

**Training & Executive Coaching on:**

- *Making Meetings Work Better*
- *Demystifying the Rules of Order*
- *Building Better Decision Making Teams*

**Published Books:**

- “101 Boardroom Problems & How to Solve Them”
- “Mina’s Guide to Minute Taking”
- “The Complete Handbook of Business Meetings”

Eli Mina, M.Sc., P.R.P.

*Meeting Mentor, Registered Parliamentarian*

**Web Site:** <http://www.elimina.com>

**Email address:** [eli@elimina.com](mailto:eli@elimina.com)

## **Eli Mina’s Knowledge Transfer Initiative**

### **Evaluations for Boards and Councils**

#### **Table of Contents**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Eli Mina’s Knowledge Transfer Initiative (Background) | 2 |
| 2. Why Regular Evaluations are Essential                 | 2 |
| 3. Specific Evaluations                                  |   |
| a. Evaluating a Council/Board as a Collective Body       | 3 |
| b. Self Evaluation for a Council/Board Member            | 4 |
| c. Evaluating a Mayor or Board Chair                     | 5 |
| d. Evaluating a Meeting                                  | 6 |
| e. Evaluating a Chief Administrative Officer             | 7 |
| f. Evaluating a Procedural Advisor (or Parliamentarian)  | 8 |

**Note:** Although this document was initially developed for **public** Boards and Councils, you are free to modify it to suit the needs of your democratically-elected governing body

## **1. Eli Mina's Knowledge Transfer Initiative (Background)**

Eli Mina, M.Sc., PRP has worked as a Professional Parliamentarian and Contentious Meeting Chair since 1984. He also completed the BC Justice Institute's 210 hour Conflict Resolution Certificate Program, which focuses on mediation and dispute resolution. Eli's work is unique: It never assumes "one size fits all" solutions to problems in meetings. Instead, his approach starts with an exploration of the problems that need to be solved and their root causes.

For over four decades, Eli has served a variety of clients, including local governments, boards of education, indigenous communities, credit unions, labor unions, and non-profits entities. He specializes in chairing or advising on contentious meetings. He earns his clients' trust and respect by being honest, direct, and entirely pragmatic and sensible. His work helps make meetings orderly, focused, efficient, democratic, equally inclusive, respectful, and safe to express dissenting views. Eli is the author of 5 books, two online courses, and many articles.

In 2023 Eli launched his **knowledge transfer initiative**, with the intent of `donating' some of his pragmatic meeting management **toolboxes** to democratically governed entities. These complimentary publications are available at <https://www.elimina.com/#publications>.

Put concisely, Eli's meeting management approach seeks to achieve three key goals:

1. **Engaging meeting participants** and their knowledge and wisdom on a `level playing field'.
2. **Managing time wisely**, in proportion to the significance and complexity of each issue.
3. **Achieving quality decisions**: judicious, thoughtful, balanced, and fully informed.

## **2. Why Regular Evaluations are Essential**

Why must evaluations be central to your **Board's culture**? Here are four reasons:

- a. Evaluations will compel civic, non-profit, and corporate leaders to function as role models in their organization and community, regularly assessing personal and collective performance, and thereby boosting the presence of excellence on personal and collective levels.
- b. Evaluations will help leaders identify damaging dysfunctions on personal and collective levels, implement concrete measures to prevent and/or remedy such dysfunctions, and place your organization/community on a path of sustained excellence in governance.
- c. Evaluations will force leaders to talk **TO** one another and build a **TEAM (Everyone Achieves More)**, instead of talking **ABOUT** others and thereby sowing the poisonous seeds of mistrust, divisiveness and conflict.
- d. Evaluations will help make your entity a magnet for people who embrace a culture of **humility** and an **appetite for learning**, which are essential when combating threats to the lifestyles of **current and future citizens** as well as the health of **the natural environment**.

The remainder of this document includes 6 evaluation forms for use in your organization and/or community. The evaluations are targeted at both collective and personal levels, and will enable you to assess the strengths of each group or leader on a scale of 0 to 100.

