

## **How To Run An Effective Meeting**

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### **How To Maintain Your Podium Power**

- 1. Start on time.
- 2. Use language effectively.
- 3. Make sure everyone knows what they are voting on, and what the effect of their vote will be. Encourage members to make parliamentary inquiries.
- 4. If there is the slightest doubt, take a counted or rising vote before the assembly asks for it.
- 5. Be impartial when recognizing members.
- 6. Pay attention -- do not become distracted.
- 7. Be prepared.
  - Review the minutes
  - Contact committees chairmen before the meeting
  - Prepare and be familiar with your agenda
  - Work with your parliamentarian
- 8. Admit your mistakes.
- 9. Use general consent and implied motions to move things along

### **Tools for the Presiding Officer**

- Constitution & Bylaws
- Procedures and/or Special Rules of Order
- Motion Chart
- Parliamentary Authority

### **SUGGESTED AGENDA**

- Call to Order
- Minutes
- Reports of Officers
- Reports of Committees
- Unfinished Business
- New Business

### **Scripts**

#### Why Scripts?

- Aid to the Presiding Officer
- Teaching Tool
- Study Tool

#### Types of Scripts

- Platform Books

- Partial Scripts
- Motion Specific Scripts

### **Assumed Motion**

When the presiding officer places a question before the assembly that was neither moved nor seconded.

### **Unanimous Consent**

When the presiding officer asks if there are objections to a pending motion, rather than taking a formal vote.

- “Is there any objection?”
- “If there is no objection we will . . .”
- “Without objection we will”

RONR (10th ed.), p.51 I - 512

- “In cases where there seems to be no opposition in routine business or on questions of little importance, time can often be saved by the procedure of unanimous consent, or as it is also called, general consent.”
- “Action in this manner is in accord with the principle that rules are designed for the protection of the minority and generally need not be strictly enforced when there is no minority to protect.”
- “If any member objects, the chair must state the question on the motion, allow any desired debate (unless it is an "undebatable" parliamentary motion), and put the question in the regular manner.”
- “If an objection is made with reasonable promptness, even though the chair may have already announced the result as one of "no objection," he should disregard such an announcement and proceed to state the question in the usual manner.”
- “Unanimous consent does not necessarily imply that every member is in favor of the proposed action; it may only mean that the opposition, feeling that it is useless to oppose or discuss the matter, simply acquiesces.”
- “Similarly, when a member [objects] . . . he may not necessarily oppose the motion itself, but may believe that it is wise to take a formal vote under the circumstances.”
- “If a member is uncertain of the effect of an action proposed for unanimous consent, he can call out, "I reserve the right to object," or, "Reserving the right to object, . . ." After brief consultation he can then object or withdraw his reservation.”

**Assumed Motions and/or General Consent are useful for the following activities:**

- Extend Debate
- Read Papers
- Permission to Withdraw or Modify Motion
- Request For Any Other Privilege
- Adopting Minutes
- Accepting Resignations
- Adjourning when no business is pending
- Recess
- Amendments that are not controversial
- Suspend the rules

**Consent Agenda**

- Non-controversial Items
- Voted up or down with one vote, no debate, no amendments
- At the request of a single member items are removed from the consent agenda

**Let's Practice**

Extending Debate (1)

Member A: Therefore, I think that adopting this resolution will . . . . .

Time Keeper: DING

Chair: I'm sorry Member A but your time is up.

Member A: May I have one more minute to conclude my remarks?

Chair: Is there any objection to allowing Member A one additional minute to conclude his remarks? <PAUSE> Since there is no objection debate is extended for one minute.

Extending Debate (2)

Member A: And in conclusion . . . . .

Time Keeper: DING

Chair: If there is no objection Member A will have 30 seconds to conclude his remarks. <PAUSE> Without objection debate is extended 30 seconds.

### Withdraw Motion

Member B: I request unanimous consent to withdraw my motion.

Chair: Is there any objection to allowing Member B to withdraw his motion? <PAUSE> Since there is no objection the motion is withdrawn. The next business in order is . . .

Brain Teaser: In what circumstance would the request for unanimous consent be required before a motion could be withdrawn?

### Recess (1)

Chair: We've been sitting here for 2 hours now and I see the coffee has been brought in, so let's take a fifteen minute recess. Is there any objection? <PAUSE> Since there is no objection the meeting stands in recess for fifteen minutes.

### Recess (2)

Chair: We have been debating this question for over an hour, and I think we can use a break. If there is no objection we will recess for twenty minutes. <PAUSE>

Member C: I OBJECT!

Chair: An objection has been raised. The question before you is shall we recess for twenty minutes. Are you ready for the question? As many as are in favor of recessing for twenty minutes say 'Aye' . . . Those opposed say 'No'. The 'Ayes' have it and the meeting will stand in recess for twenty minutes.

