

Meeting Tips

“Common Consent”

Principles of Common Consent:

1. Concern introduced by at least two persons (A second is required.)
2. Full and free discussion of merits (Debate)
3. Right of the group to act, not act, modify, wait to act, or refer to another body.
4. Decision –making by the greatest consensus possible.

Examples:

Unanimous
Two-thirds
Majority
Plurality

5. Agreement to support agreed upon action outside decision-making groups.

D & C 131:4b - "Those who go out from the assemblies and solemn conclaves of the church should exercise great care in their ministrations abroad to avoid sowing seeds of distrust and suspicion either in public ministrations or in private conversation."

Practical Actions to Implement Common Consent:

1. Order of Business
2. Handling of a Motion
3. Amendments
4. Presiding
5. Content of Minutes
6. Special Parliamentary Situations

ORDER OF BUSINESS AGENDA FOR A BUSINESS MEETING

General Points:

1. The Agenda is only as good as the amount of time put into it.
2. Rule of Thumb: Spend as much time preparing for the meeting as you plan to spend in the meeting.
3. Always try to have a printed AGENDA for the business meeting.
4. Always try to have the minutes printed and distributed ahead of time so they do not need to be read to the assembly.

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ORDER OF BUSINESS CONNTINUED

SAMPLE AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER:

(Presiding Officer: "The meeting will come to order.")

2. OPENING CEREMONIES:

- a. Opening Hymn
- b. Scripture Reading
- c. Invocation

3. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS: Any district, regional, or World Church personnel should be introduced from the person with the greatest scope of responsibility to the person with the least. Time should be allotted for these persons to briefly address the conference.

4. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

Read only those not printed and distributed. Ask for corrections and approve the minutes by general consent with no specific motion.

5. REPORTS OF OFFICERS: Any elected or appointed officers should be allowed to report any items that are necessary to the conference. If an officer wishes to make a report he/she should check with the presiding officer before the meeting begins. Reports, when given, should be in the following order:

- a. Presiding Officer
- b. Counselors and/or Associate Pastor(s)
- c. Secretary (This should normally consist of correspondence directed to the conference.)
- d. Treasurer (This should be a brief summary of the current financial situation. If the annual treasurer's report is given it should be very detailed and already audited before presentation to the conference. The Auditor's report is then accepted on motion by the conference, and not the treasurer's report. With this action, the treasurer's report becomes part of the minutes)

6. REPORTS OF COMMISSIONS: (Leadership, Worship, Christian Education, Pastoral Care, Stewardship, Zionics Relations, Missionary)

7. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES: Any committees appointed to do specific tasks should report in the order in which they were created.

8. SPECIAL ORDERS: Any item which must be acted upon at the business meeting is a special order for that meeting. Such items include:

- a. The fiscal year budget
- b. The election of officers
- c. The election of delegates to higher jurisdictional conferences

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Any items that were not completed at the end of the previous meeting are unfinished business for the current meeting.

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ORDER OF BUSINESS CONTINUED

AGENDA FOR A BUSINESS MEETING CONTINUED

10. GENERAL ORDERS: Any item which was postponed to this meeting by the vote of a previous conference is a GENERAL ORDER for the current meeting.
11. NEW BUSINESS: Any proposals which have been turned in ahead of the meeting should be listed and printed copies should be available to the members. The chair should always ask, "Is there any other new business to be brought before the conference?" This is any member's opportunity to introduce items of business before the assembly.
12. PROGRAM/ORDINATIONS: Any presentations, program, or ordinations should take place at this point in the agenda. If there is good reason to the contrary ordinations may be moved up on the agenda or delayed to another special service.
13. ANNOUNCEMENTS
14. ADJOURNMENT: The chair asks: "Is there any further business to come before the conference?" If there is, it is handled. If not, the chair says: "There being no further business to come before the conference, the conference is adjourned." The chair does not need to call for a motion to adjourn from the assembly. The chair should simply declare the meeting adjourned when there is no further business.
- 15 CLOSING CEREMONIES:
 - a. Closing Hymn
 - b. Benediction
 - c. Postlude

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THE HANDLING OF A MOTION

The handling of a motion varies according to conditions. However, in the ordinary case, the following six steps are essential:

1. A member **makes** the motion

The member must be recognized by the chair before stating the motion.

Common form: “**I move that ...**”

2. Another member **seconds** the motion

It is not necessary to be recognized prior to seconding a motion.

The name of the member who seconds a motion is **NOT** recorded in the minutes.

Common form: “**Second**” or “**I second the motion**”

3. The Chair **states** the question, i.e., the chair states the exact question and indicates that it is open to debate.

Common form: “**It has been moved and seconded that Is there any discussion?**”

4. The members **debate** the motion.

Each member must be recognized before they discuss the motion.

Discussion is strictly limited to the motion on the floor.

All debate is directed to the chair or through the chair to other members. Members never speak directly to one another.

Ordinarily, each member may speak only twice on the same motion, and each speech is limited to 10 minutes. The organization may adopt other rules that limit debate.

