



University of Wisconsin-Extension

Procedures for Local Government Meetings

Lake District Commissioner Training

March 30, 2016



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**Faith and trust in
government are on the
increase in Wisconsin.**

A. True

B. False

UWEX Meeting 3/30/2016

Still waiting for meeting to start.
Okay, finally starting.

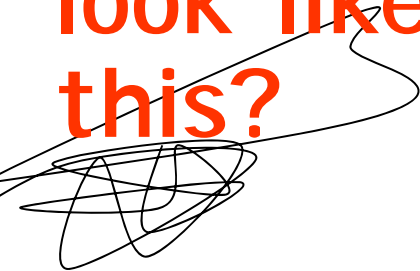
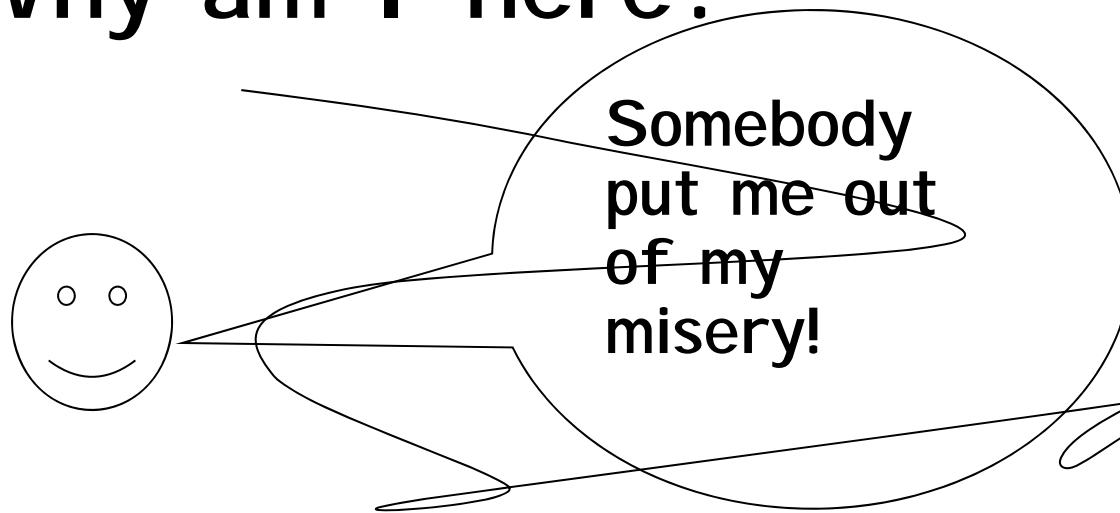
Blah, blah, blah.

Are we done yet?

Why am I here?

I am so
BORED!


**Do your
meeting
notes ever
look like
this?**





•Ukrainian Parliament-April 26, 2010
Source: nytimes.com "Ukraine Passes Deal Under Hail of Eggs"



•Ukrainian Parliament-April 26, 2010

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ANALYTICAL

**Intuitive-
Thinking**

ORGANIZERS

**Sensing-
Judging**

ACTION

**Sensing-
Perceiving**

EXPRESSIVE

**Intuitive-
Feeling**

Analysts

- Exhaust all the options to make the best decision
- Focused on issues
- Clear purpose
- Justification for all actions—answers the question “why?”

Organizers

- On time
- Structured
- Well-planned
- Job assignments
- Detailed

Action

- Fast-paced
- Joking
- A lot of discussion by everyone
- Animated
- Limited time
- Ends early
- Decisions, action

Expressive

- Check in
- No combativeness
- Good participation from all
- Social
- Values expressed
- Amicable closure

My color/temperament is:

