

For Guidance only

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

PARLIAMENTARY RULES FOR CONDUCTING MEETINGS

The following operational rules will be used when conducting meetings to make decisions in an orderly, business-like manner.

1. All meetings shall follow the applicable rules in the Oregon Public Meetings Laws.
2. Motions will be handled according to the provisions on pages 3-9.
3. The agenda and time limits for each agenda item shall be followed as closely as possible.
4. Items not on the printed agenda may be introduced at the beginning of the meeting at the time stated on the agenda. The board may then adopt an amended agenda. Additional agenda items may also be introduced later in the meeting by board action.
5. All business requiring board action (decisions) shall be brought before the board by a motion, resolution, or motion following a report or other communication.
6. No debate on business requiring board action will be allowed until a motion has been made. However, a director may give a brief explanation of a subject before making a motion, with approval of the chair.
7. Informal discussion may take place in order to properly frame the motion and to ensure all directors understand the motion before discussion begins.
8. The chair may make and second motions, discuss motions, and vote.
9. The chair must recognize directors before making motions or speaking to a motion.
10. The chair must recognize any director who seeks to speak and who is entitled to do so according to other rules.
11. Directors should not repeat information or opinions already expressed on the motion. The chair may ask a director to cease speaking if he/she is repeating previously stated content.
12. It is out of order to request to speak or begin speaking while another director is speaking.
13. The director making the motion has the right to speak first during the discussion.
14. Every director has the right to speak to every debatable motion before it is finally acted upon.
15. Discussion should be limited to the merits of approving or disapproving the motion. The chair is responsible to keep the discussion to the issue being debated.
16. When differences of opinion are evident, the chair will try to alternate the floor between those in favor and those opposed.
17. The chair may limit the number of times each director may speak to the same motion at the same meeting.
18. No director may speak to a motion a second time until every director who desires to speak on the motion has had an opportunity to do so.
19. The length of time for each speech to a motion should be no longer than 5 minutes, unless the chair prescribes a different time length. This rule can be altered for a specific motion by a majority vote of the board.

20. A director can speak in strong terms about the merits of a motion, but he/she must avoid personal attacks. Courtesy and respect for others will be maintained at all times.
21. The chair has inherent authority to control and preside over the meeting and may interrupt a director or speaker, when it is necessary to make a ruling, give information related to the motion or issue being discussed, or take disciplinary action. The chair should not unnecessarily interrupt a person who has not violated established meeting rules.
22. Every director is responsible for acting in a professional manner. Conduct such as finger-pointing, blaming, put downs, excessive anger, accusations, introducing irrelevant information, or other tactics to control the meeting, distract others, derail productive activity, avoid responsibility, or defuse accountability shall be avoided.
23. The chair does not have the power to cut off debate, unless a time period for that motion or agenda item has been set or when the board votes to cease discussion (a director moves to vote immediately or "moved the previous question").
24. The chair has the responsibility and authority to ask any person who fails to comply with board-approved rules of conduct, violates state or local laws, or who causes a disturbance to leave. Upon failure to do so, the person becomes a trespasser and may be arrested.

MOTIONS

The word "motion" refers to a formal proposal by a director during an official meeting asking the district to take a certain action. The following motions will be used.

MAIN MOTION

The purpose of a main motion is to introduce business: a motion that brings any particular subject before the district for consideration and action and is independent of any other pending motion or parliamentary situation. Rules applying to main motions are:

1. The main motion can be made only when no other motion is pending.
2. It must be capable of standing by itself.
3. It requires a second, can be debated, can be amended, and may be reconsidered.
4. A main motion requires only a majority vote, except when it changes something already adopted (such as bylaws) or when it suspends a rule for conducting business.
5. Incidental main motions include:
 - a. Accepting or adopting reports
 - b. Ratifying or confirming a previous action.
 - c. Amending the rules (with a 2/3rd majority vote and previous notice)

MOTIONS AFFECTING MAIN MOTIONS

The following motions assist the district to manipulate or dispose of a main motion. They are always applied to another motion and "do something to" the main motion without either adopting or rejecting it. These motions take precedence over main motions and must be decided before a final decision on the main motion. Most require only a majority vote.

