

All About Meetings



This document was developed to help you better understand:

- the roles of committee members,
- where committees fit into the organization, and
- how a committee gets its work done.

It was also developed to help you learn about the rules of order, to help you understand how the rules work and help you feel more comfortable participating in the meeting.

In using the rules of order, remember: “It is much more material that there should be a rule to go by than what that rule is.” (Henry Martyn Robert - creator of Robert’s Rules of Order). We use rules of order to help get our committee’s work done and help make sure everyone has a chance to speak. Rules of order can, and should be, adapted to fit your committee’s style, whether it is formal, informal or somewhere in between.

*Prepared by the Membership & Communications Committee
of the Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation (CCOC)*

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P.O. Box 2787, Station D

Ottawa, ON K2P 5W8

(613) 234-4065 ext 240

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Section 1 Who's Who & What's What On A Committee

1. The Committee

A committee is a group of people who work together on issues.



Permanent or “standing” committees are created by the Board of Directors. They meet regularly and deal with specific issues (i.e. the Property Management Committee looks at the ongoing maintenance of CCOC properties).

Temporary or “ad hoc” committees are set up for a limited time by the Board to look at issues that are either:

1. not covered by standing committees; or
2. involve more than one committee.

A committee’s purpose is to clarify issues, provide information and make recommendations to the Board. Standing committees may set up sub-committees to look at special issues. This allows the Standing Committee to stay focused on its main areas of responsibility.

Committees may be given limited decision making power. The Board of Directors can overturn decisions.

2. The Chair

The Chair makes sure that a meeting runs smoothly. S/he is expected to be familiar with the rules of order and to apply them fairly.



The duties of the Chair are:

1. to check that there is quorum (see section 2, Getting Started) and to start the meeting on time
2. to make sure the agenda is followed
3. to make sure the rules of order are applied fairly, and where there is doubt, to put the question to
4. the committee for a decision
5. to adjourn the meeting by general consent or by formal vote
6. to make sure that a report is sent to the Board of Directors.

3. The Secretary/Recorder

The secretary/recorder is responsible for keeping the minutes of the meeting. S/he takes direction from the Chair about what should be minuted whenever there is any question.

In addition to keeping the minutes, the recorder's duties are:

1. to make sure all committee members are notified of the time and place of the meeting
2. to prepare the agenda in consultation with the Chair and department Manager
3. to keep a file of all committee reports
4. to keep a list of committee members
5. to make all reports, minutes and other committee documents available to members on request
6. to provide committee members with all necessary materials for their meeting.

4. The Members

The members of a committee are an organization's greatest resource. Their experience ideas, energy and different points of view allow an organization to grow and renew itself. To become a committee member, you must be a member of CCOC and attend **three committee meetings within the last six months**. Committee and you must sign the corporation's Mission and Values Statement and respect CCOC's policies on confidentiality, conflict of interest and 'in camera' proceedings.

Some committees have members that are appointed by the Board (i.e. Personnel Committee).

Committee members' responsibilities are:

1. to attend meetings (and inform the recorder if you cannot attend),
2. to follow the rules of order,
3. to be informed and make responsible decisions,
4. to make sure that the minutes are accurate, and
5. to complete any task they have been assigned.



5. Attending Non-Members

Committees may listen to presentations by *support staff*, have interested *visitors* in attendance, invite *guests*, or receive *delegations*. These non-members have limited rights under the rules of order. They cannot vote, make motions (see Section 3 -

Motions) or invoke privilege (see Section 4 - Points) but are subject to the rules of order and corporation's by laws. They can be excluded from committee proceedings if the committee thinks it is necessary, or if regulations require that certain matters be decreased "in camera" (i.e.. during discussion of confidential information). Committee members may object to non-members speaking. The Chair must consider their objection and make a decision. The committee may discuss the Chair's decision, a vote is then taken.

Support Staff (staff reporting to a committee)

Support staff are important resources for committees because they often have firsthand experience with issues the committees work on.

Support staff's role is to answer questions from committee members and to report on items as requested.

