

ADDENDUM A

RULES OF ORDER of the MID-WILLAMETTE VALLEY AREA SERVICE COMMITTEE

Revised January 2024

A. Decorum Statement

Meetings will be conducted according to these rules of order, adapted from *Roberts Rules of Order*. This time-honored system for conducting business is the clearest way yet devised for getting a maximum amount of business done in a minimum amount of time, regardless of the degree of disagreement among the participants. These rules are meant to be used as tools to help us make orderly collective decisions, in a cooperative, respectful way in the spirit of our Twelve Concepts; please do not use them as weapons against one another. We encourage all participants to become familiar with these rules of order and conduct themselves accordingly. Once the meeting is under way, only one matter will be before the committee at any one time and no other discussion is in order. Please respect the chairperson's right to be in control of the process of this meeting so that you can have the maximum benefit of its content.

B. Debate Limit

Debate is the formal exchange of views on an idea. Unless otherwise specified, debate on both main motions and parliamentary motions is usually limited to two or three pros and two or three cons (speakers for and against the motion). Speakers addressing the motion in debate should be as brief as possible and only speak once per motion.

C. Motions

There are two basic kinds of motions. It is important to understand the difference between them. The two kinds of motions are main motions and parliamentary motions.

1. A Motion is a statement of an idea a committee member wants the committee to put into practice. After being recognized by the chairperson, the member says, "*I move that such and such be done by (this committee, one of its subcommittees, or a particular individual) under these terms*". The person making the motion then speaks briefly about why he or she feels the idea is important; this is called speaking to the intent of the motion. Because the exact wording of all motions must be recorded in the minutes, the maker of the motion should write it out. This is especially important for long or complicated motions.
2. Every motion requires a second-- the backing of another person who either wants the idea put into practice or wants to see further discussion of the idea take place. After one person makes a motion, the chairperson will ask whether the motion has a second. The seconder simply raises a hand, and when recognized by the chair, says, "*I second that*". If nobody seconds a motion, the chair will say, "*The motion dies for lack of a second*". This means that the idea will not be discussed any further because there is not enough interest in it. The committee then moves on to other business.
3. Once a motion has been made, the chairperson may rule it *out of order*. A motion may be ruled out of order for any one of a number of reasons: the main motion goes against the committee's standing policy; it clearly contradicts one of the Twelve Traditions, the Twelve Concepts for N.A. service, and /or the MWVA bylaws; or is inappropriate at the particular point in the meeting at which it is made. *Roberts Rules of Order* can be consulted for more specific examples of motions which are out of order at any given time.
4. Any member of the committee who wishes to challenge a ruling made by the chairperson may appeal that ruling as described below. If no appeal is made, or if the decision of the chair is upheld, the committee moves on to other business.

D. Parliamentary Motions

1. Motion to Amend

- a. Simple majority Required.
- b. Debatable

This is perhaps the most commonly used parliamentary motion. During debate on a motion, if a member feels that the motion would benefit from a change in its language, the member can say, "*I move to amend the motion...*" and suggest specific language changes in the motion. Ordinarily, an amendment must be moved and seconded before it can be debated. When debate on the amendment is exhausted, the body votes on the amendment. Then, debate resumes on the merits of the main motion (as amended, if the amendment has carried). When debate is exhausted on the merits of the main motion itself, a vote is taken, and the body moves on to the next item of business.

If an amendment is offered and the persons making and seconding the original motion accept it, no second vote is required, no debate is called for, and no vote need be taken on the amendment; debate proceeds as if the main motion had been formally amended. This is called a *friendly amendment*.

2. Call for Previous Question

- a. Two-Thirds Majority Required
- b. Not Debatable

This is perhaps the most commonly used *parliamentary* motion. Use it often. This motion is made by a member saying, "*I call for the question,*" or "*I move the previous question*". It is another way of saying, "I move that debate stop right now and that we vote immediately". This is one of the many motions that can be used to prevent needless, lengthy debate once an issue is clearly understood. This motion is in order after any speaker is finished. **YOU NEED NOT BE CALLED ON.** The chair must recognize you when you make this motion, and a vote must be taken with no debate. If two-thirds of the body feels that no more debate is necessary, then it is time to vote and move on.

One point worth making about this motion is that you must be careful not to squelch debate before an issue had been thoroughly aired. Be sure to vote "no" to this motion if you are still confused about the issue at hand or are unsure of how to vote. By allowing debate to continue, we avoid half-baked decisions about half-understood questions. On the other hand, the liberal use of this motion makes it unnecessary for the chair to be heavy-handed in stopping discussion, because the chair knows you will stop it soon enough.

3. Motion to Table

- a. Simple Majority Required
- b. Not Debatable

One way of disposing of a motion that is not ready for a vote is to *table* it. This is done by saying, "*I move that we table this motion until such and such a date/meeting*". This motion is not debatable; if it is made and seconded, it is voted on immediately. If it fails, debate continues on the motion itself. If it passes, the committee moves on to its next item of business. The tabled motion will be included in the committee agenda on the date specified.

4. Motion to Remove from the Table

- a. Simple Majority Required
- b. Not Debatable

A motion that has been tabled can be taken up before the time originally set in the motion to table. This is done by saying, "*I move to remove from the table the motion to such and such*". If this motion passes, the motion that had been tabled becomes the main motion and debate on it begins again. If the motion to remove from the table fails, the body moves on to the next item of business.