Amend

To change or modify the main motion – as long as the meaning of the main motion is not changed substantively.

Refer

To send the matter to a committee or another group for additional study, when additional information is needed, or when redrafting a motion or resolution is advisable.

Postpone to a Certain Time

To set a definite time later in a meeting or at another meeting when the motion must be voted on.

Limit or Extend the Time for Debate (requires a majority of 5 directors)

To limit the amount of debate on a motion: for example, to a fewer number of minutes or number of times each person can speak, to the number of speeches pro and con, or to a specific time when debate must cease. On the other hand, if circumstances indicate the need for more time than allowed by the usual rules, the length of debate on a motion can be extended.

Previous Question (requires a majority of 5 directors)

To stop debate or other actions (such as amending) of a pending motion so it will be voted on immediately.

NOTE: "Calling the question" is not the same; it indicates only that a director is ready to vote, but it does not stop debate if any director wishes to continue the discussion on the motion and is within the rules.

Table a Motion

To lay aside business temporarily without setting a time for resuming consideration on the motion. This motion carries the provision that the motion can be taken up again whenever a majority so decides. But if the motion is not "taken off the table" by the end of the next regular monthly meeting, the motion dies. When a motion is "tabled", all other motions attached to it, such as amendments, go with it.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

The following motions do not relate to the pending business. They deal with special matters of immediate or overriding importance that should be allowed to interrupt anything else. They relate to the rights of the district as a whole or the rights of each director. No debate is allowed on these motions. All of these motions must be dealt with as they are introduced.

Call for the Orders of the Day (no second required)

To force a meeting to follow the agenda, if items are being considered out of order, or to bring up a matter which has been set for the current time and is now in order. A majority vote of 5 directors is required to set the agenda aside.

Raise a Question of Privilege (no second required)

To get the attention of the chair immediately: to ask a question, to attend to some matter that cannot wait. This motion is usually decided informally without a vote. They relate to the rights and privileges of the directors on such matters as comfort (noise, temperature), conduct of members, conduct of visitors, discussion of matters that should be handled in executive session, etc.

Recess

To take a short intermission in the meeting for a specified length of time, even while business is being conducted, such as debate on a motion.

Adjourn

To close the meeting entirely, even while business is pending, provided that the time for the next meeting has been set. Unfinished business is carried over to the next meeting.

To Call for a Special Meeting

To set a date, hour, and place for another meeting before the next regular monthly meeting. This can be done while business is pending and before adjourning or postponing pending business.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

These are actions that can be taken at any time, and they must be disposed of before continuing the pending business. They are not debated or amended.

Point of Order

To claim that a rule is being violated and request the chair enforce the rule. The effect is to require the chair to make a ruling on the question involved.

Appeal

This constitutes an objection to a ruling by the chair. Any two directors who object to a ruling of the chair may appeal the decision of the chair and bring the matter to a vote requiring a majority.

Suspend the Rules (requires majority vote of 5 directors)

To allow the directors to act on business or in a matter prohibited by the rules but not in conflict with statutory requirements, such as the Public Meetings Laws.

Withdraw a Motion

To prevent a motion from being voted on and thus appearing in the minutes. Before the chair has stated a motion, its maker can withdraw or modify it. After the chair has stated the motion, withdrawing or modifying it requires consent or vote of the directors.

MOTIONS THAT BRING A PREVIOUS ACTION UP FOR CONSIDERATION AGAIN

Take from the Table

To resume consideration of a main motion laid on the table earlier in the current meeting or in the last previous meeting.

Rescind (majority vote with notice; majority vote of 5 directors without notice)

To strike out an entire main motion, resolution, rule, or decision that has been adopted.

