

THE MAIN MOTION

All members should know the six basic steps for processing a main motion because

- The main motion is the only motion that is truly substantive, all others being procedural in nature, and
- The same six steps are used for all motions, not just main motions.

The six steps are as follows:

- A member makes a motion. Three things need to happen for a motion to be moved:
 - A member requests recognition of the chair. “Madame President . . . “
 - The chair grants recognition, and assigns the floor to the member.
 - The member makes the motion: “I move that . . . “
- Another member seconds the motion. “Second” or “I second the motion.”
- The chair states the question: “It is moved and seconded that . . . Is there discussion?”
- Members discuss the motion. All issues should be discussed or a motion to close discussion can be made.
- The chair puts the question to a vote. “All in favor say Aye. All opposed say No.”
- The chair announces the result. “The motion is adopted / defeated.

The discussion is not reported in the minutes. The only items to be included in the minutes are 1) the name of the person presenting the motion, 2) the exact wording of the motion, and 3) the result of the vote.

In order to keep a meeting running efficiently and on time, motions can be written down a head of time, or during the meeting when items are reported and brought up for discussion. After a motion is presented, the motion form (written motion) can be handed to the secretary to be recorded.

If a discussion ensues and the original motion is considered but has need for amendment, it is a “pending motion.” A pending motion can be amended by adding words, striking out words, or striking out words and inserting different words. Pending motions can also be postponed.

What we would like to avoid is the majority of our meeting be used up by debating how to properly present a motion, how to amend a motion, who votes when, what are the proper words, etc. The principle behind a motion is change. If something of a procedural nature needs to be changed or a member has a desire to see something changed, the motion process is an appropriate way to do it. Let’s not get caught up in verbiage and exact parliamentary procedure. Let’s just get the job done!

- ✓ Motion is made
- ✓ Motion is seconded or not
- ✓ Discussion ensues or not
- ✓ Motion is amended or not
- ✓ Vote is taken: Aye or No

Here is a simple form that can be used when presenting a motion –

I move that _____

Motion presented by _____ Date _____

Motion adopted _____ Motion defeated _____