

The Agenda

When a meeting is called to order by the Chair, an **AGENDA** or **ORDER OF BUSINESS**, is offered for approval or should be offered.

Motions

The business of a meeting is carried forward by **MOTIONS**. The object of all motions is to get things done in an orderly manner, and democratically. Motions are made from the floor, and then followed by **DEBATE ON THE QUESTION**.

In debating, or **SPEAKING ON A MOTION**, no member should be allowed to speak twice before everyone who wants to have had an opportunity to speak.

The Chair can and should rule **OUT OF ORDER** a member who insists upon having the floor twice before others have had it once. Speaking on a motion is also called **TAKING THE FLOOR**.

Motions must be made on the subject involved, or the **POINT ON THE AGENDA**.

Seconding

Motions must be **SECONDED** in order to be debated. If the motion is not seconded, the Chair is obliged to point out that there has been no second, and proceed with the meeting. The Chair is not supposed to “milk” the meeting for a second.

Once a motion has been made and seconded, it must be **DISPOSED OF**, either by being **DEFEATED, PASSED, TABLED, REFERRED, or PLACED IN COMMITTEE**.

Except for certain **PRIVILEGED MOTIONS**, a motion cannot be placed while there is a **PREVIOUS MOTION** on the Floor.

Recognition

Once a motion has been made, it is the duty of the Chair to repeat it in order that everyone hears it, and also to **CLARIFY** it, if it was made in confused language.

Withdrawing

Before a Motion has been **STATED BY THE CHAIR**, its maker has the right to **WITHDRAW** it, or modify the language. But, after it has been stated by the Chair, the maker cannot withdraw or modify his motion without the **CONSENT OF THE MEETING**.

When a motion has been withdrawn, it is treated as though it had never been made, and is not recorded in the minutes.

Meeting Procedures (Rules of Order and Advice for the Chair)

Amendments

Once a Motion has been duly made, seconded, and is on the floor, it is subject to **AMENDMENT**.

The object of an **AMENDMENT** is to change or modify the original motion, without destroying the sense of it.

Amendments should take the form of: inserting or adding words to the motion; striking out words; substituting words or sentences.

Amendments to motions are **DEBATABLE**. Amendments require seconding.

Voting

In **TAKING THE VOTE**, after debate, the amendment is first voted upon, and then the motion itself voted upon. Sometimes, the nature of the amendment is such that passing or defeating the amendment **CARRIES** or **DEFEATS** the motion also. In that event it is not necessary to take a vote on the motion.

The Minutes

The **MINUTES OF A MEETING** are simply a record of the proceedings of that particular meeting. As such, they can only be **ACCEPTED BY THE BODY** whose minutes they are.

They are subject to a *Motion to Accept*. Sometimes, **CORRECTIONS** are raised, and then the minutes are **ACCEPTED** as **CORRECTED**. Being simply the record of proceedings, minutes may be corrected at any time, including subsequent meetings.

The date, time and place of the meetings, as well as the time of **ADJOURNMENT** should be in the minutes. Also the results of any **ROLL CALL** votes, and full reports of **SCRUTINEERS**. (Scrutineers are members elected or appointed to tally ballots.)

Secret Ballot

The ballot is a secret vote designed to save members from embarrassment. Usually, provision is made that when any four or five members request a ballot instead of an open vote it shall be granted by the Chair.

Normally, the Chair does not vote, except in the case of a tie. He generally explains his reasons for voting as he/she does and customarily votes against a motion on the assumption that, if half the members are opposed, the matter should not be forced upon them. Where voting is done by secret ballot and the Chair has already voted, she/he is generally conceded the right to an additional vote to break a tie. This depends on the bylaws of the organization.

Meeting Procedures (Rules of Order and Advice for the Chair)

Advice for the Chair

It is good policy to notify those who are waiting that they will be heard. Throughout the discussion the Chair should continue asking if anyone wishes to take the floor until the question is called. A person speaking twice on a subject automatically closes the debate.

If a large number of members have signified their intention of speaking on a topic, the Chair can then impose a time limit on each speaker. This action is necessary in order to give everyone an equal opportunity to speak. The Chair will know sometimes which members will speak in favour and which ones will be opposed and s/he will alternate the speakers so that each side has equal time.

It is a good idea during a long discussion, for the Chair to keep referring to the matter that is being discussed. During a long debate, items that have no bearing on the motion are introduced and the Chair must bring the discussion back to the subject at hand. Many members are not familiar with parliamentary procedure and a good Chair will assist them in framing their motions in order to accomplish their purpose.

