

Bourinot's Rules of Order- Fourth Edition- Summary

The summaries that follow are constructed from quotations and paraphrases of Bourinot's Rules of Order (Fourth Revised Edition). Bourinot's Rules of Order is based on the parliamentary rules of the House of Commons in Ottawa.

1. Motions

Once a motion has been moved and seconded, the Chair then restates the motion and by so doing puts the question to the meeting and opens the debate. When properly before the meeting a motion may be withdrawn by its mover and seconder only with assent of the meeting as a whole. In the course of debate the motion may be amended in various ways, or action may be taken to delay or defer its effect, but it must remain before the meeting until it is finally disposed of in one way or another.

When a vote has been taken and the motion declared either carried or lost, that decision becomes formally the decision of the body in question and is so recorded. A question, once decided, cannot be brought up again at the same meeting.

If it should become necessary to rescind a motion that has been passed, notice of intention can be given at one meeting and a motion for rescindment be introduced and dealt with at a subsequent meeting. To be adopted, a motion to rescind requires a two-thirds majority, minus abstentions.

1. Amendments

An amendment may change a word or words in a motion, add words to it, or delete words from it. It must not merely negate a motion, since this result can be obtained by voting against it. The amending motion must be seconded.

An amending motion must be strictly relevant to the main motion and must be made while the main motion is under consideration. It must not alter in a material way the principle embodied in the main motion but should merely vary its terms in one or more particulars. Just as an amendment may be moved to a main motion, so an amendment may be moved to an amendment. The conditions applicable in the case of an original amendment are equally applicable to a secondary, or sub-amendment: it may propose a variation in the terms of the original amendment but it must not materially alter the underlying intent of either the original amendment or the main motion. Usually only two amendments to a question, namely an amendment and a sub-amendment, will be allowed at the same time.

Motions and amendments are to be considered in reverse order, from sub-amendment through amendment to the main motion.

3) Notice of Motion

A member who wishes to move the rescindment of a decision, or an amendment to CCCN's bylaws, must give notice of that motion under new business. In so doing, she or he must state the text of the motion, and indicate at which future meeting of CCCN it is to be considered. Notice of motion requires no seconder, and is not debatable.

4) Special Motions

A motion to adjourn before business is complete must be seconded, but is not debatable.

A motion to proceed to the next item of business must be seconded and is not debatable. If the motion is carried, the item cannot be reintroduced at the same meeting;

A motion to call the question must be seconded and may be debated, but not amended

A motion to table must be seconded and is debatable

A motion to refer to, or back to, a committee, must be seconded and may be amended and debated, but only with respect to the reference, and not to the main subject at issue. It cannot be superseded by a motion to proceed or table.

5) Putting the Question

Questions are normally decided by voice vote. If the Chair is uncertain of the result, she or he may ask for a show of hands.

Prior to the putting of the question, the Members may specify that the vote should be by show of hands or by secret ballot.

A motion to proceed by show of hands or secret ballot must be seconded and is debatable.

Unless otherwise specified, motions are carried by a majority of those voting.

Because a member should hear the full arguments, there shall be no provision for absentee voting by mail or by proxy.

6) Point of Order

A Member may raise a point of order at any time. The Chair shall rule on the validity of the point, and his or her ruling is not debatable; but that ruling may be overturned by a duly seconded motion. The motion to overrule the Chair is debatable.

A Chair who does not wish to rule on a point of order to procedure may ask Members to decide by calling for an appropriate motion.

7) Privilege

Questions of privilege may be raised in the course of debate, but not so as to interrupt a speaker who has the floor. Such questions usually have to do with the rights or interests of the assembly as a whole or of a member personality. The Chair must decide if the question is properly one of privilege, and if he or she decides in the affirmative, the matter must be dealt with forthwith and be disposed of before debate on the main issue is resumed.

8) Closing the Meeting

When the Chair is satisfied that all business is dealt with, she simply announces that the meeting is closed. No motion is necessary.