

GLOSSARY OF PARLIAMENTARY TERMS

-- Their use and meaning

ABSTAIN

A member may *abstain* from voting by choice although the principle involved is that members have two responsibilities in respect to decisions of a meeting; they should attend and they should vote. It is the duty of every member to vote on every question because he/she would be willing to participate in the responsibility for the decision.

No one can be compelled to vote.

Abstaining members are considered part of the quorum but, when a vote is called, it is custom and practice to consider that the vote is carried by a *majority of those members voting*.

If a meeting is properly assembled and there is a quorum, members who do not vote when they have the opportunity to do so are considered to be bound by the result.

Abstaining votes are not recorded.

ACCEPT

To *accept* a report is equivalent to adopting and approving the report fully as submitted, including any and all recommendations, unless the motion is phrased to except or exclude all or some of the recommendations therein.

Example:

"Brother/Sister Chair, I move that the report of the Committee be *accepted* as read."

Such a motion must be moved, seconded and is subject to amendment, debate, rejection or approval.

An erroneous custom has grown which has encouraged legislative bodies in our organization to move motions similar to the following: "I move that the report be accepted for discussion..." This procedure has developed because of the ill-founded fear that a motion to *accept* a report does not allow the meeting to exclude certain recommendations in the report by amending the motion, rejecting others by a subsidiary motion (amendment or second amendment), or in the belief that the matter is not debatable at all and the report could very well be passed by the meeting without an opportunity to dissent.

A motion to *accept* a report should be dealt with exactly as a main motion:

1. It is subject to amendment, tabling, referral and other procedural motions; and
2. It may be debated.

To accept a report for debate or discussion accomplishes nothing because, when the matter has been dealt with fully, the disposition of the report is still undecided and the legislative body may have lost sight of those items in the report to which it might have objected.

Example:

Member: "Sister/Brother Chair, I move that the President's Report be *accepted*."

Another Member: "Sister/Brother Chair, I move that the motion be amended by the addition of the following words 'and that the Section on finances be dealt with under New Business'".

Third Member: "Sister/Brother Chair, I move that the Section in the Report dealing with membership be referred to the Membership Committee."

This last motion should be treated as a second amendment, provided that the motion to *accept* and the amendment concerning finances have not been disposed of by the voting body.

The voting body can continue to amend the main motion by procedural amendments calling for the tabling, referral or rejection of certain parts of the report. When these procedural motions and amendments have been dealt with, the main motion "to accept the report as amended" is put to the meeting in the same manner as any main motion.

ADJOURN

To *adjourn* a meeting is the usual method used to end it. Elsewhere we have set out the priority or precedence of motions, but it can be noted here that a motion to *adjourn* takes precedence over all other motions.

Example:

"Brother/Sister Chair, I move that this meeting *adjourn*."

A motion to *adjourn* is neither debatable nor amendable and requires only a simple majority to pass. It should be noted also that it is a motion which must always be moved, seconded and put to a vote except under very unusual circumstances.

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Exceptions:

Note : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

The Chair may declare a meeting *adjourned* without waiting for a motion to be put or without putting the question to a vote under the following circumstances:

1. If the purpose for which the meeting was called has been completed.
2. If the bylaws or the rules of procedure state that the meeting must *adjourn* at a specified time and that time has been reached.
3. If a dangerous or urgent situation has arisen which common sense dictates should cause the meeting to recess or *adjourn*.
4. If the meeting has become uncontrollable and, in the opinion of the Chair, for the safety and well-being of the members, the meeting should be *adjourned*.

The Chair must declare a motion to *adjourn* out of order if:

1. The bylaws state categorically the time of *adjournment* and that time has not arrived.
2. The meeting has accepted rules of order which include the time of *adjournment* and that time has not been reached.
3. A matter of business has not intervened between the first motion of *adjournment* and a second motion of *adjournment*.

(1) *Example:*

Chair: "The Bylaws of this Local state that our meeting shall *adjourn* at 10:00 p.m. and as the time is now 10:00 p.m., I declare this meeting *adjourned*."

(2) *Example:*

Member: "I move we *adjourn*."

Chair: "The Bylaws of this Local state that our meetings shall *adjourn* at 10:00 p.m. and as the time is now only 9:00 p.m., I declare the motion out of order."

A motion to *adjourn* is the only motion for which a quorum is not necessary.

AGENDA

An *agenda* is a list of matters proposed to be dealt with at a properly called meeting. It may be posted on a bulletin board or included in the notice of meeting, and it should list with accuracy all those subjects and proposals that are due for consideration and decision at the proposed meeting. *It serves as a notice of motion for all those items of business included in it.*

An *agenda* is put before a meeting or assembly in the same manner as a main motion; that is, it is moved and seconded, can be amended and is subject to some procedural motions. Once it has been adopted by the meeting, it is then used as a guide by the Chair during the meeting. The *agenda* is usually proposed (moved) by the secretary on behalf of the executive.

Example:

“Sister/Brother Chair, I move that the following agenda be adopted for this meeting:

- Call to order
- Roll call of officers
- Proposed agenda
- Reading of minutes of previous meeting
- Reading of minutes (if any) of executive meeting
- Business arising from the minutes
- Correspondence
- Financial reports and bills
- Reports of officers and committees
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Elections (if any)
- Good and Welfare
- Adjournment

Member: “Sister/Brother Chair, I move that the *agenda* be amended by the addition under item 11 ‘the matter of different meeting location’”.

The *agenda* should be prepared by one or more of the local officers, usually the Chairperson with the assistance of the secretary. During its preparation is a good time for the officers to acquaint themselves with the business which will be proposed and discussed at the meeting.

The *agenda* gives the Chair a good idea of the business before the Chair, and allows the Chair to allot appropriate time to those matters which are important.

The *agenda* can be amended by decision of the meeting at the time it is proposed, usually as the first order of business following the roll call of officers.

The Chair must take care, however, that proposals which require notice of motion are not added to the *agenda* during the course of the meeting.

Items of business are usually added to the *agenda* of a meeting at the time the *agenda* is proposed for adoption. Such additions (amendments) are included in the motion for adoption and the motion as amended requires only a majority to be accepted.

The accepted *agenda* can then only be further amended by a motion to do so, but such motions of amendment have to be seconded and require a two-thirds majority to pass.

Items subject to a motion to table remain only on the current *agenda* and are published only once when the *agenda* is published in the minutes.

Tabled motions are *not* carried forward to the *agenda* of the next meeting.

Items on an accepted *agenda* can only be moved from one place on the *agenda* to another by a motion moved and seconded and passed by a majority.

AMENDMENT

An *amendment* is a proposed revision or alteration to a proposed motion.

Example:

“Brother/Sister Chair, I propose that the motion be *amended* by the deletion of the two words ‘at cost’.”

An *amendment* is in order only if it relates *directly* to the motion; it may modify the motion but it must not radically change or contradict it. An *amendment* may:

Add certain words to the main motion.

Delete certain words from the main motion.

Delete certain words and substitute others to the main motion.

Although an *amendment* has precedence over the main motion (in that the Chair must first deal with the *amendment* before allowing debate or putting the question on the main motion) in all other aspects it may be dealt with similarly to a motion. It must be seconded and it may be debated or made subject to dilatory (delaying) or procedural motions.

The vote is always taken first on the *amendment*.

The Chair may allow only two *amendments* on the floor at the same time. If one *amendment* is passed or defeated, another may be moved, but to repeat: there can only be two *amendments* before the meeting at the same time.

SECOND AMENDMENT

A *second amendment* is an amendment placed before a meeting after a main motion and amendment when neither the motion nor the amendment have been put to the question by the Chair.

