

GUIDELINES FOR SMACNA CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

*"Leadership: The art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it."
Dwight David Eisenhower*

Leadership:

In every SMACNA Chapter someone is designated to lead. The elected representatives of the membership, i.e., Board of Directors, hold the power to set policy and determine direction for the Association. They commission an individual to serve in the capacity of Chapter President. The process of commissioning a President is usually the result of an election as delineated in the organization's Constitution and Bylaws. These basic operating documents also define the "Mission" of the Chapter, the duties and responsibilities of its officers, directors, and employees and the general rules and regulations governing the activities and operation of the Chapter.

Constitution and Bylaws:

One of the first things the Chapter President should undertake is to acquire a more than casual knowledge of the Chapter Constitution and Bylaws. These governances outline the authority of the Chapter officers, Board of Directors, and membership. As President and volunteer leader of the chapter, take the time to read and understand these documents. It will not be the most exciting reading you have come across, but it is necessary if you are to become an effective leader.

If you find that they are out-of-date or that the chapter no longer operates in accordance with them, then make as one of the goals of your presidency either to update the Chapter Constitution and Bylaws or bring the operation of the chapter into compliance with these governances. In this idealistic world it is incumbent upon each chapter to have its "house in order" and this means that its basic documents should be current and in order.

Other Responsibilities:

The specific responsibilities of the Chapter President are usually enumerated in the Chapter Bylaws. They normally include:

- Preside at all meetings of the membership, Board of Directors, and Executive Committee;
- Assure that the membership and Board of Directors are kept fully informed on the general conditions and operations of the Chapter by reporting to them on a regular basis, either orally or in writing;

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- Work in concert with the Board of Directors and Chapter Executive¹ to plan and develop policies and programs that reflect the aspirations of the membership, reflect the needs of the industry, and further the mission of the Chapter;
- Support and defend the policies and programs adopted by the membership and/or Board of Directors;
- Determine, in cooperation with the Treasurer and Chapter Executive, that the Chapter is financially sound, adheres to its budget, and follows proper financial procedures, including an annual audit;
- Encourage all members to participate in Chapter activities, programs, and serve on committees, boards, trusts, and task forces;
- Serve as Chief Spokesperson for the Chapter with the media, legislature, trade allies, labor organizations, and the public at large [this responsibility may be shared with or assigned to the Chapter Executive]; and,
- Appoint and provide guidance to all committees, boards, task forces, trustees, and Chapter representation, unless stated otherwise in the Chapter Bylaws. The President normally serves as "ex officio" member of all Chapter committees and task forces.

These are the responsibilities that are normally prescribed to the role of Chapter President and are probably fairly consistent in all SMACNA chapters.

Define Your Goals:

As Chapter President, you will want to move your Chapter and its contractor membership forward. If the Chapter has adopted a Strategic or Long Range Plan and Mission Statement, they should be used as a guide in your planning. Your initial task then is to identify how this is to be accomplished. As you define your goals for the Chapter consider the following:

- Recognize that your primary responsibility is to lead and direct, not manage, the business operations of the Chapter. It is the responsibility of your paid professional Chapter Executive to manage and administer the affairs of the Association in conformance with the policies and direction adopted by the Board of Directors.
- Take time to reflect on the most compelling needs and the most important obligations confronting the Chapter. Identify and refine a few objectives which are important to you and which you believe have

¹ Throughout this document it will be assumed that the Chapter has a paid Chapter Executive, who typically reports and is responsible to the Board of Directors. It is understood that this is not the case with all SMACNA chapters.

the potential to be accomplished and which are consistent with the Chapter's Strategic or Long Range Plan.

