
GoToMeeting | Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
4 So. Eagleville Road, Mansfield, CT

AGENDA
REVISED 9/17/2020

This meeting is physically closed to the public but the public may view the meeting on
livestream at https://townhallstreams.com/towns/mansfield_ct

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **ROLL CALL**
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
August 19, 2020 Special Meeting
4. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. **Adoption of Rules**
 - "A Short Guide to Consensus Building"
 - Democratic Rules of Order
 - Flow chart and Summary of Democratic Rules of Order
 - Appendix 4. Simplified Rules of Order
 - B. **Meeting Schedule**
5. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **Communications**
 - B. **Website**
 - C. **Recommendations to the Town Council**
 - D. **Outreach and Engagement**
 - E. **Creation of Subcommittees**
 - F. **Health Equity Solutions: Racism as Public Health Crisis**
6. **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**
7. **ADJOURNMENT**

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DRAFT MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Moran called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm.

Present: Daggot, Evans, Fried, Lapuk, Lorenz, Mitoma, Nocton, Vaughn

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Mayor Moran provided a welcome, and had all committee members and staff introduce themselves.

3. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE CHARGE

Mayor Moran read the charge of the Commission and the Town Council's July 13, 2020 special instructions.

4. COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION

- Election of Chair

Ms. Lorenz moved and Ms. Fried seconded that Glenn Mitoma serve as Chair of the Human Rights Commission. Motion passed unanimously.

- Adoption of Rules

There was a brief discussion of adopting alternative models to Roberts Rules. The goal is to have a set of rules that aim to build consensus around decision making and a more formal procedure will be discussed at the next meeting. For the time being the Commission will abide by all relevant requirements of state, local, and other laws.

- Adoption of Charge

Ms. Evans moved and Ms. Fried seconded to adopt the charge for the Human Rights Commission. Motion passed unanimously.

- Meeting Schedule

The Commission will be meeting monthly for the time being. Due to constraints of schedules and necessity to live stream meetings it was determined that a poll would be taken outside of the meeting time to schedule the next meeting.

5. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:05 pm Mr. Mitoma moved and Ms. Evans seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

A SHORT GUIDE TO CONSENSUS BUILDING

An Alternative to Robert's Rules of Order for Groups, Organizations and Ad Hoc Assemblies that Want to Operate By Consensus

Let's compare what this **Short Guide** has to say with what **Robert's Rules of Order** requires. Assume that a few dozen people have gotten together, on their own, at a community center because they are upset with a new policy or program recently announced by their local officials. After several impassioned speeches, someone suggests that the group appoint a moderator to "keep order" and ensure that the conversation proceeds effectively. Someone else wants to know how the group will decide what to recommend after they are done debating. "Will they vote?" this person wants to know. At this point, everyone turns to Joe, who has had experience as a moderator. Joe moves to the front of the room and explains that he will follow **Robert's Rules of Order**. From that moment on, the conversation takes on a very formal tone. Instead of just saying what's on their mind, everyone is forced to frame suggestions in the cumbersome form of "motions." These have to be "seconded." Efforts to "move the question" are proceeded by an explanation from Joe about what is and isn't an acceptable way of doing this. Proposals to "table" various items are considered, even though everyone hasn't had a chance to speak. Ultimately, all-or-nothing votes are the only way the group seems able to make a decision.

As the hour passes, fewer and fewer of those in attendance feel capable of expressing their views. They don't know the rules, and they are intimidated. Every once in a while, someone makes an effort to re-state the problem or make a suggestion, but they are shouted down. ("You're not following Robert's Rules!") No one takes responsibility for ensuring that the concerns of everyone in the room are met, especially the needs of those individuals who are least able to present their views effectively. After an hour or so, many people have left. A final proposal is approved by a vote of 55 percent to 45 percent of those remaining.

If the group had followed the procedures spelled out in this **Short Guide to Consensus Building**, the meeting would have been run differently and the result would probably have been a lot more to everyone's liking. The person at the front of the room would have been a trained facilitator -- a person with mediation skills -- not a moderator with specialized knowledge about how motions should be made or votes should be taken. His or her job would have been to get agreement at the outset on how the group wanted to proceed. Then, the facilitator or mediator would have focused on producing an agreement that could meet the underlying concerns of everyone in the room. No motions, no arcane rituals, no vote at the end. Instead, the facilitator would have pushed the group to brainstorm (e.g. "Can anyone propose a way of proceeding that meets all the interests we have heard expressed thus far?") After as thorough consideration of options as time permitted, the facilitator would ask: "Is there anyone who can't live with the last version of what has been proposed?" "If so, what improvement or modification can you suggest that will make it more acceptable to you, while continuing to meet the interests of everyone else with a stake in the issue?"

What's Wrong With Robert's Rules?

Robert's Rules of Order was first published in 1870. It was based on the rules and practices of Congress, and presumed that parliamentary procedures (and majority rule) offered the most appropriate model for any and all groups. The author presumed that the Rules of Order would "assist an assembly in accomplishing the work for which it was designed" by "restraining the individual" so that the interests of the group could be met. [Cite]

In the more than 125 years since Robert's Rules was first published, many other approaches to group work and organizational activity have emerged. The goal of this **Guide** and the full **Handbook** is to codify the "best possible advice" to groups and organizations that prefer to operate with broad support, by consensus, rather than simply by majority rule. When we say consensus, we do not mean unanimity (although *seeking* unanimity is often a good idea). We believe that something greater than a bare majority achieved through voting is almost always more desirable than majority rule. Moreover, the formalism of parliamentary procedure is particularly unsatisfying and often counterproductive, getting in the way of common sense solutions. It relies on insider knowledge of the rules of the game. It does not tap the full range of facilitative skills of group leaders. And, it typically leaves many stakeholders (often something just short of a majority) angry and disappointed, with little or nothing to show for their efforts.

Even with these weaknesses, many social groups and organizations, especially in community settings, adhere to **Robert's Rules** (by referencing them in their by-laws or articles of incorporation) because they have no other option. **The Short Guide to Consensus Building** (and the **Handbook** on which it is based) offers an alternative that builds on several decades of experience with effective consensus building techniques and strategies. No longer must groups and organizations settle for **Robert's Rules of Order** or parliamentary procedure when they would be better off with an alternative that puts the emphasis on cooperation and consensus.

Definitions

In order to explain what has been learned about consensus building over the past several decades, certain terms are important. Indeed, they are central to the presentation in this **Short Guide**. They are not part of everyday language and, thus, require some explanation. The key terms we will define are **consensus, facilitation, mediation, recording, convening, conflict assessment, single text procedure, creating and claiming value, maximizing joint gains, and circles of stakeholder involvement**. These definitions have been developed over the past two decades. There is still not complete agreement among dispute resolution professionals about how they should be defined; so, where important disagreements remain, we will point them out.

Here are the most important definitions:

Consensus (which does not mean unanimity)

Consensus means overwhelming agreement. And, it is important that consensus be the product of a good-faith effort to meet the interests of all stakeholders. The key indicator of whether or not a

consensus has been reached is that **everyone agrees they can live with the final proposal; that is, after every effort has been made to meet any outstanding interests.** Thus, consensus requires that someone frame a proposal after listening carefully to everyone's interests. Interests, by the way, are not the same as positions or demands. Demands and positions are what people say they must have, but interests are the underlying needs or reasons that explain why they take the positions that they do.

Most consensus building efforts set out to achieve unanimity. Along the way, however, it often becomes clear that there are holdouts -- people who believe that their interests will be better served by remaining outside the emerging agreement. Should the rest of the group throw in the towel? No, this would invite blackmail (i.e. outrageous demands that have nothing to do with the issues under discussion). Most dispute resolution professionals believe that groups or assemblies should seek unanimity, but settle for overwhelming agreement that goes as far as possible toward meeting the interests of all stakeholders. It is absolutely crucial that this definition of success be clear at the outset.

Facilitation (a way of helping groups work together in meetings)

Facilitation is a management skill. When people are face-to-face, they need to talk and to listen. When there are several people involved, especially if they don't know each other or they disagree sharply, getting the talking, listening, deciding sequence right is hard. Often, it is helpful to have someone who has no stake in the outcome assist in managing the conversation. Of course, a skilled group member can, with the concurrence of the participants, play this role, too. As the parties try to collect information, formulate proposals, defend their views, and take account of what others are saying, a facilitator reminds them of the ground rules they have adopted and, much like a referee, intervenes when someone violates the ground rules. The facilitator is supposed to be nonpartisan or neutral.

There is some disagreement in various professional circles about the extent to which an effective facilitator needs to be someone from outside the group. Certainly in a corporate context, work teams have traditionally relied on the person "in charge" to play a facilitative role. The concept of facilitative leadership is growing in popularity. Even work teams in the private sector, however, are turning more and more to skilled outsiders to provide facilitation services. In the final analysis, there is reason to believe that a stakeholder might use facilitative authority to advance his or her own interests at the expense of the others.

Mediation (a way of helping parties deal with strong disagreement)

While facilitators do most of their work "at the table" when the parties are face-to-face, mediators are often called upon to work with the parties before, during, and after their face-to-face meetings. While all mediators are skilled facilitators; not all facilitators have been trained to mediate. The classic image of the mediator comes from the labor relations field when the outside "neutral" shuttles back-and-forth between labor and management, each of which has retreated to a separate room as the strike deadline looms. These days, mediators work in an extraordinarily wide range of conflict situations. Mediation is both a role and a group management skill. A group leader may have mediation skills and may be able to broker agreement by putting those skills to use. But, again, when the search for innovative solutions rests in the hands of one of the parties, it is often hard for the

others to believe that the leader/mediator isn't trying to advance his or her own interests at their expense.

The big debate in professional circles is whether any mediator really can (or should) be neutral. The referee in a sporting match must be nonpartisan; he or she can't secretly be working for one team. The referee tries to uphold the rules of the game to which everyone has agreed. This is what is commonly meant by neutrality -- nonpartisanship. However, some people have argued that a mediator should not be indifferent to blatant unfairness. They believe that the mediator should not turn a blind eye to potentially unfair or unimplementable agreements, even if the "rules of the game" have not been violated. Yet, if a mediator intervenes on behalf of a party that may be about to "give away the store," why should the others accept that mediator's help? The answer probably depends on the level of confidence the parties have in the mediator and the terms of the mediator's contract with the group.

Before the parties in a consensus building process come together, mediators (or facilitators) can play an important part in helping to identify the right participants, assist them in setting an agenda and clarifying the ground rules by which they will operate, and even in "selling" recalcitrant parties on the value to them of participating. Once the process has begun, mediators (and facilitators) try to assist the parties in their efforts to generate a creative resolution of differences. During these discussions or negotiations, a mediator may accompany a representative back to a meeting with his or her constituents to explain what has been happening. The mediator might serve as a spokesperson for the process if the media are following the story. A mediator might (with the parties' concurrence) push them to accept an accord (because they need someone to blame for forcing them to back-off the unreasonable demands they made at the outset). Finally, the mediator may be called upon to monitor implementation of an agreement and re-assemble the parties to review progress or deal with perceived violations or a failure to live up to commitments.

"Facilitation" and "mediation" are often used interchangeably. We think the key distinction is that facilitators work mostly with parties once they are "at the table" while mediators do that as well as handle the pre-negotiation and post-negotiation tasks described above. Some professionals have both sets of skills, many do not. **Neither form of consensus build assistance requires stakeholders to give up their authority or their power to decide what is best for them.**

Recording (creating a visual record of what a group has discussed and decided)

Recording involves skills that seek to ensure that a visual record is created that captures the key points of agreement and disagreement during a dialogue. Some facilitators and mediators work in teams with one person specializing in keeping a written record of what the group has discussed and what has been agreed. This can be done on large sheets of paper, often called flipcharts, tacked up in front of a room. With the introduction of new computer and multi-media technologies, this can be done electronically as well. The important thing is to have an on-going visual representation of what the group has discussed and agreed. Unlike formal minutes of a meeting, a group memory may use drawings, illustrations, maps, or other icons to help people recall what they have discussed. Visual records prepared by a recorder ultimately need to be turned into written meeting summaries. Like

minutes, these summaries must be reviewed in draft by all participants to ensure that everyone agrees with the review of what happened.

Convening (bringing parties together)

Convening, or the gathering together of parties for a meeting or a series of meetings, is not a skill that depends on training. An agency or organization that has decided to host a consensus building process (and wants to encourage others to participate) can play an important convening role. In a private firm, for example, a senior official might be the convenor. In the public arena, a regulatory agency might want to convene a public involvement process. There is some disagreement about whether or not the convenor or the convening organization is obliged to stay "at the table" as the conversation proceeds. In general, convening organizations want to be part of the dialogue, but we do not feel they must commit to on-going participation in a consensus building process.

Someone has to finance a consensus building process. When it takes place inside an existing organization, financial arrangements are reasonably straight forward. When consensus building involves a wide range of groups in an ad hoc assembly, it is much less obvious who can and will provide the financial support. If costs are not shared equally by the parties, for example, if they are covered by the convening organization, there are special steps that must be taken to ensure that the outside facilitator or mediator has a contract with the entire group, and not just the convenor, and that the organization(s) providing the financing do not use that sponsorship to dictate the outcome.

Conflict Assessment (an essential convening step)

A conflict assessment is a document that spells out what the issues are, who the stakeholding interests are, where they disagree and where they might find common ground. It is usually prepared by a neutral outsider based on confidential interviews with key stakeholders. There is some disagreement over whether the same neutral who prepared the conflict assessment should then be the one to facilitate or mediate, if the process goes forward. Typically, after interviewing the obvious stakeholders as well as the less obvious participants suggested by the first group, a neutral party will suggest whether or not it makes sense to go forward with a consensus building process, and if so, how the process ought to be structured.

Such an assessment can be presented orally to the convenor, but it is probably better that it be written and distributed in draft to everyone interviewed, before it is finalized. The recommendations resulting from a conflict assessment are not the final word. Only the stakeholders themselves can decide whether or not they want to proceed, and, if so, how they want to organize the effort.

Single Text Procedure (A way to generate agreement)

Roger Fisher, Bill Ury, and Bruce Patton, in their well-known book, **Getting to Yes**, first suggested the phrase "single text" negotiation. Rather than having each party propose its own version of an ideal agreement, a neutral party carries a single version of a possible agreement from party to party seeking "improvements" that will make it acceptable to the next person on the list. (No one needs to know who suggested which modifications along the way.) It is also possible to work together in a meeting to collectively revise a single text, although in that setting it is more likely that some parties will find it harder to accept a proposed "improvement" because they know who it came from.

Creating and Claiming Value (a way to maximize joint gains)

Our colleagues, Howard Raiffa, in his book **The Art and Science of Negotiation**, and Jim Sebenius and David Lax, in their book, **The Manager as Negotiator**, have helped to popularize the idea of "creating value." Most people think of negotiation or problem solving as a "zero sum" game in which a fixed amount is allocated among competing parties. An efficient agreement, therefore, is presumed to be one in which all the gains available have been allocated among the parties. This tends to overlook the fact that there are numerous ways to "make the pie larger" in most situations. Thus, an efficient agreement is really one in which the parties have done all they can to create value as well as allocated all the value they have created.

Lax and Sebenius describe what they call, "the negotiator's dilemma" as the key problem facing everyone in a consensus building or dispute resolution process. How should they manage the tension between creating and claiming value? This tension results from the fact that creating value requires cooperative behaviors while claiming value revolves almost entirely around competition. Given that everyone in a group process has what are called "mixed motives" (that is, they want the pie to be as large as possible, but they also want as much for themselves or their side as they can get), they've got to figure out how much to cooperate and how hard to compete.

There is some disagreement among experienced practitioners about how likely it is that value can be created in every situation. On the one hand, those who are generally optimistic assume that value can almost always be created by trading across issues that parties value differently (e.g., "I'll give you this (which is not that important to me), if you'll give me that (which you don't care that much about)"). Even in a situation in which there appears to be just one issue -- price -- under discussion, there are ways to "fractionate" the issue (i.e., break it into parts that can be traded) or to link that issue to future considerations. Those who are generally pessimistic assume that there are severe restrictions on the possibility of creating value in many situations, either because there's nothing to trade or because asymmetries in power allow one side to demand what it wants or walk away.

We want to differentiate the idea of maximizing joint gain from the simple-minded language of "win-win" negotiating. We are interested in helping parties do better than what no agreement probably holds in store for them. Doing better than one's BATNA (Best Alternative To A Negotiated Agreement) is the way to measure success in consensus building. There are few, if any situations, where everyone can get everything they want (which is what "winning" sounds like to us).