A. Green (Analyst/Logical)

B. Gold (Organizer/Orderly/No Surprises)

C. Orange (Risk Taker/Thrive on Change)

D. Blue (People First/Feelings/No Conflict)



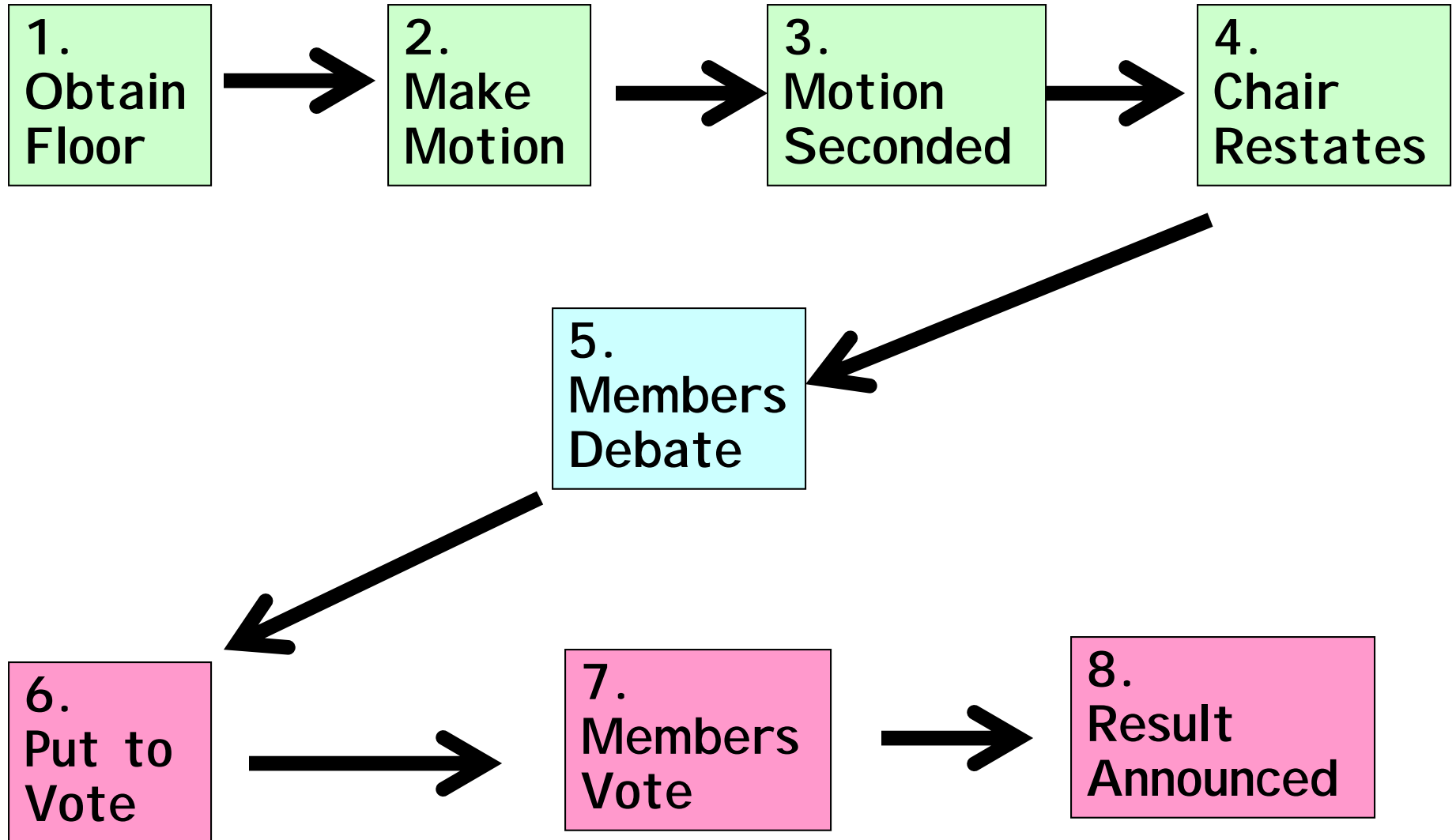
Meeting Management Procedures



The Sources of Procedural Rules

- State statutes
- Local rules
- Robert's Rules of Order

Get in Motion



1. Obtain Floor

- Typically, raising hand.
- Called upon by presiding officer.