5. The Chair **puts** the question, i.e., takes the vote.

The affirmative vote is taken first, then the negative.

Abstentions are not counted.

A majority vote means a majority of those who vote for or against a motion.

Members present but not voting are not counted. A majority is MORE THAN HALF.

6. The Chair **announces the results** of the vote.

The vote on any motion is not considered final until the chair has done this.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION

Whenever it is desired to change the wording of a motion so substantially that several amendments would be required, a substitute motion may be used. A substitute motion has the same status as a primary amendment, but the procedures for handling it are somewhat different. Both the main motion and the proposed substitute are opened to amendment. Then when both have been PERFECTED, a vote is taken on whether the substitute will replace the main motion. Finally the vote is taken on the adoption of the final motion (which may be either the proposed substitute or the original main motion).

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SUBSTITUTE MOTION: "That we encourage all of our members to attend the Association's National Convention." (This is a logical substitute for the main motion stated above. It deals with the same topic--attendance at the National Convention--but proposes a completely different course of action.)

AMENDMENTS

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Amendments, like main motions, require a second, are amendable, are debatable, and require a majority vote.
2. An amendment should be stated so that it indicates exactly what ~s being done to the main motion.
3. An amendment must always be handled before voting on the motion to which it was applied.

EXAMPLES OF VARIOUS TYPES OF AMENDMENTS:

MAIN MOTION: "That we sponsor a delegate to our association's National Convention In March."

Amendment by STRIKING OUT: "I move to amend the main motion by striking out the words "in March." (Such an amendment would be useful if the exact dates of the convention are not known.)

Amendment by ADDITION (or insertion): "I move to amend the main motion by adding at the end of the words "providing however that this club shall not be responsible for expenses in excess of \$150.00."

Amendment by STRIKING OUT AND INSERTING: "I move to amend the main motion by striking out the words "a delegate" and inserting the words "two delegates."

All of the above are examples of PRIMARY (first degree) amendments, because they apply directly to the main motion stated above. A SECONDARY (second degree) amendment is one that applies to another amendment. A SECONDARY amendment could be applied to the above amendment by addition, as follows:

SECONDARY AMENDMENT: "I move to amend the amendment by striking our "\$150" and inserting "\$100."

Amendment of the THIRD DEGREE is not permitted, but an unlimited number of primary and secondary amendments can be made. However, no more than one primary and one secondary amendment can be proposed at a time.

PRESIDING

In every deliberative assembly there must be a presiding officer and a secretary. Among the duties of the presiding officer are to keep order, to expedite the business of the assembly and to see that the rules of the assembly are enforced.

To perform these duties it is important that the presiding officer be familiar with the fundamental rules of parliamentary law, the charter, bylaws, and standing rules of the organization.

One of the first requirements is that the presiding officer be at the place of meeting sometime before the assembly's designated hour of meeting. A good presiding officer is never late.

The agenda should be carefully prepared and the parliamentary authority, Robert's

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Rules of Order, Newly Revised (RRONR), and the Rules of order of the Organization should be on the desk.

When the time arrives for calling the meeting to order, the president strikes the gavel and says “the meeting will come to order.” The president uses the gavel only to call the meeting to order and maintain order. Many presiding officers prefer to adjourn the meeting with a tap of the gavel. While RRONR does not specify this may be done, it is customary usage and should not cause comment.

The president should:

1. Maintain order.
2. Announce the business in order.
3. During debate, remain seated and pay attention.
4. Reprove a member who calls “Question, question” while another member is claiming the floor, or has the floor. (Calling “Question, question” is misunderstood by many members. They feel that is the proper manner to hurry the chair into putting the question immediately to vote.)
5. It is the duty of the chair to make perfectly clear the question before the assembly, to take the vote and announce the result, then announces the next business in order.
6. The chair has not completed the vote until the results are announced.
7. The chair never puts the negative vote on a complimentary motion (to thank a person for a service), unless a member objects.
8. The chair must take the affirmative and negative votes on all questions except a complimentary motion.
9. It is the duty of the chair to be impartial and fair.
10. The chair should not recognize a frivolous motion.
11. The President should not exercise personal rights as a member when so doing would lessen the confidence of the assembly in the chair’s fairness.
12. The president should not express an opinion or enter into debate while in the chair.
13. The president may expedite business by the use of General Consent. “If there is no objection...”
14. If the chair puts a motion so hurriedly that a member is trying to secure the floor for debate is not allowed this right although the member has been diligent in claiming the floor, the member is entitled to the floor and the motion is in the same position as it was before the vote was taken.
15. The chair should not allow dilatory or absurd motions.
16. The chair should never use “I.” Always in presiding use the third person for example, “The chair decides...”
17. In case of serious disorder, fire, or riot, the chair has the right to declare the assembly adjourned to some other time or place.