Circles of Stakeholder Involvement (a strategy for identifying representative stakeholders)

A stakeholder is a person or group likely to be affected by (or who thinks they will be affected by) a decision -- whether it is their decision to make or not. When we talk about circles of stakeholders -- we are talking about individuals or groups that want or ought to be involved in decisionmaking, but at different levels of intensity. Some stakeholders are very hard to represent in an organized way. Think about "future generations," for example. Who can represent them in a dialogue about sustainable development? In the law, various strategies have evolved so that surrogates or stand-ins can present hard-to-represent groups (like the members of a class of consumers who have been hurt

by a certain product or like children who have no capacity to speak for themselves in a court proceeding).

Sometimes, it is necessary to caucus all the groups or individuals who think they represent a certain set of stakeholders for the purposes of selecting a representative for a particular dialogue or problem solving purpose. Such meetings typically need to be facilitated by an outside party. Finally, there are various statutes that govern who may and who must be invited to participate in various public and private dialogues. Ad hoc consensus building processes must take these laws into account.

A Complete Matrix

The fold out matrix that follows provides an overview of all the elements contained in the three parts of the **Short Guide**. Part I contains a set of procedures that should be used when a group will be meeting for a short period of time or when a temporary or ad hoc assembly of stakeholders is organized for a single purpose. The procedures in the first Part are organized under five steps. While these are presented in more or less chronological fashion, they do not necessarily need to be applied sequentially.

Part II of the **Guide** focuses on the interaction of participants involved in a permanent group or organization. The suggestions in Part II build on (and are presented in contrast to) what we have suggested for temporary or ad hoc assemblies. Part II deals with consensus building in situations where the parties or their organizations expect to interact indefinitely -- like the Board of Directors of a company or the members of a city council. Even if the participants change (and they surely will over time), everyone knows that whether they personally stay involved or not, others who come after them will have to live with the impact of what occurred and they take responsibility for the long-term interest of the organization.

Part II covers the same five steps as Part I but highlights several important differences between temporary and permanent situations. Also, a sixth step is added, when groups are on-going, to take account of the need to capture whatever has been learned so that the organization can continue to improve.

Part III of the **Short Guide** anticipates serious obstacles to consensus building and suggests procedures for handling them, regardless of whether the participants are involved in an ad hoc or a permanent interaction.

PART I.

HELPING AN AD HOC ASSEMBLY REACH AGREEMENT

We have identified five steps in the consensus building process: convening, clarifying responsibilities, deliberating, deciding, and implementing agreements. The key problems for ad hoc assemblies (as opposed to permanent entities) are organizational. Selecting the relevant stakeholders, finding individuals who can represent those interests effectively getting agreement on groundrules and an agenda , and securing funding are particularly difficult when the participants have no shared history and may have few, if any, interests in common.

STEP 1 -- CONVENING

1.1 Initiate a Discussion About Whether to Have a Consensus Building Dialogue

Every consensus building effort needs to be initiated by someone or some group in a position to bring the key stakeholders together.

1.2 Prepare a Written Conflict Assessment

1.2.1. Assign Responsibility for Preparing the Conflict Assessment

Responsibility for preparing a written conflict assessment should be assigned to a neutral party. A contract for this work should be made between the convening entity and a neutral service provider. The convenor should consult informally with other key parties in making the selection of a qualified conflict assessor.

1.2.2. Identify a First Circle of Essential Participants

The convenor and the conflict assessor should identify the obvious categories of stakeholders with an interest in the issue or the dispute, as well as individuals or organizations who can represent those views. These are the individuals who should be interviewed at the outset of a conflict assessment. Each interviewee should receive a promise that nothing he or she says will be attributed to them or their organization, orally or in writing.

1.2.3 Identify a Second Circle of Suggested Participants

The first set of interviewees in a conflict assessment process should be asked to help identify a second round of individuals or organizations who might be able to contribute to or in some way block a consensus building effort. These individuals and organizations should be interviewed in the same manner as the first circle of participants.

1.2.4 Complete Initial Interviews

When individuals are interviewed for the assessment, whether by phone or in person, as part of a conflict assessment, they ought to be given an opportunity to review a written summary of what the assessor

compiles as a result of the interview.

1.2.5 Prepare a Draft Conflict Assessment

A draft conflict assessment ought to include a clear categorization of all the relevant stakeholders, a summary of the interests and concerns of each category (without attribution to any individual or organization), an analysis of what the agenda, timetable and budget might be for a consensus building process, given the results of the interviews, and a proposal as to whether or not the assessor thinks it is worth going forward with a consensus building process.

1.2.6 Prepare a Final Conflict Assessment

Everyone interviewed as part of the preparation of a conflict assessment ought to receive a copy of the draft conflict assessment and be given adequate time to offer comments and suggestions. The assessor ought to use this period as an occasion to modify the final conflict assessment in a way that will allow all the key stakeholders to agree to attend at least an organizational meeting, if a recommendation to go forward is accepted by the convening entity. The final conflict assessment ought to include an appendix listing the name of every individual and organization interviewed. In appropriate instances, the final conflict assessment ought to become a public document. If key stakeholding groups refuse to participate, even in just one organizational discussion to discuss the conflict assessment, the process can not go forward.

1.2.7 Convene an Organizational Meeting to Consider the

Recommendations of the Conflict Assessment

1.3 If a Decision Is Made to Proceed, Identify

Appropriate Representatives

Stakeholder groups and organizations should be invited to identify their own spokespeople. These are the individuals who should be invited to the organizational session.

1.3.1 Identify Missing Actors Likely to Affect

the Credibility of the Process

If a decision to proceed is made at the organizational meeting, everyone in attendance ought to review the make-up of the group and try to identify missing actors whose absence would be likely to affect the credibility of a consensus building process. Those in attendance (in response to invitations from the convening entity), should work together to identify ways of identifying appropriate individuals to add to the group.

1.3.2 Use Facilitated Caucusing If Necessary

If the members of a stakeholder category are quite diffuse, or if the representation (i.e. selection of a spokesperson) of one category of stakeholders is challenged by another, a process of facilitated caucuses should be initiated. At such sessions – either by invitation (from the convenor) or on an open basis – individuals or groups willing to represent a category of stakeholders can be selected by the relevant stakeholders. They should use super-majority voting (e.g. 65%) or select a representative by unanimous acclaim. It is often helpful to have a neutral facilitator or mediator organize and manage such caucusing

sessions. Facilitated caucusing is the best way for a category of stakeholders to answer a charge made by others that their selection of a representative was flawed.

1.3.3 Use Proxies to Represent Hard-to-Represent

Groups

If the participants in a consensus building process decide that it is important to find a way to represent a hard-to-represent or diffuse group, they may decide to invite proxy individuals or organizations to represent those interests. Representation by proxy must be agreed upon by all the other groups and individuals who agreed to participate, as must the selection of specific individuals or organizations who agree to accept such an assignment. Proxy representatives must agree to do their best to "speak for" a hard-to-represent category of stakeholders.

1.3.4 Identify Possible Alternate Representatives

If a consensus building process is likely to extend over several months or years, participants may decide to appoint alternates to stand in for them on occasion. The role and responsibility of alternates should be carefully defined in writing. Alternates who attend on a regular basis, when their regular representative is also present, may be asked to play a less active role or to accept other restrictions on their involvement.

1.4 Locate the necessary funding

There are almost always costs associated with convening, preparing a conflict assessment, and implementing a consensus building process, if that is what the stakeholders decide to do. Sometimes these costs can be subsumed within the existing budgets of the convenor and the participating stakeholders. Other times, funds have to be raised specifically to underwrite the consensus building effort.

STEP 2 -- CLARIFYING RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Clarify the Roles of Facilitators, Mediators, and

Recorders

2.1.1 Select and Specify Responsibilities of a Facilitator

or a Mediator

If a trained facilitator or mediator is going to be asked to assist the parties in a consensus building effort, it is important to select an appropriate individual acceptable to all the key stakeholders. It is also important to clarify, in writing, the facilitator's or mediator's responsibilities to the group. These services can be provided by an individual or a team.

2.1.2 Select and Specify the Responsibilities of a

Recorder

A qualified recorder, if one is to be hired, must work in tandem with a facilitator or a mediator. The recorder also needs a written indication of his or her obligations to the group. Usually, the recorder works with any other neutrals involved to produce draft meeting summaries. In general, written summaries of all group decisions, as well as highlights of the dialogue (i.e., points of agreement and disagreement), should be circulated after each meeting for group approval.

2.1.3 Form An Executive Committee

If there are more than two categories of stakeholders involved in a consensus building effort (i.e., environmentalists, business interests, unions, etc.), it is useful to appoint an Executive Committee (with one person selected by each major category of stakeholders) to make decisions between meetings, approve the allocation of funds to support the effort, and be available to the facilitator or the mediator if logistical decisions must be made between meetings.

2.1.4 Consider the Value of a Chair

Even if a facilitator or a mediator is involved, it is helpful to appoint a chair (either of the Executive Committee or of the full assembly). This position can rotate if the dialogue goes on for an extended period. The primary responsibility of the Chair is to represent the process to the world-at-large. It is also appropriate to assign this function to the mediator or the facilitator and to forgo the appointment of a Chair.

2.2.6 Set Rules Regarding the Participation of

Observers

Some consensus building processes will proceed on a confidential basis, depending on the content of the discussions. Many will proceed in a very public way. If sessions are open to the public, the rights and obligations of observers should be spelled out in writing as part of the ground rules endorsed by the participants. It is not inappropriate to allow observers a brief comment period at the end of some or all formal sessions. In some instances, uninvited observers may even be offered a larger role. It is crucial that rules governing the participation of observers be posted prior to any and all meetings and that they be enforced consistently by the facilitator, mediator, or chair. It is also important to take account of legal requirements regarding the used of closed meetings when public officials are involved.

2.3 Set an Agenda and Ground Rules

2.3.1 Get Agreement on the Range of Issues to be

Discussed

If the agenda for a consensus building process is drawn too narrowly, some potential participants may have a good reason not to come to the table. If it is drawn too broadly, other participants will become discouraged, and may drop out, because the task facing the group seems overwhelming. While it is possible to add issues along the way (in response to new developments in the dialogue) and with the agreement of the full group, it is important to get concurrence on a sufficiently rich but manageable agenda at the outset. The completion of a conflict assessment, based on confidential interviews, is the best way to pinpoint the most important items to include on a consensus building agenda.

2.3.2 Specify a Timetable

It is important to be realistic about the amount of time it will take for a group that is not used to working together to reach agreement on the items to include on a complex work agenda. At the outset, a great deal of a group's time is usually spent clarifying procedural matters. Under such circumstances it is often necessary to "go slow to go fast." That is, it is not a good idea to rush through early procedural matters to get to the most difficult issues on the agenda. Early exchanges on peripheral issues may offer a good opportunity to begin building relationships and establishing trust. Success along these lines will provide a foundation on which the group can build. It is important for the full group to participate in setting a realistic timetable. In some instances, a group might be forced to set a target date for completion, and then build a work plan that fits that timetable.

2.3.3 Finalize Procedural Ground rules

The final version of the conflict assessment should contain a set of suggested ground rules. These should address procedural concerns raised in the interviews undertaken by the assessor. The suggested ground rules should be reviewed and ratified at the opening organizational meeting. Most ground rules for consensus building cover a range of topics including (a) the rights and responsibilities of participants, (b) behavioral guidelines that participants will be expected to follow, (c) rules governing interaction with the media, (d) decision-making procedures, and (e) strategies for handling disagreement and ensuring implementation of an agreement if one is reached.

2.3.4 Require All Participants to Sign the Ground Rules

At the outset of any consensus building process, every participant should be expected to sign the ground rules agreed to by the group. Copies of these ground rules should be sent directly to every organization or group that has designated a representative to participate in the process. Observers should be asked to sign the ground rules before they are allowed to attend meetings – even those open to the public.

2.3.5 Clarify the Extent to Which Precedents Are or Are

Not Being Set

One of the reasons people engage in consensus building efforts is to formulate tailored solutions to whatever problem, issue or dispute they face. It is important that the participants in these processes feel free to generate plans or solutions that fit their unique circumstances. If everyone agrees that no precedent will be set, it is usually easier to convince reluctant groups or organizations to participate. Moreover, this allows future consensus building processes to proceed unimpeded.

2.4 Assess Computer-based Communication Options

Determine how computer technologies will be used during deliberations. Create e-mail mailing lists, web-based conferencing capabilities, and listservers as needed. Assess participant access to computers and internet connections and respond appropriately to any disparities that exist.

2.5. Establish a Mailing List

Once a consensus building process is underway, some groups or individuals eligible to participate may decide not to attend on a regular basis, or not to participate at all. These individuals, as well as any other members of a stakeholder organization or category, should be added to a mailing list so that they can receive either periodic progress reports or regular meeting summaries.

STEP 3 --- DELIBERATING

3.1 Pursue Deliberations in a Constructive Fashion

3.1.1 Express Concerns in an Unconditionally

Constructive Manner

It is important to maintain a problem-solving orientation, even in the face of strong differences and personal antagonism. It is in every participant's best interest to behave in a fashion they would like others to follow. Concerns or disagreement should be expressed in an unconditionally constructive manner. That is, there should be a premium on reason-giving and explanation. Those who disagree with the direction in which the discussion is headed should always explain the basis for their disagreement.

3.1.2 Never Trade Interests for Relationships

No one in a consensus building process should be pressed to give up the pursuit of their best interests in response to the "feelings" or the "best interests" of the group. Thus, no one should be asked to give up their interests to ensure harmony or the success of the process.

3.1.3 Engage in Active Listening

Participants in every consensus building process should be encouraged (indeed, instructed, if necessary) to engage in what is known as active listening – a procedure for checking to be sure that communications are being heard as intended.

3.1.4 Disagree Without Being Disagreeable

Participants in every consensus building process should be instructed to "disagree without being disagreeable." This dictum should probably be included in the group's written ground rules.

3.1.5 Strive for the Greatest Degree of Transparency

Possible

To the greatest extent possible, consensus building processes should be transparent. That is, the group's mandate, its agenda and ground rules, the list of participants and the groups or interests they are representing, the proposals they are considering, the decision rules they have adopted, their finances, and their final report should, at an appropriate time, be open to scrutiny by anyone affected by the group's recommendations.

3.2 Separate Inventing From Committing

3.2.1 Strive to Invent Options for Mutual Gain

The goals of a consensus building process ought to be to create as much value as possible and to ensure that whatever value is created be divided in ways that take account of all relevant considerations. The key to creating value is to invent options for mutual gain. This is best done by separating inventing from committing – engaging in cooperative behaviors that "make the pie larger" before giving in to competitive pressures "to get the most for one's self."

3.2.2 Emphasize Packaging

The best way to create value is by packaging multiple issues and sub-issues. If parties "trade" items or options that they value differently and bundle them together properly, they ought to be able to help most, if not all, stakeholders exceed the value of their most likely "walk away" option. If that is not possible, than no agreement is likely; indeed, agreement may well be inappropriate.

3.2.3 Test Options by Playing the Game of "What If?"

The most important technique for creating value is the exploration of options and packages using "what if?" questions. Sometimes these are best asked by a neutral party (and sometimes they may need to be asked confidentially) before stakeholders will feel comfortable answering them.

3.3 Create SubCommittees and Seek Expert Advice

3.3.1 Formulate Joint Fact-finding Procedures

If left to their own devices, the participants in a consensus building process will produce their own version of the relevant facts (or technical data) consistent with their definition of the problem and their sense of how the problem or issue should be handled. This often leads to what is called "adversary science." It is better if all the participants can agree on the information that ought to be used to answer unanswered or contested questions. An agreement on joint fact finding should specify (a) what information is sought, (b) how it should be generated (i.e., by whom and using which methods), and (c) how gaps or disagreements among technical sources will be handled. It is perfectly reasonable for there to be agreement on facts while substantial disagreement on how to interpret such facts remains.

3.3.2 Identify Expert Advisors

It is often helpful to supplement ad hoc consensus building discussions with input from expert advisors. Such individuals should be selected with the concurrence of the participants, and in response to the needs of the group. Typically, a neutral party assisting the process should be in touch with expert advisors before, during, and after their involvement to ensure that they understand the objectives of the consensus building effort and that they offer their advice in a form that will be most helpful to the group.

3.3.3 Organize Drafting or Joint Fact-finding

SubCommittees

Joint fact-finding should be handled by a subcommittee or a working group appointed by the full set of participants in a consensus building process. Fact finding should be viewed as an opportunity to learn more about the issues under discussion; thus, not only the most technically sophisticated participants should be assigned to these sub-committees or working groups. Subcommittees should have a clear mandate. They should not be decision-making bodies; instead, they should bring information and alternative policy choices back to the full group.