One of the privileges afforded a Chair, but one which she/he should not employ too often, is to hand over the Chair to his/her Vice-Chair. The Chair may then enter the debate without losing impartiality that she/he has developed and practiced as Chair. This should also be done only on the most vital occasions and should not be continued until it becomes a habit.

It is important to know that **ACCEPTING A REPORT** is the same as adopting it. **RECEIVING A REPORT** merely allows it to be read to the meeting. Receiving does not mean approving or adopting. Accepting does! In making motions on reports, the meeting should understand the distinction in the above two words.

Deferring Action

Once a matter has been duly placed on the floor through a motion and seconded, it may become necessary to defer or postpone action.

Tabling

A motion to **TABLE** is a motion to lay aside business in such a manner that it can be **RENEWED** at a later time --either at the same meeting or a later one. A motion to table requires a second. Once seconded, the motion to table cannot be either debated or amended but **MUST BE PUT TO AN IMMEDIATE VOTE WITHOUT DISCUSSION.**

When it is desired to resume the matter which was tabled, the Motion is **TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE.** This motion must be seconded, and is also not subject to debate or amendment. When a matter is taken from the table, it is taken with all previous actions, amendments, etc., and resumed just as it was when tabled. Tabling a motion or matter does not carry a time limit.

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Postpone to a Set Time

Do not move to Table; move to Postpone to a set time, date, or meeting. A Motion to **POSTPONE CONSIDERATION** requires a second. It can be debated before being voted on, and can be amended as to the time.

Place in Committee

When it is desired to let a few handle a given matter, instead of tying up the whole meeting needlessly, this is done by committing, or **PLACING IN COMMITTEE**.

Postpone Indefinitely

A motion to **POSTPONE INDEFINITELY** is really a motion to *KILL* the Subject. It must be seconded, can be debated, but cannot be amended. These motions are dangerous, and must be watched with care when they come up.

Appeals to Overrule the Chair

A decision of the Chair can always be subject to change through **APPEAL**. When a member rises to appeal a decision of the Chair, his/her motion can be either to **APPEAL THE DECISION**, or to **OVERRIDE THE CHAIR** — they both have the same meaning.

Under such circumstances, the member should state carefully and in understandable language why she/he is making the motion. The motion requires a second. If seconded, the Chair should yield the gavel to the next in rank at the meeting, and then state his reasons for the decision. Without further debate, the Acting Chair then puts the issue up for vote with the following words: "*Shall the Chair be sustained?*" (meaning upheld).

After the vote, the Chair resumes the gavel, whether she/he was sustained or not in his/her past decision. Technically, the motion to appeal the decision of the Chair is debatable when the question involved is the **BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE**, and not debatable otherwise.

The decision of the Chair stands, until reversed by a majority vote. A tie vote **SUSTAINS THE CHAIR**. Further since she/he does not hold the gavel at the time, the Chair can vote.

The Chair is supposed to be the *servant of the meeting*, and as such should refrain from discussing questions before the meeting. The Chair cannot authorize anyone to act in his/her place if she/he is absent from the meeting. If the by-laws do not cover that contingency, the meeting has the duty to elect an Acting Chair.

Question of Privilege

The only privilege involved is the privilege of getting the attention of the Chair at once to **ASK A QUESTION** or **MAKE A POINT OF ORDER**. When rising on a Question of Privilege, you do not wait for recognition from the Chair, you **INTERRUPT** by stating "I rise to a Point of Inquiry (or Order, or Procedure)." The Chair is obliged to recognize you.

Rising to a Point of Order usually means that you feel some member of the meeting, rather than the Chair, is off the track and you want the Chair to take action. While a question of Privilege requires no second, gets no debate, and is not amendable, the action desired may be deferred until the speaker is finished, and may also be tabled or

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postponed indefinitely. In the latter case, the question interrupted is not carried with a tabling or postponement motion.

Renewal and Reconsideration

A rejected motion cannot be renewed at the same session. It can be renewed by the same maker at a future session. Further, no motion can be introduced that is so nearly like a rejected motion that it would **PLACE THE SAME QUESTION BEFORE THE COMMITTEE** a second time. Also, no motion can be introduced which interferes with a motion which has been tabled, postponed or placed in committee.

Reconsider a Motion

The object of this action would be to bring back a question for more discussion and obtain a new vote. Such a motion can only be made by a member **WHO VOTED WITH THE PREVAILING SIDE** on the previous vote! Such a motion must receive a second and can be debated, but not amended. If reconsideration carries, the result is just as though the original vote had not been taken.