## 3.a. Evaluating a Council/Board as a Collective Body

| Ineffective Council/Board<br>(0 means "as bad as it can get")  | Effective Council/Board<br>(score up to 10 points for each row)  | Score |
|--|--|-------|
| Bogged down in small and low level details: <i>'The lower the stake, the higher the argument.'</i>   | Judicious, measured and thoughtful; Maintains a broad focus and perspective. Is guided more by 'big picture goals' than by 'minutiae.' 'Heads are in the sky, but feet are firmly on the ground.'                |       |
| Fragmented and driven by narrow interests, and dominated by 'personal agendas.'  | Acts for the community of today and of the future, and also acts for the natural environment.  |       |
| Powerless, reactive, panicky; spends much of its time and efforts in crisis mode.  | A proactive and well organized group. Creates a vision of the future and is busy making it a reality: <i>'Heads in the sky. Feet firmly on the ground.'</i>  |       |
| Win-lose culture: <i>'It is you against me.'</i> It is rare to witness genuine listening and open minds. Decisions are often forced by narrow majorities.  | Win-win culture: <i>'It is you and me against the problem.'</i> Decisions are fully informed, and are usually reached by a wide majority or consensus.   |       |
| Members advocate for their own views and do not listen to others.  | Members listen with a genuine desire to learn: <i>'We were given two ears and one mouth, and we must be listening twice as we talk.'</i> They act for the full organization; and not only for constituent units. |       |
| Slow pace, monotony, boredom; routine, predictable and low-level detail work.  | Dynamic and engaging pace. Exciting progress is made. Freshness is maintained; The community and its stakeholders appreciate being well served.  |       |
| Low commitment levels. Members have plenty of reasons, excuses and apologies. They often miss meetings and fail to keep commitments.                       | High commitment levels. Members keep their promises and deliver impressive work. <b>Reasons and excuses</b> are replaced by <b>results</b> .   |       |
| Embracing the status quo and resisting change. The <b>critics</b> (naysayers) outnumber the <b>creators</b> (proponents of creativity and thoughtfulness). | Being prepared to question the status quo and examine new ideas with open minds. Critics and creators work together to deliver strong outcomes.  |       |
| Members act with a sense of duty and obligation. They are mainly there because they 'were elected to be there.'  | A genuine enthusiasm and commitment for the governance task. Members join because they genuinely want to be partners in the process.   |       |
| Members dread meetings and perceive them as 'suffering and pain'. Absences are frequent.   | 'Suffering is optional.' Meetings are varied, engaging and fun, and are rarely missed.   |       |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>   | Add up the numbers on the right hand column. Minimum = 0. Maximum = 100.   |       |

**NOTES:**

1. A Board Evaluation process should be initiated and administered in **active partnership** between **elected officials** and the **senior management team**.
2. Here is a creative measure to help elected members broaden their attention beyond today's voting citizens: Place **empty chairs** in your Council/Board Chambers, and inform everyone that these chairs symbolically represent entities that have **no voice** and **no vote**, such as: future generations and the natural environment.
3. You may want to check Eli's book "*101 Boardroom Problems and How to Solve them*" at [www.elimina.com](http://www.elimina.com).

**3.b. Self Evaluation for a Council/Board Member**

Council/Board members should regularly evaluate themselves. Some or all of the following ten affirmations can be used as a personal **code of conduct** and/or for **self-evaluations**:

|    | <b>Ten Affirmations</b>   | <b>Score<br/>0 to 10</b> |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| 1  | I serve as an informed, objective, open minded and trust-worthy partner in decision making. I share my insights, and also listen to and learn from my colleagues, staff, advisors, and citizens.  |                          |
| 2  | I prepare fully for meetings and thoroughly perform my pre-meeting duties.  |                          |
| 3  | I attend meetings regularly, arrive on time, and stay for the full duration, in body and spirit. I keep my electronic device turned off, except when access to some data will help us make an informed decision on a complex and tough issue.   |                          |
| 4  | I keep my comments clear, brief, and on topic. I resist the temptation to express a negative tone or personal attacks, and I help <b>keep the meeting environment safe</b> .  |                          |
| 5  | I do not hesitate to constructively raise unpopular but necessary questions or insights. When I observe a damaging boardroom problem, I do not hesitate to speak up and raise a necessary point of order in order to help us improve the tone and focus of the meeting.                               |                          |
| 6  | I help my colleagues succeed and treat them as valued partners in decision-making, regardless of any annoying habits that they may be displaying, or whether I agree with them or not, or whether I like them or not.   |                          |
| 7  | I welcome feedback and listen to it with an open mind. I keep a `thick skin' and leave my ego behind when on organizational duties. I treat constructive feedback as a gift, and do not hesitate to share it with others, so they can learn from it and consider abandoning counterproductive habits. |                          |
| 8  | I disclose conflicts of interest in a timely manner and then leave the meeting, so my colleagues can fully consider the issue at hand, without being distracted by my presence.   |                          |
| 9  | When representing a constituency group, I advise it of my intention to share its input, but that I must ultimately place organizational interests ahead of constituency interests.  |                          |
| 10 | Post-meeting ethics: I accept majority decisions as collective decisions, and I keep the proceedings of closed meetings confidential.   |                          |
|    | <b>GRAND TOTAL</b> (Minimum = 0. Maximum = 100)   |                          |