2. Make Motion

- Proposal to take action.
- “I move that...”
- Clearly stated.
 - Don’t make negative motions.
 - Make positive motions.
 - “ So Moved ”

3. Motion Seconded

- By another member.
- Worthy of debate.
- Needed to advance.

Couple of Questions

**What happens if the motion
does not receive a second?**

What happens if the motion does not receive a second, but debate takes place, and the motion is voted on and passes?

- A. The vote should be declared null and void prior to the next item of business being announced.
- B. The vote stands until someone draws attention to the mistake.
- C. The vote stands.
- F. Fire the presiding officer for allowing this to happen.

3. Motion Seconded

- By another member.
- Worthy of debate.
- Needed to advance.
 - De facto second.
- Not needed if committee recommendation.

4. Chair Restates

- Clarifies.
 - “It has been moved and seconded that...”
- Transfers ownership of the motion to the body.

5. Members Debate

- Fine tune the motion.
- May occur prior to a motion.

Order of Precedence of Motions¹

	Motions	In Order When Another Has the Floor	Requires Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required for Adoption	Can be Reconsidered
Privileged	Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn	No	Yes	Yes, if moved while no question is pending	Yes	Majority	Yes
	Adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	Recess	No	Yes	No, unless moved while no question is pending	Yes	Majority	No
	Raise a Question of Privilege	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules	No
	Call for the Orders of the Day	Yes	No	No	No	Enforced by chair	No
Subsidiary	Lay on the Table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	Negative vote
	Previous Question (End Debate)	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds	Yes
	Limit or Extend the Limits of Debate	No	Yes	No	Yes	Two-thirds	Yes
	Postpone to a Certain Time	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	Commit (or Refer to Committee)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	Amend	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	Postpone Indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	Main Motions	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
	Take from the Table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
	Reconsider	Yes, but not after speaker has begun	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No
	Rescind	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority, with notice	No

In general, when a given motion in the above table is immediately pending, then motions that appear above it in the list are in order and those appearing below it in the list are out of order. A main motion is in order only when no other motion is pending.

	Motions	In Order When Another Has the Floor	Requires Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required for Adoption	Can be Reconsidered
Incidental	Parliamentary Inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	Chair responds	No
	Point of Information	Yes	No	No	No	Chair responds	No
	Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules	No
	Division of the Assembly	Yes	No	No	No	None	No
	Division of the Question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
	Appeal Chair's Decision	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Yes
	Object to Consideration	Only before debate	No	No	No	Two-thirds	Negative vote
	Suspend the Rules	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds	No
	Withdraw a Motion	Yes	No	No	No	Majority	Negative vote
	Modify a Motion	Yes	No	No	No	Majority	Yes

¹ Source: Robert' Rules of Order, Newly Revised. 11th Edition.

Side Trip on Debate

- Debate
- Discuss
- Problem Solve
 - Focus on THIS topic—not last week’s vote.
 - Address comments to presiding officer.
 - Listen to understand.

6. Put to Vote

You are presiding. After lengthy debate a member says, “I call the question.” What should you do?

- A. Stare with amazement at the member who knows so much about parliamentary procedure.
- B. Stop debate and take a vote.
- C. Make sure the board is ready to vote.
- D. Hand the gavel to the clerk.
- E. Raise your eyebrows and ask, “What should I call the question?”

6. Put to Vote

- “I call the question.”
- Ending debate.
- Chair prompts.
 - “Any further discussion?”
 - “Are you ready to vote?”
 - “Any new points, before we vote?”
- Presiding officer may not end debate on his/her own.
- Presiding officer restates the question and effect of a “yes” or “no” vote.

7. Members Vote

- Votes can be taken in a variety of ways.
- Ask for votes on both sides.

8. Result Announced

- Presiding officer announces results
 - Motion carried or failed.
 - Number of votes on each side, if known.
 - Effect.

Robert's Rules of Order

4.
Chair
Restates

- Ownership of the motion
 - No “friendly amendments.”
 - No single-handed withdrawal of a motion.
- Unanimous consent.