### Using a Consent Agenda

Chair: The consent agenda was prepared by the president and secretary and mailed to all members. You should have a copy at your seat. Any member may ask that an item be removed from the consent agenda, and it will be removed. After everyone has had a chance to remove items we will take a single vote on all remaining items without debate. Does anyone have any questions about how a consent agenda operates?

There are twenty-two items on the consent agenda. Does anyone want to remove any items? Member I

Member I: Item 15.

Chair: Item 15 has been removed from the consent agenda. Anyone else? Member J.

Member J: Item 4.

Chair: Item 4 has been removed from the consent agenda. Anyone else? Member K.

Member K: Item 8

Chair: Item 8 has been removed from the consent agenda. Anyone else? As no one else is seeking recognition we will now vote on the remaining items in the consent agenda. Items 4, 8 and 15 have been removed from the consent agenda and will be considered in their regular places on the agenda.

The question before you is on the adoption of the consent agenda without numbers 4, 8 and 15. All in favor of adopting the consent agenda say 'Aye' . . . All opposed to adopting the consent agenda say 'No'. The Ayes have it and you have adopted the consent agenda without numbers 4, 8 and 15. The next business in order is. . .

### **FORMS OF AMENDMENT**

- 1. Insert words (or paragraphs) within a sentence or add words (or paragraphs) at the end of a sentence.
- 2. Strike out words (or paragraphs) from the motion.
- 3. Striking out and inserting contiguous words
- 4. Substituting paragraphs, sections or lengthy passages.

### **An Amendment Must Be Germane**

## **Amending As A Means of Rejecting Is Not Allowed**

**Adopting the amendment does not adopt the motion.**

**Once stated by the Chair only the assembly can amend a motion.**

## **Point of Order and Appeal**

### **Point of Order**

- “It is the right of every member who notices a breach of the rules to insist on their enforcement” RONR- 10th ed. Pg. 242
- Must be timely
- Continuing Breach
- Chair rules, not debated, not voted on

### **APPEAL**

- “If a member disagrees with a ruling of the chair affecting any substantial question, he should not hesitate to appeal” RONR 10th ed. Page 250
- “Members have no right to criticize the ruling of the chair unless they appeal from his decision” Page 247
- Requires a Second
- Cannot Appeal
  - Parliamentary Inquiry
  - A question on which there cannot be two reasonable opinions
  - Announcement of a vote
- Appeals are debatable UNLESS:
  - Relates to indecorum
  - Relates to the priority of business
  - Is made while the immediate pending question is not debatable
- When Debatable
  - Chair speaks first
  - Other members may debate, but may only speak once
  - The chair gets to speak a second time right before the vote.
- Vote Required
  - The question is “Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?”
  - Requires majority in the negative to overturn the chairs ruling.
  - A tie sustains the chair.

## **Discipline**

### **Offenses that occur during a meeting:**

- Any member can raise a Point of Order, bringing to Chairs attention the alleged breach. The chair would then rule.

For a slight breach of order

- e.g. addressing a member and not the Chair, or failing to confine comments to the merits of the immediate pending
  - Rap the gavel lightly
  - Point out the fault and advise the member to avoid it
  - Member resumes debate

For a more serious breach

- e.g. a member repeatedly questions the motives of other members by name, or a member fails to heed the admonition of the Chair

#### ■ CALL THE MEMBER TO ORDER

For a more serious breach

“The member is out of order and will relinquish the floor”

Notice that in this case the Chair is saying the “Member is out of order.” Normally, if an improper motion is made, the Chair says that the “Motion is out of order.” This is a significant distinction

For a grave breach of order

- e.g. the use of offensive or vulgar language or in cases of an obstinate member who refuses to obey appropriate orders from the Chair

- The Chair can Name the Offender

For a grave breach of order

- When the Chair orders the “Naming of an Offender” the minutes would now reflect the Chair’s and the member’s words and actions. In an ordinary society the act of “Naming” is equivalent to preferring charges against a member.

- *Naming an Offender* should only be done after repeated warnings have been ignored and only in extreme circumstances.

- When it becomes apparent that “Naming” may be necessary the Chair should direct the secretary to record the exact words and/or behaviors that the Chair feels are objectionable or disorderly.

### **Offenses By Non-Members In A Meeting**

- Non-members have no rights, and the Chair on his or her own authority can have a non-member removed from a meeting.
- *NEW* - The decision of the Chair to remove a non-member is subject to appeal by members

### **Procedures In Small Boards**

- 1. Members not required to obtain the floor
- 2. Motions need not be seconded.
- 3. There is no limit on debate
- 4. Informal discussion with no motion
- 5. Vote can be taken without a motion
- 6. The Chairman need not rise
- 7. The chairman can speak in discussion