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MOTIONS

A MOTION is a formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the organization take certain action.

Basic form: Main Motion: The only motion whose introduction brings business before the assembly.

The main motion, once adopted, is the expressed will of the organization. The minutes should state the exact wording of the motion as adopted.

PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW

Only one main motion can be pending at a time.

The same or substantially the same question cannot be considered twice during the same session.

If a main motion has been temporarily disposed of, the same or substantially the same question cannot be brought up while it is still under the control of the assembly.

Once a motion has been adopted, the same question cannot be renewed unless the motion is rescinded or reconsidered.

RULES OF DEBATE

A member who desires to speak in debate must obtain the floor.

Each member has the right to speak twice on the same question on the same day, but cannot make a second speech on the same question so long as any member who has not spoken on that question desires the floor.

No one can speak longer than permitted by the rules of the body, or when no rules have been adopted, for no longer than ten minutes per speech.

Debate must be confined to the merits of the pending question.

Speakers must address their remarks to the chair or through the chair – not to any other member.

Speakers must maintain a courteous tone and avoid injecting personal notes or attacking another member's motives.

Speakers should refer to officers by title only.

Speakers should avoid the mention of other members' names as much as possible.

The presiding officer should not enter into discussion of the merits of the pending question.

The presiding officer cannot close debate so long as any member, who has not exhausted his right to debate, desires the floor, except by order of the body, which requires a two-thirds vote (to close debate).

HANDLING A MOTION

A member makes the motion. (“I move that . . .”)

Another member seconds the motion. (Does not need to be recognized. Secunder is not recorded in the minutes).

The chair states the question. (“It has been moved and seconded that . . .”)

The members debate the motion.

The chair puts the question (takes the vote).

The chair announces the results of the vote.

The action of the assembly may be recorded in the minutes as follows:

“MOTION: Sara Jones moved that Springfield Council of PTAs contribute an additional \$100.00 to the Clothing Bank to help with additional needs from hurricane victims. MOTION CARRIED (or ADOPTED or FAILED).”

Parliamentary Tip of the Month

There is some confusion as to the role of the chair in a meeting as it relates to entering into the business of the organization. Is it true that the chair cannot make motions and cannot vote? NO, it is not true, but has a grain of truth. A chair never loses the ordinary rights of membership, including making motions and voting. However, while acting as the presiding officer of a group larger than a small committee meeting, the duties of chairmanship demand that the chair be impartial. Therefore, the chair should not make motions, and should not vote unless the single vote of the chair will change the outcome, or unless the voting is by ballot. This implies that the chair votes last, if voting by voice or by rising, if at all, to preserve the image of impartiality up to the deciding vote.

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