- Recognize that you cannot do everything regardless of how strong the Chapter is, how capable its professional staff is, or how sound it is financially. The resources of time, money, and member involvement are finite.
- The major thrust of your Chapter's programs during your tenure will be to continue successful and accepted established activities. Your personal goals should compliment the Chapter's existing programs streamlining those objectives so that they are manageable. Do not try to accomplish too much at the risk of accomplishing nothing. Beware of the temptation to make drastic changes. Always keep in mind, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!"; this does not mean, however, that you should not introduce new programs or ideas for Board consideration.
- Working with your Chapter Executive, your predecessor, and your fellow officers identify the best means of approaching your goals. The objectives you collectively identify as goals for your term may include one or more of the following -

- ◆ Improvement of the Chapter's financial base by updating structure and/or developing alternate funding vehicles;
- ◆ Begin or continue a "Strategic or Long Range Planning" initiative by holding "get away" Board meetings to specifically address the planning process, consider utilization of the services available to you in this regard from SMACNA National and the Chapter Support Representative Program;
- ◆ Enhance the productivity and image of the Chapter office by assuring an appropriate setting;
- ◆ Develop a continuing education program for eligible management personnel of Chapter member firms through local programming and participation in National SMACNA Business Management programs;
- ◆ Expand Chapter membership by reaching out positively and aggressively to all signatory non-member firms and incorporating a plan for personal contact with such firms;
- ◆ Develop and offer a series of technical programs or forums for the local design community with emphasis on SMACNA's technical standards, including a review of the Chapter's manual distribution program, consider utilization of the services available to you in this regard from SMACNA National through the SMACNA Technical Department; and,

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- ◆ Establish regular labor-management meetings [at least quarterly] with local sheet metal union officials to foster positive labor relations, consider utilization of the services available to you in this regard from SMACNA National through the SMACNA Labor Department.

Every Chapter has its own unique pattern, personality, structure, and traditions. The suggestions above are offered as examples to stimulate your thinking in an attempt to assist you to start development of realistic, achievable goals for your Chapter during your tenure as Chapter President.

Your "modus operandi" may be in front of a microphone or it may be in "behind the scenes" operations. Remember you were not elected to dictate, you should reduce your ideas, directions, and goals to written form present and discuss them with your fellow officers, Board of Directors, and professional staff at the outset of your term. Following their input, you should convey them to the membership in a manner consistent with your style.

Serving as President of a Chapter, large or small, can be a rewarding and exciting experience. No term or office is perfect but advance planning and goal-setting will help to maximize the opportunity to the benefit of you and your Chapter. Working in concert with you fellow officers, directors, and professional staff will make the task easier and more enjoyable.

Working With Your Chapter Executive

"The nice thing about teamwork is that you always have others on your side."

Margaret Carty

SMACNA Chapter Presidents are first and foremost executives of their own contracting firm. Often, they serve as the President or Chief Executive Officer [CEO] of their firm. Consequently, they are busy people who must coordinate their SMACNA duties with their contracting duties.

During your term as Chapter President your greatest support will come from the Chapter Executive and staff. These professionals should be consulted and advised of all your plans; and all communications should be channeled through the Chapter office. Keep in mind, however, that the Chapter Executive works for the Board of Directors and not exclusively for you as President.

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The Chapter Executive is responsible for the internal management and administration of the Chapter and implementation of the policies and programs of the Chapter as determined by the membership and/or Board of Directors under the leadership of the President. The Chapter Executive under the Chapter organizational structure while reporting to the President is responsible to the Board of Directors. The relationship between the Chapter Executive and the President should be an enthusiastic partnership.

The Chapter Executive's profession is association management and as such he/she is as knowledgeable in association and organizational structure and procedures as you are in operating a contracting business. The following are some of the ways that the Chapter Executive can assist you during your Presidency -

- Advise on procedures and policies;
- Apprise you of potential pitfalls, activities that are illegal, and areas in which the Chapter must proceed with caution;
- Recommend individuals for committee service;
- Translate your ideas, suggestions, and concerns into forceful messages to the membership;
- Assist in keeping the membership well informed of the activities and progress of the Chapter;
- Frequently share with you the responsibility of spokesperson for the Chapter;
- Consult with you on matters pertaining to association policies, programs, finances, and industry or public position statements; and,
- Plan, prepare, and carry-out, in concert with you, regular and special meetings of the Chapter, including review of agenda and other meeting materials.

There are many ways that you will interact with the Chapter Executive. It is vital that you approach one another with trust, candor, and respect. You will both be dealing with many different personalities, both from within and outside the Chapter. In carrying out the work of the Chapter it is essential confidences exchanged during your deliberations be maintained. It is important to communicate openly and honestly from the very beginning and to understand your respective roles and responsibilities.

