

“The Met - Rules of Order, Simplified”

(Simple Rules of Parliamentary Procedure based mostly on guidelines developed by U.S. Superior Court Judge Dave Rosenberg)

1. Introduction - The rules of procedure at meetings should be simple enough for most people to understand.

2. Calling the Meeting - For a meeting to legally conduct business, it must be duly called. In the case of a Meeting of Members, notice of the meeting is to be posted in advance of the meeting according to our bylaw. For a meeting of the Board, notice of the meeting must be sent to all members of the Board seven days in advance of the meeting. An exception to the advance notice may be made in an emergency at the discretion of the Chair.

3. Establishing a Quorum - A quorum is defined as the minimum number of members of the body who must be present at a meeting for business to be legally transacted. For the Meetings of Members, a quorum of 35% of members is required only for a vote to call or terminate the Lead or Executive Pastor, or amend the bylaw governing the Corporation. For a meeting of the governing Board, a majority of directors must be present.

4. The Role of the Chair - While all members of the body should know and understand the rules of parliamentary procedure, it is the Chair of the body who is charged with applying the rules in the conduct of the meeting. Since the Chair runs the conduct of the meeting, it is usual courtesy for the Chair to play a less active role in the debate and discussion than other members of the body.

5. The Basic Format for an Agenda Item Discussion - Board and Membership meetings will have a written published agenda. The Chair and the Secretary will publish a draft agenda seven days prior to the Board Meeting and three Sundays prior to a Members' Meeting. The agenda for both Board and Members Meetings is planned by the Executive Committee.

A standard agenda will include Calling the meeting to order; Announcements; Adoption of the agenda; Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting; Old business or outstanding action items; New business, Reception of Reports, and adjournment. A review of decisions at the conclusion of the Board Meeting would be appropriate.

Decisions on each agenda item can be handled by the Chair in the following basic format:

First, the Chair should clearly announce the agenda item number and should clearly state what the agenda item subject is.

Second, the Chair should invite the appropriate person or persons to report on the item, including any recommendation that they might have.

Third, the Chair should invite a motion or a resolution from any member or committee.

Fourth, the Chair should determine if any member of the body wishes to second the motion.

Fifth, the Chair should invite comments. If numerous members indicate a desire to speak to the subject, the Chair may limit the time of public speakers. At the conclusion of the comments, the Chair should announce that input has concluded.

Sixth, if the motion is made and seconded, the Chair should make sure everyone understands the motion. This is done in one of three ways: (1) The Chair can ask the maker of the motion to repeat it. (2) The Chair can repeat the motion. (3) The Chair can ask the secretary to repeat the motion.

Seventh, the Chair takes a vote through a show of hands for yes and for no or by secret ballot. If members of the body do not vote, then they "abstain". Unless the rules of the body provide otherwise, then a simple majority determines whether the motion passes or is defeated. Any member of the Board or the Church may request a vote by secret ballot and such a request will be respected.

Eighth, the Chair should announce the result of the vote and should announce what action (if any) the body has taken.

6. Consensus Decision-Making Model

As an alternative to the above procedure for Board Meetings, the Chairman, with the support of the meeting, could decide that an issue will be decided by consensus. In that case, the call for the motion would still follow steps 2 and subsequent steps in the process discussed above. In a consensus decision, the following steps precede step 2 above, with the final step in the consensus-building to finalize a proposal (motion) that can be voted on:

- Framing the topic – what are we trying to achieve?
- Open Discussion – implications, background, options
- Identifying Underlying Concerns – possible drawbacks, unintended consequences
- Collaborative Proposal Building – main ideas on the table
- Choosing a Direction – narrow the focus
- Synthesizing a Final Proposal – articulating a motion to vote on

7. The Three Basic Motions

There are three motions that are the most common and recur often at meetings:

The basic motion. The basic motion is the one that puts forward a decision for the body's consideration. A basic motion might be: "I move that we create a 5-member committee to plan and put on our annual fundraiser."

The motion to amend. If a member wants to change a basic motion that is before the body, they would move to amend it. A motion to amend might be: "I move that we amend the motion to have a 10-member committee." A motion to amend takes the basic motion which is before the body and seeks to change it in some way. Voting on the amended motion takes precedent.

The substitute motion. If a member wants to completely do away with the basic motion that is before the body, and put a new motion before the body, they would move a substitute motion. A substitute motion might be: "I move a substitute motion that we cancel the annual fundraiser this year."

8. Majority and Super-Majority Votes

A simple majority vote determines a question. A tie vote means the motion fails. Some motions at Members' meetings as specified by our bylaw require a 2/3 vote as a super majority. The Board could decide by a 2/3 vote that a motion before the Board (e.g. calling a Lead Pastor) requires a super majority. In the event of a tie vote, the motion always fails since an affirmative vote is required to pass any motion. At the Board or Members Meeting, the chair would not normally vote, except to break a tie. Minutes of Board meetings will record abstention and dissenting votes.

9. Other Business - Board and Members' Meetings may discuss other business at the discretion of the chair. Other business refers to items not published on the agenda. Motions on other business may be ruled out of order if they are deemed consequential by the chair and the meeting is not adequately prepared for discussion or debate of the motion.

10. Voting by Email or Teleconference (Board only) - At the discretion of the Chair, the Board may conduct a motion and vote by email or teleconference in an urgent situation requiring a decision. The chair or his delegate must attempt to contact all directors. The majority of directors must be available and agree to participate in the discussion by email or telephone. Unless the situation involves dire consequences, a minimum of twenty four hours is required between the notice of the meeting and a decision for all directors to have a chance to be heard.