Example:

“Sister/Brother Chair, I move that the second word in the main motion be deleted and the word ‘Alliance’ be substituted.”

A *second amendment* is simply another amendment to the main motion placed before the meeting in the same manner as the first amendment. It must be moved and seconded, may be debated, and must be put to a vote before the meeting can deal with the first amendment.

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT

An *amendment to the amendment* is a proposed alteration, addition or deletion to the structure of the first amendment. The *amendment to the amendment* is sometimes referred to as a “sub-amendment” but it is dealt with in the same fashion as the other amendment forms.

Example:

“Brother/Sister Chair, I move that the amendment be *amended* to read ‘\$5.00 per week’.”

An *amendment to the amendment* or sub-amendment may be placed before the meeting when a main motion and amendment are being considered. It must be moved and seconded; it may be debated; but it must be put to a vote before the meeting can consider the amendment or the main motion itself.

In other words, an *amendment to the amendment* or a sub-amendment takes precedence over the amendment and the main motion and must be disposed of first.

As with the amendment, an *amendment to the amendment* or a sub-amendment must not contradict or radically change the proposals contained in the amendment or in the motion.

APPEAL

A member disagreeing with a ruling by the Chair may *appeal* from the ruling of the Chair. In effect, this is a request to the Chair that he/she ask for the opinion of the meeting on his/her ruling and it cannot be denied.

Example:

“Sister/Brother Chair, I *appeal* fro the ruling of the Chair.”

Such an *appeal* is regarded as a privileged motion. It does require a seconder and it must be dealt with immediately, giving precedence only to a point of privilege or a motion to recess or adjourn.

An *appeal* from a ruling of the Chair is not debatable except that it is customary for both the appellant and the Chair, in that order, to be given an opportunity to explain the reasons for their decisions.

When this has been done, the Chair should put the question immediately as follows: “Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?”

When this question has been put to the meeting, a vote is taken and a tie vote or simple majority is sufficient to uphold the ruling of the chair. If the majority vote is in the negative, the Chair’s ruling is rescinded. The Chair is never permitted to vote on an *appeal* from the ruling of the Chair (it should be noted that the provision of a tie vote upholding the Chair has been established to obviate the Chair voting).

Matters of law, fact, constitution or regulations known to be true and used by the Chair in support of her/his ruling are *not* subject to *appeal*. Where any of these circumstances exist, the Chair should rule such *appeals* out of order and state the reason for her/his ruling.

APPOINT

The Chair may *appoint* a committee if given the power to do so by the meeting. It is normal practice for a motion to this effect to be moved, seconded and carried.

Example:

“Brother/Sister Chair, I move that a Committee of three established for (a particular purpose), the members of which shall be *appointed* by the Chair.”

However, the meeting may choose to handle the business itself by not only establishing a committee but nominating and electing members of that committee from the floor of the meeting.

It should be remembered that final authority for the system to be used rests with the meeting itself.

The presiding officer has an implied right to *appoint* herself/himself to committees concerning which she/he has been given authority to *appoint* but her/his authority should be exercised with restraint, and it is preferable that her/his association with such committees be *ex-officio* rather than that of a regularly seated member.

If the bylaws of the organization or its rules of order forbid such procedure, then they must take precedence over this parliamentary custom.

BALLOT

A *ballot* is always a secret vote.

The secrecy of voting has long been one of the bulwarks of democracy, going back to the time of the Greek assemblies at the Agora when major issues before the meetings of the people were often decided by a secret *ballot* of sometimes 10,000 voting members of the Ecclesia (general assembly).

Voters customarily mark their *ballots* with an “X”, “yes” or “no”, or the name of the person they are voting for, folded *once*, and deposited in a receptacle provided by one or more scrutineers.

It is the right of a meeting to cast a *ballot* at any time it wishes, and it is the duty and responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the procedure and machinery for a secret *ballot* is efficient and ready at all times.

The Chair may not cast a *ballot* on an appeal against a decision of the Chair for the reason that, in this one instance, a tie vote upholds the decision of the Chair against which the appeal was made.

A *ballot*, once completed, may be reconsidered if two members stating that they voted in the majority move and second a motion to reconsider. The Chair *must* accept their word that they did vote with the prevailing side.

A motion to reconsider a *ballot* taken must be seconded and the vote taken by *ballot*. Such a motion is debatable as of propriety.

If a *ballot* has been taken in which the Chair voted and the result is a tie, the Chair may *not* case a second *ballot* but the proposition is considered to have been lost because it was not passed by a majority of those voting.

The results of a *ballot* are always communicated to the meeting through the Chair, never by the scrutineers or other person in charge of taking the *ballot*. Unless the meeting or the bylaws instruct otherwise, the actual count is not usually communicated to the meeting. This custom protects from embarrassment the person who receives only a small number of votes.

When *ballots* have been collected by the scrutineers and removed from the floor of the meeting, it is permissible to continue business of the meeting, provided that the business cannot be influenced by the outcome of the *ballot* which has been taken and not yet counted.

The results of the *ballot* are always reported in writing and signed by all the scrutineers.

If illegal votes, more votes or fewer votes are cast than there are members present, the result of the *ballot* is not invalidated as long as the result could not be affected in any way by the irregularity.

CAUCUS

The word *caucus* simply means “meeting” and is commonly used in political parties. It is used to refer to a separate meeting from the main body.

A *caucus* is usually used as a means of reaching a common understanding or consensus on policies (or candidates) to be supported by the members of the caucus.

CENSURE

Censure is a vote of reprimand expressing a meeting's indignation and giving the member(s) concerned a warning that the meeting may decide to take more drastic action if the cause is warranted.

It is usually the first step taken by a meeting for violation of its bylaws or rules, or its orders and instructions, or for misconduct in office, or disorderly conduct at meetings, or for offensive or profane words in debate. It may also be expressed by the meeting with reference to unethical acts and is a warning that the organization may next move to suspend, remove from office or expel the member concerned.

A motion of *censure* is treated exactly like a main motion; it must be seconded, is debatable and amendable and is also subject to all subsidiary, procedural and dilatory motions.

It requires only a majority vote and it is final and may not be reconsidered.

As in law, a person cannot be punished twice for the same crime therefore a *censured* person cannot be *censured* twice for the same offense.

The alleged offender may *not* vote on the motion and it is customary to take a ballot rather than an open vote.

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A motion of *censure* does not require notice of motion but to avoid the possibility of subsequent charges of defamation or slander, it should give the explicit reasons for *censuring*.

The Chair may be *censured* by a meeting when he/she knowingly and dictatorially departs from accepted parliamentary procedure. However, in such cases, the issue must be raised by a member objecting by rising to a point of order. In the event that the Chair ignores the wishes of the meeting, a motion of *censure* is appropriate.

In the event that a motion to *censure* the Chair is made from the floor, it is common practice for the Vice-chairperson to take the Chair immediately to allow the Chairperson to participate in the debate, but the latter is not permitted to vote on the question.

CHAIRPERSON

The President of the organization normally presides as the *Chairperson* of all meetings. There are several good books on the duties and obligations of a *Chairperson* so there is no need to repeat such counsel herein.

The *Chairperson* holds her/his position by will of the meeting, and to maintain the respect of its members: she/he should play a neutral role as much as possible. She/he may assist the meeting by wording motions for a mover and seconder provided she/he is again expressing the will of the meeting. She/he may prompt the meeting along certain lines of conduct provided she/he does so to expedite its business. She/he may appoint committees subject to the approval of the meeting and she/he should be well versed in parliamentary procedure.

