

## Appendix D: How to Prepare a Good Report

Numerous topics must be covered in a one-hour council meeting. One issue cannot be given so much time that other important issues are excluded or given inadequate attention. So, it is incumbent upon anyone making a report to be ever mindful of the clock.

In general, a presenter should take no more than three minutes to give his report. With careful preparation, this is ample time to convey the necessary information. A crisp, focused report respects not only the Grand Knight who carefully prepared the meeting agenda, but also the other presenters who limited their reports to fit the allotted times.

Often, people who are not accustomed to public speaking at council meetings will speak much longer than the audience is willing to listen. Instead of focusing only on the key points and main take away items, they dwell at length on lesser details as if they were delivering an academic paper. They fail to note when the audience has lost interest, and they drone on while members look at their smart phones and other distractions.

A good presenter respects the valuable time of the audience. A good report is short and simple. Key elements include:

- The five W's: Who, What, When, Where, Why.
- Results if reporting completion of a project.
- Status if giving an update on a project.
- Clear requests for needed support.
- Recommendations for further actions.

It is unnecessary to drag the audience through the thought process and intermediate steps taken to reach the conclusions. The speaker should tell the audience what they need to know, answer their questions, and sit down.

Some speakers find it helpful to write down their intended remarks. Then they cut it in half and reorganize. Then they cut it in half yet again. This forces them to eliminate all superfluous information. In time it becomes second nature to focus on only the most important matter.