5. Motion to Refer

- a. Simple Majority Required
- b. Debatable

Sometimes the committee does not have enough information to make an immediate decision on a main motion. Such motions can be removed from debate and sent to either a standing subcommittee or an ad-hoc committee for further study. This can be done by a member saying, "*I move to refer the motion to the such and such subcommittee*". If the motion is seconded, the body may debate it before voting. If the motion to refer passes, the committee either continues debating the main motion or votes on it.

The Subcommittee to which a motion has been referred will take it up at its next meeting. The subcommittee will report back on what it has come up with at the next meeting of the full committee.

6. Motion to Reconsider or Rescind

- a. Simple Majority Required
- b. Debatable

Sometimes a member feels that a motion the committee has passed will prove harmful. That member can either move to reconsider (reopen for debate and voting) or rescind (void the effect of) the original motion.

There are a few conditions on motions to reconsider or rescind:

- a. The motion must have been passed in either the last or the current meeting.
- b. The member making the motion must have information on the issue that was not available. The Member must have been with the winning side of the original vote.

These limits are placed to protect the committee from having to reconsider again and again the motions it passes while still allowing it to examine potentially harmful situations it has created inadvertently. If any of these requirements are not met, the chairperson will declare the motion out of order.

The motion to reconsider requires a simple majority.

The motion to rescind requires a simple majority, provided that committee members were informed prior to the meeting that such a motion would be made. If prior notice is not given, the motion to rescind requires a two-thirds majority.

7. Request to Withdraw a Motion

- a. Unanimous Consent Required
- b. Not Debatable

Once a motion is made and the debate begins, the maker of the motion may ask to withdraw it. The chair asks if there are any objections. If there is even one objection, the motion stays on the floor and debate resumes. If there are no objections, the motion is withdrawn, and the body moves on.

8. Offering a Substitute Motion

- a. Simple Majority Required
- b. Debatable

A Substitute motion is the same thing as an amendment to a motion. The only difference is that it is offered to entirely replace the original idea, instead of merely revising a portion of it. It is handled in the same way an amendment is handled.

9. Motion to Adjourn

- a. Simple Majority Required
- b. Not Debatable

Any voting member may move to adjourn at any time. This motion is always in order, is not debatable, and requires a simple majority pass. Obviously, frivolous motions to adjourn may be ruled out of order. After all business is finished, the chair may declare the meeting adjourned without a motion.

E. Other Procedures

In addition to parliamentary motions, there are other ways in which members may alter or clarify the proceedings. Here are a few of the most common.

1. Order of the Day

If a committee member feels that business is going too far astray from the original agenda, that member can help get things back on track. The member says, "*I call for the order of the day*". This means, "I move that the chair bring us back on track and conduct the meeting according to procedure, adhering to the agenda". This does not require a second, is not debatable, and does not even require a vote-- the chairperson is obligated to honor the request unless two-thirds of the body tell the chairperson otherwise.

2. Point of Information

If a committee member needs certain information before making a decision about a motion at hand, that member can say at any time to the chairperson, "*Point of Information*". This means, "I have a question to ask", not "I have information to offer". One does not need a second to raise a point of information; it is neither debatable nor to be voted on. The person raising the point of information may ask the question of either the chairperson or another member of the body.

3. Point of Order

If it appears to a committee member that something is happening in violation of the rules of order, and if the chairperson has not yet done anything about it, the member can ask the chairperson for clarification of the rules at any time. The member may simply say out loud, "*Point of order*". The chairperson then says, "*What is your point of order?*" The member then states the question and asks the chairperson for clarification. If the chair agrees that the rules are not being followed, the chair says, "*Your point is well taken*" and restates the appropriate rule. If the chair does not agree, the chair says, "*Overruled*". This decision, as all others, can be appealed.

4. Point of Appeal

Anytime that the chair makes a decision, that decision may be appealed. Any voting member who wishes to appeal a decision may do so by saying, "*I appeal the decision of the chair.*" If the appeal is seconded, the chair then asks, "*On what grounds do you appeal my decision?*" The chairperson then speaks briefly to the intent of the ruling being appealed. The body may then debate the ruling and the merits of the appeal. A vote is taken, requiring a simple majority to overrule the original decision of the chair.

5. Parliamentary Inquiry

If a committee member wants to do something but doesn't know how it fits in with the rules of order, all that member has to do is ask. At any time, a member may simply say out loud, "*Point of parliamentary inquiry.*" The chairperson must immediately recognize the member so that person may ask how to do such and such. The chair will answer the question, possibly referring to a specific passage in this document of explanation. A point of parliamentary inquiry needs no second, is not debatable, and is not voted on.

6. Point of Personal Privilege

If the smoke gets too heavy for you, the air conditioner or heater is on too high, or if there is too much noise in the room, you can ask that something be done about it. If the matter is urgent, you may interrupt the proceedings by saying, "*Point of personal privilege.*" If the matter is not particularly urgent, you are encouraged to wait until the person speaking has finished. Such a request generally requires no second, and the chair must recognize you immediately. State the situation and ask that it be corrected. The request seems reasonable, the chair will accommodate you.

F. Voting Procedures

There are several ways that votes can be taken. The most common used method is the show of hands. With rare exceptions, votes will be taken by a request from the chair to see the hands of all in favor, then all opposed, then all abstaining on each issue. The chair should ask for all three categories every time, just to be thorough, even when the majority is overwhelming.