The *Chairperson* forms a part of the quorum and she/he may vote as a member on any matter coming before the meeting, excepting appeals from the ruling of the Chair, or motions of censure against the *Chairperson*, but good counsel should lead her/him to cast her/his vote *only* in circumstances where the welfare of the organization is deeply involved.

She/he need not vote in the case of a tie, parliamentary law dictating that in the case of a tie vote there is no majority; decisions can only be made by a majority.

She/he should use the gavel as a badge of office; that is sparingly and not something to lean on, threaten the members with or wave in emphasis of any point being made.

She/he should abstain from participating in the debate. Of all the sins of *the Chair*, this is the greatest. Far too many do not recognize the need to maintain both neutrality and silence whenever possible, but instead participate freely in each debate at every opportunity.

The *Chairperson* is normally a member *ex-officio* of all committees established by the meeting unless the meeting expressly states otherwise. She/he may leave the Chair on occasion to participate in important debates but she/he should do so infrequently, realizing that each time she/he takes part in discussion, she/he tends to lose her/his aura of impartiality.

COMMITTEE

A *Committee* is a small part of the main body, usually established for the purpose of expediting business, as meetings have found that subjects of some complexity or depth are more easily handled by a small number of people. *Committees* may take one of several forms:

1. *Standing Committees* are *Committees* which are permanent between elections and usually established by provisions in the bylaws or regulations of the organization.

2. *Special (or Select) Committees* are *Committees* with a limited term of office, usually established for a particular or special purpose and sometimes referred to as *ad hoc committees*.

A *Committee* is a creature or instrument of the main body and has little life of its own, being delegated a particular task within fairly rigid guidelines. It may be required to do editorial, investigative or collating work but, in any event, must be guided by the accepted parliamentary rules of procedure.

It need not keep minutes but should keep notes and prepare a report.

When required to do so, it must reach a conclusion which is then reported to the main body. It is seldom (that is, without the express permission of the main body) allowed to initiate programs of its own. Normally it is expected to accept the raw material of a meeting or assembly and re-work it in such a fashion as it may think will meet the approval of the main body and submit a report and recommendations.

Special, select or ad hoc *committees* are normally discharged with a vote of thanks by the main assembly when the *committee* has completed its task. However, this is only a custom; *committees* which complete their assigned tasks are considered to have ceased at that time.

Committees are usually established by a main motion with instruction to carry out the wishes of the assembly as follows:

Example:

"Sister/Brother Chair, I move that a *committee* of three be named by the Chair to investigate our requirement for office space."

The report of a *committee* must be signed by its chairperson. No other signature need be affixed to a report for the purpose of showing any division of opinion nor can the report be accompanied by any counter-statement from the minority. The committee chairperson only signs by way of authentication on behalf of the *committee*. She/he should sign the report even if she/he dissents from the majority.

Unless a *committee* report has been presented to the meeting, it is irregular to refer to it in debate or to ask questions in reference to the proceedings of the *committee*. When a *committee* report is before the

parent meeting, it may be debated at length but members should not be permitted to discuss the conduct or language of the *committee* except insofar as it appears on the record.

A report is the opinion of the *committee*, not that of individual members. Failing unanimity, the conclusions agreed to by the majority of the *committee* are the conclusions agreed to by the majority of the *committee* are the conclusions of the *committee*. If a *committee* member disagrees with certain paragraphs in a report or to the entire report, she/he can put on record her/his observations and conclusions as opposed to those of the majority by proposing an alternative (minority) report and moving that the alternative (minority) report be substituted for the report of the *committee*. If such a motion is passed, debate ceases on the main report and is directed entirely to the alternative (minority) report. Conversely, if the alternative is defeated, there can be no further reference made to it.

Committees may make progress or interim reports but such reports should be oral, brief and limited to a very general statement of the direction the *committee* work is taking, the number of times that the *committee* has met, and possibly an estimate of the date when it expects to complete its task.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

A meeting has the power by a majority vote to act as a committee itself. In other words, it has the power to constitute itself as a *committee of the whole* which means the entire body becomes a committee for the purpose of considering any question associated with the motion establishing the *committee of the whole*.

Example:

"I move that this meeting go into *committee of the whole* to consider the motion to purchase new chairs for the office."

A motion for the *committee of the whole* requires a seconder, is not debatable and must be put to a vote before any motions over which it has precedence. If the motion passes, the meeting Chairperson leaves the chair and the *committee of the whole* elects its own Chairperson.

A motion constituting a *committee of the whole* should be treated in the same manner as a motion to refer as it is actually a motion creating a committee and referring the question before the meeting to the committee thus constituted.

A *committee of the whole* is created for the purpose of giving members greater freedom in debate because a question to be considered is of complex or unusual nature, or because a problem or question is of

urgent importance and should be debated fully. In *committees of the whole* procedure is realized and, although the number of speakers may be limited

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and the time to be allotted established, the Chair has the right to guide the debate in a way which will assist it to reach a final conclusion. To this end, procedural motions are not considered to be in order. For instance, a motion to table is not in order in a *committee of the whole* nor is a motion to put the previous question.

However, while the committee is in session, it is proper for a motion to be made either recommending acceptance or rejection of the proposal which was assigned to the committee for consideration, or the committee can recommend amendments to the question before it. If the committee is unable to reach a conclusion, it may move in committee "that the *committee of the whole* do now rise and report". The latter motion is seconded and put to a vote in the usual manner, and if it passes the meeting's regular Chairperson returns to the Chair and asks for the report of the committee, which is subsequently made by the Chairperson of the *committee of the whole*.

A motion in the *committee of the whole* "that the committee do now rise and report" is equivalent to a motion to adjourn in a regular meeting and must be dealt with immediately by the Chairperson of the *committee of the whole* without debate. A motion to rise and report requires only a simple majority to pass and requires the committee Chairperson simply to report progress to the main body.

The report of a *committee of the whole* is dealt with exactly like any other committee report with the exception that if the committee Chairperson merely reports "progress", the meeting returns to its regular business and the matter previously referred to the *committee of the whole* is not dealt with any further but is considered to have died in the committee.

Some authorities have concluded that only substantive motions and the following incidental motions may be referred to a *committee of the whole*:

An appeal from a ruling by the chair.

A question on the quorum.

A question on a vote.

A point of order.

An investigation or inquiry constituted by the main body.

A question on a secret ballot.

During sittings of the *committee of the whole*, the secretary does not keep minutes but records only the statement that a question was referred to the committee (setting the question or motion down in full) and the subsequent action taken by the committee when the matter is reported back to the main body. Only voting members of the body attend sittings of

a *committee of the whole*. All others are excluded from its deliberations because one of the purposes of a *committee of the whole* is to permit a free and unreported debate on the question before it.

DEBATE

Debate is the discussion which takes place between proponents and opponents of a proposition at a meeting. It is controlled by a Chairperson who should attempt to make certain that each side is adequately heard by the assembly before the issue is decided.

Sometimes bylaws, rules of procedure or the meeting itself may instruct that members *debating* be limited to the time allotted, or the Chair may suggest (with the approval of the meeting) that each speaker be given a fixed amount of time and the number of speakers be limited.

In *debate* each speaker is recognized in turn by the Chair and given the floor to put her/his views before the assembly. When a speaker has the floor, she/he may be interrupted only by members rising to a question of privilege or a point of order although she/he may yield the floor voluntarily if requested to do so by another speaker during a pause in the *debate*.

It is customary in *debate* for members to use the third person and to avoid referring to other members or speakers by name. This custom assists meetings to avoid personalities and violent disagreements which disturb the harmony and courtesy of an assembly. Many authorities consider that the use of another member's name during *debate* is unparliamentary and this rule is strictly enforced in most legislative bodies. Members can be referred to in other ways such as the "mover of the motion", or "the previous speaker", etc.

