

**BOARD/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION**  
**HANDBOOK**



**CREATED: March 2017**

## INTRODUCTION

This Handbook has been prepared by the Town Clerk's Office for use by the appointed and elected boards, committees and commissions involved in Town Government. It provides information concerning legal obligations, procedural matters and advice for the effective operation of these groups.

We are grateful to the many residents of Winthrop who serve in these positions and hope that this Handbook will assist them in their duties and responsibilities. This great Town would not be as wonderful as it is if not for the many volunteers that dedicate countless hours to make our Community an amazing place to live!

Many Thanks!

Carla Vitale  
Town Clerk



Town Hall  
One Metcalf Square  
Winthrop, MA 02152

TOWN OF WINTHROP

**Carla Vitale**  
Town Clerk

Phone: (617) 846-1742  
Fax: (617) 539-5814  
Email: [cvitale@town.winthrop.ma.us](mailto:cvitale@town.winthrop.ma.us)  
Website: [www.town.winthrop.ma.us](http://www.town.winthrop.ma.us)

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**THIS IS MEANT TO BE A QUICK STUDY RESOURCE FOR NEW BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS. PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE WITH ANY QUESTIONS, OR SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO THIS HANDBOOK.**

## GENERAL

### Types of Committees

There are three types of appointed committees involved in Winthrop Town Government; namely:

A. Permanent Committees of the Town (e.g., Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Town Council, School Committee, etc.). These are established by Charter, State Statute, or by vote of the Town Council. These committees are assigned specific responsibilities for certain functions of the Town.

B. Study Committees. These committees are established by Town Council vote to study specific problems facing the Town and to bring back recommendations.

C. Ad Hoc Committees. These committees are established by one of the elected boards of the Town. They are usually asked to study an area of concern of the Board in question, and to make recommendations to that particular board.

The term “establishing agency”, as used in this Handbook, refers to the particular body (either by Town Council vote, elected board or Town Official) which initially creates the appointed committees.

### Appointments

Appointments to committees in Winthrop are made by any one of several appointing authorities—the Town Council, the Town Manager, or by some combination thereof (hereinafter referred to as the “appointing authority”).

The appointed individual receives formal written notification of his or her appointment from the appointing authority. The individual appointed shall appear before the Town Clerk’s Office to take the oath of office before taking his or her seat on the committee.

Permanent committee appointments are generally for three year terms, or as designated by the Charter or appointment papers. Specific purpose, or Ad Hoc Committee appointments, are generally made for the life of the project.

**NOTE:** The above procedure does not apply to the filling of vacancies on elected boards. Citizens who assist committees are not official committee members and, as such, have no vote in committee proceedings.

## **Officers**

Committees may, at their option, establish various officers within the committee. At a minimum, a chairman and secretary should be elected. At the first meeting each committee shall organize and submit the new organization of the committee to the Town Clerk and the appointing authority via email.

## **Applications**

Application forms are available in the Town Clerk's office and should be submitted to the Town Council Clerk for forwarding to the appropriate appointing authority. If no openings exist, the application will be held on file for consideration when an opening becomes available.

A well-written application will assist the appointing authority in making the best decision on committee appointments. Ideally, the application should list education, work experience and outside accomplishments that will significantly contribute to the committee's area of responsibility.

## **Resignations**

All resignations shall be submitted in writing to the Town Clerk, with a copy to the appointing authority and the committee to which appointment was made when the individual does not intend to continue to participate.

## **Reappointments**

If a person chooses not to be appointed, the appointing authority should be advised in advance. The appointing authority may, at their discretion, choose not to reappoint a person to a committee, and shall inform the person.

## **Composition**

The composition of most appointed committees is specified by Charter or Town Council vote. The composition of ad hoc committees is decided by the establishing agency which may at any time, by formal vote, increase or decrease committee membership.

## **MEETINGS**

### **First Meeting**

The first meeting of a committee will be called by the chairman of the committee or, being none, then by the appointing authority. At that time it is advisable to review the goals of the appointed committee so that all members understand and agree upon the objectives of the committee.

### **Time, Place, Frequency**

To accomplish committee objectives, regular meeting times and locations should be established. Depending on committee workload, meetings may be held weekly, bi-monthly or, at the very least, monthly. A regular night of the week and time for the meetings should be established and notice of such shall be recorded in the office of the Town Clerk. By law, meetings must be conducted in a public building, but not scheduled for holidays, election days, or Sundays.

