

Clarifying Some MSCA Business Meeting Procedures

MSCA business meetings generally follow Roberts Rules of Order, and proceed on as informal a basis as possible, consistent with the rights of all concerned. The meeting procedures do have some exceptions to Roberts Rules which help it proceed more closely in accord with the Traditions, the Concepts, and the General Service Conference.

Overall the purpose of these rules of order is to allow the body to conduct its business; and to carry out the will of the Fellowship by reaching an informed group conscience.

The Area Secretary should establish a quorum according to the MSCA Bylaws.

Substantial Unanimity

In MSCA matters of policy usually require the measure to pass by substantial unanimity (two-thirds majority of those voting). Housekeeping matters usually require only a simple majority.

General Rules of Debate

- Motion (A written motion is preferred), and second. If a motion is forwarded to an Area Assembly from the Area Service Committee (ASC) it is generally considered to be a seconded motion.
- Discussion. The Chair should state who is eligible to vote, and the margin (if a simple majority or 2/3 is necessary to carry).
- People who wish to speak line up at the microphone and are called on in order.
- Each person may speak for up to two (2) minutes.
- No one may speak for a second time on a topic until all who wish too, have spoken for the first time.
- Voting is by a show of hands. (If it is a close vote, each person may count off to be sure of the number.)

Amending a Motion

- Members who wish to amend a motion on the floor state their amendment.
- Must be made in order at the microphone.
- Requires a second.
- For clarity a written copy of the amendment should be given to the chair.
- To save time, the chair may ask if there is any objection to the amendment and if no one objects the amendment may be accepted (Unanimous Consent).
- Debate on the main motion stops and debate is opened only on the amendment.
- After the vote and minority opinion, debate resumes on the original (or amended) motion.

Calling the Question

Calling the question brings debate to a halt while members decide whether to proceed directly to a vote (the question) or go on with the debate. A motion calling the question and may not be preceded by any other comments or arguments by the person calling the question.

- Must be made in order at the microphone.
- Requires a second.
- Is not debatable.
- Requires a majority vote.

Reconsideration

In keeping with Concept V, after voting on a policy matter, the side that does not prevail will always be given an opportunity to speak to their position. At this time only members of the side that did not prevail may speak, unless someone voting on the prevailing side wishes to change/reconsider their vote and offers a Motion to Reconsider the Vote. After everyone in the minority who wishes to has shared, the chair may ask if anyone on the prevailing side wishes to make **a motion to reconsider** (A second is required).

- A simple majority is required to reconsider a vote.
- If the majority votes to reconsider, full debate on the original motion, pro and con, is resumed. Members of the body are urged to limit discussion to new considerations of the question under debate.
- No action may be reconsidered twice.

Tabling a Motion (In Robert's this is considered Postponing to a certain time)

Tabling a motion must include a time frame to return to consideration.

- Requires a motion and a second.
- Requires the same (majority or 2/3) vote as the original motion.
- Is not debatable.

Tips, Hints, and Words of Caution

Full discussion of a motion should take place before the vote. Premature actions (e.g. amending motions early in the discussion or hastily calling the question) can divert attention from the subject at hand, thus confusing and/or delaying business.

Everyone is entitled to, and should, express his or her opinion. However if your perspective has already been stated by someone else, it is not necessary to go to the mike and say it again.