Every member has the right to propose and discuss any motion and, when this right is exercised, she/he must not be personally attacked. It is common practice to attack the motion or the intent of the motion but never the mover. All members should be entitled to express their opinions on any question before the meeting without incurring the enmity or noisy objection of other members.

Debate may also be interrupted by raising a point of "no quorum" or a call for the orders of the day, the latter being a request to return to the appropriate item on the agenda in the event that the Chair has allowed the meeting to stray from its proper order of business.

Although it is difficult for a Chairperson to order debate in a way that will bring all facets of a question to the attention of a meeting, members should be counseled against the sin of boring repetition. Too many of us propose resolutions that are as popular as "mom's apple pie", yet despite no opposition to such favorable resolutions, speakers parade to the

microphones one after another, tie up the business of the day with debate that adds nothing to the work of the organization. No Chairperson can entirely avoid this difficulty but certainly she/he should attempt to assist the body by counseling the members against such a practice.

DIVISION

Division of a question is usually known as a motion “to divide the question”. Sometimes a member will propose a motion which includes two propositions or questions to the meeting instead of a separate motion for each.

Example:

A member: “Brother/Sister Chairperson, I move that we advise the local bargaining committee that we wish to demand a reduction in the hours of work to 36 and that further, we propose a 10 per cent per annum increase in pay.” (The motion is seconded.)

Another member: “Brother/Sister Chairperson, I move that the question be *divided*.”

In parliamentary practice, if a motion is considered lengthy, complicated, or can be separated naturally into several parts, another member may move that the question be *divided*; that is, separated into several parts each of which can be dealt with singly.

A motion to *divide* the question takes precedence over the main motion. It must be seconded, is not debatable and is put to a vote immediately by the Chair before further discussion on the main motion.

If the motion to *divide* the question is passed by the meeting, the Chair restates the motion in a *divided* form, allowing debate and vote on each part in order.

Motions to *divide* the question are amendable if the Chair accepts the amendment as an assistance in clarifying the proposed *division*. The Chair may also declare that the motion cannot be properly *divided* and therefore the motion to *divide* is not in order.

ELECTIONS

The *election* procedure in the Alliance is well defined in its Constitution and the rules therein can be applied to any election in one of its subsidiary bodies.

Elections should be scheduled by proper notice and at a time and place specified.

Only members in good standing are eligible for office in the Alliance or any of its subsidiary parts.

The *election* Chairperson must state to the meeting in explicit terms what the procedure is and how it will be followed. Any proposed departures must be emphasized and receive either tacit or formal approval of the meeting.

All ballots which indicate the wishes of the voter clearly enough for the scrutineers to understand should be counted; that is, no ballot should be void because a name has been spelled wrongly or an X has not been placed exactly in the square or circle of the ballot.

Provided the scrutineers are satisfied that they understand the intention of the voter, a ballot should be accepted as valid.

An *election* not held in accordance with the bylaws of the Local or Component or in violation of a provision of the PSAC Constitution may be declared invalid.

During the course of an *election* between the point where the Nominations Committee has reported or the Elections Chairperson is accepting nominations and the time at which the scrutineers leave the floor with the ballot boxes, no other business may be transacted. However, once the floor is vacated by the scrutineers with the collected ballots, the business of the meeting may resume, provided it will have no impact on or be influenced by the outcome of the vote.

If a customary procedure is holding *elections* has had long unquestioned usage, a completed *election* cannot be upset by the use of a technicality that the procedure in the bylaws was not followed to the letter even though the technicality may be correct. Custom and practice have the weight of law and therefore technical corrections to a procedure must be made *before* an *election*.

ELECTIONS PROCEDURE

1. The Elections Chairperson must have the authority to act. This power may be conferred on her/him by a Convention, an executive body or a president, provided that the Constitution or Bylaws do not specifically bar such transfer of power or is silent on such procedures. If the action is questioned or challenged by the body over which she/he will preside, the regular Chairperson must submit the proposal formally to the assembly because only the assembly itself has the power to accept or reject the proposal.

2. Prior to the meeting, the Elections Chairperson will select the tellers for counting ballots, meet with them and explain the election system. She/he will go through an actual drill, make certain ballot boxes are available, a table and chairs outside the hall in the location to be used for counting ballots, tally sheets for use by the tellers, and report sheets for the chief teller on which results will be entered and certified correct by the signatures of all the tellers.

3. The Elections Chairperson will also explain to the tellers where they will be assigned and how many tables each teller will be assigned to collect the ballots, and that they will not begin collection before ordered to do so by her/him. They will be told that when collections have been completed, all tellers will assemble in front of the Chair with their ballot boxes and await her/his order to leave the assembly hall to the place assigned for the counting. She/he will instruct the chief teller that the results of each election will be given to the Elections Chairperson and no other. All tellers will be told that under no circumstances should any other person learn of the results of an election until the Election Chairperson has announced the results to the meeting.

4. The Elections Chairperson will also instruct that all doors will be kept locked during the balloting, the counting of ballots, and until after the announcement of the results of the vote. She/he will also instruct that only appointed scrutineers will be permitted in the ballot counting location during the work of the tellers' committee.

5. When the regular Chairperson has called the meeting to order and announced the name of the Elections Chairperson, the latter will advise the meeting that she/he has been appointed to the office by the authority of the President, the executive or whatever body named her/him to carry out the responsibility. She/he will then advise the meeting that she/he has appointed certain members to act as tellers to assist in the election. She/he will advise the meeting that each voting member must wear some identification (previously agreed or assigned) in order to receive a ballot or a ballot book and to be recognized by the tellers when the collection of ballots begins. The Elections Chairperson will also advise the meeting that no voting members should mark a ballot until told to do so. She/he will say that she/he will instruct the meeting to mark a ballot of a certain colour or number if that is the procedure agreed to earlier. She/he will advise the voting members that after they have marked their ballots they should fold the ballot once only to help speed up the counting. She/he will also say that each voting member must place her/his own ballot in the ballot box.

6. After the Elections Chairperson has explained the elections procedure, and prior to requesting the Nominations Committee to report, she/he will declare that all positions for which the election is being held are vacant and that they will be properly filled by the election that will follow. She/he will name each vacant position in this declaration.

7. The Elections Chairperson will then call on the Nominations Committee and ask its Chairperson to report the nominations for each office separately. The Elections Chairperson will also advise the meeting that the names of the nominees will be written on a blackboard. She/he will advise the meeting that she/he will call for nominations from the floor for the position to be filled three times and, at the end of the third time, declare nominations closed. She/he will emphasize to the meeting that a motion to close nominations will be declared out of order.

8. One of the Nominations Committee members will write all the names of the nominees on the blackboard in alphabetical order. The Elections Chairperson will ask each nominee in turn if she/he accepts

nomination. If a nominee declines, her/his name will be removed from the blackboard. The Elections Chairperson will allow each nominator or secondor of the nomination or the nominee to speak for three minutes in favour of the candidate concerned.

9. The Elections Chairperson will then declare that the nominations have been properly made, an election is in order and instruct the tellers to distribute ballots to all voting members present and in good standing.

10. When the ballots have been collected by the tellers, they will stand at the front of the room facing the Elections Chairperson, who will ask the meeting if all the ballots have been collected. If there is no response and the meeting is satisfied that all ballots have been collected, the Elections Chairperson will ask the tellers to take their ballot boxes to the ballot-counting location and, when they have completed their task, to report back to her/him.

11. When the ballots have been counted, the chief teller will recheck the count, enter the final totals on the reporting sheet, have all the tellers certify the count as correct and present the reporting sheet personally to the Elections Chairperson.

