

Rules of Order

Introduction

Ideally, a union meeting would be like a conversation between free friends: relaxed, easy-going, and free of any rules. While we try and have meetings that are relaxed and easy-going, we have a legal responsibility to conduct the meeting in a manner that ensures to our members that proper procedures have been followed. This is especially true when it comes to spending members' money (ie/ dues), making endorsements (political or other), handling and discussing grievances and electing officers. As a result, our meetings need to have rules as the need to run smoothly, equitably, and democratically. We use rules of order based on "Bourinot's Rules of Order," with a few modifications, and strive for a meeting that is relaxed and easy-going.

Agenda

This sets the topics of discussion for the meeting. For general meetings, agendas are established and handed out in advance of the meeting. It is best that agenda items be sent to the Recording Secretary (and CCd to the President) at least a week in advance. Anyone is free to add an item to the agenda. The agenda may be amended on the floor of the meeting by a majority vote.

Decorum

Discussion at our general meetings should always be respectful. Attacking the character of other members, presuming to know the motives of other members, inflammatory language, and speaking out of order are not allowed. If during the course of a meeting you feel that the tone of the discussion or the actions of another member prevent you from participating, you may bring this to the attention of the Chair or any union officer present. Please refer to the CUPE Local 3906 Equity Statement.

Duties of the Chair

The Chair conducts meetings, preserves order and decorum, and interprets the Rules of Order. The Chair is impartial and may not take part in the debate or vote (unless the vote is tied). The Chair may yield his/her duties temporarily in order to speak on any question before the Local, or to introduce a new question. In case of a tie, the Chair is responsible for a casting tie-breaking vote, though if he or she chooses, can abstain, in which case the motion is lost.

The President or, in his or her absence, the Vice-President, shall take the chair at all membership meetings. In the absence of both the President and Vice-President, the Recording Secretary shall act as chair, and in her or his absence a temporary chair shall be chosen by the local.

Motions

Motions are used to direct action, and take the form of “I move that...” or “Be it resolved that...” *Any member may move a motion at a meeting*, as long as it directly relates to the agenda item under discussion. *Motions must be seconded by another member* prior to discussion commencing. Motions must pass by majority vote (50%+1), with some exceptions (see chart below).

Any member may move a substantive or procedural motion as long as it is ‘in order’ (ie/ doesn’t violate the by-laws or the rules of order). A substantive motion, or one containing a number of considerations, should ideally be prepared in writing and given to the chair, preferably in advance of the meeting.

The mover of a motion is allowed to speak first on the motion followed by the seconder. Questions about the motion are directed to the Chair and then to the mover or person to whom they are addressed. No member, except the Chairperson of a committee making a report or the mover of a resolution, shall speak more than five minutes, or more than once on the same question without the consent of the meeting or until all who wish to speak have had an opportunity. Movers of the motion shall be limited to five minutes, except with the consent of the meeting.

When a member wishes to speak on a question or to make a motion, she or he shall raise her or hand and respectfully address the presiding officer, but, she or he shall not proceed further until recognized by the chair. One doesn’t need to be recognized by the Chair if they are making a point of order or on a question of privilege. When two or more members rise to speak at the same time, the presiding officer shall decide which one is entitled to the floor. Every member, while speaking, shall adhere to the question under debate and avoid all personal or offensive language, as well as any poor reflection on the Local or member thereof. If a member, while speaking, is called to order, she or he shall cease speaking until the point is determined; if it is decided she or he is in order, she or he may again proceed.

Any member having made a motion can withdraw it with the consent of the seconder, except that any motion, once debated, cannot be withdrawn except by a majority vote of those present.

Types of Motions

To Do This:	You Say This:	May I Interrupt the Current Speaker?	Does someone need to second the motion?	Is the motion debatable?	Is the motion amendable?	What Support Does it Need to Pass?
Move a Motion (ie/ Propose to Do Something)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority (50% + 1)
Change an Existing Motion	"I move that the motion be amended to read..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority (50% + 1)
End Debate on a Motion	"I Call the Question"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority (50% + 1)
End the Meeting	"I move to adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority (50% + 1)
Change the Order on the Agenda	"I move the agenda be amended to...."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority (50% + 1)
Postpone Discussion until later in the meeting (tabling)¹	"I move that the motion be tabled"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority (50% + 1)
Postpone Discussion until a future meeting (postponing)	"I move that the motion be postponed until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority (50% + 1)
Have a Motion Studied Before	"I move that the motion be referred to..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority (50% + 1)

¹ You will want to ensure that the motion is picked back up off the table prior to the end of the meeting

Voting On It						
Reconsider a Motion already voted on earlier²	“I move that the motion about...be reconsidered at the next meeting”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 rd majority
Object to something that prevents your participation (ie/ too noisy)	“Point of Privilege (then explain your issue)”	Yes	No	No	No	No vote, chair makes a decision
Seek Clarification from Previous Speaker	“Point of information (then explain your issue)”	Yes, if it is urgent (use your discretion)	No	No	No	No vote, chair makes a decision
Overturn the Ruling of the Chair	“I challenge the chair’s ruling on....”	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 rd majority can agree and overrule Chair
Enquire about the Procedure	“Point of order (then explain your issue)”	Yes	No	Yes, only on the point of order itself	No	No vote, chair makes a decision
Object due to incorrect procedure being used	“Point of order (then explain your issue)”	Yes	No	Yes, only on the point of order itself	No	No vote, chair makes a decision

² The person motioning to reconsider must have voted with the majority on the original motion. In other words, someone who voted against the motion cannot motion to have it reconsidered. In order to have the original motion be reconsidered, written notice must be provided to the President and Recording Secretary in advance of the next meeting.

Commonly Made Motions

Some motions are made more frequently than others. While every 'actionable item' requires a motion (and a seconder), these are some commonly made motions that can serve as a guideline.

Donation

I move that we donate \$ (Insert amount, up to \$500) to (name of organization) in support of (the cause ie/ their on-going strike, their annual fundraiser etc.)

please note that this \$500 limit applies only to executive meetings. There is no limit for items introduced at the GMM

Expense/Purchase

I move that we spend \$ (Insert amount, up to \$500) to purchase (item being bought)

Referring a Grievance to Arbitration

I move that we refer grievance (insert grievance number, provided by Staff or steward) to arbitration, pending discussion from and the support of CUPE national staff and/or legal council

Sending People to Conference

If the total cost is over \$500: I move that the executive endorse sending up to (insert number of people) to (name of Conference or event, held on if date is known)

please note that this secures executive support and will need another motion at GMM, followed by election of the attendees

If the total cost is under \$500: I move that the executive send up to (insert number of people) to (name of Conference or event, held on if date is known)

please note that there will need to be an election of the attendees at the next GMM, unless we for some reason to agree to appoint send a specific person at the executive level

Amending an Existing Motion

I move that we amend the current motion to (insert your related amendment here)

An amendment cannot change the spirit of the original motion. For example, you can amend a motion to donate \$100 to either \$50 or \$150, but you cannot amend it to not donate any money. We need to vote on the amendment, then have a discussion, and then vote on the amended motion