Visitors

Visitors are people who come to a committee meeting to observe.

Guests

Guests are people invited by the committee to speak, make presentations etc.

Delegations

A delegation is a group that makes a presentation to a committee.

A delegation petitioning the committee should give the committee notice of its intention to attend a meeting.

The petition is added to the agenda. A delegation should also choose a spokesperson before the meeting. Having one person speak gives focus and clarity to the presentation. This will help the committee to focus their questions.

A delegation that comes without giving notice should approach the Chair or recorder before the meeting is brought to order. The Chair can then bring the matter before the committee. The committee decides if they have time to hear the delegation and where the delegation's petition should be added to the agenda.

If a delegation arrives during a meeting the Chair may stop the meeting to determine why they have come. However, the Chair is not obliged to let the delegation present their petition immediately. The committee can decide that the delegation's business be added at the end of the agenda or that the delegation returns for the next meeting.

6. Reports

Committee Reports are information brought to the committee by committee members, support staff or by individuals the committee has asked to report. Copies of reports adopted by the committee are kept on file with the meeting minutes.

Reports to the Board are regular reports sent from each committee to the Board of Directors. They contain information on the general activities of the committee. They are also a way for committees to indicate the need for the Board to take action on certain issues.

7. Committee Minutes

The minutes are the permanent record of a committee's meeting. They provide a record of what was done and said at previous meetings. The minutes are not meant to be a complete record and should avoid unnecessary detail.

For example, if a member presents a report to the committee, the minutes should include:

1. the nature of the report
2. who presented it, and
3. any resolutions arising from the report,

The minutes give both committee members and others a chance to review the committee's activities. This is why minutes are so important.

Section 2 The Order of Business

1. Getting Started (Call to Order)

The meeting cannot begin until there is quorum. Quorum is the number of people needed to legally make decisions. Most CCOC committee need three members for quorum. The recorder starts taking minutes once the meeting has been called to order.



2. Adopting the Agenda (Order of Business)

The agenda should be sent to committee members before the meeting. The Chair discusses the agenda with the committee's recorder and/or department Manager before the meeting. After the call to order, the Chair asks if there are items to be added or changed (i.e. to discuss an item earlier because it will involve a long discussion).

Suggested changes can be discussed. If committee members agree on the changes, the Chair rules them as adopted. If there is disagreement, a vote has to be taken.

After the changes have been recorded, the Chair announces that the agenda is approved by saying,

“If there are no further changes, the agenda is approved.”

3. Adopting the Last Meeting’s Minutes

Adoption or approval of the minutes starts with tabling or presenting last meeting’s minutes. The minutes should be sent to committee members before the meeting. If this is not done, the Chair can:

1. give members time to read the minutes, or
2. have the minutes read aloud.

The Chair will ask if there are any changes to be made. Changes are to be recorded in the minutes. After all corrections have been made, the Chair will announce that the minutes are approved by saying,

“If there are no other corrections, the minutes are approved as corrected.”

If an objection is made to a correction, a vote is then taken.

4. Correspondence

Correspondence is divided into:

1. items that need action (to be dealt with as New Business), and
2. items that do not (for example, thank you notes)



The Chair may report on correspondence **that does not need action**. Correspondence *needing action* is given to members so they can prepare for discussion under New Business (see #7).

5. Reports

All reports are presented at this time. The report from the Board of Directors should be presented first (since the Board gives direction for work to be done). Reports from other committees are presented next. For each report, the Chair will ask if there are any questions.

If a report has a recommendation, a committee member may make a motion to adopt the recommendation to do this:

1. make a motion to adopt
2. have someone second the motion

3. discuss
4. vote

Most committees allow time for a staff report. Depending on the type of work a committee does, it may not be necessary to have a full report at every meeting. Committees can decide how often staff should present reports, and what kind of information they would like to see.

6. Unfinished Business/Business Arising from the Minutes

The Chair never asks if there is any unfinished business. S/he should have already discussed this with the secretary.