3.3.4 Incorporate the Work of SubCommittees or Expert

Advisors

The findings of subcommittees or expert advisors should be viewed as only one input into a consensus building process. Differences in interpretation as well as conflicting interests among the participants often mean that the work of sub-committees or expert advisors will not lead to agreement. It is important, nevertheless, to tap the best available technical sources.

3.4 Use A Single Text Procedure

3.4.1 Draft Preliminary Proposals

Often, the best way to focus a consensus building dialogue is to provide a set of preliminary proposals to focus the conversation. Each set of proposals should deal with an item on the agenda and present the widest possible range of ideas or options. Preliminary proposals can be prepared by the facilitator or the mediator. They can also be prepared by a proposal drafting sub-committee that includes members of each key category of stakeholders. Preliminary proposals are meant to focus conversation, not end it.

3.4.2 Brainstorm

Brainstorming is an important step in a consensus building process. Whether undertaken by a sub-committee or the full group, brainstorming should seek to expand the range of proposals considered with regard to each agenda item. Brainstorming should also be used to generate packages that incorporate trade-offs among agenda items.

3.4.3 Withhold Criticism

The best way to encourage brainstorming is to adopt a formal ground rule that urges participants to withhold criticism when new options are suggested. The withholding of criticism should not be viewed as an indication of support or agreement; it is, however, the best way to encourage creative thinking.

3.4.4 Avoid Attribution and Individual Authorship

Consensus building is best viewed as a group enterprise. When individuals or a single group insists on claiming authorship of a particular proposal (i.e. in an effort to enhance its standing with its own constituents), they are likely to provoke criticism or counter-proposals. Consensus is much more likely to emerge if participants avoid attributing or claiming authorship of specific ideas or packages.

3.4.5 Consolidate Improvements in the Text

As the dialogue proceeds, participants should focus on "improving" a consolidated text prepared by a drafting subcommittee or a neutral party. Avoid competing texts that seek to maximize the interests of one or

just a few parties. When changes to a text are made, do not indicate where they originated. All revisions to the single text need to be acceptable to the group as a whole.

3.4.6 Search for Contingent Options

As the discussion proceeds, participants should search for ways of bridging differences by suggesting contingent agreements. Using an "if...then" format is likely to be helpful. That is, if a group is opposed to the prevailing draft of a recommendation or a consolidated agreement, then it should suggest the changes necessary for it to accept that proposal.

3.5 Modify the Agenda and Ground Rules (if necessary)

3.5.1 Reconsider the Responsibilities, Obligations and Powers of Sponsoring Agencies and Organizations

During the course of a consensus building process it is not inappropriate to re-visit the assignment of responsibilities and obligations of sponsoring agencies and organizations set by the participants at the outset. Changes should only be made if consensus can be reached on suggested revisions.

3.5.2 Reconsider the Obligations and Powers of Late

Arrivals

During the course of a consensus building process, as unanticipated issues or concerns arise, it may be desirable to add new participants. With the concurrence of the group, representatives of new stakeholding groups – attracted or recruited because of the emerging agreement or shifts in the agenda – can be added. The obligations and powers of late comers (especially with regard to requesting that issues already covered be reconsidered), should be reconsidered by the full group upon the arrival of new participants. Changes in the agenda or the ground rules should only be made with the concurrence of all parties.

3.6 Complete Deliberations

STEP 4 --- DECIDING

4.1 Try to Maximize Joint Gains

4.1.1 Test the Scope and Depth of any Agreement

The results of every effort to maximize joint gain should be continuously assessed. This is best accomplished by having a neutral party ask whether the participants can think of any "improvements" to the proposed agreement. In addition, it is important to ask whether each representative is prepared to "sell" the proposal to his or her constituents and whether each can "live with" the group's recommendation.

4.1.2 Use Straw Polls

Even groups that agree to operate by consensus (or unanimity for that matter!) may find straw polls helpful for testing the scope of agreement along the way. When such polling devices are employed, it is important

each time they are used, to explain that the results are intended to explore the scope agreement that has or has not been reached, and not to seek commitments.

4.1.3 Seek Unanimity

It is appropriate to seek unanimity within the time frame set by a consensus building group.

4.1.4 Settle for An Overwhelming Level of Support

It is appropriate to settle for an overwhelming level of support for a final recommendation or decision, if unanimity can not be achieved within the agreed upon time frame. While it is not possible to specify an exact percentage of support that would constitute an overwhelming endorsement, it would be very hard to make a claim for consensus having been reached if fewer than 90% of the participants in a group were not in agreement.

4.1.5 Make Every Effort to Satisfy the Concerns of

Holdouts

Prior to making its final recommendation or decision, a consensus building group should make one final attempt to satisfy the concerns of any remaining holdout(s). This can be done by asking those who "cannot live with" the final recommendation or decision to suggest a modification to the package or tentative agreement that would make it acceptable to them without making it less attractive to anyone who has already expressed support for it.

4.2 Keep a Record

4.2.1 Maintain a Visual Summary of Key Points of

Agreement and Disagreement

It is important for a recorder to keep a written record of a consensus building dialogue. This is best done in a form that is visually accessible to all participants throughout the process. It is not necessary to keep traditional minutes of all discussions as long as key points of agreement and disagreement are captured in writing.

4.2.2 Review Written Versions of All Decisions Before

They Are Finalized

A written draft of the final report of a consensus building process should be circulated to all participants before they are asked to indicate support or opposition.

4.2.3 Maintain a Written Summary of Every Discussion

For Review by all Participants

A written summary of every formal group discussion should be kept, even after a final report is produced by a consensus building group. Such an archive can be important to the credibility of the group's recommendation and can help to clarify the group's intent should problems of interpretation arise later.

STEP 5 -- IMPLEMENTING AGREEMENTS

5.1 Seek Ratification by Constituencies

5.1.1 Hold Representatives Responsible for Canvassing Constituent Responses to a Penultimate Draft

The participants in a consensus building process should be asked to canvass the response of their constituents to the draft of the group's final report. Copies of the draft should be circulated with sufficient time for the members of the group or organization to let their representative know how the report might be improved.

5.1.2 Hold Representatives Responsible for Signing

and Committing to a Final Agreement in their

Own Name

At the conclusion of a consensus building process, the participants should be asked to endorse the final report if there is one. Representatives should be responsible for endorsing the proposal in their own names even if their organization or group is not able to commit collectively. A signature should be interpreted as a commitment to do everything possible to assist with implementation, if an agreement was reached.

5.1.3 Include the Necessary Steps to Ensure that Informal Agreements are Incorporated or Adopted by Whatever Formal Mechanisms

are Appropriate

Often the results of a consensus building process are advisory. Sometimes they must be ratified by still another set of elected or appointed officials. Any agreement resulting from a consensus building process should contain within it a clear statement of the steps that will be taken to ensure that the informal agreement will be incorporated or adopted by whatever formal means are appropriate. For example, informally negotiated agreements can be stipulated as additional conditions when a permit granted by a government agency. This must be done according to the rules of the permitting agency.

5.1.4 Incorporate Appropriate Monitoring

Procedures

Negotiated agreements must often be monitored to ensure implementation. Responsibilities and methods for overseeing implementation should be specified in the written report of any consensus building group.

5.1.5 Include Re-opener or Dispute Resolution

Procedures

Any agreement reached by a consensus building group should include within it a mechanism by which the participants can be re-assembled if a change in circumstances or a failure on the part of one or more

participants to live up to their commitments suggests that another meeting is necessary. Appropriate dispute resolution procedures (and ways of activating them) should be described in the agreement or report.

PART II

HELPING A PERMANENT GROUP OR ORGANIZATION REACH AGREEMENT

The same five consensus building steps apply when dealing with permanent groups, although there is a sixth step -- organizational learning -- that needs to be added. Permanent groups or organizations are likely to have well established decision-making procedures. This can be an advantage in that less time should be needed to reach agreement on how the group should operate. At the same time, resistance to change may be a new source of difficulty. An organization that has historically operated in a top-down management style, may have a hard time adapting to a consensus building approach. A shared commitment to the long-term well being of the organization, however, can provide common ground on which to build.

STEP 1 -- CONVENING

Key Differences:

- Less of a problem getting started, routines are known
- Less mistrust of the convenor's motives (all part of the same group)
- Greater clarity about who needs to be involved
- Less difficulty launching a conflict assessment
- More experience with each other to build on

STEP 2 -- CLARIFYING RESPONSIBILITIES

Key Differences:

- Less inclined to use an external professional neutral unless an impasse is reached

- Greater acceptance of the legitimacy of other participants
- Less of a problem to clarify responsibilities because of past experience

STEP 3 -- DELIBERATING

Key Differences:

- More experience dealing with each other; could cut either way (making it easier or harder to reach consensus depending on past experience)
- More experienced with consensus building techniques
- Presumably improvements have been made based on past experience
- Involvement in long-term relationship might lead parties to put greater value on maximizing joint gains

STEP 4 -- DECIDING

Key Differences:

- Greater respect for needs of other parties; awareness that each person could be the odd-person-out the next time; may lead to an emphasis on reason giving and an appeal to objective criteria
- Commitments may be viewed with less skepticism because long-term relationships are in play (not necessarily)
- Impossible not to set at least informal precedent

STEP 5 -- IMPLEMENTING AGREEMENTS

Key Differences:

- Long term relationships increase the focus on implementation
- Dispute resolution procedures may already be in place
- Past experience with each other may make it harder to get believable implementable agreements

STEP 6 -- ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Key differences:

- Clear need to invest in Organizational Learning
- Payoff of organizational development work is clear

Invest in Organizational Learning

For groups that will continue to work together, it is important to set aside time to reflect collectively on what can be learned from each episode in the group's history. Time should be set aside, periodically, to determine which features of the group's activities have worked well and which have not. Organizational learning can be assisted by qualified neutral parties.

Invest in Organizational Development

The lessons of organizational learning will not lead automatically to increased group capacity or improved decision-making. Training and other organizational development efforts must be made. These will require the time and attention of all participants to be effective. Organizational development can be assisted by qualified outside consultants.

PART III.

DEALING WITH THE BARRIERS TO CONSENSUS BUILDING

Both temporary and permanent groups and organizations are likely to encounter certain predictable obstacles to consensus building. It is important that both groups handle these obstacles with great care.

7.0 Respond To Disruptive Behavior

If a participant or an observer of a consensus building process acts in a disruptive manner, the facilitator, mediator, or chair – whoever is managing the meeting – should remind that individual of the procedural ground rules they signed. If that does not result in the desired change in their behavior, they should ask the participants with the closest ties to the disruptive party to intercede on behalf of the group. If that, too, fails to deter the disruptive individual, it may make sense to adjourn the meeting temporarily and allow the group as a whole to convince the disruptive person to either alter his or her behavior or leave. If that fails as well, participants should not be afraid to contact the relevant civil authorities and ask for assistance in removing the individual involved.

8.0 Accept An Advisory Role if that is All that is

Allowed

In many instances, both in the public arena and inside private organizations, consensus building groups are often granted only advisory, not decision-making, power. Formal decision-making may still reside with elected or appointed officials or officers. This need not diminish the contribution that a consensus building effort can make. From the standpoint of a decision-maker, it is always helpful to know which options or packages are likely to have the full support of all the relevant stakeholders. Moreover, if those with decision-making

authority are involved in a consensus building effort – or, at last, kept apprised of its progress – they may feel sufficiently comfortable with the result to endorse it.

9.0 Clarify the Presumed Liability of the Participants

If the participants in a consensus building process are dealing with confidential or proprietary information that could create legal liability, the scope of this liability should be stated in the invitation to participate extended by the convenor, and be explained in the ground rules governing the group's operations.

10.0 Clarify Confidentiality Arrangements

There are legitimate reasons for consensus building processes, however public they may be, to adopt confidentiality arrangements. Both the arrangements and the rationale for adopting them should be spelled out in the group's ground rules. These arrangements must take account of open meeting and sunshine laws if public officials are involved.

11.0 Clarify Legal Obligations if the

Participants are Simultaneously Involved in

Pending Litigation

If a consensus building effort is meant to resolve issues that are simultaneously the subject of litigation, the participants in the informal dialogue should be apprised (by counsel) of their legal rights and the impact that informal consensus building conversations might have on the legal proceedings, and vice versa. They should also approach the judge or adjudication body to talk about the best way of coordinating the two processes.

12.0 Clarify the Extent to Which Precedents Are

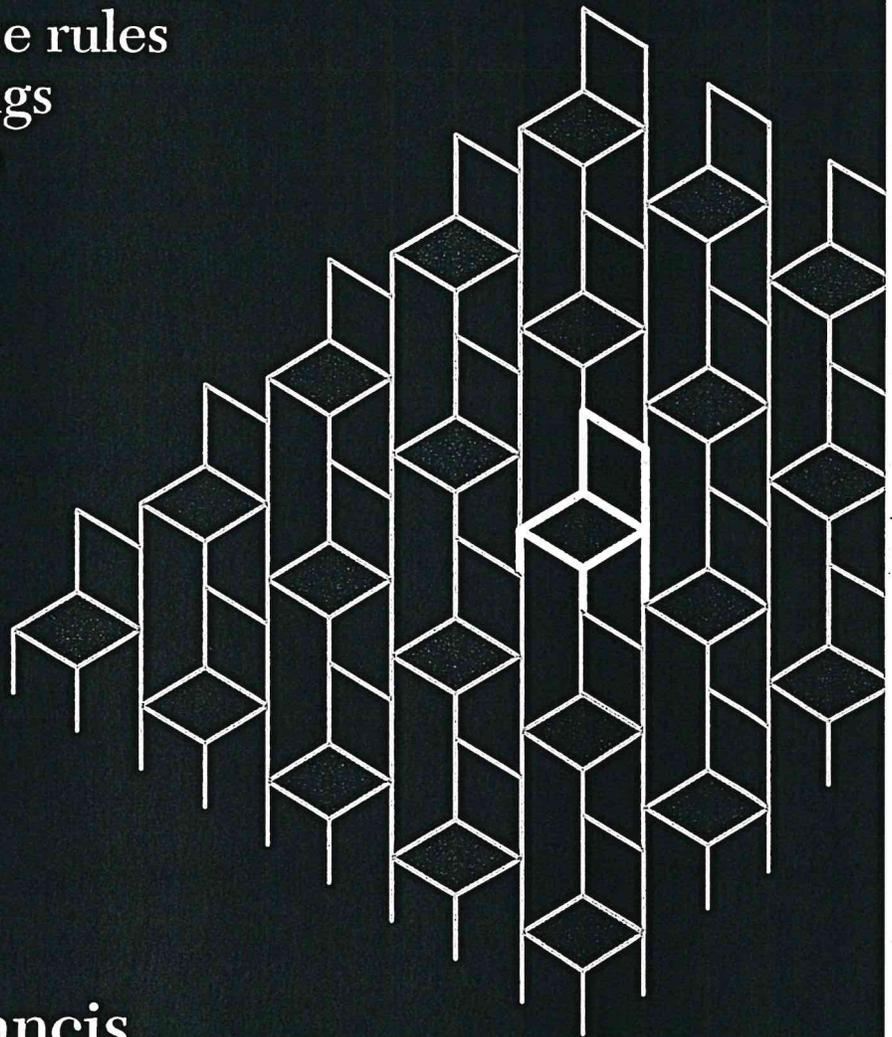
or Are Not Being Set

One of the reasons people engage in consensus building efforts is to formulate tailored solutions to whatever problem, issue or dispute they face. It is important that the participants in these processes feel free to generate plans or solutions that fit their unique circumstances. If everyone agrees that no precedent will be set, it is usually easier to convince reluctant groups or organizations to participate. Moreover, this allows future consensus building processes to proceed unimpeded.

Democratic Rules of Order

9th
EDITION

Easy-to-use rules
for meetings
of any size



Fred Francis
Peg Francis

A Review by Douglas Leiterman, (former parliamentary correspondent)

Fred and Peg Francis have done an amazing job. Their book is absolutely indispensable for anyone who conducts meetings or participates in democratic discussion at any level from parliamentary assemblies to condominium annual meetings. What the Francis' have succeeded in doing is cutting through the forbidding complexities of running a meeting and reducing them to a simple set of common-sense rules which anyone can follow. The disappointments which accompany many meetings can be sharply reduced and democratic participation improved.

Over the years I have chaired or attended hundreds of meetings at the governmental, business, church and social levels and have often been frustrated by the difficulties of properly presiding over such meetings so that everyone can understand the process, and the will of the majority can be formulated and prevail. Much of the difficulty arises from the fact that few have the time or inclination to study the old-style rule books, and are therefore easily intimidated, even tyrannized sometimes, by the very few who know them.