### **Meeting Notices**

All committee members should be notified via email of each regular committee meeting, if the committee is operating on an irregular schedule, and of each special meeting. Best practices are attached to this document.

### **Public Posting**

Meeting notices must be posted with the Town Clerk a minimum of 48 hours before any meeting (excluding Saturdays, Sundays or legal holidays). Meeting notice forms are available at the Town Clerk's office and may be submitted by hard copy, or e-mail to [dquist@town.winthrop.ma.us](mailto:dquist@town.winthrop.ma.us). Notices shall contain the committee name and the date, time and place of the meeting in addition to "a list of items reasonably anticipated to be discussed" (an Agenda). Check for availability of meeting space by calling or emailing the Town Manager's Office. A sample posting form is attached to this document.

### **Minutes**

A written record of each committee meeting is required by law and becomes part of the public record. Minutes must contain names of members present and absent, all formal votes of the committee and a reasonable summary of discussion, including a list of all supporting documents and exhibits reviewed by the committee. Minutes must be formally accepted by vote of the Committee before being filed with the Town Clerk. Minutes (or a draft of the minutes), supporting documents and exhibits of an open meeting are public records and must be made available to the public within 10 days upon request. Minutes of all committee meetings must be placed on file in the office of the Town Clerk within a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed 60 days. Best practices are attached to this document.

### **Quorum**

A committee should establish a quorum necessary for conducting business. This quorum must be greater than fifty per cent (50%) of committee membership. This may deviate depending on the criteria used to establish the committee.

**Open Meeting Law: Please Refer to Open Meeting Attachments and/or visit**  
**<http://www.mass.gov/ago/government-resources/open-meeting-law/>**

## **PLANNING – REACHING GOALS**

### **2.8 Goals/Purposes**

A Committee is advised to formally document its understanding of the committee's goals and purposes. Verification of these goals with the appointing agency will preclude wasted effort through a misdirection of initiatives.

### **2.9 Plan of Action**

A plan of action should be developed, outlining how the committee is to accomplish its goals. Reporting of major accomplishments should be done so that the appointing agency may audit the committee's progress toward its goals.

## **INTER-COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

There are no regularly scheduled joint meetings of all town boards or committees. Special meetings should be requested and scheduled as needs arise and attendance requests should be tailored to the meeting purposes. The Town Manager's office should be notified well in advance so as to be able to facilitate said meetings.

## **DISSOLUTION**

When the committee has completed its assigned goals, committees can request formal dissolution from the appointing authority, or accomplish the same by filing a "Final Report". Under dissolution the committee should deliver to the Town Clerk all records deemed to be appropriate for inclusion in the permanent records.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST LAW & ETHICS COMPLIANCE** **(M.G.L. Chapter 268A)**

The Conflict of Interest Law is very complex. All officials of the Town of Winthrop should review the provisions of Ch. 268A, which are in effect during their service to the town and for two years after the completion of their service. Each individual shall be responsible for his or her actions in this regard. Any person having a question concerning their own individual position, should request an opinion from the State Ethics Commission or from Town Counsel through the Town Manager.

Ethics Training must be completed within 30 days of appointment and again every two years. Acknowledgement is required each year via email. Please view the law and required training at [www.muniprogram.state.ma.us](http://www.muniprogram.state.ma.us).

# Record Management Tips

June 2010

The **Open Meeting Law** was revised as part of the 2009 Ethics Reform Bill, and will centralize responsibility for state-wide enforcement of the law in the Office of the Attorney General. The effective date of the revised law is **July 1, 2010**.

The Open Meeting Law supports the principle that the democratic process depends on the public having knowledge about the considerations underlying governmental action. The Open Meeting Law requires that most meetings of governmental bodies to be held in public. There are some exceptions, which are designed to ensure that public officials are not "unduly hampered" by having every discussion among public officials open to the public. As a result, the Open Meeting Law provides for particular circumstances under which a meeting may be held in executive, or closed, session.