The Chair introduces this part of the meeting by saying,

“Under unfinished business/business arising, we have the matter of...”

This business should be listed in the agenda to help committee members prepare for the meeting. Committees might find they deal with a recurring set of issues. These can be listed as regular items in the agenda this helps committee members to prepare for the meeting.



7. New Business

The Chair presents correspondence needing action first. Committee member and staff items come next.

Committees can then look at tenant appeals (i.e. about matters of rent or repair work). This is also a good time to hear from delegations. The Chair will summarize the delegation’s appeal or presentation and make sure that any related material is handed out.

Before going to “Announcements”, the Chair should give one last chance to discuss new business by asking,

“Is there any further new business?”

8. Announcements

The Chair makes all announcements and then asks

“Are there any further announcements?”

Announcements that may require committee action should be brought to the Chair’s attention before the meeting starts. Committee members or guests may make announcements.

9. Adjournment

The Chair can simply announce,

“If there is no further business, the meeting will adjourn (pause)... the meeting is adjourned.”

Section 3 Motions

A. Ranking Motions

The following motions are ‘ranked’, that is, the first has precedence over the next in the committee’s deliberations.

Except where noted, you can only make a motion after the Chair has recognized you (when it is your turn to speak). The Chair cannot move a motion. To move a motion, s/he must give the Chair to another committee member. S/he can take the Chair back once the motion has been voted on.

1. To Adjourn

This motion is not debatable. It cannot be amended. It must be put to a vote immediately. The vote cannot be reconsidered.

Motions to adjourn can be made more than once during a meeting as long as there has been other business in between, however, the Chair can over rule the motion if it only appears to be an attempt to delay.

The motion to adjourn is out of order during:

1. a vote
2. the counting of a vote, and
3. the verifying of a vote.

Motions to adjourn that are qualified, for example, *“I move that this committee adjourn and reconvene next Tuesday”*, can be debated, amended and have other motions attached to it,

2. To Recess

Members may want to take a break or “recess” after a long debate. If you think the committee needs a recess, you can make this motion. When the committee returns, it will take up business where it left off.

If someone else *has the floor* (is speaking), you must wait until they are finished.

The motion must be seconded. You can only amend the length of time of the recess.

3. To Raise a Question/Point of Privilege

See Section 4 - Points.

4. Call for the order of the day (agenda)

If you think the meeting is not following the agenda, you can interrupt the meeting and say:

*“Mister/Madam Chair, I call for order of the day” or
“Mister/Madam Chair, I call for reference to the agenda”.*

The Chair must immediately recognize you and ask:

“Please state the order” or “To what do you refer”



You then explain your point. For example: *“It is now twenty minutes past the agreed time of adjournment” or “This report should not be presented at this time...”*

The Chair must decide if the meeting is or is not following the agenda. A two-thirds vote by the committee overturn a call for the order of the day (i.e. item has been discussed longer than agreed, but committee members want to continue).

5. To defer a question until later in the meeting (lay on the table)

You can make this motion if you feel that a question under discussion should be set aside until later in the meeting, for example, after a recess. This motion is helpful to:

1. allow more urgent business to be discussed, or
2. give more time for committee members to prepare.

The motion must be seconded. A majority vote is required.

6. To Call an Immediate Vote

This motion puts an end to all debate. The motion needs a seconder.

You can ask that the vote include all motions made since the main motion. Whatever motions you want to vote on immediately, they must be consecutive and include the last motion made.

For example, the committee has a main motion under discussion:

1. *“The Committee approves the spending of five thousand dollars to send delegates to the International Housing Conference in Athens.”*

There is an amendment,

2. *“...subject to the Executive Committee’s approval.”*

And there is an amendment to the amendment,

3. “... approval by the end of this month.”

In this case, you can ask:

- for an immediate vote on all three motions (1,2 and 3), or
- for a vote on the amendment and the amendment to the amendment 2 and 3), or
- just the amendment to the amendment (3).

You cannot have a vote on the main motion and the amendment to the amendment (1 and 3).