The Francis' book is making an important contribution to democracy. It can be readily adopted by any group, council, union or corporation and will be of lasting benefit. Speaking personally, I have sat through years of parliamentary debate and appreciate the value, and necessity, of achieving consensus in a democratic proceeding by having rules and following them. Up until now, the rules have been exceedingly complex, often confusing, and unsatisfactory at many levels. From here on in, those groups who adopt *Democratic Rules of Order* will find significant improvement in both the tenor of their meetings and the validity of the results.

(Signed) Douglas Leiterman
Toronto, Canada

(Douglas Leiterman was Parliamentary Correspondent for Southam Newspapers, Executive Producer of CBC's "This Hour has Seven Days", chairman of various communications companies and CEO of Motion Picture Bond Company.)

Democratic Rules of Order

NINTH EDITION



Democratic Rules of Order

Easy-to-use rules for
meetings of any size

**Fred Francis
Peg Francis**

 **Cool Heads**
PUBLISHING

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*Dedicated to
democracy*

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Preface

Are you tired of meetings that lack efficiency... fail to move smoothly through an agenda... lose order and professionalism due to emotional outbursts... or do not foster constructive decision-making that truly represents the wishes of the membership?

You're not alone. But, it doesn't have to be that way!

After years of volunteering their time for community groups - including attending hundreds of professional and non-profit meetings - Peg and Fred Francis recognized the need for a concise, authoritative resource to assist boards of directors, committees, and other organized groups seeking to fairly represent their memberships through hosting efficient, effective meetings.

When they could not find such a resource, they created one. It took several years of refining and input from many executives, parliamentarians and users to perfect the rules, to be sure that each point was crystal clear, and that not a single necessary rule was missing. Introduced in 1994 as *Distinctly Democratic Rules of Order* (changed to *Democratic Rules of Order* in later printings), the easy-to-use book has become a respected and valued reference for thousands of organizations, large and small, and for students being taught the democratic process in

classrooms around the world.

Used by diverse groups

From unions and professional associations to strata councils, churches and non-governmental organizations, *Democratic Rules of Order* is a “pocket guide” setting out a step-by-step process that allows all members to participate in the exchange of ideas and group decision making.

The book can be read in less than an hour and is intentionally small so it is easy to carry to meetings for on-the-spot reference when a question arises.

Easy-to-use format

To make it easy to follow, the book is divided into two parts. The first part consists of organizational structure, member roles, and a step-by-step description for handling the most critical part of any meeting - the decision-making process. It helps the reader navigate through the democratic process of:

- introducing ideas,
- making motions and amendments,
- handling points of order and disturbances,
- managing the voting process, and
- governing committees.

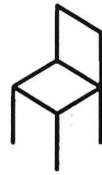
The second part of the book provides additional reference information, including:

- frequently asked questions,
- a scripted example of a meeting that uses all the key elements of *Democratic Rules of Order*,

- a flow-chart that illustrates the rules of order and
- a summary of the Rules of Order for quick reference during a meeting.

We hope this book helps to bring understanding and peace to our communities.

Cool Heads Publishing
"Seeding grassroots democracy"



PART 1

The Rules

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Introduction

Fairness and orderliness

These parliamentary rules of order help people to deliberate and consider ideas together, and then make decisions as wisely, fairly, and easily as possible. They are made for meetings of any size that are undivided by organized political parties. Ideally, decisions are based on objective consideration of facts, unaffected by emotions, group pressures, or unnecessary protocols. The purpose of this book is to help your organization reach this ideal.

Democratic principles

This book is not an abridged version of other books. It is a complete set of rules determined by common practice and the natural laws of democracy, "rule by the ruled," as Webster's dictionary puts it. These self-evident principles, when applied to decision-making meetings, include

- **the right of each individual member** to participate equally and fully in orderly meetings that are free from intimidation, filibustering, and other disturbances and in which all members follow the same easily-understood rules, and the right to be equally and fully informed of all events, whether the member is present or not; and
- **the right of the majority of members** to make the decisions.

A democratic ideal

We should remember that we all belong to the same organization, with a common purpose. We can have widely differing views and still work together for a common good without dividing into opposing sides, each trying to get its own way. The best decisions are made when we listen thoughtfully to the information being presented and then make our own decisions privately.

Another democratic ideal

Must we accept a legal decision if it is a bad one? Yes and no. Yes, to practice democracy we must accept the decision and do what it requires us to do. No, we don't have to change our opinion. At some later date the opportunity may occur for a review of the decision, or we may even find that the decision was good after all!

Degrees of formality

In small or close-knit groups, decisions can often be made by consensus or general agreement, provided that the chair or secretary recording each decision is sure that most members agree (see pages 16 and 32).

Large groups, too, often make decisions informally. The mover's privilege (see page 19) allows cooperative members to work out decisions quickly and easily. A more formal amending process is automatically required if opinions are divided. The degree of formality is usually determined by custom, agreement, or a law as defined in the next paragraph.

Higher laws

Rules of order are automatically overruled when a law of the land, a constitution, a bylaw, or an existing standing rule applies. Throughout this book we refer to any of these as a law.

Rules of order apply to the conduct of meetings only. They do not interpret laws or make up for deficiencies in bylaws or standing rules.

Minority rights

While a democratic majority rule system may appear to be in conflict with minority rights, remember that there are higher laws that protect minority and individual rights. Nearly all nations have laws that protect the natural rights of all individuals, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. No group may make a decision that would violate universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.

For maximum efficiency

Sharing the decision-making process in meetings is like driving a car. There are rules to be learned and skills to be attained. Once this has been done, group decision-making is second nature, like driving. If each member reads this book thoughtfully at least once, and if the chair does the same at least twice, and if members agree to follow these rules, your meetings should move as easily as the car of an experienced driver who enjoys driving without wondering which pedal to press.

The ninth edition

The ninth edition, like each previous edition, has been revised to make the book clearer, more useful, and easier to work with. However, the rules of all editions are so similar that organizations can use earlier editions along with the latest edition without conflicts.

Electronic meetings

These rules, modified if necessary, can be used for telephone or video conference meetings and for computer connected meetings in which discussions and voting are done electronically.

To adopt or modify these rules of order

Add to the standing rules or bylaws a statement such as "This organization's meetings shall be governed by *Democratic Rules of Order*." You could also add "Members' general meetings shall be conducted by a formal chair, and the executive board's meetings shall be conducted by an informal chair" (see page 16). Similarly, modifications can be made to these rules to make them conform to an organization's special needs.

An impersonal referee

These rules are complete. When adopted, they form the official rules of order for your organization's meetings. This book is your parliamentarian, or referee, when needed.

Governing Elements

Good government has structure.

GOVERNMENT CONTROL

The governments of some jurisdictions require that the constitution and bylaws of incorporated societies be approved and that reports be submitted annually.

CONSTITUTION

A constitution is a short document stating the name and purpose of the organization. To change the constitution may require advance notice, a large majority of votes (e.g., two-thirds or three-quarters), a secret ballot, and government approval. Indeed, some clauses may be unalterable, so the organization would have to be disbanded and reformed to change them. Many organizations today are formed without constitutions and place all governing rules in their bylaws.

BYLAWS

The governing rules of the organization, covering topics such as membership, officers, elections, duties, finances, meetings, quorum, discipline, amendments, and the seal. To change the bylaws may require advance notice, a large majority of

votes (e.g., two-thirds or three-quarters), a secret ballot, and government approval.

STANDING RULES

Decisions that have been recorded in a list because they will be useful for future guidance. Standing rules can be changed by a majority of votes at any regular meeting, provided a quorum (see page 17) is present.

Unless all members are present and none object, changes to an existing standing rule governing the conduct of members' meetings apply only to future meetings. Some organizations require advance notice before a decision listed in the standing rules can be changed (see page 42, Q17).

RULES OF ORDER

A set of rules, established by the standing rules or bylaws, by which the members agree to govern their meetings. Rules of order are subject always to the laws of the land, the constitution, the bylaws and existing standing rules, any of which we call a law in this book.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

A group of members elected for a limited time to conduct the organization's business in accordance with the members' wishes. Their responsibilities and limitations are specified in the bylaws. Their authority lies only with the whole board, and no single member should assume any special authority or responsibility unless such powers have been delegated to that individual by the board. A title such

as “Board of Directors,” “Trustees,” “Governors,” or “Strata Council” does not reduce the need for their complete compliance with the will of the members.

OFFICERS

President, vice president, secretary, treasurer, etc., who have been elected by the members or appointed by the executive board for a limited time. Their responsibilities and limitations are specified in the bylaws. In some organizations, the officers form part or all of the executive board.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

Usually found in the bylaws and stating when elections are to be held, requirements and term of office, nominating and voting procedures, balloting, and number and appointment of vote counters.

Members Making Decisions

It is easier to make good decisions when everyone knows the rules.

FINAL AUTHORITY

Given a quorum, the will of the majority of members present and voting at any meeting held in accordance with the bylaws is the final authority and cannot be thwarted by any individual or by any previous decision, except where a higher law provides an exception (see page 10).

EQUAL RIGHTS

Unless a law states differently, each member has one vote and an equal voice in all decisions.

THE CHAIR

The president or someone elected by the members or appointed by the executive board to conduct the members' meetings.

CHAIR'S AUTHORITY

The chair's duty is to preserve order and fairness in meetings by following the bylaws and rules of order. Members must abide by the rulings of the chair without debate except when a point of order (see page 29) is made.

FORMAL CHAIR

In large meetings, the chair must be, and must be seen to be, absolutely impartial. The chair must refrain from expressing personal opinions in words or gestures and should not participate in discussion except to guide it in an orderly fashion. If, on rare occasions, the chair has relevant, brief information, the chair may depart from this rule, but the chair must always avoid showing any bias. The chair cannot make a motion.

If the chair needs to participate actively in a discussion, arrangements should be made for another member to fill this position until the motion has been voted on. A member may call the chair to a point of order for wrongful participation, and the chair should comply with good spirit (see page 49, Q31).

INFORMAL CHAIR

In smaller or less formal meetings, members may have a bylaw, standing rule, or custom permitting the chair to participate in discussions with the same privileges as other members.

ADDRESSING THE CHAIR

Members must wait for permission (verbally or with a sign) from the chair before speaking. If several members stand at once, the chair selects one and notes who should be next. The others should sit until the speaker has finished, but in large assemblies the chair may require members wishing to speak to line up behind a microphone or put their names on a list and wait their turn.

QUORUM

The minimum number of members required by a law to be present before decisions can be made at meetings. The chair must find out if a quorum is present before the meeting begins and be kept informed of any drop in numbers that might cause the loss of a quorum. The chair should warn the members if this is likely to occur. If a quorum is not present the meeting may continue unofficially and should arrange, if possible, to get a quorum or to set the time of the next meeting.

AGENDA

The items of business and the order in which they are to be discussed at meetings, generally prepared by the secretary with executive board approval, or in smaller meetings by the chair. The agenda should be made known to members beforehand. It can be changed by the members any time during the meeting except when another motion is on the floor. The agenda change must be voted on if one or more members object. Agenda headings might include

- Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Correspondence and reports
- Business arising from minutes, correspondence, and reports
- Motions to be presented and new business
- Announcements
- Adjournment and closing

MOTIONS AND DECISIONS

Sometimes decisions are made by consensus in which the Chair says "If there are no objections then [the decision is described]," but otherwise all decisions are made with motions or resolutions (see page 47, Q26) in which a member says "I move [that some action be taken]." Before any motion can be considered it must be seconded by another member; this prevents time being spent discussing an idea that has little chance of approval.

A new motion cannot be made until the motion on the floor has been withdrawn or voted on except for those motions, which directly affect the motion on the floor:

- to amend (see page 20),
- to postpone, refer or limit debate
(see page 21, 22),
- to change the voting procedure (see page 23).

Unless a law specifically allows, a member must be present to make a motion, thus preserving the valuable mover's privilege. If the members have been notified already of a proposed motion, however, any member present can make the motion when it comes up on the agenda.

If the motion is clear, does not conflict with a law, and has been seconded, the chair or the secretary should read out the motion to make sure it is recorded correctly. Experienced movers sometimes have motions already written to give to the secretary. If possible, the motion should be worded affirmatively.

It is customary to allow the mover to speak to the motion first and again at the end of the discussion.

A notice of motion to be presented at a future meeting can be made to members in writing or verbally during a meeting.

Special meeting: Unless a law states differently, a special meeting can make decisions only on topics stated in the notice calling that meeting.

A non-binding opinion poll (straw vote) can be held by the chair any time during the meeting if the members are willing. If a member objects, the chair should ask the members for a decision and conduct the opinion poll or not according to the members' vote (see page 47, Q27).

MOVER'S PRIVILEGE

During discussion, ideas for improving the motion may occur. Provided that not more than one member objects, the mover may reword or withdraw the motion any time before it has been voted on. A seconder for new wording or withdrawal is required. Rewording can be continued until the motion is as perfect as the mover, assisted by the meeting, can make it.

Once the mover has decided on new wording and it has been seconded, the chair or secretary should read out the reworded motion, which immediately becomes a new motion on the floor, replacing the previous one. If two members object prior to this reading out of the reworded motion, changes can be made only with motions to amend.

AMENDMENTS

If the mover does not—or cannot, because of objections—make a suggested change to the motion, any member may move an amendment to the original motion. An amendment may delete, substitute, or add words that will modify the original motion but must not negate it or change the intent.

The amendment, when accepted by the chair and seconded, immediately becomes a new motion on the floor, temporarily replacing the original motion. It grants mover's privilege to the mover of the amendment except that any rewording must be acceptable to the chair as not changing the topic. The details of the proposed amendment are discussed, not the original motion, and then the amendment is voted on. An amendment cannot be amended but can be defeated and replaced with another amendment.

If the amendment passes, the secretary should read the newly amended previous motion, which is now a new motion on the floor to be discussed (if desired) and voted on. It cannot be reworded or withdrawn by the mover's privilege now, since it has been partly established by the members, but this new motion can be passed, defeated, or amended again.

If the amendment fails, the previous motion again becomes the motion on the floor. If this previous

motion was the original motion (having never been amended) then the original mover regains the mover's privilege. Further amendments are allowed, one at a time.

POSTPONE, REFER

A member may, any time before the motion has been voted on, move to **postpone** the motion on the floor (including any amendments passed) to an indefinite or a specific future occasion or to **refer** it to a standing or ad hoc committee for further study.

A member believing that consideration of a particular motion would be unwise could move "that we postpone the motion indefinitely." If the motion to **postpone indefinitely** is seconded and passed, then that particular motion cannot be discussed further at that meeting. It can be brought up at another meeting. A motion cannot be postponed permanently, because one meeting cannot bind a future meeting.

VOTING

When all members who wish to speak have done so, the chair should call for a vote. Unless a larger majority is required (see page 24), a decision is made (the motion is passed) when a quorum is present and more than half the votes are affirmative. Spoiled ballots and members not voting are not counted (see page 42, Q18).

Calling for a vote: Members who believe discussion is complete sometimes call out “question,” or the chair might ask “Are you ready to vote?” The response is a guide for the chair only and does not force a vote. A member who believes that the chair is calling for the vote too early or is delaying too long can rise on a point of order (see page 29) and move that “we delay the vote for more discussion” or that “we vote now.” Such a motion needs seconding and should be voted on with little or no discussion.

Member’s right to speak: Every member has a right to speak once to a motion but in large meetings a motion limiting speaker's times could be passed. The chair should not normally accept a motion to “vote now” if members who have not yet spoken are waiting to do so. However, if arguments on both sides of the question have been fairly presented and good order is being jeopardized by discussions becoming repetitive, the chair should accept such a motion.

After the members have decided to vote, either by general consensus or by passing a motion to vote, the chair or the secretary should read out the motion again, and the chair should make sure that all members understand it. Then the chair should call for the vote with “All in favor of the motion, please say ‘yes’ [or raise a hand]” (pause), “All opposed, say ‘no’ [or raise a hand],” or “Please mark your ballots now,” etc. The chair must announce the result.

How votes are taken: Custom or a standing rule usually determines how votes are taken. Some groups vote by voice, which makes it more difficult to tell which way others are voting, and some by show of hands, voting cards, standing, secret ballot, or roll call (see page 46, Q25), which makes it easier to count the votes. If the chair, assisted by the secretary, is uncertain which way the vote went, the chair can ask for a show of hands. If it is still unclear, the chair can ask for a standing vote, saying “Those in favor, please stand” (pause), “Please be seated. Those opposed, please stand” (pause), “Please be seated.”