12. The Elections Chairperson will then announce the result of the ballot. If a nominee does not receive a clear majority of the ballots cast, the Elections Chairperson will order another ballot and, if there are three or more nominees, instruct that the nominee who received the least number of ballots be struck from the list of candidates for whom the assembly may vote.

13. In the event of a tie vote, the Elections Chairperson shall call for another ballot and continue to call for additional ballots until the tie is broken. There is no limit to the number of ballots that may be taken in the event of a tie. Some assemblies have voted more than one hundred times until a tie was broken.

14. When the Elections Chairperson has announced the successful candidate, she/he may then call for a motion to destroy the ballots and proceed to the next election.

15. Sometimes following a concluding election vote an unsuccessful candidate may rise and announce that he is "casting all her/his votes for the successful candidate in order to make the election unanimous...". The gesture is generous and well meant but no members or officer has the right to offer the ballots cast in her/his favour to any other candidate without the express permission of each member who cast a ballot. Elections Chairpersons are counseled to advise candidates to avoid such theatrical gestures and unwarranted assumptions. Each ballot cast represents the opinion of the one who cast it and not the opinion of a candidate.

16. When all the elections have been carried out and the successful candidates named by the Elections Chairperson, she/he will then ask the newly elected officers to stand before her/him to take the Oath of Office and be installed.

17. The Oath of Office should be administered by the most senior administrative officer present. The ritual is carried out with the successful candidates assembled at the front, facing the meeting and the person administering the oath with his back to the assembly. The Elections Chairperson will ask the meeting to stand during the ceremony.

18. When the swearing in has been completed, the Elections Chairperson will say, "Brothers and Sisters, by the authority vested in me, I now proclaim you duly installed in your respective offices. I congratulate you upon your election. You may now assume your offices".

MAJORITY

Most decisions are made by a clear *majority* of those members voting. In some instances (such as amendments to the Constitution, bylaws or rules of procedure, reconsideration, or the amendment of regulations) a two-thirds *majority* is required.

In the case of a tie vote, there is no need for the Chair to cast a vote. She/he may declare the motion lost because it did not obtain a *majority*.

It should always be remembered that the *majority* have a right to make the final decision while the minority have a continuing right to dissent but *not* to frustrate the will of the *majority*.

A two-thirds *majority* vote means that for every negative vote there must be *at least* two affirmative votes (or vice versa).

A proposition is always considered carried by a *majority* of the votes actually cast; that is, if there were 25 members at a meeting and only 10 voted, the *majority* required would be 6.

MEETINGS

A *meeting* begins when the Chair first calls the assembly to order and ends when a motion to adjourn is ordered by the Chair or passed by the *meeting*. A *meeting* may be only a few minutes long or may last several days or weeks. Authorized interruptions in the *meeting* are recessed; only one adjournment takes place and that is at the end of the *meeting*.

A *meeting* is also referred to as a *session* and has the same meaning; that is, a *session* lasts from the initial call to order until adjournment. *Meetings* or *sessions* are made up of *sittings* and these period are considered to take place between a call to order and the time when the body rises for a recess.

A *sitting* is terminated by a motion to recess, excepting only the *sitting* which takes place prior to final adjournment.

MOTION

Main *motions* are proposals which introduce a principal subject or proposition before the meeting. Only one main *motion* can be pending before the meeting at one time but main *motions* are normally subject to the precedence of subsidiary, procedural and privileged *motions* .

A main *motion* must be seconded and it is always debatable. It is subject to amendment and sub-amendment or second amendment. The terms “question” and “*motion*” are interchangeable in parliamentary procedure. A *motion* is a question until it has been voted upon and decided by the meeting, at which time it becomes in fact a resolution.

A main *motion* should be carefully thought out before it is proposed and made as complete as possible so that it will not invite amendment. If at all possible, it should be put in writing and after having been moved and seconded, the written *motion* or question can then be handed to the Chair and used by both the Chair and the secretary.

Motions should first be proposed by the mover, then seconded by a member and then stated distinctly by the Chair before they are subject to debate or amendment.

Example:

Member: “Sister/Brother Chairperson, I move that we replace all the chairs in the meeting room with new ones.”

Second member: “I second the *motion*.”

Chair: “It has been regularly moved and seconded that we replace all the chairs in the meeting room with new ones. Is there any discussion?”

The practice of speaking on a non-existent *motion* and summing up with the phrase: “...and I so move” is unacceptable. This is often done by speakers who have not carefully thought out their *motion* before going to the microphone or accepting the floor.

A *motion* that has not been seconded is not open to debate. If no other person but the mover supports a *motion*, it is evident that the meeting is not interested in the subject of the *motion* and debate should not be permitted.

It is the duty of the Chair to state a *motion* once it has been seconded. By stating the *motion* following the actions of the mover and the seconder, the Chair is able to place distinctly and clearly before the meeting the intent of the mover, and debate should not be permitted until this is done.

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Example:

Note : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

Chair: "It has been regularly moved and seconded that..."

It is common practice for the mover of the *motion* to speak to her/his *motion* before others. When all have had their say, the Chair may recognize the mover and allow her/him to speak again but when the mover has spoken the second time, debate is closed.

A main *motion*, once it has been moved and seconded and stated by the Chair, is the property of the meeting and can be only withdrawn by the mover and the seconder with the unanimous consent of the meeting.

Motions which conflict with the Constitution, Bylaws, Regulations or Rules of Order are out of order at the time of proposal. If they are adopted, they are null and void even if adopted by unanimous vote. The Chair should rule all such *motions* out of order and these rulings are not subject to an appeal.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Notice of motion or previous notice for any purpose may be given at a previous meeting by being included in the meeting notice, or it may be given by mail to every member entitled to attend the next meeting.

A *notice of motion* is based on the common law practice of "due notice" which requires that a person be fully advised of all particulars which might be of concern to him/her in the business to be transacted at a meeting.

Example:

"Agenda Item 4. *Notice of motion* was given by Secretary Treasurer Brother Brown that an increase in the dues would be proposed at the meeting called for March 17th, 1974."

A *notice of motion* is not debatable nor is it subject to any procedural motion. It is simply advice that a certain item of business will be proposed at the next meeting.

It is preferable that *notice of motion* be included in the agenda for the proposed meeting.

It is not necessary that a member giving *notice of motion* be the one to move or second the actual motion at the following meeting.

A *notice of motion* is usually required for such important matters as elections, expenditure of funds, amendments to bylaws and regulations, and similar items of business.

It should be emphasized that a proper *notice of motion* is not simply a few non-descriptive words on an agenda but should make the *Note* : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

intention of the mover of the *notice of motion* abundantly clear. It is preferable that a *notice of motion* should include the proposed motion in full. In some jurisdictions it is required that the complete working of the proposed motion be published in the *notice of motion* itself.

Example:

“*Notice of motion* was given by Brother Tom Brown that he intended to move the following motion at the meeting of January 3rd, 1975: ‘that a Committee be established to investigate new office quarters for the Local’.”

PAST PRESIDENT

Where the Bylaws or Constitution provide, a retiring president not standing for another term or defeated in office sometimes automatically holds another office known as *past president*. The original intent was to provide continuity and experience and allow a new president to lean on the experience of the old.

A *past president's* term should last no longer than one term between elections. A president elected for a second term theoretically holds the office of *past president* and should no longer need such assistance in his office.

A *past president* will have the right of voice at all meetings but not vote as it is not an election position.

POINT OF INFORMATION

From time to time this “parliamentary” gimmick creeps into use. No doubt it has grown out of confusion between Point of Order. Question of Privilege and Question of Information.

So-called Questions of Information are not permitted because debate is free and there is no need to give special recognition to a person who rises to give or seek information.