Except for a motion to defer, no other motion can be made until the vote has been taken. The vote can be reconsidered.

7. To Commit or Refer

If you feel that the committee needs more information to make a decision about an issue, or that members should have more time to think about an issue, you can make a motion to *commit* (set up a committee) or *refer* (send the matter to another committee).

When you make this motion, you are asking that the main motion and the amendments be sent to another committee. The motion needs a seconder.



When making this motion, you must include:

1. the name of the committee (if referring), or the composition of the new committee (if committing)
2. the duties of the committee
3. when the committee should report

For this motion, debate is limited to:

1. whether or not the main motion should be sent to another committee, if it should,
2. what committee (standing or ad hoc) should deal with the matter, and
3. what the instructions to that committee should be.

The vote can be reconsidered.

8. To Amend

This is one of the most common motions made at committees, however, it is probably the most complicated. See *Robert's Rules of Order Revised* for more Information.

You make a motion to amend if you want to change the way a motion is worded, but not the meaning. There is no such thing as a friendly amendment" in any of the standard texts on rules of order. You either make an amendment or you don't. A "friendly amendment" under the rules of order is simply one supported by the mover of the main motion.

The motion needs a seconder and can be put to a vote.

A motion to amend can be amended. However, there can only be:

- one amendment to the main motion, and
- one amendment to the amendment under discussion at any time.

There are three methods of amending:

1. adding (at the end),
2. deleting (take out), and
3. replacing with different words

Because the committee has voted on it:

- words that have been added cannot be taken out or changed in a further amendment,
- words that have been taken out cannot be added elsewhere.

The committee, through general consent, can accept the amendment, but the Chair calls a vote if someone objects. The vote can be reconsidered.

9. To Postpone Indefinitely

This motion is a complete rejection of the main motion. It ends all discussion and prevents a vote on the main motion. It cannot be made if there are amendments to a motion under discussion.

The motion must be seconded.

During debate of this motion, the merits of the main motion can be discussed. Only a vote in favour of postponement can be reconsidered.

10. Main motion

A main motion is the question under discussion. For example,

“I move that the committee authorize the purchase of three flats of Zinnias to be donated to the L. Greene Memorial Fund.”

The motion must be seconded. It can be amended. The vote can be reconsidered.

Nine steps to a Motion:

1. moved a proposal from the floor
2. seconded another member feels the proposal is worth discussing
3. stated wording is recorded and everyone understands the intent of the proposal
4. discussed members discuss the motion.
5. amended wording of the motion is changed by adding, deleting or replacing,
**each amendment has the same 9 steps as a motion*
6. called - after discussion. (a motion to end discussion or call the vote).
7. restated - to make sure everyone understand what is being voted on.
8. voted - Chair calls each option ‘all in favour?’ ‘opposed?’ ‘abstaining?’
9. declared - results of the vote announced by the Chair.

B. Non ranking motions

The following motions are only considered when no ranking motions are being discussed.

When two non ranking motions are on the floor, the Chair must decide the order in which they will be discussed:

- to adopt a report
- to amend an amendment
- to amend standing rules
- debate (to extend, limit or close)
- for division (have a recorded or balloted vote)
- to divide a question (break a motion into two parts)
- nominations:
 - 1) to make a nomination
 - 2) to close nominations
 - 3) to re-open nominations
- objection to discussion of an issue (i.e., item is not the committee’s responsibility)
- to postpone definitely (i.e. postpone until next Tuesday at 4 p.m.)
- reconsider
- return to a deferred item (to take from the table’, see Ranking Motion #5)
- vote (to call the question)
- withdraw a motion



