

Meetings should run on a “Fixed Order of Business.” Consistent meetings allow members to view your organization as organized and timely. This is crucial in member retention.

Order of Business

- A. Reading and Approval of the Minutes
- B. Report of the Officers and Standing Committees
- C. Report of the Special Committees
- D. Special Orders – Important business that is to be considered at this meeting (elections)
- E. **Unfinished Business** – Postponed or pending at the last meeting that needs to be voted on at this meeting
- F. New Business

Optional Headings: Pledge of Allegiance, Roll Call, Approval of the Agenda, Announcements

Is There Any Unfinished Business?

Before the agenda is drafted, the secretary advises the presiding officer of the matters which weren't disposed of from the previous meeting. Also, the parliamentarian advises the presiding officer on the issues that can be carried forward as “**Unfinished Business**”. Therefore, the presiding officer should never ask the members, “*Is there any Unfinished Business?*” That question can be answered only by the secretary and the parliamentarian.

General Rules of Debate

- A. No members may speak until recognized by the chair.
- B. All discussion must be relevant to the immediately pending question.
- C. No member may speak a second time until every member who wishes to speak has had the opportunity to do so.
- D. No member can speak more than twice on a motion.
- E. No member can speak more than ten (10) minutes. *Councils may have other rules regarding time.*
- F. All remarks must be addressed to the chair – no cross debate is permitted.
- G. It is not permissible to speak against one's own motion (but one can vote against one's own motion.)
- H. Debate must address issues not personalities – no one is permitted to make personal attacks or question the motives of other speakers.
- I. The presiding officer must relinquish the chair in order to participate in debate and cannot resume the chair until the pending main question is disposed of.
- J. When possible, the chair should let the floor alternate between those speaking in support and those speaking in opposition to the motion.
- K. When a large number of people wish to speak to a motion it may be advisable for the chair to make a speakers' list.
- L. Members may not disrupt the assembly.
- M. Rules of debate can be changed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote.

	<i>If you want to...</i>	<i>You say to the Chair...</i>	<i>Debatable</i>
1	Stop the meeting for a short time to take a break	I move that we recess for...(state length and time)	YES
2	Ask someone to speak louder, open a window, or anything concerning the comfort and well-being of the people at the meeting	I rise to a question of personal privilege	YES
3	Bring a discussion back to the discussion of main part of the agenda	I call to the orders of the day	YES
4	Get more information on the business being discussed	Request for information	YES
5	Question Chair's decision	I appeal the decision of the Chair	YES
6	Stop a motion you have made	I wish to withdraw the motion	NO
7	Prevent discussion of a motion	I object to the consideration of the motion	NO
8	Have a motion put aside until later because of an urgent matter	I move we lay on the table...(state motion)	NO
9	Bring up a motion that has been tabled	I move the motion be taken from the table	YES
10	End discussion/debate and vote	I move the previous question	NO
11	Put something off until another meeting	I move we postpone this matter until...	YES
12	Ask a committee or a member to study an idea or recommendation	I move we refer this matter to committee	YES
13	To address a violation of the rules	I rise to a point of order or Point of Order	NO

Most decisions and statements require a "second". This means that at least one other member of the organization believes the motion should be considered by the group. Exceptions to these rules are as follows:

1. Statements and motions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 13 do not require a second.
2. Statements and motions 7, and 10 require a vote of (2/3) two-thirds to pass.
3. Motions 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 13 are not debatable.

**Unanimous Consent:
A Presiding Officer's Best Friend**

Decisions can be made by *unanimous consent* or *general consent*. This can be used during small meetings and for routine actions or recommendations of little importance or when no opposition is expressed. The chair can say: "***Is there any objection to the...***" [PAUSE] ***Hearing none, the...is approved.***" No vote is taken.