Such questioners or providers of unsolicited information should take their place in the debate and should be required to hold questions and information until speakers in their proper order have had an opportunity to speak.

POINT OF ORDER

A *point of order* is a motion which may be raised without the speaker first being recognized by the Chair. It does not require a seconder and it is not debatable except as specified below. When a *point of order* is raised by a member, the Chair must make a decision without allowing the introduction of any other business except those of motions which have precedence.

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The Chair's decision is subject only to an appeal from the ruling of the Chair and in cases where the Chair is stating the content of Bylaws,

Note : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

Rules of Order, Regulations or the Constitution, etc., which are fact, no appeal is permitted.

Example:

Member: "Brother/Sister Chairperson, I rise to a *point of order*."

Chair: "Please state your *point of order*."

Member: "The motion proposed is out of order because it is contrary to Bylaw 13."

Chair: "Your *point of order* is well taken; I declare the motion out of order."

Another Member: I appeal against the ruling of the Chair."

Chair: "Your appeal cannot be put to the question as Bylaw 13 is a statement of fact and the Chair cannot accept an appeal against a standing bylaw."

POSTPONE

The motion to *postpone* is a dilatory or procedural motion used to refer business until a later or more appropriate time. Business *postponed* by such a motion is taken up automatically under unfinished business at the time specified, usually at the next meeting.

Such a motion requires a seconder, is debatable only as the propriety or advisability of *postponement*, is subject to amendment and always requires a majority vote to pass. It should be said that only amendments in respect to the alteration of the time or date specified are allowed.

Example:

"Sister/Brother Chairperson, I move that we *postpone* the pending motion 'to buy new chairs for the meeting rooms' until the next meeting."

Sometimes a motion to *postpone* is used as a closure motion because it may be debated only with respect to the matter of *postponement*. The main motion to which the motion to *postpone* refers cannot be debated while the latter motion is on the floor.

A motion to *postpone* is subject to reconsideration, provided the conditions surrounding a motion of reconsideration are met.

If a motion to *postpone* refers to a later time in the same meeting, the item is automatically inserted in the agenda at the appropriate place.

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A *postponed* question can be considered by the meeting prior to the time specified in the motion if no one objects or if a two-thirds majority vote so specifies.

Note : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

In addition to privileged motions and other motions having precedence which are listed under that heading, motions to *postpone* to a specified time take precedence over motions to refer, amend or *postpone* indefinitely.

A motion to *postpone* to a specified time may be applied to questions of privilege and motions of reconsideration.

PRECEDENCE

The proposals which are put before meetings and other public assemblies fall into three main classes as follows:

Privileged motions.

Dilatory (delaying or procedural) motions.

Main (or principal) motions.

Under these headings motions of the three classes are said to have a certain *precedence* or rank. That is, the first one listed is of the highest *precedence* and must be dealt with first by the Chair. The second motion listed has the second highest *precedence* and is only outranked by the first, and so on.

Privileged motions

1. To adjourn.
2. To recess.
3. A question of privilege.
4. An appeal from the decision of the Chair.
5. A point of order.

Dilatory (or procedural) motions

6. To suspend the rules.
7. To table.
8. To put the previous question.
9. To limit or extend debate.
10. To postpone to a definite time.
11. To refer.
12. Second or sub-amendment.
13. To amend the main motion.
14. To postpone indefinitely.

Main (or principal) motions

15. Main motions or resolutions.
16. To reconsider.

Each motion on the above list beginning at the top has higher *precedence* than every motion listed below it. This means that a motion having greater *precedence* than the one on the floor is in order and may be moved without waiting for the termination of discussion on the previous motion.

Note : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

For example, a motion has been moved and seconded to purchase new meeting room chairs. In the midst of discussion on this proposal, two members may move and second to have the matter postponed indefinitely. Before this motion is disposed, of, two other members move and second that the original proposal to purchase meeting room chairs and the motion to postpone indefinitely (which is considered to be attached to the main motion) be laid on the table. The motion to table has *precedence*.

The reverse situation also holds true: motions having lesser *precedence* than a motion on the floor are always out of order. For example, if a member has moved a motion to lay the proposal on the table, it would be out of order to move the previous question, postponement to a definite time, or any other motion of lesser *precedence* or rank.

Although some motions have *precedence* over others, a speaker does not have the right to interrupt another speaker by reason of having a motion of higher *precedence*.

The would-be mover of such a motion must wait her/his turn to be recognized by the Chair, with the only exceptions to this rule being pertinent points of privilege or order.

PREVIOUS QUESTION

A motion that the *previous question* be now put proposes that debate should cease on the pending main motion or amendment and the meeting should make an immediate decision on whether the question should be put or debate resume.

Example:

“Brother/Sister Chairperson, I move that the *previous question* be now put.”

The *previous question* prevents any further amendments to the pending main motion or amendment and closes debate. Such a motion can

be made in respect to the main motion, an amendment, a second amendment, or it can be made in turn on each of them. It is not debatable nor is it subject to amendment and it has a high precedence. It can be reconsidered.

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Some jurisdictions require only a simple majority for the *previous question* to be adopted while others, including these Rules, adhere to the practice of requiring two-thirds majority.

The *previous question* is not admitted in committees of the whole or other committees.

Note : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

An undemocratic practice is shouting “question! question!” or “I call for the question”, or “I move the previous question”. This does not end discussion. Only the assembly can decide by vote or by general (silent) consent to cease debate. The proper procedure is to rise, be recognized, and move a motion that the previous question be put.

PRIVILEGE

A motion of *privilege* takes precedence over all other motions except adjournment and recess. The mover of a motion of *privilege* or question of *privilege* may interrupt a speaker and need not be recognized by the Chair before speaking. In common usage it does not require a seconder and is not put to the vote. It must be stated concisely and clearly by the mover and immediately decided by the Chair.

One authority says that such questions should concern a broad interpretation of and relationship to the following matters:

1. Safety of a member, the members or the organization.
2. The health of the same.
3. The integrity or respect to which a member, the meeting or the organization is due.
4. Safety and protection of their property.

The Chair must make two decision: first, whether the question is one of *privilege*, and secondly, how the question of *privilege* will be disposed of.

Example:

Member: “Sister/Brother Chairperson, I rise to a question of *privilege*.”

Chair: “Please state your question of *privilege* .”

Member: “Sister/Brother Chairperson, may I ask that all guests be asked to leave the room until this confidential business has been completed.”

Chair: “Your question of *privilege* is granted. The Chair orders that all guests shall leave the room until all confidential business is concluded.”

Another Member: “Sister/Brother Chairperson, I appeal from the ruling of the Chair.”

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An appeal from the decision of the Chair on points ordered and questions of *privilege* must be put to the vote of the assembly without allowing the intervention of any other business. It is customary that the mover of the question of *privilege* or point of order be given an opportunity to state her/his reasons for doing so and the Chair is allowed a similar period of time to explain the reasons for its ruling. No other debate is allowed.

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A major abuse of this parliamentary procedure is a tendency to introduce a question of *privilege* for the purpose of continuing the debate, sometimes even after the vote has been taken. The Chair should rule immediately to prevent such abuses. It is a constant requirement for members raising questions of *privilege* that they must be concise, proper, legitimate and germane to the points mentioned above.

Example:

Chair: "The question just raised does not constitute a question of *privilege*."

QUESTION

Correctly speaking, each item of business (*question*) before a meeting passes through three stages:

1. It is a motion when it is moved and seconded by two members on the floor.
2. The Chair restates the proposition, thus placing the *question* before the meeting for debate and further action.
3. Following debate, provided that no procedural or subsidiary motions have been introduced, the Chair states the *question* again and puts it to a vote.

