



Area 79

Voting Procedures

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Main Motion

The chairperson invites the voting member to make the motion, and if seconded, the motion is discussed.

- Requires a Second? Yes
- Is debatable? Yes
- Vote Required for Approval? Two-thirds Substantial Unanimity
- Minority Voice Heard? Yes

Second

The Chairperson asks whether there is a voting member who wishes to second the motion; they do not have to be in favour of the motion to second it; it simply means “I agree we should discuss this.” If a motion is not seconded, it will not be discussed.

Discussion

Anyone present who wishes to speak to the motion lines up at the microphone or raises their virtual hand and is called on in order (alternating between online and in person). Each person may speak for a maximum of two minutes. No speaker may speak for a second time to the motion, unless all who wish to, have spoken for the first time. Those in line, in person and online, are encouraged to listen to the points, questions, and answers that arise during the discussion, and to take their seat or lower their hand if their point has already been made, or their question has already been asked.

Vote

“All in favour” and “All opposed”. All motions require “substantial unanimity” (a two-thirds majority) to carry. Decisions that only affect the assembly “event” can be decided by a simple majority.

Minority Opinion

After a motion has been voted on (not all motions hear a minority voice), the Chairperson invites voters who are opposed to the outcome of the vote to speak. Very often a Higher Power is found in the still, small voice of the minority.

**After sufficient minority voice has been heard, the Chairperson can suggest that a voting member from the prevailing side of the motion may at this time wish to make a motion to reconsider. The chair has delegated authority and autonomy to decline the request in a loving way - “I’m asking that you entertain this after thorough discussion has taken place,” and/ or pointing out “there are still those in the queue, who wish to speak,” or “the topic hasn’t yet had time to be fully considered.”*

Point of Order

A point of order takes priority over all other discussion. If the procedures are not being followed or a step has been missed, it is the responsibility of those in the assembly to bring up a point of order. To make a point of order, the member must first be recognized by the Chair. To be recognized, the member is permitted immediate access to the microphone in person or virtual (front of the line or to unmute if online). The Chair responds by either clarifying the procedure or identifying how it will be corrected if required.

Procedural Inquiry

A procedural inquiry is when a voting member asks for clarification of the rules, processes, or order of business being followed during the assembly. To make a Procedural Inquiry, a member must first be recognized by the Chair. To be recognized, the member is permitted immediate access to the microphone, whether in person or virtual (front of the line or unmuted). The Chair will then directly respond to the inquiry. A Procedural Inquiry takes priority over all other discussion items except Point of Order.

Amendment

During the discussion, a voting member may propose an amendment to the main motion. The proposed amendment must pertain to the subject of the main motion, requires a seconder, is debatable, and requires substantial unanimity (two-thirds) for approval. An amendment itself may not be amended – an amendment under discussion must be voted on, before another amendment is considered. *This voting procedure is a departure from Robert's Rules of Order, because it is a format that better suits Area 79.

- Requires a Second? Yes
- Is debatable? Yes
- Vote Required for Approval? 50%+1 Simple Majority
- Minority Voice Heard? Yes

Calling the Question

This brings discussion to a halt while the Assembly decides whether to proceed directly to a vote or continue with discussion on the original motion. The voting member calling the question asks the Chair to allow the assembly to decide whether to continue the discussion or proceed to a vote. Consideration should be given that there has been sufficient discussion prior to calling the question. When the question is called, a seconder is required, and the assembly votes immediately on calling the question. If two-thirds is achieved, debate ends and voting proceeds on the motion. If two-thirds is not achieved, debate on the original motion continues.

- Requires a Second? Yes
- Is debatable? No
- Vote Required for Approval? Two-thirds of members voting - Substantial Unanimity
- Minority Voice Heard? No

** Does not move to the front of the line*

Chair has delegated authority and autonomy to decline the request in a loving way - “I’m asking that you entertain this after thorough discussion has taken place,” and/ or pointing out there are still those in the queue to speak or the topic hasn’t yet had time to be fully considered.

Motion to Reconsider

A Motion to Reconsider a vote may be made only by a member who voted with the prevailing side, but it can be seconded by any voting member and is not debatable. If a simple majority (50% + 1) votes to reconsider, full debate – pros and cons on the motion – is resumed. No action may be reconsidered twice. A motion to reconsider would occur during the minority voice.

- Requires a Second? Yes
- Is debatable? No
- Vote Required for Approval? Simple Majority (50%+1)
- Simple Majority Minority Voice Heard? No

** After sufficient minority voice has been heard, the Chairperson can suggest that a voting member from the prevailing side of the motion may at this time wish to make a motion to reconsider. The chair has delegated authority and autonomy to decline the request in a loving way - “I’m asking that you entertain this after thorough discussion has taken place,” and/ or pointing out “there are still those in the queue, who wish to speak,” or “the topic hasn’t yet had time to be fully considered.”*

Does not move to the front of the line

Withdrawing a Motion

Once a motion has been seconded and is being discussed, the individual who made the motion may request that the motion be withdrawn. A motion on the floor of the assembly is now owned by the assembly, no longer by the body or member presenting it. The Chair will ask if anyone objects. If not, the motion is withdrawn without debate. If a voting member objects, a vote will be held to withdraw the motion without debate. A simple majority (50%+1) is sufficient to withdraw the motion.

- Requires a Second? No
- Is debatable? No
- Vote Required for Approval? Simple Majority (50%+1)
- Minority Voice Heard? No

Tabling a Motion

Once a motion has been seconded and is under discussion, a motion to table postpones further consideration until a later time during the same event. Tabled motions would be heard before floor actions. It is made without comment, requires a second, is not debatable, is carried by a simple majority (50% +1), and no minority voice is heard.

- Requires a Second? Yes
- Is debatable? No
- Vote Required for Approval? Simple Majority (50%+1)
- Minority Voice Heard? No

Floor Action

A Floor Action is a business item submitted to the Chair after the motion submission deadline. Motions must be submitted to the Area Chair at least ten weeks prior to the event. Floor Actions are handled separately because they have not been circulated to the groups in BC/Yukon Area 79. The Area Chair will accept floor actions in writing until 11:00 a.m. on the Saturday of the assembly. Floor Actions will be posted at the event and presented in the order received. When a floor action is to be heard, the voting member will be given two minutes to present it. Once presented, a Floor Action requires a seconder to become a motion.

Just like any motion, if not seconded, the Floor Action is not heard. If seconded and no motion to Decline to Consider is heard, the floor action becomes a motion on the floor and follows the same procedure as any other motion. All financial items (other than budgets) exceeding \$2,000.00, whether spending or reductions, cannot be introduced as floor actions.

Decline to Consider

After a floor action is presented and seconded, the Chair asks if there is a Motion to Decline to consider. It is made without comment, requires a seconder, is not debatable, and requires substantial unanimity for approval (2/3rds majority). There is no minority voice heard.

- Requires a Second? Yes
- Is debatable? No
- Vote Required for Approval? Two-thirds - Substantial Unanimity
- Minority Voice Heard? No

A Note about Roberts Rules of Order

Roberts Rules are gentle guideposts to allow the body to discuss what the fellowship feels it needs to talk about. The Chair will instruct a member who “Calls the Question or wants to Amend the Motion too quickly to “come back, after the fellowship has a chance to discuss the business.” Roberts Rules are to bring order to a disorderly body. We are not disorderly a body – we're a spiritual one. We trust our Trusted Servants and our Chair to use their discretion and judgment.