There are **major changes** to the Open Meeting Law that are listed below. Some of them you are already aware of and have complied:

- All persons serving on "public bodies" must receive a copy of the Open Meeting Law:  
[M.G.L. c. 30A, § 19\(c\) \(PDF\)](#)  
[Open Meeting Law Guidelines \(PDF\) - April 2009](#) – This will be updated by the Attorney General's office in July 2010.
- **The officer calling the meeting** is responsible for complying with the following posting requirements:
  1. 48 Hour notice for meetings of Boards and Committees – the Town Clerk must receive your meeting posting, including agenda by 3:30pm at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. This notice must be available to the public at all hours. **The 48 hours notice cannot include Saturdays, Sundays or holidays.**
    - a. Email postings to [cvitale@town.winthrop.ma.us](mailto:cvitale@town.winthrop.ma.us)
    - b. Drop off at Winthrop Town Hall, Town Clerk's Office Room 5

*For example:*

**Monday night meetings** must be posted before Thursday night.

**Tuesday night meetings** must be posted before Friday night (if Monday is a holiday, before Thursday night).

**Wednesday night meetings** must be posted before Monday night.

**Thursday night meetings** must be posted before Tuesday night.

**Friday night meetings** must be posted before Wednesday night.

2. **Notices** must include the **date, time and place** of the meeting and the **agenda** (the list of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed).

- **Emails** are included in the definition of “deliberation” which is prohibited outside of open session; but **distribution of agendas, scheduling information or reports to be discussed at future meetings is permitted.**
- **Attendance by a quorum** at a location is not considered to be a “meeting” if members are not intending to conduct business and no deliberation occurs.

*For example:*

1. Attendance at a conference, social event, or a meeting of another municipal board is **not considered to be a meeting** if no intention to conduct business or deliberation occurs.
2. A meeting of a quasi-judicial board solely to make a decision required in an adjudicatory proceeding is **not a “meeting”**.

- **Meeting minutes** must contain more detailed information than previously required.

*The following must be included in the minutes:*

1. Date, place, time and matters discussed.
  2. Summaries of discussions
  3. List of documents used
  4. Decisions made
  5. Actions taken
  6. Record of all votes (yeas, nays and abstentions).
  7. Documents and other exhibits, such as photographs, recordings, maps and presentations used by the body at the open or executive session shall be part of the official record of the session in addition to the minutes.
- **Executive Minutes** must be reviewed by the chair periodically to determine if they should be released, or if purpose for executive session is still ongoing to keep minutes confidential.
  - **Attorney General** will assume broad interpretation and enforcement authority over the Open Meeting Law. The District Attorney is no longer involved.
  - **Persons making complaints** of Open Meeting Law violations must file **written complaint** with the **Public Body** first. The **Public Body** then submits a reply to the complainant and to **The Attorney General’s Office.**

Source: Brian Riley, Esq., Kopelman and Paige, P.C. and Rosemary Harvell, Sudbury Town Clerk



# TOWN of WINTHROP

## MOTION

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Article Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

## TEXT OF MOTION

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Signature of Petitioner: \_\_\_\_\_

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Public Body Checklist for Creating and Approving Meeting Minutes**

Issued by the Attorney General's Division of Open Government – March 12, 2013

- Minutes must accurately set forth the date, time, place of the meeting, and a list of the members present or absent. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a).
- Minutes must include an accurate summary of the discussion of each subject. See G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a). The summary does not need to be a transcript, but should provide enough detail so that a member of the public who did not attend the meeting could read the minutes and understand what occurred and how the public body arrived at its decisions.
- The minutes must include a record of all the decisions made and the actions taken at each meeting, including a record of all votes. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a).
- The minutes must include a list of all of the documents and other exhibits used by the public body during the meeting. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(a). Documents and exhibits used at the meeting are part of the official record of the session, but do not need to be physically attached to the minutes. See G.L. c. 30A, §§ 22(d), (e).
- If one or more public body members participated remotely in the meeting, the minutes must include the name(s) of the individual(s) participating remotely, and their reason(s) under 940 CMR 29.10(5) for remote participation. 940 CMR 29.10(7)(b).
- If one or more public body members participated remotely in the meeting, the minutes must record all votes as roll call votes. 940 CMR 29.10(7)(c).
- Executive session minutes must record all votes as roll call votes. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(b).
- The minutes must be approved in a timely manner. G.L. c. 30A, § 22(c). Generally, this should occur at the next meeting of the public body.