The practice of calling "*question! question!*" in an effort to end the debate is unacceptable parliamentary practice. In properly run parliamentary forums, each member wishing to speak should have an opportunity to do so. Only the majority (that is a two-thirds majority to *put the previous question*) should be able to express the wish of the meeting that no further debate should be allowed.

QUORUM

The *quorum* of a meeting or group is the minimum number of members required by its bylaws or rules to be present before any business can be carried out by the meeting.

It should be clearly stated that no meeting can be called to order when a *quorum* is required unless a *quorum* is present. If the meeting is called to order with a *quorum* present and during the business of the meeting the Chair or a member notices that there is no longer a *quorum* present, any further business transacted must be considered null and void.

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A question of no *quorum* once brought to the attention of the Chair cannot be ignored or withdrawn, even by consent of the meeting. It is not subject to any procedural motions and must lead immediately to a decision to adjourn if no *quorum* is found when attendance is counted.

In many assemblies it is legally acceptable for the Chair to accept a motion to recess with the intent to seek a *quorum* by having other members brought into the meeting.

Note : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

A local organization can insert in its bylaws a provision allowing the transaction of certain business at a meeting of no *quorum*, provided that transaction is limited to matters approved by the annual meeting or convention; such business must be ratified at a following meeting of the organization.

RATIFY

To *ratify* a matter is to give it approval, confirm the action, to make it valid or legal, and is usually the final action taken by a meeting or group to legalize some business performed by its officers or representatives.

It can be regarded as a main motion requiring a seconder and it is debatable and subject to amendment. It requires a majority vote for adoption and permits a debate on the merits of the matter to be ratified.

Example:

“Brother/Sister Chairperson, I move that this meeting *ratify* the action of the social committee in spending \$40.00 for gifts for the Children’s Hospital.”

Sometimes this motion is used to approve the actions of an executive which has undertaken business on behalf of the body without proper authority but it should be said here that the first responsibility of an executive is to get authority before acting. Sometimes members resent the usurpation of their rights and will refuse to *ratify* an action which was not authorized.

This practice can also be used in emergency situations to *ratify* actions which are unavoidable in a meeting when no quorum was found to be present but this procedure should be avoided whenever possible.

RECESS

The motion to *recess* a meeting is normally used when it is necessary to suspend business for a short period, such as when recessing for a coffee break or lunch, or to have someone speak to the meeting, or to await the result of a ballot.

The proposal is considered a privileged motion, requires a seconder and may be amended but it is not debatable. It requires only a simple majority and for obvious reasons cannot be reconsidered. As a privileged motion, it has precedence over all other motions except a motion to adjourn.

A meeting should be *recessed* -- not adjourned -- if the intention is to have an intermission or to leave off business from one day until the next.

Note : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

A session of a meeting, group or convention is considered to exist between the time when the Chair calls the meeting to order and the final declaration of the Chair that the meeting, group or convention stands adjourned. All other breaks should be regarded as *recesses* and treated as such by the Chair. Even if members move a motion to adjourn when what is intended is a *recess*, the Chair should accept the motion to adjourn as one of *recessing* the assembly and treat it in the fashion of the latter motion.

RECONSIDER

A motion to *reconsider* is used when it is felt that the meeting has acted on insufficient information or made a hasty decision. Such a motion requires a “notice of motion” to be given at a previous sitting of the meeting. At a later sitting, the motion to *reconsider* is regularly moved and seconded and is subject only to debate in respect to its propriety or advisability. It requires a two-thirds majority to be passed and can *only* be moved and seconded by two members who state that they voted with the majority (the prevailing side) on the first question.

When a decision has been made on an earlier question as a result of a secret ballot, it is required that the motion to *reconsider* be taken in the same manner; that is, by secret ballot.

Reconsideration can be moved only once on the same question; when it has failed, it is not subject to being raised again at that meeting.

Reconsideration is not proper at a later meeting but only at one of the sittings of the meeting that passed the original motion.

A later meeting has the power to negate the actions of a previous meeting without the use of the motion for *reconsideration* by moving and accepting a motion to rescind the previous action.

Notice of motion of *reconsideration* is considered to stop any action proposed in the earlier motion to which the motion of *reconsideration* refers.

A motion of *reconsideration* cannot be referred or amended but it may be postponed to a specified time (in the same meeting).

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RECORDED VOTE

A *recorded vote* is one by which the members of any meeting are required to support or oppose a motion publicly and on the record at the time a *recorded vote* is ordered. The record is usually kept by the recording secretary who, at the time the *recorded vote* is taken, calls out the names of the assembly in alphabetical order with each member responding with either a simple “yes” or “no”.

In preparation for a *recorded vote*, the recording secretary should have a tabular alphabetical list of all members present with four columns on the right-hand side titled “yes”, “no”, “abstain” and “absence”.

Note : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

The Chairperson *may* vote in a *recorded vote* but his/her vote is always taken last, not in the alphabetical order of names.

The minutes of the meeting should show that a *recorded vote* was taken, with the number voting in the affirmative, the number voting in the negative and the number of members that abstained. There should also be an entry in the minutes that the actual record of the vote has been attached as an appendix to the minutes.

In a National Board of Directors' meeting two members may request and have a *recorded vote* on any procedural motion ordered by the Chair.

By Convention decision, all votes on substantive motions in the National Board of Directors must be recorded.

REFER

The term "*to refer*" means to give over a question or task to a person or committee. A motion *to refer* requires a seconder and requires only a simple majority for adoption. Debate is permitted on the advisability or propriety of *referral* or with respect to any instructions which may be attached.

If the motion *to refer* does not contain instructions with respect to the naming of a Committee, the Chair is permitted to do so and she/he must name or appoint the Committee prior to consideration of further business unless she/he advises the assembly that she/he intends to name the Committee at a later time or date.

A motion *to refer* may also include an instruction for a report to be made at a later specified time.

Example:

"Brother/Sister Chairperson, I move that we *refer* the question of purchasing new office furniture to a Committee of three to be nominated from the floor and to report at the next meeting."

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It should be noted that once a motion *to refer* has been passed by the meeting, the meeting's authority over the motion comes to an end. In other words, it has transferred its control of the motion to another body (the Committee) and has no right to consider the matter except when the Committee reports or at a time when a two-thirds majority of the meeting decides by proper motion that the matter be taken up again by the meeting.

A motion *to refer* is subject to amendment, reconsideration and the previous question.

REPORTS

Note : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

Reports of officers and committees are usually given in that order with the *report* of the Chairperson or President being first at the appropriate point on the agenda. Where possible, *reports* should be moved for adoption or acceptance and treated as main motions in the business of the meeting.

Reports of committees are not subject to amendment except in respect to information; e.g., wrong statements in a *report* may be corrected.

If a motion to accept or adopt the *report* of the Committee is passed and the *report* contains recommendations, the motion to adopt or accept is considered to have given an affirmative vote to any such proposals. Of course, if the assembly does not wish to accept recommendations or proposals in a *report*, it may exclude such matters from the motion to adopt.

Example:

“Sister/Brother Chairperson, I move that the *report* of the membership committee be accepted with the exception of the recommendation dealing with recruitment.”

The practice in the Alliance is to deal with Committee recommendations separate and apart from its *report*.

Members of a Committee who have supported the majority decisions in Committee sessions are considered to be duty-bound to support the *report* of the Committee on the floor of the meeting.

It is permissible for the minority to produce a minority *report* and submit it to the meeting at the time the meeting is considering the main *report* of the Committee. The accepted procedure for gaining consideration of a minority *report* is for a spokesperson for the minority to rise, gain the Chair’s recognition, and move to substitute the minority *report* for the majority *report*.

