

Meeting Guide

The diagram for the proper form in setting up a Grange Hall is found on the first page of the Subordinate Manual. Take note that the Gatekeeper's stave is to be found at the Outer Gate. The chairs of the AS and the LAS should be carefully noted as they are placed in front of and to the sides of the Overseer's station, and not even with it.

The Altar is place one third of the distance between Ceres' station and the Overseer and the cloth one third the distance between the Overseer and the station of Ceres.

The Steward, with the help of his/her assistants, will see that the hall is properly set up in ample time for the hour of the meeting.

Right and left of the hall are determined by the right and left of the Overseer.

Officers' Entrance March

All officers except the Master should be assembled in proper attire in the suggested order listed below in the anteroom. After the Master calls to order and says, "The hour or labor has arrived and the work of another day demands our attention. Let each repair to his or her allotted station." The officers on the first note of the music, led by the Assistant Steward and the Lady Assistant Steward will enter, proceed to the station of the Chaplain, turn left and proceed toward the station of the Lecturer, turn left and march around the hall with each officer leaving the line of march as he/she arrives at their station.

The suggested line up for the entrance march is as follows:

AS	LAS
O	L
T	Sec
F	EC
C	EC
P	EC
	CH
GK	ST

Order of Business Fourth Degree

1. Opening the Grange
2. Roll call of Officers
3. Reading the records of the last meeting
4. Proposals for Membership
5. Balloting for Candidates
6. Conferring the Fifth Degree
7. Reports of Standing Committees
 - A. Legislative – Agriculture
 - B. Women’s Activities
 - C. Youth
 - D. Junior
 - E. Deaf & Health
 - F. Membership
 - G. Others
 - H. Flora – any members sick or in need?
8. Report of Special Committees
9. Communications
10. Have the reports of the Pomona and State Granges been duly and promptly made?
11. Bills and Accounts
12. Unfinished Business
13. New Business
14. Is any member sick or in need?
15. Lecturer’s Program
16. Suggestions for the Good of the Order
17. Reading and Adopting the Minutes (optional)
18. Closing the Grange

** Count may be taken either after Lecturer’s Program or Suggestions for the good of the order.
It may also be taken early in the meeting (after reading minutes) if a count is needed for the refreshment or supper committee.

1. Opening the Grange

Promptly at the scheduled time, the Master will call the Grange to order and proceed to open the Grange in the fourth degree as explained in the manual.

When the Steward directs the Assistants to make examination and report, the LAS and AS will rise, take their staves in their right hand, and proceed directly to the Altar. Upon reaching the Altar, they will pass their staves in their left hands, and then the LAS will take the staff of the AS in her right hand. The AS will then place the Bible on its back binding in the center of the Altar, open it, straighten the marker if there is one, and then their staves are returned to their right hands. If there is music, both will stand at attention until the Hymn has been finished. During the ceremony of opening the Bible, it is requested that the entire grange remain quiet and that no jingling of money be heard.

After the hymn has finished, the assistants will face about, the AS to the right and the LAS to the left, and proceed to the Overseer in the same line they used when going to the Altar. If, as in some granges the words are not taken, the LAS and AS stop at the cloth and report to the Overseer, "We find all present correct." Otherwise, the LAS at the Overseer's left and the AS at the right, receive the words from him/her. Neither the LAS nor the AS stop on the cloth – they both pass to their respective sides of the Overseer's station together. The Overseer gives the words to the LAS first. As they both receive the words, they will proceed to take up the words from all members present.

In taking up the words, the members will rise and whisper first the annual word and then the degree word. The Assistants should receive two words from each member. If a member is found to be without the word, he or she will be reported to the Master, who will direct that they approach his station and be instructed, if they are entitled to the words. The Assistants will not return to the member thus instructed for the word, but will continue taking the word from the rest of the members.

When taking the word from the pianist, he/she need not rise or stop playing.

When the Assistants meet at the Graces' stations, the LAS takes the word from Flora and the AS takes the word from Pomona and Ceres. They return to the cloth and report to the Overseer – LAS, "All are correct on the left, Worthy Overseer" and AS, "Same on the right, Worthy Overseer." They then return to their stations and remain standing.

The Overseer then reports to the Master that all present are correct.

The Master calls the officers to rise and they remain standing in a dignified manner until the Grange is opened.

When the Gatekeeper is directed to close the Outer Gate, it is not a signal for the Steward to close the Inner Gate. The Inner Gate must remain open until the Master directs the Steward to close it and any patrons coming late may walk right in by giving the words to the Steward. The

Steward should advise the member not to go on the cloth if the Grange has not been declared open.

Immediately after the Steward closes the Inner Gate and after the salutation, the Master directs the Overseer to proclaim the Grange opened per the Manual.