**Note that this checklist is intended as an educational guide, and does not constitute proof of compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Checklists are updated periodically, so please confirm that you are using the most current version. For questions, please contact the Attorney General's Division of Open Government at 617-963-2540 or via email at [openmeeting@state.ma.us](mailto:openmeeting@state.ma.us). For more information on the Open Meeting Law, please visit [www.mass.gov/ago/openmeeting](http://www.mass.gov/ago/openmeeting).**

# Public Body Checklist for Posting a Meeting Notice

Issued by the Attorney General's Division of Open Government – March 12, 2013

## Notice Contents

- The notice contains the date, time, and location of the meeting. G.L. c. 30A, § 20(b).
- If the meeting is a joint meeting of several public bodies, the names of all bodies meeting are listed.
- The notice contains all of the topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting. G.L. c. 30A, § 20(b). The topics are sufficiently specific to reasonably advise the public of the issues to be discussed at the meeting, including executive session topics. See G.L. c. 30A, § 20(b); 940 CMR 29.03(1)(b).
- The notice is printed in a legible, easily understandable format. G.L. c. 30A, § 20(b).
- The date and time that the notice is posted is conspicuously recorded on the notice. 940 CMR 29.03(1)(b).

## Notice Publication

- The notice is published at least 48 hours before the meeting, not including Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays. G.L. c. 30A, § 20(b).
- The notice is posted with the proper authority. G.L. c. 30A, § 20(c); 940 CMR 29.03(2)-(6).
  - Local public bodies - Filed with the municipal clerk, who must post it either:
    - In a location conspicuously visible to the public at all hours in or on the municipal building where the clerk's office is located; or
    - If an alternative posting method, such as a website, has been adopted, at the alternative location, with a description of the alternative method posted in a manner conspicuously visible to the public at all hours on or adjacent to the main and handicapped accessible entrances to the building in which the clerk's office is located. Meeting notice must also be available in or around the clerk's office so that members of the public may view the notices during normal business hours.
  - State public bodies – Posted to a website, and a copy sent to the Secretary of State's Regulations Division.
  - Regional public bodies – Posted in every municipality within the region, unless the public body has adopted an alternative notice posting method.
  - County public bodies - Filed with the office of the county commissioners and a copy of the notice is publicly posted in a manner conspicuously visible to the public at all hours in such place or places as the county commissioners shall designate for the purpose, unless the public body has adopted an alternative notice posting method.

**Note that this checklist is intended as an educational guide, and does not constitute proof of compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Checklists are updated periodically, so please confirm that you are using the most current version. For questions, please contact the Attorney General's Division of Open Government at 617-963-2540 or via email at [openmeeting@state.ma.us](mailto:openmeeting@state.ma.us). For more information on the Open Meeting Law, please visit [www.mass.gov/ago/openmeeting](http://www.mass.gov/ago/openmeeting).**

## **Public Body Checklist for Entering Into Executive Session**

Issued by the Attorney General's Division of Open Government – March 12, 2013

- Executive session listed as a topic for discussion on meeting notice, including as much detail about the purpose for the executive session as possible without compromising the purpose for which it is called. See G.L. c. 30A, § 20(b); 940 CMR 29.03(1)(b).
- Public body convened in open session first. G.L. c. 30A, § 21(b)(1).
- Chair publicly announced the purpose for executive session, citing one or more of the 10 purposes found at G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a).
- Chair stated all subjects that may be revealed without compromising the purpose for which the executive session was called. G.L. c. 30A, § 21(b)(3). For example, the Chair identified the party a public body may be negotiating with or the litigation matter the public body will be discussing.
- Chair stated whether the public body will adjourn from the executive session, or will reconvene in open session after the executive session. G.L. c. 30A, § 21(b)(4).
- For Executive Session Purposes 3, 6, and 8:
  - Chair publicly stated the having the discussion in open session would have a detrimental effect on the public body's negotiating position, bargaining position, litigating position, or ability to obtain qualified applicants. G.L. c. 30A, §§ 21(a)(3), (6), (8).
- A majority of members of the body voted by roll-call to enter into executive session. G.L. c. 30A, § 21(b)(2).

**Note that this checklist is intended as an educational guide, and does not constitute proof of compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Checklists are updated periodically, so please confirm that you are using the most current version. For questions, please contact the Attorney General's Division of Open Government at 617-963-2540 or via email at [openmeeting@state.ma.us](mailto:openmeeting@state.ma.us). For more information on the Open Meeting Law, please visit [www.mass.gov/ago/openmeeting](http://www.mass.gov/ago/openmeeting).**

## **Good Advice from Veteran Board members to new Board Chairs re: Public Hearings**

(Comments collected by CPTC)

