Meeting Rules

Guiding Principle: Everyone has the right to participate in discussion if they wish; every member should get a chance to weigh in before anyone may speak a second time. Only urgent matters may interrupt a speaker. Only one thing (motion) can be discussed at a time; related issues should be tabled until the current motion is decided.

A **motion** is the topic under discussion (e.g., “I move that we add a coffee break to this meeting”). After being recognized by the president of the board (or an officer elected to act as chair), any member can introduce a motion when no other motion is on the table. A motion requires a second to be considered. Each motion must be disposed of (passed, defeated, tabled, referred to committee, or postponed indefinitely).

How to do things:

You want to bring up a new idea before the group.

After recognition by the president/chair of the board, present your motion. A second is required for the motion to go to the floor for discussion, or consideration.

You want to change some of the wording in a motion under discussion.

After recognition by the president/chair of the board, move to amend by

- adding words,
- striking words or
- striking and inserting words.

You like the idea of a motion being discussed, but you need to reword it beyond simple word changes.

Move to substitute your motion for the original motion. If it is seconded, discussion will continue on both motions and eventually the body will vote on which motion they prefer.

You want more study and/or investigation given to the idea being discussed.

Move to refer to a committee. Try to be specific as to the charge to the committee.

You want more time personally to study the proposal being discussed.

Move to postpone to a definite time or date.

You are tired of the current discussion.

Move to limit debate to a set period of time or to a set number of speakers. Requires a ⅔ vote.

You have heard enough discussion.

Move to close the debate. Requires a ⅔ vote.

You want to postpone a motion until some later time.

Move to table the motion. The motion may be taken from the table after 1 item of business has been conducted. If the motion is not taken from the table by the end of the next meeting, it is dead. A majority is required to table a motion without killing it.

You believe the discussion has drifted away from the agenda and want to bring it back.

Call for a return to the agenda.

You want to take a short break.

Move to recess for a set period of time.

You want to end the meeting.

Move to adjourn.

You are unsure that the president of the board has announced the results of a vote correctly.

Without being recognized, call for a recount. At this point a roll call vote will be taken.

You are confused about a procedure being used and want clarification.

Without recognition, call for “Point of Information” or “Point of Parliamentary Inquiry.” The president of the board will ask you to state your question and will attempt to clarify the situation.

You have changed your mind about something that was voted on earlier in the meeting for which you were on the winning side.

Move to reconsider. If the majority agrees, the motion comes back on the floor as though the vote had not occurred.

You want to change an action voted on at an earlier meeting.

Move to rescind. If previous written notice is given, a simple majority is required. If no notice is given, a ⅔ vote is required.

You may INTERRUPT a speaker for these reasons only:

- to get information about business – point of information
- to get information about rules – parliamentary inquiry
- if you can't hear, safety reasons, comfort, etc. – question of privilege
- if you see a breach of the rules – point of order
- if you disagree with the president of the board’s ruling – appeal

Other Discussion Etiquette

All discussion should be constructive - statements attempting to build agreement and find solutions. Non-constructive statements should be identified by the chair or other board members, and the discussion returned to a constructive mode.

If the discussion becomes too heated, the motion should be postponed to later in the meeting, or the discussion closed and a vote called.

Quick Reference

Action	Must Be Seconded	Open for Discussion	Can be Amended	Vote Count Required to Pass
Main Motion	√	√	√	Majority
Amend Motion	√	√		Majority
Kill a Motion	√			Majority
Limit Debate	√		√	⅔
Close Discussion	√			⅔
Recess	√		√	Majority
Adjourn	√			Majority
Refer to Committee	√	√	√	Majority
Postpone to Later Time	√	√	√	Majority
Table	√			Majority
Postpone Indefinitely	√	√	√	Majority

~~Shamelessy ripped off~~ Lovingly adapted from The Bodgery, in beautiful Madison, Wisconsin.

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