A member who believes that there has been a **miscount** can ask—or, if necessary, move—“that we repeat the count with a standing [or ballot] vote.” If this motion is seconded and passed, then the vote must be taken again. Motions can be made requiring that a vote be by ballot, that the counted ballots be destroyed, that the number of votes for and against be announced, or any other decisions the members wish to make.

Can a member vote without being present?

No, unless a law specifically allows proxy or absent voting.

Ethics: A member who would benefit personally from a decision may participate in the discussion but should voluntarily refrain from voting.

TIE VOTE

A tie vote means the motion has not passed. Members might wish to reconsider it immediately or at a future time. In some organizations, a law gives the chair an extra vote to break a tie.

LARGER MAJORITY VOTE

A mover who believes that the action being proposed needs strong support from many members may finish the motion with "and that this motion require a three-quarters [or some other ratio] affirmative vote to pass." Since a simple majority of members could easily remove this special requirement with an amendment, this restriction, if not removed, has been accepted by the meeting and is now a requirement for the motion to pass. Sometimes a law will already exist requiring a larger majority vote in certain financial matters or bylaw changes, etc.

INFORMAL DISCUSSION

Occasionally there is merit in discussing an idea informally before a motion has been formulated. To allow for this a member may move "that we discuss [some topic] informally for a few minutes." This motion needs seconding and should be voted on almost immediately. After discussing the topic, if no motion is forthcoming, the meeting should proceed with the next item on the agenda.

RESCIND

Unless a law makes an exception, and providing it would not create a breach of contract, a motion to

rescind (repeal) a previous decision requires only a majority to pass and can be made at a time when the agenda allows (normally under new business or resulting from a point of order changing the agenda).

RECONSIDER

A motion to reconsider a previous decision can be made immediately after the decision has been made or at any meeting during new business or when it has been put on the agenda (perhaps by a point of order). It should be voted on immediately with little or no discussion. If the motion to reconsider is passed, then a member moves the previous motion or a replacement motion on the same topic and it is again discussed and voted on. The mover's privilege applies. The new decision replaces the previous one. A motion can be reconsidered as often as the members are willing (see page 60). Once the decision to reconsider has been made, no new business can be done until the reconsideration has been dealt with.

MINUTES

Records of meetings kept by a secretary. They should include at least all major events and motions (see page 39, Q7). The secretary should maintain a filing system for minutes, reports, correspondence, etc.

After the minutes of the previous meeting have been circulated or read to all members, the chair should ask if there are any corrections. After any

corrections have been made, the chair should ask "All in favor of adopting the minutes as circulated [or read, or corrected], please say 'yes' [or raise a hand]" (pause), "All opposed, please say 'no' [or raise a hand]" and then announce the decision. Once adopted, and signed by the chair and secretary, the minutes are an official record generally acceptable in a court of law.

REPORT

Executive boards, committees, and individuals often report to the members at meetings with information and/or recommendations.

After a report containing information has been read to the meeting, no motion is necessary. However, in some groups it is customary to finish with "I move that this report be **received** as read," which means that the members have heard and understood the report.

If the report contains a recommendation, the person presenting the report might move that "this report be **adopted** as read." This motion means that the members have agreed with and adopted the report and its recommendations. Of course, a member could propose an amendment changing "adopted" to "received" so that the members would not be bound by the report's recommendations. Treasurers' reports are usually received, rather than adopted, as the members are not in a position to guarantee the report's accuracy.

RATIFY A PREVIOUS DECISION

If a decision has been made, perhaps due to an emergency, which exceeded the authority of the member, committee or meeting at the time it was made, this decision can be either ratified or not by the members, who do have the authority, at a later meeting (see page 48, Q29). This is done by a member making a motion to ratify the decision. Normally the motion to ratify is quickly passed. However, if the motion to ratify is not passed, this is a “non-confidence” vote. Unless a higher law (e.g. a bylaw) has provided for this in a different way, the member or group must resign and an election be called to have them replaced.

ADJOURNMENT

If a bylaw or standing rule requires adjournment by a specified time, the chair should warn the members as it draws near, so that they can either finish quickly or extend the meeting with a motion, if it is allowed. If the meeting has not been extended, the chair should declare it adjourned at the specified time. Otherwise, the chair could say, “Since the business is finished, if there are no objections” (pause), “the meeting is adjourned.” Or the chair could say, “Since the business is finished, let’s adjourn; all in favor, please say ‘yes’ ” (pause), “All opposed, please say ‘no.’ ” If the motion passes, the chair then says “The meeting is adjourned.”

Keeping Meetings Flowing

A good meeting needs good order.

STAYING ON THE SUBJECT

Members must discuss only one topic or motion at a time. If necessary, the chair should interrupt a speaker to insist that this rule be obeyed.

MORE THOUGHT, LESS TALK

A member must not take more than a fair share of floor time nor speak more than once on a motion until all others who wish to do so have had a turn. Exceptions may occur, however, with new information or a series of questions and answers involving useful facts. If necessary, members could pass a motion or have a standing rule, starting next meeting (see page 13), limiting each speaker's time and appointing a timekeeper to enforce it.

MUTUAL RESPECT

Members must respect the rights of other members to their own quiet judgment on issues. Decisions should be based on consideration of the facts rather than on the skill of speakers or on an opinion of how others might vote. Members should speak to contribute light only, not heat!

Members must not use any form of personal criticism or ridicule to persuade a meeting. A member may criticize an idea but never a fellow member. A member must never interject or interfere with another member's right to an uninterrupted floor when speaking, except as allowed under a point of order. The chair should insist that this rule be followed.

POINT OF ORDER

A member who believes that a law or the meeting's good order is being breached may rise at any time and say, "Mister/Madam Chair, point of order." The chair should immediately acknowledge this member, who should then briefly explain why he or she believes a law or good order is being breached. The chair then rules on the point, either correcting the situation or explaining why it is in order.

If the chair declares that the situation is in order, the member may exercise **one last option** by rising and saying: "Mister/Madam Chair, I request a vote on this point of order." First the member and then the chair briefly explain their reasons. Then with little or no further discussion, the chair calls for a vote, saying "All who believe that [this action] conforms to our rules [or good order], please say 'yes' [or raise a hand]" (pause), "Those who disagree, please say 'no' [or raise a hand]." The chair and the member raising the point of order must abide by this vote.

DISTURBANCES

Filibustering or any other action that interferes with good order is not allowed. If a member is speaking too long, the chair should give a polite reminder. If the member continues, the chair can interrupt and request a decision from the meeting with "I request a decision from the meeting. All wishing this member to stop speaking now, please say 'yes' [or raise a hand]" (pause), "All opposed, please say 'no' [or raise a hand]." If the decision was for the member to stop speaking, the chair says, "Sir/Madam, the members wish you to stop speaking now. Please do so." Or if the decision was opposed, "Sir/Madam, the members are willing for you to continue. Please do so."

If a member or group of members does not stop speaking when asked by the chair or when a motion is passed by the members, then the chair can interrupt the speaker and ask for a motion requiring the speaker(s) to leave the meeting or, if necessary, for a motion to adjourn the meeting to reconvene at a later time. Only the members can make such a decision. Physical force should not be used against a member, although the speaker's microphone could be turned off on request of the chair (see page 36, Q2, and page 37, Q3).

DIFFERING OPINIONS

If there is a difference over the meaning of a bylaw or a procedure, etc., the chair may assist in solving the dispute. For example, the chair could pose a question designed to resolve the dispute and ask

for a show of hands on it. The final decision rests with the members.

A NEW CHAIR

Serving as chair need not be a dreaded job, since these rules are straightforward and your fellow members can assist if needed. You can let it be known that you appreciate help. Ask members to call out if they can't hear you and to remind you if you forget something. Or you could suggest "If you see ways I can chair the meetings more efficiently, please ask the secretary to give me a copy of the rules of order in which you have highlighted the points I most need to review."

As well as studying the bylaws, standing rules, and rules of order beforehand, it is helpful to study the agenda and perhaps to write reminders and notes of things to say on it. By the way, starting meetings on time is a valuable habit.

Committees and Small Meetings

Meetings can be both informal and orderly.

COMMITTEES

A committee is a group of one or more persons appointed by the executive board or the members to perform a continuing or short-term function. A **standing committee** is permanent until disbanded, although its membership may be changed periodically. An **ad hoc committee** is appointed to do a specific task and is temporary. The chair of a committee is appointed by the members, or the executive board, or elected from within the committee. Unless otherwise stated, the quorum of a committee or meeting is a majority of its members. Written guidelines are often used to provide order and continuity.

LESS FORMALITY

In committees and small meetings, the chair participates informally (see page 16) as a leader, subject always to the law and the will of the meeting, which in turn is responsible to the appointing body. Examples of degrees of formality include

- (a) work parties making decisions by consensus led by the chair;

- (b) small meetings making minor decisions by consensus that are announced by the chair and recorded in minutes;
- (c) meetings of executive boards with an agenda and motions that are seconded, voted on, announced by the chair, and recorded in minutes by a secretary.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Most committees are democratic, but sometimes a non-democratic committee is formed in which one person has full responsibility, although others may help.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Ideally, a committee brings to bear upon a subject the combined experience and wisdom of several people. But sometimes well-meaning people talk too much or too forcefully, quite unaware of how much time this wastes and how unfair it is to the others. Meetings must be protected from such imbalance. The chair should not allow any member to be overly dominant.

The chair should assist members to stick to the business at hand. (Socializing can be done before or after the meeting.) Light good humor is great but should be brief. Replies to divergent opinions should be controlled and not allowed to degenerate into arguments. Let the facts speak for themselves. A little silence during a meeting with members pondering a situation could signify an effective group.

Most committees find that letters and creative concepts are better written and corrected by one or two people and then presented to the whole committee for final review.

In all meetings of any size, the ideal is members seeking the best answers together, not sides debating to have their own viewpoints adopted. (True for legislative assemblies too, if they only knew it!)

NON-DEMOCRATIC MEETINGS

Some meetings, such as a sales meeting in which a manager is instructing personnel, are not intended to be democratic - yet orderliness and respect for every individual, the basic principles of democratic rules, will improve the efficiency of any meeting. Including a little democratic decision-making, when possible, usually brightens a meeting and adds interest.



PART 2

Further Help

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Frequently Asked Questions

INVOLVING THE CHAIR

Q1. What qualities does the chair most need?

A1. Self-control, good humor, and a thorough knowledge of the constitution, the bylaws, the standing rules, and the rules of order of the organization.

Q2. What can a chair do to ensure a fair and harmonious discussion of a contentious item?

A2. If necessary, the chair can remind members

- that the rules by which they have agreed to be governed allow them to discuss and make joint decisions in an orderly fashion, even when opinions are strongly divided;
- that a member's right to an uninterrupted floor includes freedom from any kind of audience response while that member is speaking;

- that a member who has spoken once may not reply to other speakers' statements, no matter how outrageous, until all others who wish to speak have done so;
- that a member must be acknowledged by the chair before speaking; and
- that we need not change our opinions, but we must accept the voting majority as the authorized decision-maker.

It may be helpful to have on hand copies of *Democratic Rules of Order* that members may borrow and return at the end of the meeting, so that appropriate sections can be referred to. If necessary, the chair should respectfully insist that these rules, especially those on pages 28 to 30, be followed.

Q3. How should the chair deal with confrontational, angry members?

- A3. The most effective way is to not react even a little, to be calm, objective, proactive, and aware that remaining polite and dispassionate will help keep you in control. Compassion for people less able to control their emotions sometimes helps to keep you from dropping to the same level. It gets easier with experience (see page 30).

Q4. Can the chair vote?

A4. Yes, unless a law states differently. However, a formal chair (see page 16) should do so as inconspicuously as possible to avoid showing bias.

Q5. If both the chair and the vice-chair are absent, what happens?

A5. Any member, perhaps the secretary, can call the meeting to order, call for nominations, and conduct an election of a temporary chair for that meeting.

Q6. Should the chair guide the discussion?

A6. An occasional verbal summary can be helpful but a formal chair (see page 16) must be careful to maintain impartiality. A chair who keeps the discussion on track, prevents overzealous members from dominating, helps members speak clearly one at a time, and keeps the meeting from dragging on with repetitions, is doing much to make the meeting worth while. Minor decisions can be made by consensus. For example, the chair might say, "Unless there is an objection, we will continue this meeting without the noisy microphone."

INVOLVING THE SECRETARY

Q7. How detailed should minutes be?

A7. As detailed as the secretary and/or the members wish. Minutes should contain all motions exactly as passed and a very brief description of all major actions. Minutes often look like expanded agendas. Minutes of formal meetings will generally be fuller than those of informal meetings. Minutes of informal meetings might be simply a dated list of events and decisions.

Q8. Must the minutes include the names of the mover and seconder?

A8. No, but in more formal meetings, the secretary may wish to include them, or the members could pass a motion requiring that this be done.

Q9. Must the minutes of the previous meeting be read at the beginning of the meeting?

A9. No. The members determine the agenda (see page [17](#)). If the minutes have been circulated, the members may not wish to have them read aloud.

Q10. When minutes of the previous meeting have been corrected, must the secretary rewrite them?

A10. Normally corrections are made in the text or margin of the secretary's copy of the minutes and initialed by the chair and the secretary. However, if the secretary wishes, or if the members pass such a motion, then they should be rewritten and the new copy be signed by the chair and the secretary.

Q11. If the minutes of a previous meeting have been adopted and are later found to contain an error, what should be done?

A11. Since they have been adopted, that signed copy cannot be changed. The correction should be noted and approved by the members in the later meeting and included in its minutes. Then a note of the later correction should be made on or attached to the original minutes, dated, and signed by the chair and secretary.

Q12. Can a secretary make a motion?

A12. Any member except a formal chair (see page 16) can make a motion. However, in large meetings, it is usual for motions to be made from the floor.

ABOUT MOTIONS, ETC.

Q13. Can a motion be put on the agenda without naming a mover?

A13. Yes. When its turn comes on the agenda, any member can move it. If the motion is not moved, the meeting moves on to the next item on the agenda (see page 17).

Q14. What are the advantages of the mover's privilege (see page 19)?

A14. When members are co-operative, the mover's privilege enables them to improve a motion in an easy, natural way. Efficiency increases with experience. Since objection from any two members requires a more formal amending process, this privilege cannot be abused.

Q15. Can a member speak and vote against his or her own motion?

A15. Yes. The only restrictions on members' participation are those on pages 28 to 30. However, it may be wiser to modify the motion with the mover's privilege or an amendment (see pages 19 and 20).

Q16. Can a member who will be absent submit a written amendment to a motion that is on the agenda?

A16. No, unless a higher law allows (see page 10)

Q17. Can the members add or change a standing rule during the meeting to give the chair a tie-breaking vote?

A17. No. They can change the standing rule, but it will not take effect until the next meeting since the meeting is governed by the existing standing rules. This protects the right of members not present at a particular meeting from having a major rule changed during that meeting, when they are not there to participate in the decision. However, if all members are present and none object, a standing rule could be changed immediately (see standing rules, page 13, and tie vote, page 24).

Q18. Our quorum is forty. Forty members were present. On a vote there were eight affirmative votes, seven negative votes and one spoiled ballot that did not contain a "yes" or "no." Twenty-four members did not vote. Did the motion pass?

A18. Yes. Two conditions are necessary for a motion to pass:

(1) the total number of members present must be at least a quorum; and

- (2) a majority of the legitimate votes cast must be affirmative.

In this case both conditions were met. A quorum of members was present. The spoiled ballots did not count. Eight votes were a majority of the fifteen legitimate votes cast (see page 21).

Q19. What if a member feels an intermission would be helpful?

A19. The member can rise to a point of order and move that members take a break and reassemble at a stated time.

Q20. How could the agenda be changed during a meeting to have a particular topic considered earlier?

A20. At a convenient time, a member could rise on a point of order (assuming the proposed change will improve the good order of the meeting) and move the change in the agenda (see agenda, page 17).

Q21. When can a motion that has been postponed indefinitely be brought up again?

A21. In a future meeting at a time when the agenda allows (normally under new business or resulting from a point of order changing the agenda).

Q22. Our bylaws require a notice of motion in order to spend over \$1,000 at any meeting. A notice of motion to install an electronic security system for \$5,000 was properly sent to each member. During the meeting this motion was changed to purchasing better locks instead, for \$4,000. Is this acceptable?

A22. Yes. The amount is within the financial limit established by the notice of motion, and the motion is on the same topic of security. If there were a difference of opinion on this, the chair could ask "If you agree with my decision to accept this motion as being in accord with the notice of motion, please raise your hand" (pause), "If opposed, please raise your hand," there-by emphasizing that the members are the final authority (see differing opinions, page 30).