At this point in the meeting, the Assistants, with the help of Ceres and the Steward, will present the Flag as impressively as possible in a manner which has been prescribed by the National Grange. Please give our Flag all the dignity it deserves and make this ceremony as impressive as possible. All members will stand at attention and as adopted by the delegate body, when our Flag is being presented as in a parade within our halls, members will render the appropriate salute until the Flag is placed in its holder.

2. Roll Call of Officers

When the Master calls for Roll Call of Officers, the Steward, the LAS and the AS will rise and as the secretary calls the names of the officers, the LAS will reply present or absent for all male officers and the AS will do likewise for all female officers. As each officer's name is called, he or she will rise and remain standing in a dignified manner until roll is called. -OR- It is acceptable for your grange to adopt the following method: When the Secretary calls each Officer's name they will reply present and rise. If the office is being filled by another person, when called they will rise and state their name saying "pro tem." This method is being used more and more throughout the country as it simplifies the roll call, especially when there is a new or fill-in Assistant.

3. Reading the records of the last meeting

During the reading of the records it is the duty of the Master to see that proper decorum is maintained. Whereas it is no longer necessary that the minutes be read at the close of the meeting, this would be where the previous meeting's minutes would be read and adopted.

Draping the Charter

Immediately following the minutes of the last meeting, the Chaplain will report to the Ceres any deaths that may have occurred. After the Ceres charge, the Master will call the Grange to rise and the Charter will be draped as prescribed in the Manual. A resolution adopted at the 2010 RI State Grange Session recommends that a resolution be submitted on a member's passing.

Escorting Dignitaries

The proper time to welcome guests and escort visitors to the Master's station is after the reading of the minutes or after draping the charter, if necessary.

The following procedure shall be used in escorting visitors to the Master's right.

1. The State Master is always first if present.
2. The National Master is next if present, followed by other National Officers.
3. Past State Masters and Past National Officers

NOTE: The Grange should be called to rise as any of the officers listed above are escorted.

The following is as prescribed in the Manual for escorting a visiting dignitary, which should always be conducted in a respectful and dignified manner.

The visitor should be seated in the rear of the hall or remain in the anteroom. The Steward will announce: **Worthy Master, (brother/sister – give full name and title) is our guest in waiting.** Following this announcement the Master will say **Patrons, (brother/sister – give full name and title) is our honored guest. The Assistants will present our honored guest to the Master's station.** The Assistants will escort, the Master will call up the grange; the Assistants will hook staves to allow pass through to be received by the Master, then they unhook their staves, step towards each other with shoulders touching, and pivot to the left, returning to their stations. Once welcomed by the Master, the Dignitary should be asked if they would like to make any remarks to the Grange, then the Master will call down.

4. All the remaining elected State Officers will be escorted / recognized next with the Grange seated.
5. Special Deputy, Pomona deputy, Subordinate Deputies and Junior Deputy.
6. Department Heads
7. Visiting Pomona Masters
8. Visiting Subordinate Masters

NOTE: Please escort in groups whenever possible to save time. Out of State Dignitaries should be escorted immediately following their Rhode Island counterparts.

4. Proposals for Membership

All applications for membership shall be read by the Secretary and referred to the Executive Committee or committee appointed by the Master and Overseer. The application should be signed by the Master or Secretary of the subordinate grange, and the fee should accompany the application.

5. Balloting

In classes of two or more candidates the first ballot shall be cast for the group as a whole. In the event the class receives less than a majority of votes, the ballot must be taken on each candidate separately. Voting is by paper ballot – “yes” or “no”

6. Conferring Degrees

As adopted by the National Grange, the Official Obligation Ceremony or Welcoming Ceremony for the subordinate grange may be used at any time to initiate a member. The member is urged to witness the conferral of all degrees to gain the full appreciation of the ritual.

7. Reports of Standing Committees

The Master should see that all reports from standing committees receive action by the Grange. These reports should be adopted, rejected or deferred for later action. The Master should say, "The reports of the standing committees are properly before you for adoption – will you discuss them? If not, all in favor will manifest by the voting sign of the order, those opposed, same sign." The Master should then state, "It is a vote in the affirmative, and I so declare it."

8. Reports of Special Committees

Reports of special committees should receive the same courtesy as Standing committees and when the committee's work is completed, it should be discharged with thanks.

9. Communications

All communications for the good of the grange should be read by the Secretary. If any other members receive correspondence of interest, it should be given to the secretary. Communications should be acted on during the heading of "New Business." Also any resolutions written and submitted for Grange action should be presented at this time.

10. Have the reports of the Pomona and State Granges been duly and promptly made?

The secretary should respond whether reports due to the Pomona and/or State Grange have been submitted on time. These would include quarterly membership report and dues to the State Grange, and the report of your subordinate grange's activities to your Pomona Grange if required.

11. Bills and Accounts

All bills should be approved by the Executive Committee before the Grange votes to pay them. If this is not convenient, they should be acted upon subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. The correct language for the motion should be "that the bills be paid after being approved by the Executive Committee." All bills should be acted upon under New Business.