- ❖ ..... **establish the fact that the Chair is in control** by setting the ground rules for the hearing and sticking by them. Too many public hearings get out of control by a weak chairperson.
- ❖ ..... **make sure that the application process is organized and clear and that the same goes for the hearing.** We recently elected a new chair who has done a great job "getting things together" and it makes the process smoother and fairer.
- ❖ .....**start each public hearing** with a brief statement outlining the powers and purpose of the Board and outline the way the hearing will be conducted. e.g.: read the legal notice, petitioner or representative make presentation, questions from the Board, questions and comments from audience, and direct any questions from those in attendance through the Chair. Read any related correspondence.
- ❖ .....**we have significantly improved attendance** at public hearings by doing a flyer the weekend before. We hand them out at the P.O., the dump, the corner store or wherever else people are gathered that weekend. The flyer usually touches on the issue and answers the most often asked questions.
- ❖ We also individually **do our homework** for the meeting before the hearing by going over the issues and making sure that each one of us on the Planning Board can answer questions convincingly. We also try to anticipate possible problems. For instance, we have one town member who talks loudly, thinks he knows everything... Last hearing we had our only male Board member sit next to him (we always place chairs in a circle) and engage him in conversation before the meeting started. We always scatter ourselves around the circle and the Chair tries to sit to one side of a confrontational person rather than directly in front of them. .. We also go over basic questions of etiquette, what behavior we will and will not allow and then act as a group to see our expectations are met. This takes some of the heat off the chair for controlling the meeting.
- ❖ ..... **Explain the purpose of the hearing** and lay out the rules for participation clearly at the outset and then enforce the rules quietly, forcefully, and fairly.
- ❖ .....**rehearse prior to the hearing.** He/she should know the basics of Roberts Rules, have an outline of the procedure in front of him/her, know what to expect before hand, and just plain rehearse before you walk into the meeting. Nothing beats a bit of planning!
- ❖ ..... **all parties have to sign-in.** If someone comes in late - they should make a point to stop the meeting and have the person sign-in. This eliminates the confusion of who was there and who gets the information that has been requested. All pertinent contact info: Name, Address & Phone. ....

## **Notice to All Municipal Employees**

The following is important information from the State Ethics Commission on the conflict of interest law education and training requirements for municipal employees. You are a municipal employee required to acknowledge receipt of the summary of the law and complete the online training program for municipal employees if any of the following is true:

- You hold any elected office, whether paid or unpaid
- You hold any appointed position, including membership on a board or committee, whether paid or unpaid
- You hold a part-time, seasonal or intermittent position
- You hold an elected or appointed position with an independent municipal agency or district, such as a municipal utility or fire district, or a regional municipal district, such as a regional utility or school district.

If you are unsure about whether these requirements apply to you, please contact your employer or the State Ethics Commission. Please **DO NOT** send your acknowledgment of receipt or your online training completion certificate to the State Ethics Commission.

### **I. Summary of the conflict of interest law for municipal employees**

Your municipal employer will provide you with the summary of the law. You are required to return to your employer an acknowledgment that you received the summary, which your employer will maintain on file. The last page of the summary has an acknowledgment form for you to use. In the alternative, your employer may ask that you acknowledge receipt of the summary by replying to an email or by completing an online form. Please follow the instructions provided by your employer.

### **II. Conflict of interest law online training program for municipal employees**

Your employer will direct you to complete an online training program on the conflict of interest law. Please follow your employer's instructions on how to access the training program. If you are directed to the program on the Ethics Commission website, you may access it at: [www.muniprogram.eth.state.ma.us](http://www.muniprogram.eth.state.ma.us). Before you begin the program, please note the following in order to ensure your ability to obtain an acceptable completion certificate to provide to your employer:

- **Do not use the Google Chrome web browser; Use Internet Explorer, Firefox or Safari. Do not use a mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet, to complete the training program.**
- **Turn off the pop-up blocker in your web browser.** You will not be able to print a completion certificate at the end of the program if you do not first disable the pop-

up blocker. If you are able to proceed through the entire program but your completion certificate does not include your name, position and municipality, you can temporarily disable the pop-up blocker by holding down the "Ctrl" key on your keyboard, and then click the "View Certificate" button on the program.

- **If you will need to print a completion certificate, make sure your computer is connected to a printer.**
- **If your employer asks you to send your certificate electronically, you can save the certificate electronically by converting it to a .PDF file.** You may also take a screen shot of the certificate, or scan a printed copy and save it to your desktop to email to your employer. Contact your employer if you need assistance. **The Ethics Commission does not maintain any record that you completed the program.**
- **Do not click the Course Credit button instead of the Print Certificate button unless you have been directed to do so by your employer.** The Course Credit button is only to be used in connection with learning management systems.