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18. The chair is entitled to vote when their vote would change the results. The word is “may” and not “shall.” The chair is entitled to vote in such instance but cannot be compelled to do so. The chair may always vote in a ballot vote.
19. Whenever addressing the assembly the chair stands. The chair sits during debate, reports, etc. Included in the terminology of addressing the assembly would be terms such as putting a question, taking a vote, and ruling on points of order.
20. The method of addressing the chair varies according to the title given the presiding officer.
21. The chair stands when recognizing a member.

CONTENT OF THE MINUTES

KIND of meeting: regular, special, adjourned, etc.

NAME of the assembly

DATE of the meeting and the **PLACE**, if the organization does not have a regular meeting place

State the fact that the **PRESIDENT & SECRETARY WERE PRESENT** or the names of those fulfilling their responsibilities.

Indicate whether the **MINUTES** (except any withdrawn), all **POINTS OF ORDER & APPEALS** together with the reason given by the chair for the ruling, whether or not sustained:

Record of motions should include:

1. The wording in which each motion was adopted or disposed of (with the facts as to how the motion may have been debated or amended before disposition being mentioned only parenthetically);
2. The disposition of the motion, including -- if it was temporarily disposed of -- any primary and secondary amendment and all adhering motions that were then pending; and
3. The name of the mover (the name of the one who seconds is not needed)

All other motions should be recorded that were not withdrawn.

The last paragraph should state the **HOUR OF ADJOURNMENT**.

The minutes should be signed: Jane Doe, Secretary.

NEVER USE: “respectfully submitted”

Include details of the treasurer’s report in the minutes.

If an election takes place, include a full report of all votes cast.

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The question is always on the approval of the minutes, not the secretary's report. The minutes are not the secretary's report, but the factual record of what was done.

When a count has been ordered or the vote is by ballot, the number of votes on each side should be entered.

The name and subject of a guest speaker can be given, but no effort should be made to summarize their remarks.

SAMPLE SECRETARY'S MINUTES

The annual meeting of the Society was held on 24 August 2008, at 8 p.m., the President being in the chair and the Secretary present. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved as corrected.

June Brown, reporting on behalf of the Membership Committee, moved "that Jane Doe be admitted to membership in the Society." The motion was adopted after debate.

The report of the Program Committee was received and placed on file.

The resolution relating to the use of the Society's library by nonmembers, which was postponed from the last meeting, was then taken up. This motion and a pending amendment were laid on the table after the chair announced that the guest speaker had received a phone message which would require her early departure.

The President introduced the guest speaker, Ms. Lea Martin, whose subject is Scholarships and how to fund them.

At the conclusion of Lea Martin's talk, the resolution relating to the use of the Society's library by nonmembers was taken from the table. After amendment and further debate, the resolution was adopted as follows: "Resolved that nonmembers be permitted to use the Society's library only between the hours of 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday evenings."

Edna Smith moved "that the Society establish a summer camp for girls on its lakefront property." Jane Doe moved to amend this motion by inserting the word "underprivileged" before "girls" On motion of Irene Thomas, the motion to establish the camp, with the pending amendment, was referred to a committee of three to be appointed by the chair with instructions to report at the next meeting. The chair appointed June Brown, Jane Doe, and Joanne Sample to the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM

Gladys Night, Secretary

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SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY SITUATIONS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Officers are elected by the organization through the process of nomination and voting. Below is described the preferable method for **NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS**.

Nomination Process:

1. The Immediate Past National President Chairs the Nominating Committee that was elected at the Annual Board of Directors meeting. **IN NO CASE** should more than one nominee be presented by the nominating committee? It is their responsibility to search out and nominate **THE BEST** candidate possible (in their opinion) for each position. Otherwise there is no reason for prior arranged nominations.
2. Nominations should be received from the floor for each elected office. Persons making nominations should have the consent of the nominee before placing her name in nomination.
3. After nominations have been closed (either when no other s are offered or when a motion to close nominations is adopted by a 2/3rds vote), the nominees should be voted on in the order in which they were nominated.

Voting Process:

1. Nominees are voted upon in the order in which they were nominated.
2. The chair should say: "The following persons have been nominated for the office of _____. We will vote in the order in which they were nominated. All those in favor of _____ raise your hands. Thank you. Now all those in favor of _____ raise your hands (and so on until all have been voted upon),"
3. To be elected to ANY position, a candidate **MUST** receive a **MAJORITY** of the votes cast unless some other provision is ordered by the assembly prior to the voting. This means that if there are 100 votes cast for Secretary, a candidate must receive at least 51 votes to be elected. This is true regardless of how many persons have been nominated.
4. If no nominee receives a majority of the votes cast, the chair should declare that no one was elected and proceed to conduct the election again. The chair does **NOT** have the right or the prerogative to drop anyone from the list of nominees because they received fewer votes than the other candidates. **NO RUN OFF ELECTIONS ARE ALLOWED IN ROBERTS!!!** By the process of reballoting, one candidate will eventually receive a majority of the votes cast.
5. After a nominee has received a majority of the votes cast, the chair should **DECLARE** that she is elected to the office.
6. Provision can be made by the assembly to elect by **PLURALITY VOTE** when there are more than two nominees, but this must be done before the voting begins.