However, changing the motion, by means of the mover's privilege or an amendment, to purchasing a system for \$5,200 would not be acceptable, as the amount is over the limit established by the notice of motion.

Q23. How can we have a relaxed, interactive “think tank” session with maximum freedom to explore new, problem-solving ideas in an orderly way?

A23. Use the informal discussion rule (see page 24) to free the meeting from formality. Then appoint the chair or a member to act as a neutral facilitator to be sure that every idea presented is received with complete absence of pre-judgment on its merit so that no one is reluctant to mention a “far-out” idea. You could also appoint the secretary or a member as a recorder to list the ideas on a board or chart so that none are lost.

Large meetings sometimes break into smaller groups, each with its own facilitator and recorder. When the session is finished, the groups come together and hear reports from the facilitators. Ideas from these sessions may lead to motions.

Q24. Can you give an example of an acceptable and an unacceptable amendment?

A24. Consider the motion "I move that we go to Sam's restaurant next time."

Amendment #1. "I move that we amend this motion by replacing the word 'Sam's' with 'The Golden Pagoda.'" This is acceptable, because it does not negate the motion or change the topic.

Amendment #2. "I move that we amend this motion by adding the word 'not' in front of the word 'go.'" This is not acceptable, because it negates the original motion (see page 20). The same result could be achieved more simply by defeating the original motion.

Q25. What is a vote by roll call?

A25. The secretary calls the name of each member, who then votes audibly. Each member's vote is recorded on a list.

Q26. What is a resolution?

A26. A resolution is a formal expression of the meeting's opinion on some topic, or a resolve to take some action worded in a special way. It usually consists of a preamble containing one or more premises followed by a conclusion. For example: "I move that we adopt the following resolution: WHEREAS [followed by one or more premises] THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT [followed by a resolve]." Of course, the members can change any part with the mover's privilege or amendments before voting on the whole motion.

Q27. What is an example of an opinion poll (straw vote)?

A27. While considering the purchase of a new computer, a member wanted to know how many members would make use of it and asked the chair to find out. The chair said "If there are no objections, we will have a show of hands on this question" (pause), "How many would use this computer if we buy it?" Then he announced the result. If a member had objected to this poll, the chair would have asked "All willing for this meeting to conduct this poll, please say 'yes'" (pause), "All opposed, please say 'no.'" The chair would then have conducted the poll or not as the meeting decided (see page 19).

Q28. Can you give an example of how a higher law would modify a rule of order?

A28. The rule on equal rights (see page 15) gives each member one vote. However, in some jurisdictions, laws governing meetings of condominium owners give each member one vote for each condominium unit owned by that member. A member owning five units in the condominium complex has five votes. Similarly in a corporation's shareholders' meeting, votes are usually proportional to the number of voting shares owned.

Another example would be the rule on a tie vote (see page 24). In some jurisdictions, laws governing meetings of condominium owners give the chair of the meeting a tie-breaking vote in addition to the chair's original vote.

Q29. Our board spent \$7,000 on repairs to an elevator, claiming this was an emergency, when their spending limit was \$2,000. Were they in order?

A29. Yes. However, at the next regular or special meeting the members must ratify this expenditure (see page 27). Usually this motion is passed. If the motion to ratify the expenditure is not passed, then the members have lost confidence in that board and an election must be called to have them replaced.

Q30. Will these rules work in conventions, conferences, and legislative assemblies?

A30. Yes, they will work well in conjunction with the specific procedures and rules dealing with agendas, delegates, speaking orders and limits, voting methods, and the many details necessary for the smooth operation of such events.

It is easy to modify these rules of order with a standing rule or bylaw to make them conform to special needs.

Q31. What can a formal president do if she has a motion that she wants to present to the meeting?

A31. She can arrange for another member to present the motion if she is willing to stay uninvolved. Otherwise she can ask the vice president, secretary or another member to chair the meeting throughout this discussion and voting while she participates from the floor as a regular member (see page 16).

Example of a Meeting Governed by These Rules

This script of an imaginary meeting contains examples of how the rules work in awkward situations. If you first read the rules and the questions and answers until you see that they are mostly common sense, this script will be more useful.

C: Chair

M: Members

Page reference

C: Welcome! Let's open our meeting. Are there any changes to the agenda? M1? 17

M1: I move that consideration of a fish pond be deleted from the agenda.

M2: I second the motion.

C: It has been moved and seconded that consideration of a fish pond be deleted from the agenda.

[Discussion]

C: Are you ready to vote now? 22

[Members call out "Question"]

C: Since we are ready to vote will the secretary please read the motion.

[Secretary reads the motion] 22

C: All in favor of deleting the fish pond from the agenda, please raise a hand.... All opposed, please raise a hand.... Thank you. The vote is tied. 24

There are forty affirmative votes and forty negative votes, so the motion did not pass and the agenda remains unchanged. The minutes of our last meeting have been circulated. Are there any changes or omissions? Yes, M3?

M3: The meeting started at 7:30, not 8:00 p.m.

C: Thank you M3. If there are no objections (pause), will the secretary please make that correction now. Are there any further corrections?... All in favor of adopting the minutes as corrected, please raise a hand.... All opposed, please raise a hand.... Thank you. The minutes have been adopted as corrected, and the secretary and I will sign them now. 18

25

C: The next item on the agenda is a report from the executive board, to be read by M4.

[M4 reads the report]

M4: *I move that this report be adopted as read.* 26

M5: *I second the motion.*

C: It has been moved and seconded that the report be adopted as read. M6?

M6: *I don't think we should be bound by this report's recommendation that we change our management company. I suggest that M4 replace the word "adopted" with the word "received."*

C: M4, are you willing to make that change? 19

M4: *No. I do not wish to make that change.*

C: Yes, M6?

M6: *I move that we amend this motion by replacing the word "adopted" with the word "received."* 20

M7: *I second the motion.*

C: It has been moved and seconded that we amend this motion by replacing the word "adopted" with the word "received," to prevent the members from being bound by the report's recommendations.

[Discussion]

[Members call out "Question"]

C: If there are no objections, we will vote now. All in favor of the amendment changing the word "adopted" to the word "received," please raise a hand.... All opposed, please raise a hand.... Thank you. The amendment has been lost and now we must consider the original, unchanged, motion. Is there any further discussion? Since there is none, let's vote. All in favor of adopting the report as read, please raise a hand.... All opposed, please raise a hand.... Thank you. The motion to adopt has been passed.

M8: Ms Chair. Point of order.

29

C: Yes, M8?

M8: That vote was so close. I request we vote again by ballot.

C: I am satisfied the vote was correct.
M8?

M8: Well, I am not satisfied, and I move that we vote again by ballot!

23

M9: I second the motion.

C: All in favor of voting again by ballot, please stand and remain standing until I say "thank you." Will the secretary please help me count?... Thank you. All opposed, please stand. Secretary, please help count again.... Thank you. The motion to vote again by ballot has been lost, thirty-seven affirmative and forty-three negative. So the original motion to adopt M4's report with its recommendations remains passed. The next item on the agenda is the fish pond. M10?

M10: I move that we informally discuss the idea of a new fish pond for a few minutes now.

24

M11: I second the motion.

C: All in favor of informally discussing the fish pond now please raise a hand.... All opposed please raise a hand.... Thank you. The motion has been passed, so we will now discuss this topic together informally.

[Informal discussion]

M12: Since we are not ready to make a motion on this topic yet, I move that we continue with the agenda now.

M13: I second the motion.

C: All in favor of continuing with the agenda now, please raise a hand... All opposed, please raise a hand... Thank you. The motion has been passed. The next item arising from the minutes is the notice of motion made at our last meeting about painting our building.
M14?

19

M14: Because I believe this motion should have strong support from a large majority of members, it contains a special requirement. I move that we have all the exterior wood of our building painted at a cost not to exceed \$5,000 and that this motion require a 75 percent affirmative vote to pass.

24

M15: I second the motion.

C: Since members have been notified, this motion complies with our bylaws and is in order. Would the secretary please read it.

[Secretary reads the motion]

C: M14, do you wish to speak to your motion?

[M14 speaks to the motion]

[Discussion]

M14: After hearing the discussion I wish to reword my motion to read: that we have the exterior window frames of our

building painted at a cost not to exceed \$4,000, and that this motion require a 75 percent affirmative vote to pass.

M16: I second the motion.

M17: I object to this change in the motion.

M18: I also object to this change in the motion.

19

C: Since there have been two objections, this motion cannot be changed with the mover's privilege, and the original motion is still the motion on the floor.

M14?

M14: I move that we amend the motion by replacing the words "all the wood on the exterior of our building" with "the exterior window frames" and the price of "\$5,000" with "\$4,000."

M19: I second the amendment.

20

C: The amendment is in order. Would the secretary please read the amendment to be sure we have it written correctly?

[Secretary reads the amendment]

C: The mover of the amendment may speak first.

[Discussion]

[Members call out "Question"]

C: Hearing no objection, let's vote now.
Will the secretary please read the amendment?

[Secretary reads the amendment]

C: All in favor of the amendment, please raise a hand.... All opposed, please raise a hand.... Thank you. A majority are in favor and the amendment has been passed. The newly amended motion is now the motion on the floor. Would the secretary please read this new motion?

[Secretary reads the motion]

[Discussion]

C: Is there any further discussion? Will the secretary please read the new motion again before we vote on it?

[Secretary reads the motion]

C: Does everyone understand what we are voting on?... To make counting easy we will have a standing vote. All in favor of the motion, please stand.... All opposed, please stand.... Thank you. There were forty-eight affirmative votes and thirty-two negative votes, which means 60 percent are affirmative. The motion required 75 percent to pass. It has been lost. M20?

23

M20: I move that we reconsider this motion.

25

M21: I second the motion.

C: All in favor of reconsidering the motion, please raise a hand.... All opposed, please raise a hand.... A majority is in favor, and the motion to reconsider has been passed. M22?

M22: With a slight modification, I think this idea might gain approval. I move that we have the exterior window frames and doors of the building painted at a cost not to exceed \$4,500 and that this motion require a 75 percent affirmative vote to pass.

M23: I second the motion.

C: Would the secretary please read the motion.

[Secretary reads the motion]

[Discussion]

C: M24?

M24: Ms Chair, I move we vote now.

M25: I second the motion.

C: As soon as M26, who was waiting to speak, has had his turn, I will accept your motion.

22

M26: Thank you....

C: It has been moved and seconded that we vote now.

M28: Ms Chair, point of order. Several more of us would like to speak to this motion.

C: Both sides of the question have been fairly presented during the past twenty minutes. Over eighty members are present. We will let the members decide. All in favor of voting now, please raise a hand.... All opposed, please raise a hand.... Thank you. The motion is carried and we will vote now. Secretary, please read the motion once again.

22

[Secretary reads the motion]

C: Thank you. We will have a standing vote. All in favor, please stand.... Thank you. All opposed, please stand.... Thank you. There were sixty affirmative votes and twenty negative votes. The number of affirmative votes was 75 percent of the total votes and so the motion has been passed. The executive board can now have this work done. Next on our agenda is new business. M29?

M29: I move that we reconsider this last motion.

25

M30: I second the motion.

C: All in favor of reconsidering this last motion, please raise a hand.... All opposed, please raise a hand.... The motion to reconsider has been lost.

M30: I move that we reconsider this last motion.

M29: I second the motion.

C: This motion is out of order as we have already made a decision on it.
M30?

M30: Ms Chair. It is not out of order, as our rules of order state on page 25 that "A decision can be reconsidered as often as the members are willing."

C: The members have just decided that they are not willing to reconsider this motion, and so we will now proceed with new business. M31?

M31: My condominium is next to the games room, and players are frequently noisy. I move that this room be closed daily at 9:00 p.m.

C: Is there a seconder for the motion?
The motion fails for lack of a seconder. M32?

18

M32: I move that we post a sign in the games room asking players to be quiet after 9:00 p.m.

M33: I second the motion.

C: It has been moved and seconded that we post a sign in the games room requesting players to be quiet after 9:00 p.m. Is there any discussion?

M34: The motion should put a limit on the cost.

C: M32?

M32: Good idea. I would like to change my motion to read that the maintenance committee be asked to spend up to \$45 for a sign in the games room requesting players to be quiet after 9:00 p.m.

M33: I second the new motion.

M35: I object to this change in M32's original motion.

C: Since there is only one objection, this change is acceptable. Will the secretary please read the new motion.
[Secretary reads the motion]

19

C: M36?

M36: Because there are other factors to be considered, I move that we refer this motion to the executive board for their consideration and ask them to report back to us at our next meeting.

21

M37: I second the motion.

[Discussion]

C: Anyone else?... It has been moved and seconded that we refer this motion to the executive board and ask them to report back to us at our next meeting. All in favor, please raise a hand.... All opposed, please raise a hand.... The motion is carried. Is there any further new business? M38?

M38: Three meetings ago we decided to carpet the foyer. Nothing has been done. I move that we rescind the motion to carpet the foyer!

24

M34: I second the motion.

M39: Ms Chair. Point of order.

C: Go ahead, M39.

M39: The contract has been given to a firm. By our rules of order we cannot rescind that motion.

C: I believe you are right, M39. We cannot rescind a motion if doing so would create a breach of contract. M38?

M38: The color is wrong! The price is too high! We are not breaking a contract! It hasn't been signed yet! I insist that we—

M39: I agree with—

C: Hold on a minute, M39! Please wait until you have been acknowledged before speaking. 16

M38: Ms Chair. Point of order. 29

C: Yes, M38.

M38: I believe this motion is in order and request a vote on this point of order.

C: Thank you, M38. Please explain your reasoning. Then I will explain my reasoning, and then we will vote.

[M38 explains]

[C responds]

C: Now the members will decide. All who believe that this motion to rescind is out of order, please raise a hand.... All opposed, please raise a hand.... Thank you. The motion has been carried. The motion to rescind has been considered out of order, and we will now proceed to the next item of business.

[More business is discussed]

C: Our standing rules require us to adjourn by 10:00 p.m. We have only ten minutes left. M40? 27

M40: I move that we change that standing rule to read: "that we adjourn at 10:00 p.m. or at a later time if the members attending so wish."

M41:I second the motion.

C: This motion, if passed, will not affect tonight's closing time as we are governed by our existing standing rule. The motion before us is that we change our standing rule to read that "we adjourn at 10:00 p.m. or at a later time if the members attending so wish."

13

[Short discussion]

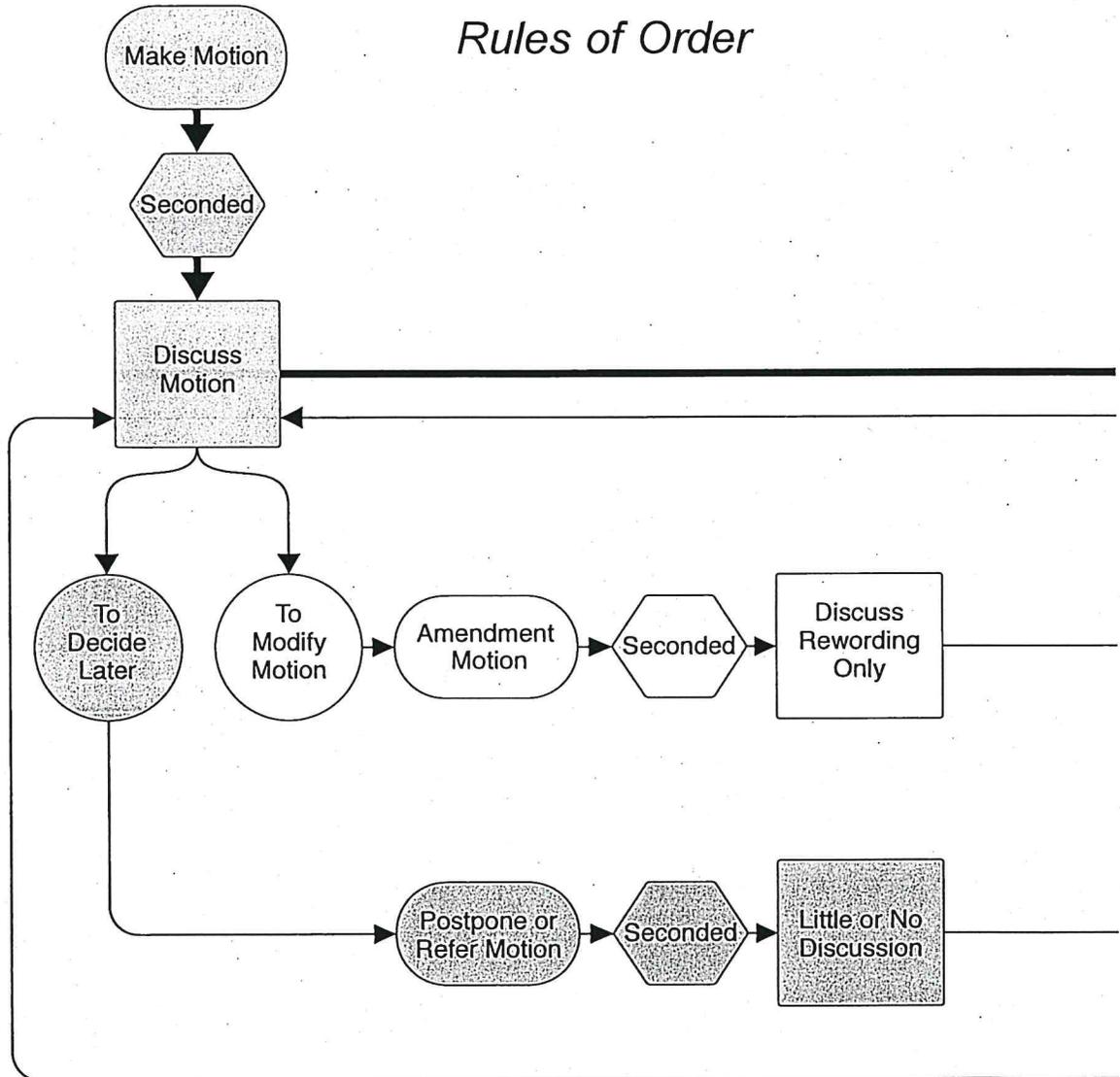
[Members call out "Question"]

C: Secretary, please read the motion.

