

MEETINGS

There must be a quorum present to conduct a meeting.

The president will chair the meetings.

The secretary/treasurer will record the meeting and prepare minutes.

The president will call the meeting to order.

The minutes will be given to members for review, correction and final approval.

The standard meeting agenda will be: 1. Reading of minutes; 2. Reports; 3. Unfinished business (Items carried over from the previous meeting); 4. New Business.

MINUTES: The secretary/treasurer may distribute the minutes; ask if there are any corrections. If there is a dispute, there may be a debate and vote on the proposed corrections. Only after they are approved can they become an official record. The president will announce, "If there are no further corrections the minutes are approved."

REPORTS: The president, as an example might say, "May we have the treasurer's report." Often these reports just give information. If they include recommendations for action by the committee they are considered, debated and voted upon.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: The president should bring up these items and might say. "Under Unfinished Business, the first item of business is..." Unfinished business includes any item that was in the process of being considered when the last meeting was adjourned or any item that was scheduled to come up at the last meeting but was not reached before adjournment. There are no items of "Old Business"

NEW BUSINESS: The president asks, "Is there any new business?" Any member, using the procedure of making a motion, may bring up new items.

MOTIONS: A motion is a formal proposal by a member in a meeting upon which the group takes certain action. There should be no debate on an item **before** a motion has been made. Any member may make a motion.

1. To make a motion a member must be recognized by the president. After being recognized, simply say, "I move that..." and clearly state the proposal. It is important to say exactly what the words of the motion will be. Votes are on the exact wording not a vague idea. The secretary will write down the motion accurately. The motion may be submitted in writing.
2. A motion must be seconded in order for it to be considered.
3. The president "States" the motion by saying "It is moved and seconded that." and then repeats the motion. Before stating the motion the president must ensure the motion is in order. If the motion in some way violates the rules the president says "The chair rules the motion is out of order because...."
4. After "Stating the motion the president lets the maker of the motion explain the reason. After explaining, the president asks if there are any other comments. Each member may speak. The president will ask, "Is there any further debate?" If there are no questions the president states the question and asks for a vote. A majority vote is required. The president then announces the motion either adopted or lost.

DEBATE:

Every main motion and some secondary motions may be debated. There are some secondary motions that may not be debated. (RRO, Table D, p194-195)

One of the most important rules of debate is that the proposal, not the member is the subject of debate. Debate about the merits of the proposal is the purpose. If it were allowed to include personal attacks, other members with important points may not participate. It would leave hard

feelings and foster personal ill feeling in the group long after the debate ended. An idea may be attacked of likely results in strong terms, but *must avoid personalities*. The motives of a member may not be questioned or attacked. Terms like *false, fraud, lie or liar* must never be used. Instead it could be said, "I believe there is strong evidence that the member is mistaken." When debating, comment as though you are speaking to the president. not the other members. Also, as much as possible, avoid using the names of other members.

1. **Speech Limits.** Anyone may speak in debate twice on any debatable motion. Each time you make speak for up to ten minutes unless special rules are adopted setting other limits. Time cannot be saved or transferred to someone else. You cannot let someone speak on your time except you can let someone ask you a question on your time.
2. **Preference in Recognition.** As a general rule the chair should recognize the person who rises first after the previous speaker has finished. You cannot, while someone is speaking, signal that you want to speak. There are three common exceptions to the rule that the person who rises first should be the one recognized to speak. * First if you are the maker of the motion, you have a one time right to preference in speaking about it. * Second, although everyone may only speak twice on the same motion, anyone who has not spoken has preference over anyone who has spoken. * Third, when the chair knows that persons seeking the floor have opposite opinions the chair should try to alternate between those who favor and those who oppose.
3. **Stick to the subject.** Your speech must relate to the motion. They must have a bearing on whether the motion should be adopted.
4. **Debate the Issue, Not Personalities** One of the most important rules of debate is that the proposal, not the member, is the subject of debate. Debates about the merits of a motions central to the idea of a meeting. When arguments on all sides are fully aired, the group will likely come to a wise decision.
5. **Formalities That Avoid Personalities.** Speak as though you are talking to the chair. Don't say "Bill your argument is.." Instead say "Mr. President. The last speakers final point is...."

CLOSE DEBATE IMMEDIATELY: A motion closes the debate and also prevents the making of secondary motions, including those to amend. The motion requires two-thirds vote and is undebatable. The motion may not be made without first being recognized by the chair.

AMEMDMENTS

When a motion is being debated you may think it can be improved if it is changed in some way. To get others to agree you can propose amendments- which, if adopted, modify the wording, and within limits, the meaning of the motion. The vote on the amendment does not decide whether the main motion will be adopted. After an amendment is adopted the main motion as amended may be debated. Only if the motion passes on that vote will the group finally decide to do what the amendment together with the main motion proposes to do.

POSTPONE Perhaps more information is needed or it is not urgent. There can be many reasons why you might want to put off taking a vote on it, stop dealing with the motion and put it off until a later time. A motion to Postpone To a Certain Time meets this need. "I move to postpone the motion until..." After the motion to postpone has been stated, it may be amended, it is also debatable, but the debate must be limited to the motion to postpone

COMMITT OR REFER Before voting on a motion, you may feel that it would profit from redrafting or further study by a small group of people. The motion to Commit (Refer to a committee) allows this. It requires a majority vote, and should identify the committee to which the motion will be referred. It may include instructions such as when to report, or the purpose.

CORRECTING MISTAKES: A motion that has been approved or defeated may not be brought up again at that meeting in the normal way. After a consideration or more facts are learned it may be that something done should have been done differently or a mistake was made in not choosing to do something. There are special procedures for dealing with theses cases in meetings.

MOTIONS TO RECONSIDER: Only a member who voted on the winning side may make a motion to Reconsider. Any member may second the motion. An example, "Mr. president I move to reconsider the vote on the motion relating to... I voted for that motion." A motion to reconsider may only be made during the current meeting. After the meeting is adjourned a motion may not be reconsidered.

MOTIONS TO RESCIND OR AMEND SOMETHING PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED: After a meeting is adjourned and you believe the wrong decision was made, at the next meeting you make a motion to rescind the decision. Examples: I move to rescind the motion relating to... which was adopted at our 2007 meeting." Alternatively example if you think too much money is allowed "I move to amend the authorization previously adopted to donate money to... by adding 'however a subsequent donation may be considered by the membership each year.' You may make either of these motions regardless of how you voted. If previous notice is not given of the intent to make one of these motions, adoption of the motion requires a two-thirds vote at the reunion or the vote of the majority of the entire membership whichever is smaller at that time. If a previous notice is given, only a majority vote at the meeting is required.

RENEWAL OF MOTIONS: At the next meeting you may make the same motion that was defeated regardless of how you voted on the original motion

Martin A. Markley November 2007