Note: For many years, granges used the phrase "after being properly audited by the Executive Committee," until a former State Grange Treasurer (a CPA) pointed out that "audited" carried a connotation that is improper for the action we are taking. Thus, it is requested that granges not use this phrase, and substitute "after being approved by the Ex. Comm."

12. Unfinished Business

The Secretary should inform the Grange of any unfinished business at this time.

13. New Business

Under New Business, all bills and communications should be acted on at this time. Any other business of the Grange should be acted on also. The entire membership, not just the officers, should have a voice in the business of the Grange. It is a duty as well as a privilege.

14. Is any member sick or in need?

Members should report any members that are ill, hospitalized, etc. or in need of assistance.

15. Lecturer's Program

This is one of the most important parts of the Grange meeting. All Lecturers should make an effort to have a worthwhile program during this period. There are many good programs that could be secured in many areas. (If you need help, please speak to the State Lecturer or her committee for suggestions.) Members won't find time to come to meetings to listen to programs that waste time. Remember to have some fun, but don't forget the intellectual side. Give members something to think about until the next meeting and they will come back.

Count

The Master calls the roll of the granges present and the Assistants count and the Assistant Steward replies, "(number counted), Worthy Master." All visitors are counted before the host grange. If a youth count is taken, this is a separate count and not included in the total count. This also applies to the count of 25, 40, 50, and etc. year members. These members and youth members should have already been included in grange counts.

16. Suggestions for the Good of the Order

All persons called upon to speak should have something pertinent to say. They should be called upon in the same order as they were escorted or recognized at the beginning of the meeting.

17. Reading and Adopting the Minutes

If the minutes are to be adopted, it would be done at this time. This can be omitted and the minutes adopted at the next meeting, when they are read as the third order of business.

18. Closing the Grange

The closing ceremony is conducted in the same manner as the opening. The AS and LAS will rise, take their staves, then take one step forward and pause until the Steward crosses behind them and proceed in a line with them. The Assistants will wait at the Altar until the Steward reaches the Master's station, picks up the implement case, and returns to a place in line with the Altar. The AS closes the Bible, then the LAS and AS turn about as in the Opening and the Steward and the Assistants will return to their stations and remain standing.

Officers Retiring March

After the Master declares the Grange closed by having the Steward inform the Gatekeeper, he will request that the patrons be seated (one rap of gavel) while the officers march out. Then rap the gavel twice for the Officers to rise.

The Assistants rise, each takes their stave in their right hand, and the Lady Assistant Steward then turns right and proceeds in a line until she is at the right side of the Assistant Steward. They then proceed to the station of the Chaplain, turn left and proceed toward the Lecturer. They turn left at the Lecturer and then proceed around the hall with the officers with the officer entering the line of march as their station is passed.

The Lecturer, Overseer, Chaplain and Master enter the line of march on its second time around the hall.

When they arrive at the inner gate, the Assistant Steward gives one rap of the stave to stop the lines, and another rap to open the lines. The Assistants then hook their staves, then the officers exit, starting at the end of each line. The Master and Chaplain exit first, followed by the Overseer and Lecturer, and continue from the back of the line until all have passed out of the hall. The suggested exit march is as follows:

AS	LAS
ST	GK
EC	F
EC	C
EC	P
T	Sec
O	L
M	Chap

NOTE: By the aid of these instructions, and those given throughout the subordinate manual, any officer of the Grange, if they are willing to give their duties proper study and attention, can perform the work in an acceptable manner.

The Rhode Island State Grange Officers, Deputies and Committee Heads are willing to assist in any way – please do not hesitate to ASK.

Other Suggestions to aid you with your meeting:

- Master or President is the approved title. President should be used to public publications
- All staves should be carried perpendicular with the open part of the staff facing the rear and raised about six inches from the floor.
- During the following occasions, a member would not be admitted immediately:
 - During the prayer
 - During the Presentation of the Flag
 - While saluting the Flag
 - When draping the charter
 - While degrees are in progress
 - It is no longer necessary to approach the cloth and give the salutation if a member wishes to leave or enter the hall for any reason during the meeting.
- Steward and Ceres never step backward while carrying the flag
- The Steward, AS and LAS shall carry their staves with them while performing the duties of their Office. However, they need not carry their staves when distributing materials.
- It is not necessary for the Master to reread the bills and communications that come to his/her station that have already been read by the Secretary. They only need action by the Master.
- If two or more applications are before the Grange for approval, they may be voted on collectively. An application may be voted on the same night that it is received and the Obligation Ceremony or the Welcoming Ceremony may be performed at the same meeting.
- If a member has a demit and wishes to rejoin any Grange, they must also submit an application for membership with the demit. A demit is simply proof of previous membership.
- A rising vote of thanks is made, seconded and voted on like any motion. After the motion is carried, the Master will ask the members to rise. (do not call up with gavel)