[Secretary reads the motion]

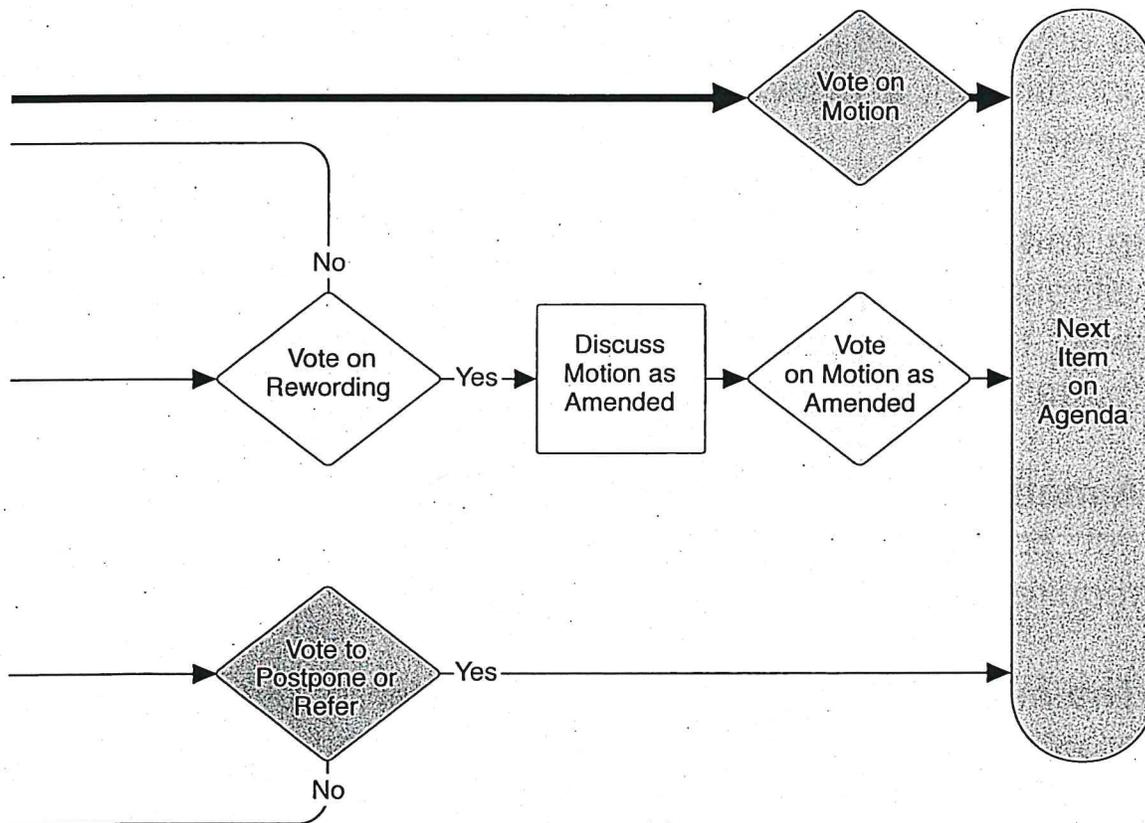
C: If there is no objection, we will vote now. All in favor, please raise a hand.... All opposed, please raise a hand.... The motion has been carried and will allow members to extend the time of adjournment at future meetings. It is now 10:00 p.m. and I declare this meeting adjourned!

Flow Chart Using *Democratic Rules of Order*



GOOD ORDER

- Stay on topic
- One speaker at a time, acknowledged by chair
- No interrupting



POINT OF ORDER

- Member explains how a law or good order is being breached
- Chair rules on point of order
- Vote if necessary

Printable color version of Flow Chart available for download here:
<http://www.coolheadspublishing.com/download/flowchart.pdf>

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The final authority is the majority of voting members, provided a quorum is present, subject always to any applicable higher law (a law of the land, a constitution, a bylaw, or an existing standing rule) (page 15).

In formal meetings, the chair guides impartially without taking part in discussion. In informal meetings, the chair participates as an equal member (page 16).

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The Authors

Fred and Peg Francis have had decades of experience with meetings in school, college, business, church and community organizations as members and as officers. After attending university together, Peg taught elementary school. Fred taught mathematics in high schools and college. They have also designed several commercial products including clean-burning wood stoves, rodent-proof composters and children's building sets. They live in Victoria, Canada, and have four wonderful children and six equally wonderful grandchildren.

This book has been a very satisfying project for Fred and Peg, who see the urgent need for more justice and stronger democracies in our world. For a democracy to work successfully the populace itself must understand and want to obey the democratic principles. Citizens need practice in making the individual rights of each member and the rights of the majority work together. People using this book are practicing and learning these laws, and helping the world at the grass-roots level.

"May this book help you and your organization to have productive and distinctly democratic meetings!"

Fred and Peg Francis
Victoria, British Columbia
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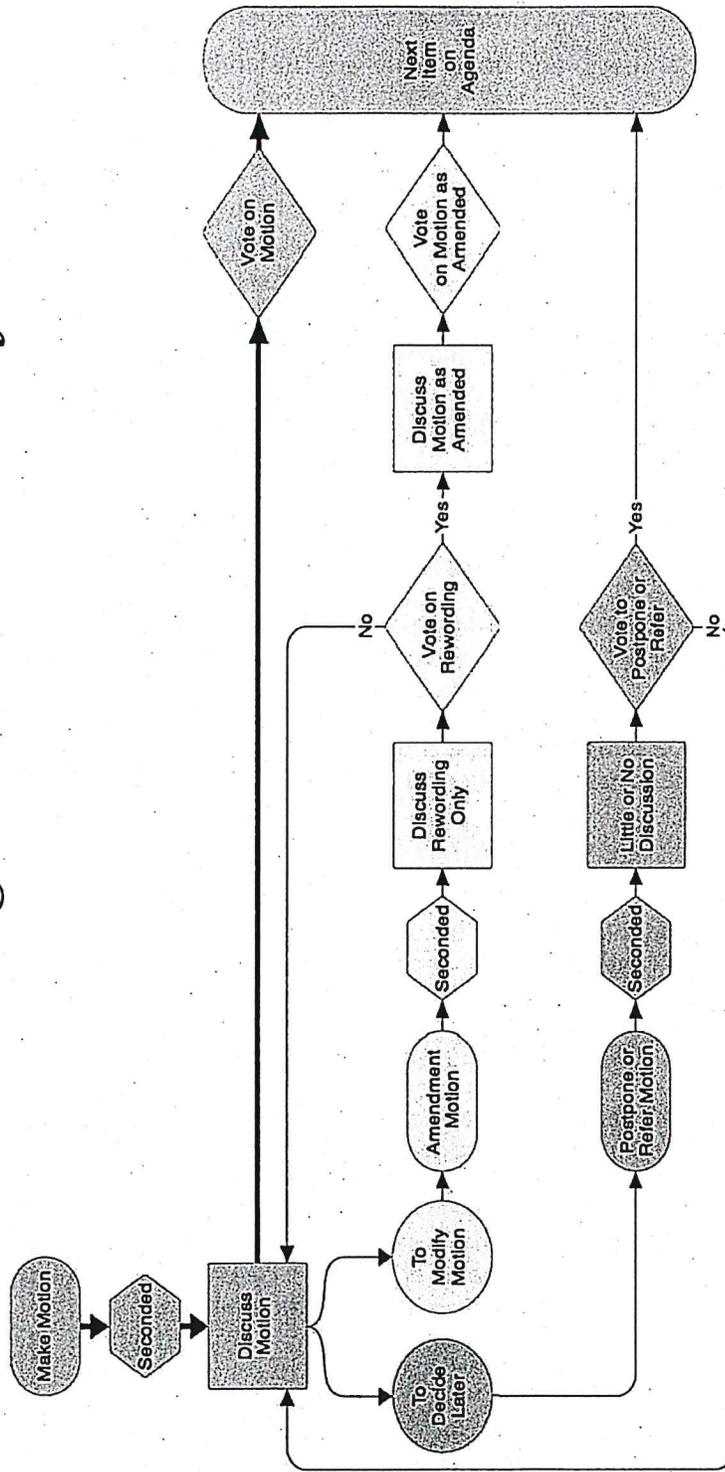
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from

Democracy is Power

By Mike Parker and Martha Gruelle

A Labor Notes Book www.labornotes.org

Appendix 4. Simplified Rules of Order

Virtually all unions use Robert's Rules of Order. Yet few people who chair meetings understand and follow the rules, and only a tiny part of the membership understands more than the barest outline. This defeats the number-one democratic value of having rules—that everyone knows how to accomplish their goals and what to expect.

Here is a set of rules that will serve most local union meetings. They require only a few pages and can easily be distributed to all members. Although Robert's Rules is a whole book, the Simplified Rules include most of the rules and concepts that unions, in practice, actually use from Robert's. In addition, these rules emphasize democratic practices and remove some of the undemocratic features in Robert's. The emphasis is on helping members be involved.

It is usually not worth the affront to tradition to try to formally amend the local union bylaws to adopt these rules. Instead, the rules proposed here could be adopted as the informal "short form." In most locals, the interpretation of Robert's is quite loose anyway.

One way these rules are simpler than Robert's is through the consistent use of majority rule, rather than two-thirds or more, on all motions. (The exception is those issues on which the local bylaws require a larger majority, such as amending the bylaws.) Rules requiring more than a majority vote (two-thirds, three-fifths, three-

quarters, unanimous) are intended to protect minority rights, but in practice, they multiply the power of already powerful minorities so much that they can thwart majority rule. In the long run, minority rights can be protected only by the care and respect of the majority. So in these Rules, instead of requiring a two-thirds vote to end debate, for example, a majority is allowed to do so, but only after the chair asks who and how many still wish to speak.

These same rules, slightly modified, can be used in very large meetings and conventions. The main changes would be (1) to require seconders for motions and when calling for a vote count, (2) to require submission of motions in advance, and (3) the use of a "convention committee" to sit throughout the convention and make recommendations for adjusting the agenda or other procedural problems. Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) has used such a set of rules at its national conventions for twenty years.

Simplified Rules of Order

I. Purpose

The purpose of these rules is to allow the maximum democratic participation in meetings.

In meetings, as in all phases of union democracy, leadership is an essential part. The chair is the leader of the meeting. Therefore the main job of the chair is to help the meeting and its members conduct business and accomplish goals. The rules are a way to achieve these goals and are not an end unto themselves. Therefore the chair and meeting attenders should be allowed considerable flexibility in proposing implementation.

II. Agenda Preparation

- A. **The proposed meeting agenda will be made up by the executive board or through a procedure established by the board.**

The proposed meeting agenda will include all motions submitted to the board by members in advance, unless the member withdraws the motion before the meeting. The board may recommend time limits and limits to debate on such motions as part of the agenda proposal. The executive board will set an order for the agenda as appropriate, except that items held over from previous meetings take precedence over any non-emergency new business.

The proposed agenda should include the full text of short motions and brief descriptions of longer motions and reports. The agenda may include proposals for procedures, such as time limits for specific discussions and how to handle voting.

B. Availability

The main points of the meeting will be provided with the announcement of the meeting, and the full meeting agenda will be available before the meeting.

Committee reports and background material should be available before the meeting.

C. Approval

Adoption of the agenda is the first order of business at the meeting. A member may propose to amend the agenda to change the order of business or the procedures. There may be one speaker for and one against each such amendment. The chair may allow a second person for and against.

Amendments and adoption of the agenda will be by majority vote.

III. Voting

A. Methods

1. Voice vote
2. Standing or hand vote (on request of any member)
3. Count. Because a vote count takes so much time, this will only be done when the chair finds a standing vote too close to call, or when at least ten percent of the members attending second the call for a count.

B. Definitions

Unless otherwise provided, all motions, both substantive and procedural, require a simple majority for passage.

A simple majority is achieved when more than 50 percent of those voting vote yes. (Examples: if there is a tie, the motion is defeated. If 31 vote yes, 30 vote no, and 50 abstain or do not vote, the motion is passed.)

IV. Main Motions

Unless another arrangement has been made, one motion is considered at a time. If someone makes an amendment, it will be dis-

cussed and voted on before going back to the main motion or other amendment. (There may be an amendment to an amendment, but there may be no third-level amendments.) However, when two or more motions or amendments are directed to the same point, procedures may be proposed by the executive board or chair, subject to approval by the meeting, to consider two or more motions or amendments together.

V. Discussion

A. Individual

Unless otherwise provided, each speaker will be limited to three minutes. No speaker will speak twice on the same motion when others are waiting to speak for the first time. The chair may ask someone who has already spoken to answer a question if it would clarify matters, and the person who made the motion may be allowed to sum up.

B. Total

Where no time limit for the total discussion has been proposed as part of the agenda, the chair must propose one.

C. Content

The discussion should be relevant to the motion, on the floor.

VI. Other Motions

Like all other motions, those below require only a simple majority to pass. Where a motion is normally non-debatable, the chair may suggest some limited discussion if there appears to be substantial confusion in the body.

To Table

Not debatable.
Postpones further discussion and decision indefinitely (can be reintroduced in a very short time, or never). (Tabling is not used for sending a motion to a committee or for changing the time for consideration. See To Refer.)

To Refer (for example, to a committee) or **To Postpone** (to a specific time)

Limited debate (e.g., two speakers for and two against a proposal).

To Reconsider

Must be made by someone on the winning side.

Limited debate unless the procedure is suspended.

Procedural

For suggesting a procedure to handle a certain point (for example, to extend the time for discussion, or to consider two motions together).
Not debatable except on recommendation by chair.

To End Debate and Come to a Vote ("to call the question" or "to move the question")

Must be made by someone who has not yet spoken on this motion.
Not debatable.

Before taking the vote on ending debate, the chair must first ask for a show of hands of those who wish to speak, so members may make an informed decision.

To Adjourn or Recess

Not debatable.

The chair may ask or answer questions regarding pending business, to help members understand what they are cutting off if they adjourn the meeting.

The chair may entertain non-debatable motions for referring pending business before holding the vote on whether to adjourn.

The chair may entertain motions for setting the next meeting, if not already scheduled.

The chair must first ask for a hand showing of those not wishing to adjourn before taking the vote.

To Overrule the Chair (also called "to overturn" or "appeal the ruling of" the chair)

Must be called out immediately after the chair's ruling, before other business is conducted.

The chair does not have to step aside.

The chair should explain her ruling, the person appealing speaks, the chair responds. If the matter looks very controversial, the chair may take speakers for and against before her final reply.

The vote is then immediately taken in the following way: "All those in favor of upholding the ruling of the chair, please say 'aye.' Opposed, say 'no.'"

The chair plays an important role in keeping the meeting moving along by suggesting procedures and making rulings in ambiguous situations. Normally the chair should be allowed this authority and flexibility. The check on this authority is the motion to overrule.