C. The Making of a Main Motion

| The Committee Members... | The Recorder... |
|---|---|
| 1. A committee member moves a motion. i.e. I move that Jack & Jill run up the hill. | 1. records the motion and who moved it. (M =mover) i.e. It was moved that “Jack & Jill run up the hill.” (M/D. Bucket) |
| 1. A committee member moves a motion. i.e. I move that Jack & Jill run up the hill. | 1. records the motion and who moved it. (M =mover) i.e. It was moved that “Jack & Jill run up the hill.” (M/D. Bucket) |
| 2. The Chair asks if there is a seconder for the motion. i.e. Can I /do I have a seconder for this motion? | 2. |
| 3. Another committee member seconds the motion because s/he thinks the motion is worth discussing. i.e. I second the motion, | 3. records who the seconder was. (S seconder) i.e. M/S D. Bucket/D.Water |
| 4. The Chair invites discussion i.e. Any discussion?.... | 4. records highlights of the discussion. |
| Amendments must be discussed immediately. The Chair may ask if the mover and seconder of the original motion accept the amendment. If yes: agree to reword the motion, continue discussion and vote (“friendly amendment”); if not: begin at Step 1 and discuss the merit of the amendment. | records amendment’s mover, seconder and discussion. |
| 5. The Chair asks if there is any more discussion. If not, s/he restates the motion to prepare members for the vote. i.e. If there is no more discussion, we will now vote on whether or not Jack and Jill should run up the hill. | 5. The Chair may ask the recorder to restate the motion (word for word). i.e. It was moved that “Jack & Jill run up the hill.” |
| 6. The Chair calls the vote and announces the results. i.e. All in favour? opposed? abstaining? The motion is carried/defeated. | 6. records the vote, (C = carried, D = defeated) i.e. M/S/C D. Bucket/D.Water |

Section 4 Points

1. Points of Order

You raise a point of order when you feel the rules of order are either not being followed or have been misapplied. You can interrupt a speaker to raise a point of order The Chair must immediately recognize you. You can only interrupt a discussion if the point relates

to the discussion at hand. If the committee has already moved on to other business, that business must be completed before the point of order can be considered,

2. Points of Privilege

Points or ‘questions’ of privilege relate to the rights of committee members. They can be as simple as not being able to hear someone speaking, or as serious as objecting to an insult. A committee member may interrupt a speaker to raise a point of privilege, except during a motion to recess or to adjourn.

When you want to address the Chair on a point of privilege, say:

“Point of Privilege” or “Privilege “

The Chair must immediately recognize you. State your point in the form of a question as you are asking the Chair to decide if your rights (personal privilege) or those of the committee (privilege) have been violated.

The Chair decides:

1. it is not a matter of privilege; or
2. it is a matter of privilege, but a frivolous one; or
3. that privilege has been violated and appropriate action must be taken.

The Chair can choose to let a speaker finish before discussing the question of privilege.

Any decision can be appealed by two members of the committee. An appeal forces a vote on whether or not to discuss of the point of privilege

Section 5 Appeals

Any decision (ruling) from the Chair can be appealed. The appeal must be made as soon as the Chair has ruled. You don’t have to be recognized by the Chair to make an appeal. You can make an appeal even if someone else already has the floor.

You make your appeal by saying,

“Mister/Madam Chair, I appeal your decision.”

Your appeal requires a seconder. Once your appeal has a seconded, the Chair explains the reason for her/his decision and then asks,

“Does the committee support the Chair’s ruling?”

Discussion is allowed, but each committee member only has one opportunity to speak. The Chair may address the committee at the end of the discussion to answer any questions about his/her ruling.

A vote is taken after the discussion.

The Chair's decision stands in the event of a tie. You cannot appeal the vote, however, you can ask for a balloted vote.

Section 6 Glossary of Terms

| | |
|---------------|---|
| in camera | to discuss an item in private (i.e., "members only" because information is of a confidential nature). |
| move a motion | to propose a question or resolution (to propose that "something" be done). |
| the Chair | person who presides over the meeting (a Chairperson). |
| to abstain | to decline to use your vote (to abstain from voting on a motion). |
| to adopt | to approve or accept (a motion or report). |
| to amend | to propose a change to a motion under discussion. |
| to deliberate | to give careful consideration; to discuss. |
| to second | to give the necessary support to a proposal (motion). A motion cannot be debated if it is not seconded. |
| quorum | a fixed number of members that must be present to make the proceedings of a committee valid. |