

## Appendix 4

Rules of Order for the Conduct of Meetings: from "A Manual for Worship and Service" prepared for Canadian Baptist Churches 1998 edition pages 151-156

In case no other rules are adopted at the commencement of deliberations, the parliamentary rules of order commonly used in deliberative bodies are those which ought to govern churches and other religious societies in their congregational meetings. For a complete presentation of parliamentary procedures, see Rules of Order by Bourinot © 1963 by McClelland and Stewart Ltd.

The following rules of order are provided as a guide to generally accepted procedures.

### Motions

- All business shall be presented by a motion, made by a member and seconded by another, and presented in writing by the mover, if so required.
- No discussion can properly be had until the motion is made, seconded, and stated by the chair, or presiding officer.
- A motion cannot be withdrawn after it has been discussed, except by the unanimous consent of the body.
- A motion having been discussed, it must be put to a vote, unless withdrawn, laid on the table, referred or postponed.
- A motion lost cannot be renewed at the same meeting, except by unanimous consent.
- A motion should contain but one distinct proposition. If it contains more, it may be divided at the request of any member.
- Not more than one question can properly be before the meeting at the same time.
- A second motion cannot be allowed to interrupt one already under debate. The only exceptions are subsidiary motions to amend, to substitute, to commit, to postpone, to lay on the table, or to adjourn.
- The subsidiary motions cannot be interrupted by any other motion, nor can any other motion be applied to them, except to amend by specifying time, place, or purpose. Subsidiary motions may not interrupt or supersede each other.
- A motion to adjourn is always in order except when a member has the floor, or when a question is being taken.

### Amendments

- Amendments may be made to resolutions in three ways: by omitting, by adding, or by substituting words or sentences.
- An amendment to an amendment may be made, but is seldom necessary and should be avoided. There cannot be an amendment to the amendment to the amendment.

- No amendment should be made which essentially changes the meaning or design of the original motion; but a substitute may be offered which may change entirely the meaning of the resolution under debate.
- The amendment to the amendment (if any) must first be discussed and acted on, then the amendment, and lastly the original motion or the original motion as amended.

### Speaking

- Any member desiring to speak on a question should rise and address the chair or presiding officer, confine remarks to the question, and avoid personalities and all unkind and disrespectful language.
- A speaker using improper language, introducing improper subjects, or otherwise out of order, should be called to order by the chair, and must either conform to the rules of debate governing the body or be seated.
- A member while speaking may allow others to ask questions or to make explanations; but if the floor is yielded to another, it cannot be reclaimed.
- A member is not permitted to speak more than once until all have spoken who desire to speak, nor more than twice on any question without the permission of the chair, or of the meeting.

### Voting

- A question is put to vote by the chair, having first distinctly restated it. First, the affirmative, then the negative, is called. Whether the motion is carried or lost is then distinctly announced.
- Voting may be done by calling for the "ayes" and "nays," by holding up the hand, by standing to be counted, or by ballot.
- If the vote as announced by the chair is doubted it is called again, usually by standing to be counted.
- All members should vote unless excused for reason, or unless under discipline, in which case they should take no part in the business.
- The chair or presiding officer does not usually vote, but in case of a tie vote, casts the deciding vote.
- When the vote is to be taken by ballot, the chair appoints tellers to distribute, collect and count the ballots.

### Appeal

The chair or presiding officer announces the result of all votes, and decides all questions as to rules of procedure and order of debate. Any member, however, who is dissatisfied with the decisions of the chair may appeal them to the body. The chair then puts the question: "Shall the decision of the chair be sustained?" The vote of the body, whether negative or affirmative, is final. The right to appeal should not be resorted to in matters of slight importance.

### Previous Questions

- The previous question shall be in the following words. "That this question be now put." The previous question is not debatable and must be voted on at once unless a motion to adjourn be made.
- The previous question, until it is decided, shall preclude all amendments to the main question. If the previous question be resolved in the affirmative, the original question is to be put forthwith, without any amendment or debate.
- No amendment can be proposed to a motion for the previous question nor can the previous question be proposed when an amendment is under consideration. A motion for adjournment can be made to a motion for the previous question.
- If the motion for the previous question is lost, the presiding officer cannot put any question on the main motion, and it is dropped.

Note: The previous question is used to effect one of two objects:

1. To prevent a decision on a question under consideration, in which case the members who propose and second it vote against the motion: and
2. To prevent any amendment and force a direct vote on the question, in which case the members who propose and second it vote for the motion.

#### To Lay on the Table

- Sometimes consideration of a question is deferred by a motion to lay it on the table, in which case it may be taken from the table for discussion at any time by order of the body; or it may be laid on the table until a specified time, to be taken from the table when that time arrives. If a question is merely laid on the table, it is usually considered disposed of.
- A motion to lay on the table must apply to a resolution or other papers. An abstract subject cannot be disposed of in this way.

#### Not Debatable

Motions for the previous question, indefinite postponement, to commit, to lay on the table and to adjourn, are not debatable.

However, when these motions are modified by some conditions of time, place, or purpose, they become debatable, but only in respect to the time, place or purpose which brings them within the province of debate.

#### To Reconsider

A motion to reconsider a motion previously disposed of must be made and seconded by persons who voted with the majority when the motion was disposed of. If the motion to reconsider a motion or resolution is carried, then the original motion stands just where it did before being considered, and may be discussed, adopted or rejected.

A vote to reconsider must be taken at the session at which the question or motion reconsidered was disposed of, and should be when there are as many members present as at first.

### Point of Order

Any member who believes that a speaker is out of order, or that discussion is proceeding improperly, may at any time rise to a point of order. The point of order or objection must be distinctly and briefly stated, and then ruled on by the presiding officer.

### Rule Suspended

A rule of order may be suspended for the time being by the unanimous vote of the body.

### Adjournment

A simple motion to adjourn is always in order except when a member is speaking, or when taking a vote. It takes precedence of all other motions and is not debatable. A body may adjourn to a specified time, but if no time is mentioned the fixed or usual time of meeting is understood. If there is no fixed or usual time of meeting, then an adjournment without date is equivalent to a dissolution.