**NOTES:**

- *Individual Members should evaluate themselves after every meeting and allocate up to 10 points for each item. The grand total can be up to 100 points.*
- *Individual Members should welcome feedback from their colleagues and others, and should also share feedback with them (compliments and/or suggestions for improvements).*

**3.c. Evaluating a Mayor or Board Chair**

|    | <b>Ineffective Mayor or Board Chair</b><br><b>0 means as bad as it gets</b>   | <b>Effective Mayor or Board Chair</b><br><b>10 means as good as it gets</b>   | <b>Score</b> |
|----|---|---|--------------|
| 1  | Enjoys and appreciates the visibility that comes with the position.   | Takes the job in order to serve and make a difference. Is selfless and committed to the organization's goals and mission.   |              |
| 2  | Makes unilateral procedural decisions when they should consult with the professional staff.   | Engages members and expert advisors in sharing procedural insights and wisdom. Leads the Board in making smart collective decisions.  |              |
| 3  | As a super hard worker, inadvertently makes the organization dependent on him/her. Sometimes works hard instead of working smart.   | Shares the leadership spotlight and work with others. Serves as a mentor and <b>builds other leaders</b> , thereby reducing dependency on him/her. Recognizes unique contributions and achievements, privately and publicly.  |              |
| 4  | Hesitant to intervene when important rules are broken and thereby damage the democratic process. Avoids confrontations. Tries hard to please everyone, and rarely says no.                                | Intervenes proactively to manage problems. Addresses meeting issues with a principle-based approach. Is capable of saying no, gently but firmly, to ensure fairness and to facilitate informed decision-making. Seeks to benefit from Staff's procedural expertise. |              |
| 5  | Treats feedback or dissenting views as personal attacks. Has a short temper and low tolerance for divergence of opinions and participation styles.  | Mature, patient, approachable, respectful, and supportive. Maintains freshness, a light touch, and appropriate humor. Learns from criticism and from dissenting views.  |              |
| 6  | Passive and reactive during debates.  | Keeps a broad view on issues and guides the group effectively in debating tough issues.   |              |
| 7  | Unprepared for meetings.  | Organized and fully prepared. A role model and an inspiration for others to follow.   |              |
| 8  | Unconcerned about relationship building.  | Builds and maintains strong relationships with voting members, staff, the community and its sub-groups, and external stakeholders.  |              |
| 9  | Hesitates to bring closure to discussions or to take a vote after a full debate.  | Intuitive and responsive to moods and needs of a meeting. Balances the need to make progress (time management) with the need for inclusive and informed decision making.  |              |
| 10 | Offers rebuttals again and again without recognizing others who are waiting to speak. Fails to facilitate a logical flow and step-by-step decision-making, or to summarize progress and initiate closure. | Looks for first time speakers before speaking a second time on an issue. Concisely clarifies decision-making options or divides multi-faceted decisions into manageable components.   |              |
|    | <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>  | Add the numbers on the right hand column. Minimum = 0. Maximum = 100.   |              |