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Example:

Chairperson of the Committee:

“Sister/Brother Chairperson, I move adoption of the Committee’s *report*.”

Chair:

“You have heard the recommendation of the Committee, is there any discussion?”

Minority Chairperson:

“Sister/Brother Chairperson, I move that the minority *report* be substituted for the Committee *report*.”

Note : All italicized words are defined in the glossary which follows the Rules of Order

This motion must be seconded.

From the point on, the Chair must direct debate to the motion put by the minority spokesperson. The motion must be disposed of by the meeting before debate can return to the *report* of the Committee. Of course, if the motion to substitute the *report* of the minority for the Committee *report* passes, no debate may be allowed on the majority or main Committee *report*. Also, if the motion to substitute the minority *report* for the *report* of the Committee is passed by the meeting, a motion that the minority *report* be adopted must be moved and seconded and voted on.

RESCIND (or Repeal)

A motion to *rescind* is a main motion and should be treated as such. The procedure for using such a motion should be prescribed in the rules of order, Bylaws or Constitution of the body. It is a motion requiring a two-thirds majority and should be preceded by a notice of motion at the previous sitting.

Example:

"Brother/Sister Chairperson, I move that we *rescind* (or repeal) the motion 'that this association purchase new chairs for the meeting room'."

A motion to *rescind* requires a seconder but debate must be limited to the motion to *rescind*. That is, this restriction limits debate to the advisability of repeal or the propriety of *rescinding*.

A motion to *rescind* or repeal is never in order if the matter can be dealt with by a motion for reconsideration. A *rescinding* motion cannot be applied to any action that cannot be reversed.

A motion to *rescind* is most often used to rid the organization of an outdated or outmoded regulation or custom.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

A *special meeting* is a meeting called to act on limited or special business usually of an urgent nature.

In *special meetings*, the regular order of business is not followed except for the opening formalities, the business for which the meeting was called and, finally, the adjournment of the meeting.

The decisions of a *special meeting* must be limited to the business stated in the call to attend the *special meeting*, with one exception. A *special meeting* may consider other business if all members of the body are present and voting and they agree unanimously to consider another matter of concern to the meeting.

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Minutes of *special meetings* are subject to the approval of the following regular meeting of the body but *special meetings* do not *have the authority to approve minutes of a regular meeting*.

A *special meeting* may be called by a regular meeting but a *special meeting* cannot call a regular meeting.

A *special meeting* cannot be called for a time beyond the time of the next regular meeting.

SUSPEND THE RULES

A motion to *suspend the rules*, when passed by a meeting, has the effect of making inoperative some standing rule or regulation previously enacted by that same body. It should be remembered that only the assembly which established the rule in the first place, or a body superior to it, has the authority to suspend such rules. For instance, a convention can, through proper procedure, suspend its own constitution if the constitution does not explicitly forbid such action and if all other conditions are met.

Example:

1. Member at local meeting:
"Sister/Brother Chairperson, I move that the Constitution be suspended during this meeting."

Chair: "Your motion is out of order; this meeting does not have the authority to suspend the Constitution."

Another member:

"Sister/Brother Chairperson, I appeal from the ruling of the Chair."

Chair: "The appeal from the ruling of the Chair cannot be entertained as this meeting does not have the authority to suspend the Constitution."

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2. Member at local meeting:
"Sister/Brother Chairperson, I move that the rule calling for a ten minute coffee-break in our meetings be suspended."

In the second example, the Chair could accept the proposal as a main motion requiring a seconder and permit limited debate on the advisability or propriety of passing the motion.

It should be noted that to pass a motion to suspend the rules requires unanimous approval.

Requiring unanimity is a logical rule in that it protects the members of the organization from capricious actions by one meeting. Bylaws and constitutions are the legal frameworks within which an

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organization must function and are designed to protect the members from impetuous or sometimes illegal actions. The rule of law is an accepted and necessary part of our social and political system and so we must always make it very difficult to *suspend the rules* which govern the way in which our meetings and convention operate if, as individuals, we wish to protect our rights.

Finally, a motion to *suspend the rules* should always include the explicit reason for the proposed suspension and the Chair should ensure that any subsequent actions taken by the meeting do not go outside the purpose for the suspension.

TABLE

The motion to *lay on the table (to table)* is a subsidiary or dilatory motion. It is also called a procedural motion because it determines a procedure with which a main motion may be dealt.

Example:

“Brother/Sister Chairperson, I move that the motion ‘that we obtain new meeting quarters’ be *tabled*.”

The effect of the motion is to set the business aside for an indefinite period of time. In such cases, a motion to *lift from the table* is necessary before the business can be dealt with. As in the case of some subsidiary or procedural motions, debate is *not* permitted.

A motion to *table* can have two effects. It may delay indefinitely any piece of business which the meeting is not prepared to discuss, or it may delay it for an unspecified period of time, placing the onus of re-activating the matter on the meeting itself. Motions are never *tabled* for a specific period of time. It becomes the responsibility of any two members who wish to re-activate the *tabled* subject to introduce a motion that the subject matter be *lifted from the table*. It requires a simple majority to pass.

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Motions to *table* are *not* subject to amendment. For example, let us say that the motion regularly moved and seconded “that a Committee be established to examine new meeting space”, is before the meeting. Debate has been held, there may have been amendments and even a motion to refer the question to a Committee. Nevertheless, a motion to *table* is in order, and if it is seconded and passed by a majority, the whole question of the motion, amendment and referral is *laid on the table* and debate must cease.

A motion to *table* is similar to a motion to postpone indefinitely and accomplishes the same result, with the addition that a *tabled* motion is recorded only in the minutes of that meeting and on the agenda of the meeting. Following that recording, it is dropped from the record.

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Motions to *table* are sometimes used by a meeting to avoid the subject going to a vote. This means that the meeting has chosen not to express its opinion in a vote but wishes to shelve the matter.

VOTING

A demand for a *secret ballot* has precedence over all other forms of voting unless the Regulations, Bylaws or Constitution specify otherwise.

A *recorded vote* has precedence over all other forms of voting with the exception of a secret ballot.

The *standing vote* has the next highest precedence, followed by a *show of hands* and then a vote by *voice*.

The Chair should first take a *voice* vote. If there is any uncertainty or the vote is questioned, she/he should then proceed to take a vote by a *show of hands*. Finally, if in doubt or requested to do so, she/he should ask for a *standing vote* with tellers assigned to make an accurate count.

A *two-thirds majority vote* means that two voters have voted for the proposition for every one that voted against.

A *majority* is 50 per cent of the votes cast plus one additional vote.

Vote counts are taken of only those who voted; e.g., if 50 members are present and 25 abstain in a vote, a majority of those voting would be 13 and a two-thirds majority would be 17.

WITHDRAW

A motion may be *withdrawn* by the mover with the permission of the seconder under the following circumstances:

1. If the assembly agrees unanimously, the motion may be *withdrawn* and struck from the record.
2. If one member of the assembly objects, another member may move that the motion be allowed to be *withdrawn*. This procedural motion does *not* require a seconder and requires only a simple majority to pass.
3. If unanimous agreement to *withdraw* a motion is not obtained and the problem is finally resolved by a motion that the original mover be allowed to *withdraw* his motion, then both the original motion and the

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procedural motion giving permission to *withdraw* must be recorded in the minutes.

A motion to *withdraw* a main motion is *not* debatable and must be put to a vote immediately. In ordinary circumstances, the assembly should be prepared to give unanimous approval to a mover's request to *withdraw* her/his motion. However, in a situation where one member feels very strongly about the motion which has been put, she/he may object to its *withdrawal* and thus protect her/his right to debate the issue.