

Business Meeting Rules



Submitting a Motion

Motions for consideration must be emailed to l8nightrecovery@gmx.com no later than 48 hours before the next business meeting. Motions submitted after the deadline will be brought forward at the following month's business meeting.

Those persons bringing motions forward for consideration must be present at the business meeting to make the motion or else the motion will be discarded.

Basic Principles

- All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations
- No person can speak until recognized by the chair
- Personal remarks during debate are out of order
- Only one question at a time may be considered, and only one person may have the floor at anyone time
- Members have a right to know what the immediately pending question is and to have it restated before a vote is taken
- Full and free discussion of every main motion is a basic right
- A simple majority decides a question
- Silence gives consent. Those who do not vote allow the decision to be made by those who do vote.
- The Chair should always remain impartial

Basic Definitions

Motion – A formal proposal made to bring a subject before an assembly for its consideration and action. Begins with *“I move that...”*

Second – A statement by a member who agrees that the motion made by another member be considered. Stated as *“Second,”* or *“I second the motion.”*

Amendment – Before the vote is taken on a motion, it may be amended by:

- Striking out words
- Inserting or adding words
- Striking out words and inserting others in their place

Chair – The individual who facilitates the meeting.

Role of the Chair

- To remain impartial during debate
- To vote only to break a tie
- To introduce business in proper order
- To recognize speakers
- To determine if a motion is in order
- To keep discussion germane to the pending motion
- To maintain order
- To put motions to a vote and announce results

General procedure for Handling a Main Motion

- A member must obtain the floor by being recognized by the chair
- Member makes a main motion
- A motion must be seconded by another member before it can be considered
- If the motion is in order, the chair will restate the motion and open debate
- The maker of a motion has the right to speak first in debate
- The main motion is debated along with any secondary motions that are debatable.
- Debate on secondary motions (if debatable or amendable) take precedence over debate on the main motion and must be decided before debate on the main motion can continue.
- Debate is closed when:
 - discussion has ended, or
 - 15 minutes has elapsed, or
 - a simple majority vote closes debate (*“call the previous question”* or *“call the question”*)

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- The chair restates the motion, and if necessary, clarifies the consequences of affirmative and negative votes
- The chair calls for a vote by asking “All in favor?” Those in favor say “Aye” followed by their name and location. Then asking “All opposed?” Those opposed will say “Nay” followed by their name and location
- The chair announces the result

General rules of Debate

- No member may speak until recognized by the chair
- All discussion must be relevant to the immediately pending question
- No member can speak more than twice to each debatable motion. The second time takes place after everyone wishing to debate the motion has had an opportunity to speak once
- No member can speak more than two minutes
- All remarks must be addressed to the chair – no cross debate is permitted
- It is not permissible to speak against one’s own motion (but one can vote against one’s own motion)
- Debate must address issues not personalities – no one is permitted to make personal attacks or question the motives of other speakers
- Members may not disrupt the assembly and may be removed from the meeting at the Chair’s discretion

Example of Handling a Main Motion:

Member rises and addresses the chair.

Chair recognizes member (by name). Member makes the motion.
I move that...

Another member seconds the motion (without recognition).
Second [or] I second the motion.

The chair states the motion and opens debate.
It is moved and seconded that...
Is there any debate? Or are you ready for the question?

Chair recognizes members wishing to speak.

After debate concludes. Chair restates the motion and puts the question to a vote.
The question is on the motion to...
Those in favor of the motion say “aye, followed by your name and location” Those opposed say “nay, followed by your name and location”

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Chair announces the result of the vote and what action will be taken.

The “ayes” have it, and the motion is adopted. We will [stating action to be taken].

The “nays” have it, and the motion is struck down.

The chair continues with the next business in order.

Common methods of taking a vote:

General consent:

"If there is no objection, we will..." (Pause) "Since there is no objection, we will..."

Voice vote: "As many as are in favor, say "aye." As many opposed, say "no." The "ayes/nays" have it and the motion is adopted/struck down."

Methods of Amending

By striking out: "I move to amend the motion by striking out the word "Denver."

By inserting: "I move to amend the motion by inserting the word 'Las Vegas' after the word 'Portland' and before the period."

By striking out and inserting: "I move to amend the motion by striking out the word '\$35' and inserting the word '\$50.'"

Make Motions – that are in order
Obtain the floor – properly
Speak – clearly and concisely
Obey – the rules of debate
And most of all, be courteous! That’s always in order!