**3.d. Evaluating a Meeting**

|    | <b>Ineffective Meeting</b><br><b>0 means as bad as it gets</b>  | <b>Effective Meeting</b><br><b>10 means as good as it gets</b>  | <b>Score</b> |
|----|---|---|--------------|
| 1  | A weak connection between the agenda and the mission, vision and strategic goals.   | A clear sense of purpose and a solid link between the meeting's agenda and the mission, vision and strategic goals.   |              |
| 2  | A disorganized and sometimes rushed decision-making process, with hasty solutions to poorly defined problems.   | A logical and organized process for problem solving: establishing the problem, then evaluating potential solutions (based on set criteria), and then choosing the best option (at a later meeting if an expert's input is needed).                      |              |
| 3  | Members are late, leave early, do not prepare, use electronic devices for calls, social media entries, or responses to texts and e-mails.   | Members arrive on time, prepared, and have the knowledge to make informed decisions. They are committed to being there and serving the community, in body and in spirit.  |              |
| 4  | Decisions are made and motions are voted on without any clarity as to their precise wording. Action items are vague or non-existent.  | Clearly articulated consensus (or motions) and follow up items. Concise minutes help ensure follow-up by capturing what was decided.  |              |
| 5  | Vocal members dominate discussions; quiet members and their input are left behind.  | Participation is balanced. Members have equal opportunities to speak and influence decisions. Debates are enriched by diverse input. A good pace is maintained by everyone.   |              |
| 6  | Members are silent when a procedural issue arises, for fear of insulting or offending others. They tolerate chaos, repetition, digressions, personal attacks, as well as heckling, booing and clapping by citizens in the public gallery.   | Members act as partners in the process. They speak up if a dysfunction is damaging the process and/or erodes the quality of decisions. The public is advised to avoid heckling, booing and clapping, to help make the meeting environment safe for all. |              |
| 7  | The meeting is slow and monotonous. Some members or speakers/citizens ramble, and no one reminds them to be brief or observe time limits. Conversely, things may move too quickly, and flawed decisions may be rushed.                      | Time is well managed. The pace is dynamic and engaging but comfortable (not too quick nor too slow). Members and presenters speak concisely. More time is spent on significant issues and less time is spent on minutiae.                               |              |
| 8  | Rules for participation are not in place, making it a free for all. Alternatively, rules are used too rigidly, stifle creativity and curtail a natural flow of ideas, thereby making the meeting too formal, stuffy and unsafe to speak at. | Essential rules are set: wait to be recognized before speaking, stay on topic, be concise, do not dominate, and be respectful of others. Rules are used flexibly, so they promote efficiency without stifling vital debate.                             |              |
| 9  | Personal attacks and insults are rampant. The climate is adversarial, with each faction using manipulative tactics to achieve its goals.  | A respectful and civilized tone is kept, even when issues are contentious and even when elected members disagree with presenters. The focus is on issues, not personalities. The group works as a team to advance its mandate.                          |              |
| 10 | The group is distracted by logistical problems: a hot or cold room, noise, faulty A/V equipment, catering issues, and other issues.   | Logistical details are handled flawlessly through meticulous planning and preparation, and rarely become an issue or a distraction.   |              |
|    | <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>  | Add the numbers on the right hand column. Minimum = 0. Maximum = 100.   |              |

**3.e. Evaluating a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)**

|    | <b>Category</b>  | <b>Score<br/>0 to 10</b> |
|----|--|--------------------------|
| 1  | <i>Building Council/Board capacity:</i> The CAO and the Procedural advisor help the Council/Board optimize its effectiveness via a quality orientation program, on-going training and education, and feedback on what can be learned from procedural issues.   |                          |
| 2  | <i>Providing professional advice:</i> The CAO leads the Professional Staff and Advisors (with assistance from outside professionals, when needed) in providing sound professional advice in a timely manner, helping the Council/Board make balanced, legal and sustainable decisions.   |                          |
| 3  | <i>Providing decision-making options:</i> The CAO (with assistance from internal and external experts) provides analysis and decision-making options (possibly as <b>written motions</b> , circulated in advance of a meeting to elected officials and the public).  |                          |
| 4  | <i>Establishing roles and responsibilities:</i> The CAO respects the Council/Board's role to govern <i>from "the balcony"</i> (focusing on items within its governance role), while managing operations <i>from "the ground floor"</i> . The CAO insulates staff from interference by Council/Board members.   |                          |
| 5  | <i>Maintaining accountability:</i> The CAO reports regularly and proactively and provides full operational disclosure, in a manner that builds trust and assures everyone that initiatives are soundly managed, policies are adhered to, and strategic goals are advanced.   |                          |
| 6  | <i>Risk management and dispute resolution:</i> The CAO identifies risks and internal disputes at an early stage and addresses them in a proactive and timely manner. Staff members who wish to draw the Council/Board's attention to internal issues are protected by whistleblower policies.  |                          |
| 7  | <i>Maintaining consistency, reliability, accessibility and openness:</i> The CAO is consistent, reliable and disciplined, and displays an abundance of openness and approachability. This builds trust and makes it clear that there are no hidden problems or concealed risks.  |                          |
| 8  | <i>Exchanging feedback:</i> The Council/Board is assured that its feedback to the CAO is welcomed and responded to, and that, conversely, it can count on the CAO's frank and direct feedback to help it reduce problems and achieve excellence in decision making.  |                          |
| 9  | <i>Optimizing staff performance:</i> The CAO hires effective staff members and ensures they have the knowledge, skills and motivation to excel in serving the organization. The CAO creates a safe and harassment-free environment, where staff members know that their input is valued and appreciated and never taken defensively. As a result, staff morale and retention levels are high and turnover is minimal. The CAO sets an example by optimizing their own performance and participating in relevant continuing education activities. |                          |
| 10 | <i>Building and maintaining relationships with the community:</i> The CAO ensures that community members and stakeholders are treated as valued partners, with courtesy and respect. This builds trust and establishes satisfaction among community members and stakeholders and boosts their respect for the organization. The CAO and staff are also ready to explain to citizens what may make their expectations unreasonable.   |                          |
|    | <b>GRAND TOTAL (Minimum = 0. Maximum = 100)</b>  |                          |