Robert's Rules of Order

2. Make Motion

- Decisions can be reviewed
 - Renew, rescind, amend.
 - Reconsider
 - Moved by a member who voted with prevailing side.
 - Must be moved in a timely manner.
 - Reopens debate; it does not change the decision.
- Contracts are still binding.

Robert's Rules of Order

- Public does not have participation rights in meetings of local government bodies.
- Local government body may suspend its own rules.

Chairperson's Responsibilities

- Chairperson is responsible for the agenda.
- Members may place items on agenda.
- **What about voting?**

The chair of a committee:

- A. Votes on all questions, unless there is a conflict of interest.
- B. Votes only in case of a tie.
- C. Votes only when it will anger none of the residents.
- D. Should not vote. This maintains the appearance of impartiality.
- E. I'm not sure; how about all of the above?

Chairperson's Responsibilities

- Chairperson is responsible for the agenda.
- Members may place items on agenda.
- Chairperson has all the rights of participation, including making and seconding motions, and voting.
 - **Mayoral exception**
- Chairperson is responsible for administering the group's deliberations.

Chairperson's Responsibilities

- Announces issues and keeps members on track.
- Restates motions for clarity.
- Recognizes members.
- Seeks balance.
- Enforces group's rules.
- Asks for votes on each side and announces outcome.

Motions

- Required on substantive issues.
- Avoid negative motions, accepting informational reports, reaffirming existing policy.
- Should be stated fully and repeated by chairperson, once seconded.
- Must be seconded, unless incidental.

Additional Key Points

- Quorum must vote.
- Conflicts of interest must be disclosed.
- Waukesha County Code

- how to handle (tactfully) the overzealous wife of chairman....we have one. doesn't know how to keep quiet during meeting, brings up things in public comment time that are okay....and to keep family peace, he has hard time telling her to sit down and S@## *P
- Most other public that come use common courtesy and sense and keep their comments concise and to the point.
- I know how to handle bit, but I wouldn't be as nice as he is to his wife and I am clerk.

- I also work for Dunn County and take minutes for a committee there. Dunn County has said it is not necessary to have an official "motion" to adjourn meetings. So when taking the minutes and the chair announces the meeting is adjourned I just note the time in the minutes.
-
- Our town board always makes a motion to adjourn.
-

Is a motion to adjourn necessary or just a simple announcement from the chair that the meeting is adjourned?

A. Yes

B. No

C. I hope not, cuz on our board the motion might not pass.

- **Hi Dan,**
- **Will see you on Tuesday, but I did ask my boss, (deleted to protect the innocent and guilty), if he had any questions.**
- **Maybe you can just e-mail us with the answer, but the question is:**
- **Are we allowed to have a closed session during a Finance Meeting to discuss levy problems and options?**

- Does the town Chairmen's wife have the right to get up during the meeting and explain things for her husband? Our chairperson's wife does this at every meeting.

- If a regular board meeting is adjourned, and a board member recalls something they should have brought up in his/her report-- can the meeting be called back into session? And if so, how?

Can decisions be made in closed session and then when are the decisions released to the public?

A. Yes

B. No

When board members approve minutes, do they need to correct grammar as they think it should be? With a comma here, or semi colon there, etc.?

- **Who “owns” the minutes?**
 - A. The Clerk**
 - B. The Board**
 - C. The Clerk and the Board**

When does a chair have the right to stifle a person?



Resources

- *A Guide to Parliamentary Procedure for Local Governments in Wisconsin.* Larry Larmer. 1998
- **Dan Hill**, UW-Extension Local Government Center
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<http://lgc.uwex.edu/OpenGovt/effmtgs.html>

Resources:

- Fact Sheet #1 Wisconsin Open Meetings Law

<http://lgc.uwex.edu/program/pdf/FactSheets/fs1openmeetings.pdf>

Jim Schneider, UW-Extension Local Government Center

- Wisconsin Open Meetings Law: A Compliance Guide

<http://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/dls/open-meetings-law-compliance-guide-2010.pdf>

Wisconsin Department of Justice



University of Wisconsin-Extension

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