the county.

The planning session should lay the groundwork for an informative, meaningful, and successful county convention.

At this meeting, you should be sure to do the following:

- Discuss and establish the purpose and goals of the convention.
- Choose a format (full- or half-day, evening).
- Set a date, time, and location. Please notify PSATS of the meeting date so the Association can schedule staff and Executive Board representation.
- Establish a list of topics to be discussed.
- Compile a list of speakers to invite based on the purpose and goals of the convention. (*PSATS can help in selecting topics and speakers.*)
- Make tentative plans for workshops.
- Set a tentative schedule.
- Decide what to include in the printed program.
- Make plans for any special awards ceremonies or anniversary celebrations.
- Determine what the costs will be and consider soliciting sponsors and exhibitors or charging a registration fee to pay for meeting facilities. If you do charge a fee, it is best to require preregistration and prepayment.
- Appoint committees, as necessary, including:
 - 1) *Nominations* — to nominate officers.
 - 2) *Resolutions* — to propose resolutions to the State Association.
 - 3) *Program* — to prepare the printed program and sell advertising.

The planning committee should meet periodically to review the progress of plans for the convention. Work should be divided and assigned to the appropriate committee members.

SELECT A CONVENTION SITE

- Choose a location that is easily accessible to township officials throughout the county.
- Meeting room(s) should be well-lit and comfort-



able and have good acoustics.

- Meet with representatives of several meeting facilities, if possible, to get different written proposals.
- Negotiate with the facility (hotel, restaurant, fire hall, township building, school, etc.) before you sign a contract.
- Find out what the facility will provide free-of-charge, such as projection screens, podiums, microphones, table skirting, and pens and tablets.

Increasing Third-Party Revenue

SOLICIT REVENUE FROM VENDORS

Many county associations keep their costs down by seeking third-party revenue from vendors, who exhibit at the conference, advertise in the program book, offer door prizes, and even sponsor aspects of the convention.

Here are some tips for increasing your third-party revenues and decreasing your costs:

- Keep a running list of potential vendors and update this list each year. The list should include contact name, company name, address, phone, and email. Also include on this list what the vendor did in previous years. Maintain a vendor history.
- Solicit local suppliers, dealers, businesses, and engineers that your member townships do business with. Also include potential new vendors. Look at the handbooks of nearby county associations for leads and don't forget the *Pa. Township News* advertisers.
- Work from this list to sell advertising, exhibit space, and sponsorships and encourage door prize donations.
- Contact the vendors far enough ahead to meet printing deadlines and have a good idea of how



much this third-party revenue will generate.

- When selling advertising space in your program book, be sure to figure out your per-page costs by looking at last year's numbers and talking to the printer. You want to at least cover the costs of printing.
- During your solicitation for ad space in your handbook, talk about exhibit space, sponsorships, and door prizes. Get them on board with as many opportunities as possible right out of the gate.
- If sponsorships are a new idea for your county association, brainstorm ideas for items the vendors can sponsor. They might include the meal (*one or multiple sponsors*), the printing of the program book, awards, table centerpieces, or giveaways for every township attendee.
- Think in terms of bundling or packaging a sponsorship and consider having different levels, such as bronze, silver, and gold. For example, one level could include five seats (*with dinner*), an exhibit table, and a full-page ad in your directory.
- Remember to recognize and thank your vendors for all of their support both during and after the convention. If you have a county association website or Facebook page, recognize them there as well.

Building a Better Agenda

KEEP IT FRESH AND INTERESTING

At your county conventions, take a look around the room. Are people wide awake and interested or nodding off to sleep? If you find the latter, the culprit may be the satisfying all-you-can-eat turkey dinner everyone just enjoyed. Then again, maybe it isn't.

The snoozing may be a sign that you need to take a new approach to who speaks, what they speak about, and for how long because nothing spells convention disaster as much as an assembly line of boring speakers.

Keep in mind that each year is a new slate. People don't want to hear the same thing year after year. You have to change things up and keep it interesting.

Speakers, workshops, time for networking, and exhibit shows are the staples of most county conventions. And while each convention is unique, seasoned planners say that there are a few things you can do to guarantee success.

Among their suggestions: Get an early start on planning the agenda; work as a team; survey your

members so you can gauge what will grab their interest; and be sure to give everyone plenty of time to socialize and exchange ideas. Consider these possibilities:

- Select speakers whose message supports your meeting's purpose and will address timely issues.
- Don't invite more than one speaker from the same organization.
- Try to use a variety of speakers; don't use the same people every year.
- Contact speakers and familiarize them with the current issues of concern to townships in your county.
- Think about holding a workshop or two during the convention for one or more audiences, such as supervisors, secretaries/managers, tax collectors, and auditors.
- Don't forget to inject some fun into your convention with a motivational or funny speaker/entertainer or play a fun game to engage the audience.



Making Your Directory More Useful

TIPS FOR A BETTER PUBLICATION

The county convention handbook or directory is an integral part of your convention. It not only serves as a program guide and source of vital information but also provides sponsors with a means to advertise their products and services.

Advertisements can help cover the cost of your directory and generate additional revenue for the county association.

A useful directory should contain:

- The agenda, listing the order of events and speakers.
- The minutes of the last convention.
- A current treasurer's report.
- The resolutions, if any, to be voted on.
- Your association's officers and their office and home township.
- An alphabetical list, by township, of all the elected and appointed township officials in the county and their contact information, including email addresses.
- A list of key county officials.
- A list of your state and federal legislators and their addresses and phone numbers.