**3.f. Evaluating a Procedural Advisor (serving as a Meeting Parliamentarian)  
(Often referred to as Municipal Clerk, or Corporate Secretary, or Secretary/Treasurer)  
Allocate up to 10 points per item, with the maximum total being 100 points.**

|    | <b>Category</b>  | <b>Score<br/>0 to 10</b> |
|----|--|--------------------------|
| 1  | <p><b>Serves as an Advocate for the Process:</b> Ensures that everyone understands and follows the process naturally and enthusiastically, so its specific provisions can help the group achieve three key goals:</p> <p>a. <i>Equal engagement of participants</i> in democratic debates (a level playing field).</p> <p>b. <i>Time management</i>, on a <b>per participant</b> basis and on a <b>per issue</b> basis.</p> <p>c. <i>Informed decision making</i>, e.g.: Motions without advance notice are <b>the exception</b>, and not the norm.</p> <p>Briefly said, the process should make meetings orderly, focused, efficient, equal, civilized, and safe.</p> |                          |
| 2  | <p><b>Is a life-long learner:</b> Interacts regularly and exchanges ideas with other procedural advisors; joins organizations where meeting procedure is taught; invites input on meeting procedures from elected officials, staff, and citizens; learns from feedback on the effectiveness of meeting procedures.</p>   |                          |
| 3  | <p><b>Develops a pragmatic Procedure Bylaw:</b> Ensures that the Procedure Bylaw complies with the applicable legislation, is written in plain language, and is intuitive to navigate, search, and implement.</p>  |                          |
| 4  | <p><b>Is pragmatic and nimble:</b> Knows how to apply rules with "<i>that plain old common sense</i>"; Refrains from offering advice without first determining what problem needs to be solved; Serves as the trusted "go to professional" that everyone turns to for definitive and credible input on meeting procedures.</p>   |                          |
| 5  | <p><b>Provides training and ad-hoc advice:</b> Provides education to elected officials and support staff on how democratic decision making works (at <b>formal</b> Public Meetings and Quasi-Judicial Hearings, and at <b>informal</b> Committee Meetings, where strict rules can inadvertently stifle a free flowing exchange of ideas).</p>  |                          |
| 6  | <p><b>Develops and delivers process-related training to individuals or groups that may need it</b>, e.g.: Citizens who are contemplating a run for an elected office or want to serve on panels/committees, and do not know how the democratic process works (or possibly have false notions about it).</p>  |                          |
| 7  | <p><b>Shares the task of "defending the process"</b> with their well trained Support Staff Team; Also develops passion for <b>the process</b> among elected members, so they too will defend it, e.g. by speaking concisely, so that patience and intellectual capacity are not diminished due to exceedingly long meetings.</p>   |                          |
| 8  | <p><b>Providing support during a meeting:</b> Provides advice on the procedure to deal with tough situations such as a motion made 'on the fly' and without public notice, especially when such a motion lacks the essential analysis, and should therefore be <b>referred to</b> Management or to an external expert for input.</p>   |                          |
| 9  | <p><b>Closed Meetings &amp; Other Processes:</b> Is familiar with the legislative clauses that must be adhered to when convening a meeting which is closed to the public, and advises the voting body accordingly. Also advises about conflicts of interest, and possibly retains an external legal counsel for related input.</p>   |                          |
| 10 | <p><b>Meetings away from a publicly held meeting:</b> Cautions elected officials against debating public meeting issues away from a public meeting and about making a commitment on how they will vote; Emphasizes the importance of supporting transparency and coming to meetings with <b>open minds</b>.</p>  |                          |
|    | <p><b>GRAND TOTAL</b> (Minimum = 0. Maximum = 100)</p>   |                          |