VII. Quorum

The required quorum will be established in the bylaws. (If one is not specified, there is no quorum requirement.) A call for a quorum may not be shouted out or interrupt a speaker, but must come after being recognized by the chair. The chair will check for a quore-

run by show of hands or count, in the same manner as voting. A call for a quorum is out of order for ten minutes after a previous quorum call. If a quorum is lacking, the following business is still in order:

- Motions directed toward getting enough members for a quorum
- Motions about when to meet again
- Motions to refer business to the executive board
- Good and welfare
- Motions to adjourn or recess

VIII. Miscellaneous Points

Normally, people will speak in the order that they are recognized, by raising hands. Certain circumstances make it necessary to get recognized more quickly. This is accomplished with one of the following points. All may be made by shouting out. However, you may not interrupt someone while they are talking except for Personal Privilege and a Point of Order to appeal a ruling of the chair. If the chair feels an individual is abusing these points, she does not have to recognize the abuser.

A. Point of Personal Privilege

To be used only when there is difficulty in participating in the meeting, such as inability to hear, too much commotion, smoke, etc. May not be used as a way of getting the floor to answer a criticism, even if you believe you were misunderstood or misquoted.

B. Point of Procedure

To be used to move to change the procedure (e.g., to propose that we have two speakers for and two against this motion).

C. Point of Order

To be used to call attention when it is felt that the chair or the body is deviating from the previously adopted procedure (for example, "Our procedure calls for our coming to a vote at this time.") May also be used to challenge a ruling of the chair.

D. Point of Information

To ask a question of the chair. May not be used to ask a question directly of another member (There is no such thing as a "point of clarification" or any other special way to give information, except to be recognized by the chair in the usual manner.)



Racism is a Public Health Crisis: Local Resolutions

Declaring racism to be a public health crisis or emergency offers a clear path to intentionally acknowledging and addressing disparities and inequities. Adopting a resolution can lead to data analysis, policy analysis, and implementation of changes that dismantle racism in our systems. In other words, this is one way to hold ourselves and our local and state governments accountable for addressing racism.

Has any town in Connecticut done this? On June 15, Windsor was the first Connecticut town to pass this resolution. By June 24, Hartford, Bloomfield, West Hartford, and New Britain had all done the same. That's 5 towns in 10 days! Other counties, cities, and even states around the U.S. have or are considering joining this movement. Will yours be next?

Why should my city or town take this action? Making a public declaration that racism is a public health crisis is the first step in intentionally embedding health equity in policymaking. This is a way to hold our elected leaders accountable for the changes necessary to move towards equity.

How is racism a public health emergency? As a result of the trauma inflicted by racism and the purposeful disinvestment in their social and economic well-being, people of color live with disproportionately higher cortisol levels, higher rates of chronic stress, higher rates chronic disease, lower infant birth rates, higher rates of COVID-19 infection and death and pay the ultimate price with their lives.

Included below are:

- a sample resolution and
- 2 recent articles supporting the timeliness of this effort.

For more information, contact:

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Director of Policy

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Sample Resolution

WHEREAS, racism is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism that is interpersonal and/or internalized or systemic racism that is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks;

WHEREAS race is a social construct with no biological basis;

WHEREAS racism unfairly disadvantages specific individuals and communities, while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources;

WHEREAS racism is a root cause of poverty and constricts economic mobility;

WHEREAS racism causes persistent discrimination and disparate outcomes in many areas of life, including housing, education, employment, and criminal justice, and is itself a social determinant of health;

WHEREAS racism and segregation have exacerbated a health divide resulting in people of color in Connecticut bearing a disproportionate burden of illness and mortality including COVID-19 infection and death, heart disease, diabetes, and infant mortality;

WHEREAS Black, Native American, Asian and Latino residents are more likely to experience poor health outcomes as a consequence of inequities in economic stability, education, physical environment, food, and access to health care and these inequities are, themselves, a result of racism;

WHEREAS more than 100 studies have linked racism to worse health outcomes; and

WHEREAS the collective prosperity and wellbeing of CITY/TOWN depends upon equitable access to opportunity for every resident regardless of the color of their skin:

Now, therefore, be it *Resolved*, That the City Council/Board of Selectmen/Board of Alders of CITY/TOWN—

- (1) Assert that racism is a public health crisis affecting our city/town and all of Connecticut;
- (2) Work to progress as an equity and justice-oriented organization, by continuing to identify specific activities to enhance diversity and to ensure antiracism principles across our leadership, staffing and contracting;
- (3) Promote equity through all policies approved by the City Council/Board of Selectmen/Board of Alders and enhance educational efforts aimed at understanding, addressing and dismantling racism and how it affects the delivery of human and social services, economic development and public safety;

- (4) Improve the quality of the data our town/city collects and the analysis of that data—it is not enough to assume that an initiative is producing its intended outcome, qualitative and quantitative data should be used to assess inequities in impact and continuously improve;
- (5) Continue to advocate locally for relevant policies that improve health in communities of color, and support local, state, regional, and federal initiatives that advance efforts to dismantle systemic racism;
- (6) Further work to solidify alliances and partnerships with other organizations that are confronting racism and encourage other local, state, regional, and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis;
- (7) Support community efforts to amplify issues of racism and engage actively and authentically with communities of color wherever they live; and
- (8) Identify clear goals and objectives, including periodic reports to the City Council/Board of Selectmen/Board of Alders, to assess progress and capitalize on opportunities to further advance racial equity.

Officials Seek To Shift Resources Away From Policing To Address Black 'Public Health Crisis'

https://khn.org/news/officials-seek-to-shift-resources-away-from-policing-to-address-black-public-health-crisis/?utm_campaign=KHN%3A%20Daily%20Health%20Policy%20Report&utm_medium=email&hsmi=90220110&hsenc=p2ANqtz-Q25ofcBi5C0y7a4AmlDZFmrjIFaMULHt3CXyAB600tn32LxJx7wkee-Aq_9_tzxd3a507Tr1I2riiqIZ-V1oJ9pgFQ&utm_content=90220110&utm_source=hs_email

Anna Almendrala: June 25, 2020



(Mark Makela/Getty Images)

From Boston to San Bernardino, California, communities across the U.S. are declaring racism a public health crisis.

Fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic's disproportionate impact on communities of color, as well as the killing of George Floyd in the custody of Minneapolis police, cities and counties are calling for more funding for health care and other public services, sometimes at the expense of the police budget.

It's unclear whether the public health crisis declarations, which are mostly symbolic, will result in more money for programs that address health disparities rooted in racism. But officials in a few communities that made the declaration last year say it helped them anticipate the COVID-19 pandemic. Some say the new perspective could expand the role of public health officials in

local government, especially when it comes to reducing police brutality against Black and Latino residents.

The declarations provide officials a chance to decide “whether they are or are not going to be the chief health strategists in their community,” said Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association.

“I’ve had a firm view [that] what hurts people or kills people is mine,” said Benjamin, a former state health officer in Maryland. “I may not have the authority to change it all by myself, but by being proactive, I can do something about that.”

While health officials have long recognized the impact of racial disparities on health, the surge of public support for the Black Lives Matter movement is spurring calls to move from talk to financial action.

In Boston, Mayor Martin J. Walsh declared racism a public health crisis on June 12 and a few days later submitted a budget that transferred 20% of the Boston Police Department’s overtime budget — \$12 million — to services like public and mental health, housing and homelessness programs. The budget must be approved by the City Council.

In California, the San Bernardino County board on Tuesday unanimously adopted a resolution declaring racism a public health crisis. The board was spurred by a community coalition that is pushing mental health and substance abuse treatment as alternatives to incarceration. The coalition wants to remove police from schools and reduce the use of a gang database they say is flawed and unfairly affects the Black community.

The city of Columbus and Franklin County, Ohio, made similar declarations in June and May, respectively, while Ingham County, Michigan, passed a resolution June 9. All three mention the coronavirus pandemic’s disproportionate toll on minority residents.

Those localities follow in the footsteps of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, which last year became the first jurisdiction in the country to declare racism a public health crisis, citing infant and maternal mortality rates among Blacks. The county’s focus on the issue primed officials to look for racial disparities in COVID-19, said Nicole Brookshire, executive director of the county’s Office on African American Affairs.

Milwaukee County was training employees in racial equity and had launched a long-term plan to reduce disparities in health when the pandemic hit. “It was right on our radar to know that having critical pieces of data would help shape what the story was,” said Brookshire.

She credits this focus for the county’s speedy publication of information showing that Black residents were becoming infected with and dying of COVID-19 at disproportionate rates.

Using data to tell the story of racial disparities “was ingrained” in staff, she said.

On March 27, the county launched an online dashboard containing race and ethnicity data for COVID-19 cases and began to reach out to minority communities with culturally relevant messaging about stay-at-home and social distancing measures. Los Angeles County and New York City did not publish their first racial disparity data until nearly two weeks later.

Declaring racism a public health crisis could motivate health officials to demand a seat at the table when municipalities make policing decisions, and eventually lead to greater spending on services for minorities, some public health experts say.

The public is pressuring officials to acknowledge that racism shortens lives, said Natalia Linos, executive director of Harvard's Center for Health and Human Rights. Police are 2½ times as likely to kill a Black man as a white man, and research has shown that such deaths have ripple effects on mental health in the wider Black community, she said.

"Police brutality is racism and it kills immediately," Linos said. "But racism also kills quietly and insidiously in terms of the higher rates of infant mortality, maternal mortality and higher rates of chronic diseases."

The public health declarations, while symbolic, could help governments see policing in a new light, Linos said. If they treated police-involved killings the way they did COVID-19, health departments would get an automatic notification every time someone died in custody, she said. Currently, no official database tracks these deaths, although news outlets like The Washington Post and The Guardian do.

Reliable data would allow local governments to examine how many homeless or mentally ill people would be better served by social or public health workers than armed police, said Linos.

"Even symbolic declarations are important, especially if they're accurately capturing public opinion," said Linos, who is running to represent the 4th Congressional District of Massachusetts on a platform of health and equity. "They're important for communities to feel like they're being listened to, and they're important as a way to begin conversations around budgeting and concrete steps."

Derrell Slaughter, a district commissioner in Ingham County, Michigan, said he hopes his county's declaration will lead to more funding for social and mental health as opposed to additional policing. Slaughter and his colleagues are attempting to create an advisory committee, with community participation, to make budget and policy recommendations to that end, he said.

Columbus City Council members coincidentally declared racism a public health crisis on May 25, the day Floyd died in Minneapolis. Four months earlier, the mayor had asked health commissioner Dr. Mysheika Roberts for recommendations to address health issues that stem from racism.

The recent protests against police brutality have made Roberts realize that public health officials need to take part in discussions about crowd control tactics like tear gas, pepper spray and wooden bullets, she said. However, she has reservations about giving the appearance that her office sanctions their use.

“That definitely is one of the cons,” she said, “but I think it’s better than not being there at all.”

“Connecticut towns are declaring racism a public health crisis.

Advocates want the state to follow” <https://ctmirror.org/2020/06/24/connecticut-towns-are-declaring-racism-a-public-health-crisis-advocates-want-the-state-to-follow/>

Connecticut cities and towns eager for change in the wake of George Floyd’s death are taking the symbolic step of declaring racism a public health crisis in their communities.

The pronouncements are designed to spur a deeper analysis of systemic issues and ultimately drive policy change. As more municipalities prepare to follow suit, health equity advocates are calling on Gov. Ned Lamont and the legislature to recognize racism as a public health emergency at the state level, laying the foundation for broader change.

“People are galvanizing around it because, I think, they see like we do that the first step in resolving a problem is acknowledging it,” said Tekisha Dwan Everette, executive director of Health Equity Solutions. “This is an opportunity to acknowledge there is physical, emotional and actual trauma happening around racism. It’s causing health issues.”

Everette’s group, which advocates for equitable health care access, delivery and outcomes, began reaching out to city and town leaders recently, asking them to adopt the declaration and offering guidance.

More than 20 cities and at least three states across the country have declared racism a public health crisis. Earlier this month, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh issued an executive order with the declaration and transferred \$3 million from the police budget to the health department. The city council in Lansing, Mich., voted in favor of the declaration this week, calling out the city’s history of discriminatory business and housing practices.

In Connecticut, the local government in Windsor was the first to act. Last week, council members unanimously backed the measure.

Governing bodies in Hartford and Bloomfield followed Monday night, and the town council in West Hartford voted in favor on Tuesday.

“These ordinances are an opportunity to say, hey, we have a problem and we need to be intentional about correcting it,” Everette said. “It is our hope that, like most things that start on the local level, this momentum gets the state to take action.”

Everette sent an email to Lamont, top administration officials and Deidre Gifford, the acting commissioner of public health, last week asking them to consider the declaration. Her organization collected more than 570 signatures on a petition calling for “intentional racial equity decision-making by our elected officials.”

Max Reiss, a spokesman for Lamont, said the governor’s ability to take action by executive order is limited.

“The powers granted to the governor when he declares a public health emergency are temporary, and any action he takes during that brief period would terminate after a certain date,” Reiss said. “In the short-term, addressing police accountability is one of the governor’s priorities for the limited special session.”

Senate Democrats have shared their wish list of topics to address during a special session this summer, which is expected to convene in July. Among them are several health equity proposals, including strengthening data collection on race and ethnicity and supporting community health workers. But it was unclear if they’ll adopt a declaration. Lawmakers said they are considering it.

“In a very literal sense, racism is a public health crisis,” said Sen. Matthew Lesser, a Middletown Democrat who co-chairs the legislature’s Insurance Committee. “We’ve got to address that head on because we’ve seen huge gaps in Connecticut.”

Reiss said Lamont will work with lawmakers on health equity proposals, but more time may be needed to develop them.

“As the governor stated last week, there is more to do to address broader issues concerning racial and economic inequality and those complex and difficult issues need to be addressed in a thoughtful and deliberate manner,” Reiss said. “He looks forward to working with legislators and other stakeholders on those issues during the next regular session.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought Connecticut’s racial inequities into sharp focus.

Black residents here are 2 ½ times more likely to die from a coronavirus infection than whites. The death rate for Hispanics is 67% higher than for white residents.

People of color here are also more likely to work in high-risk, “essential” jobs, such as those in nursing homes, grocery stores and retail, and to live in densely populated communities and have higher rates of pre-existing conditions like diabetes and asthma that are caused or worsened by systemic racism.

During the pandemic, residents in low income, predominantly minority neighborhoods have faced larger barriers to testing and other services. Until May, two-thirds of the state’s testing sites required a doctor’s note, and many people living in these communities have no insurance or primary care doctor to refer them.

“Declaring racism a public health issue, to me, demands and warrants that there has to be some policy changes,” the Rev. Robyn Anderson, director of the advocacy group Ministerial Health Fellowship, said. “It impedes people’s health, mentally and physically.”

A study by the Connecticut Health Foundation in January highlighted links between discrimination and “negative physical and mental health consequences” including depression,

anxiety, hypertension, breast cancer, and giving birth preterm or having a low-birthweight baby.

“Research suggests that one way discrimination could lead to poorer health is through repeated activation of the body’s stress response system, which can have negative long-term physiological and psychological effects,” the foundation noted.

Nuchette Black-Burke, a town council member in Windsor, said she raised the local declaration to ignite action in her community. That includes a deeper exploration of inequities in health care, education, law enforcement, housing and economic development.

“Being a Black woman, every day when I go out there is a conversation I have to have with myself: How do I present? What am I doing? Where am I going? If I do this, is it going to be interpreted this way?” she said. “I also have two sons; one is a 14-year-old who is beginning to look more and more like a man.

“I wanted to share this with our town council to help them understand the constant self-talk that Black folks, that people of color have to go through each and every day contributes so much to their levels of stress.”

In Hartford, council members who unanimously backed the local proposal want the city to direct more resources to the health department and schools to tackle inequities.

Thomas Clarke II, the panel’s majority leader, called for more cultural competency training and de-escalation measures within the police department.

“When you talk about the inequity that we have experienced in communities of color ... you can make the strong case that it really is due to racism,” he said. “So this is our way of calling it out, finally addressing it and looking for some reforms.”

More communities are weighing the declaration. Everette said she has been in touch with officials in New Haven, New Britain, Farmington, Glastonbury, Orange, Willimantic, Meriden and Manchester to provide research and guidance.

The local declarations are an important way to address issues that are unique to each town, she said, but she’s also hoping for action at the state level.

“In the best scenario, we’re going to have both,” she said.

Jenna Carlesso is CT Mirror’s Health Reporter, focusing on health access, affordability, quality, equity and disparities, social determinants of health, health system planning, infrastructure, processes, information systems, and other health policy. Before joining CT Mirror Jenna was a reporter at The Hartford Courant for 10 years, where she consistently won statewide and

regional awards. Jenna has a Master of Science degree in Interactive Media from Quinnipiac University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism from Grand Valley State University.