If you are directed to an alternative site to access the training program, such as the municipality's website or a learning management application site, please follow the instructions provided by your employer.

**Notice for charter school employees only:** Charter school employees are state employees for the purposes of the conflict of interest law. Charter school employees should complete the state/county online training program and acknowledge receipt of the summary of the conflict of interest law for state employees.

## ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Object to procedure or personal affront	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"I call for a division of the house"	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	None unless someone objects
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to..."	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).

## PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MAIN MOTION

**NOTE:** Nothing goes to discussion without a motion being on the floor.

### Obtaining and assigning the floor

A member raises hand when no one else has the floor

- The chair recognizes the member by name

### How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

- The member makes the motion: *I move that (or "to") ...* and resumes his seat.
- Another member seconds the motion: *I second the motion* or *I second it* or *second*.
- The chair states the motion: *It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the question?*

### Consideration of the Motion

1. Members can debate the motion.
2. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor.
3. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly
4. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion.
5. Debate can be closed only by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate.

### The chair puts the motion to a vote

1. The chair asks: *Are you ready for the question?* If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote.
2. The chair says: *The question is on the adoption of the motion that ... As many as are in favor, say 'Aye'. (Pause for response.) Those opposed, say 'Nay'. (Pause for response.) Those abstained please say 'Aye'.*

### The chair announces the result of the vote.

1. *The ayes have it, the motion carries, and ...* (indicating the effect of the vote) or
2. *The nays have it and the motion fails*

### WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS

1. Listen to the other side
2. Focus on issues, not personalities
3. Avoid questioning motives
4. Be polite

## HOW TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN MEETINGS

### MAIN MOTION

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.

- After recognition, make a main motion.
- Member: "Madame Chairman, I move that \_\_\_\_\_."

### AMENDING A MOTION

You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by adding the following words \_\_\_\_\_."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words \_\_\_\_\_."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words, \_\_\_\_\_, and adding in their place the following words \_\_\_\_\_."

### REFER TO A COMMITTEE

You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the question be referred to a committee made up of members Smith, Jones and Brown."

### POSTPONE DEFINITELY

You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question until \_\_\_\_\_."

### PREVIOUS QUESTION

You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move the previous question."

### LIMIT DEBATE

You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker."

## **POSTPONE INDEFINITELY**

You want to kill a motion that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madam Moderator, I move to postpone the question indefinitely."

## **POSTPONE INDEFINITELY**

You are against a motion just proposed and want to learn who is for and who is against the motion.

- After recognition, "Madame President, I move to postpone the motion indefinitely."

## **RECESS**

You want to take a break for a while.

- After recognition, "Madame Moderator, I move to recess for ten minutes."

## **ADJOURNMENT**

You want the meeting to end.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to adjourn."

## **PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW A MOTION**

You have made a motion and after discussion, are sorry you made it.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I ask permission to withdraw my motion."

## **CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY**

At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda was adopted. The chairman is not following the order of the approved agenda.

- Without recognition, "Call for orders of the day."

## **SUSPENDING THE RULES**

The agenda has been approved and as the meeting progressed, it became obvious that an item you are interested in will not come up before adjournment.

- After recognition, "Madam Chairman, I move to suspend the rules and move item 5 to position 2."

## **POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE**

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing.

- Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."
- Chairman: "State your point."
- Member: "There is too much noise, I can't hear."

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

You are going to propose a question that is likely to be controversial and you feel that some of the members will try to kill it by various maneuvers. Also you want to keep out visitors and the press.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that we go into a committee of the whole."

## POINT OF ORDER

It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules.

- Without recognition, "I rise to a point of order," or "Point of order."

## POINT OF INFORMATION

You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

- Without recognition, "Point of information."

## POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

You are confused about some of the parliamentary rules.

- Without recognition, "Point of parliamentary inquiry."

## APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR

Without recognition, "I appeal from the decision of the chair."

## Rule Classification and Requirements

Class of Rule	Requirements to Adopt	Requirements to Suspend
Charter	Adopted by majority vote or as proved by law or governing authority	Cannot be suspended
Bylaws	Adopted by membership	Cannot be suspended
Special Rules of Order	Previous notice & 2/3 vote, or a majority of entire membership	2/3 Vote
Standing Rules	Majority vote	Can be suspended for session by majority vote during a meeting
Modified Roberts Rules of Order	Adopted in bylaws	2/3 vote