Reconsider

To bring up an adopted motion again during the same meeting, if new information or a changed situation makes it appear a different result might occur.

| | Second Required | Can be Discussed | Can be Amended | Can be Reconsidered | Number Directors for Acceptance | Out of Order When Other Business |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Adjourn | Yes | No | No | No | 4 | No |
| Amend | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | 4 | Yes |
| Appeal | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | 4 | Yes |
| Call for a Special Meeting | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | 4 | No |
| Call for the Orders of the Day | No | No | No | On call or 5 votes | 5 | Yes |
| Limit / Extend Time for Debate | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | 5 | Yes |
| Main Motion | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | 4 | Yes |
| Move for a Vote | Yes | No | No | Yes | 5 | Yes |
| Point of Order | No | No | No | Chair rules or 4 votes | No | Yes |
| Postpone to a Certain Time | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | 4 | Yes |
| Raise a Question of Privilege | No | No | No | No | Chair Rules | Yes |
| Recess | Yes | No | Yes | No | 4 | Yes |
| Reconsider | Yes | Yes | No | No | 4 | Yes |
| Rescind | Yes | Yes | Yes | Only no vote | 4, if notice 5, if no notice | No |
| Refer | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | 4 | Yes |
| Suspend the Rules | Yes | No | No | No | 5 | No |
| Table a Motion | Yes | No | No | No | 5 | No |
| Take off the Table | Yes | No | No | No | 4 | No |
| Withdraw a Motion | By maker | No | No | Only no vote | 4 | Yes |
| Make a Nomination | No | Yes | No | No | 4 | No |
| Close Nominations | Yes | No | Yes | No | 5 | No |
| Reopen Nominations | Yes | No | Yes | Only no vote | 4 | No |

HANDLING A MOTION

Six steps are followed to handle a motion: three to bring the motion before the board and three to take action on the motion.

1. A director makes a main motion.

A simple motion is introduced by "I move that..." For a very important, complex, and formal question, a resolution may be desirable: "I move the adoption of the following resolution: "Resolved, That..."

Long or complex motions should be offered in writing.

Usually discussion is permitted only with reference to a pending motion. However, a motion can be prefaced by a few words of explanation, if it does not become a speech or argument for adopting the motion. A director may ask for assistance in wording the motion. Discussion of an issue before offering a motion requires permission of the board.

2. The motion is seconded.

Another director who wishes the motion to be considered seconds it, without obtaining the floor.

If no second is heard, the chair makes sure all have heard the motion by asking, "Is there a second to the motion?" If no second is given, the matter is dropped, and the board proceeds to the next item of business.

A second merely implies the seconder agrees the motion should come before the meeting and not that he/she necessarily favors the motion.

A motion made by a committee of the board requires no second, since more than one person has already recommended the motion.

The purpose of a second is to prevent time being used on a motion only one person wants to see introduced.

3. The chair states the motion.

The motion becomes open for debate only after being stated by the chair: he/she may repeat the motion, "It has been moved and seconded that ..." and then asks, "Is there any discussion?"

The chair may rule the motion out of order or may request clarification of the wording of the motion. If the chair rules the motion out of order, his/her decision is subject to appeal.

If the wording of the motion is not clear, the chair must insure the motion is put in suitable form before stating the motion and opening it up for discussion.

The maker of the motion may withdraw or modify the motion before it is stated. Any director may request the maker of the motion to modify the motion before it is stated. The maker must state acceptance or rejection of the modification. If modified, the seconder may withdraw the second. Modifications should be generally acceptable to the board and not bring about separate debate as in amendments.

Any director without being recognized may suggest certain facts, if he/she believes they would lead to the maker withdrawing the motion. Brief, informal discussion of a motion before it is stated may lead to a clearer and more productive debate.

4. The directors debate the motion.

See "Parliamentary rules for Conducting Meetings" pages 1-2.

5. The chair puts the motion to a vote.

When debate appears to have closed, the chair puts the motion to a vote. He/she should make sure every director understands the motion and the effects of a "yes" vote and of a "no" vote.

The usual methods of voting are by voice or show of hands. Motions requiring a two-thirds majority are usually taken by show of hands.

6. The chair announces the voting result.

A director can change his/her vote until the final result is announced.

The announcement should contain (a) report of the vote); (b) declare the motion as passed or defeated; (c) and state the effect of the vote.

Before the vote is announced, any director may require the vote be retaken (e.g., by standing or a show of hands when a voice vote was taken) and a count made if requested.