The Chapter functions better and the job gets done more efficiently and effectively when the President and Chapter Executive have an effective and meaningful working relationship. Communication is the key. Meetings with the

Chapter Executive should be on a regular schedule. This means scheduling time on your busy calendars to get together to review and plan the business of the Chapter. These meetings should be scheduled for your convenience. They may be at breakfast, lunch, or later in the afternoon at the association office; or whatever schedule works the best for the two of you. It is necessary to establish such a schedule and strive to maintain it. Phone calls from one another should be given priority; phone communications can save considerable time. However, the phone is no substitute for face-to-face meetings. Things do come up from time to time that require immediate attention, but generally Chapter business can wait for your regular scheduled meetings.

The essence of enlightened leadership is to invest the Chapter's elected representatives with strategic policy planning and to empower the Chapter professional staff to carry out the business of the Chapter in accordance with the adopted policy and direction.

Presiding At Meetings

"Every time a man puts a new idea across, he finds ten men who thought of it before he did - but they ONLY thought of it." Farmer's Almanac 1988

While the President affects the life of the Chapter in many ways over the course of his term, the opportunity to accomplish most is in chairing membership, Board of Directors, and Executive Committee meetings. This is where ideas are formulated, decisions made, and the on going mission of the Chapter is discussed, shaped, re-shaped, and given final purpose and direction.

Good meetings do not just happen!! They are planned and carried out in accordance with the plan. This is where teamwork between the President and Chapter Executive is crucial.

The President and the Chapter Executive confer well in advance of any meeting to define the agenda and plan procedure. The Chapter Executive is responsible for the development of a tentative agenda. Once the agenda is finalized with the President, the Chapter Executive and staff arrange all meeting details, i.e., send out meeting notices, approved agenda, and other pre-meeting materials; make the physical arrangements; confirm schedules and other details with outside speakers or guests; etc.

As the President, it is your responsibility to preside at meetings of the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and/or membership and to guide the meeting to

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a successful conclusion. Following are some of the basic rules for conducting a meeting:

- **START ON TIME!!**
- Follow the agenda; the purpose of the agenda is to save time and keep the meeting on course.
- Keep the meeting moving; interest lags when action lags.
- Involve as many members as practical; keep responses short and to the issue.
- Speak clearly. If you cannot be heard, you cannot exercise control. If you have a low speaking voice, use the gavel and get attention focused on you before speaking.
- Insist on order. When simultaneous discussions ensue, no one can be heard and nothing is accomplished.
- Address the group, not individuals. Side conversations are rude, disruptive, and accomplish nothing.
- Make certain that each individual who takes the floor speaks clearly and audibly. Interrupt if you must and repeat what was said if you suspect that it may not have been heard.
- Actions usually require the introduction of a motion, which **MUST** be seconded before proper discussion and ultimate action can be taken. Roberts Rules of Order are typically the procedures followed. You should become familiar with this publication.
- Sum up what the speaker has said [repeat the motion] and obtain a decision.
- Retain control, but do not stifle free comment. Invite constructive criticism and even disagreement. Ask for support. Clarify issues by obtaining consensus.
- Do not argue with the individual who has the floor. Ask questions if you disagree or do not understand, but remember as the Presiding Officer *you are neutral*. If you have a comment or wish to participate in the debate, make a motion, etc., you **MUST** turn the chair over to the appropriate officer [usually the Vice President].

Most SMACNA Chapters are small organizations. Their business meetings are also small and informal with an average attendance from 10 to 20 individuals at membership meetings. The Constitution and Bylaws of most chapters stipulate that meetings are to be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order. It is not necessary that you become an expert in parliamentary procedures to conduct a meeting, but it does help to have at least a working knowledge of the basics from Roberts Rules. [See Appendix "A"]

One of your goals may be to improve the quality of monthly membership meetings. Your membership meetings can be a learning experience for the members as well as a place to conduct Chapter business. Bringing in outside speakers for programs, which you feel, will be of interest to the members and whose subject or presentation is pertinent to the industry, will enhance the quality of the meeting. With appropriate pre-meeting publicity, interest and participation by the membership can be enhanced.

Committee Work

"There is something that is much more scarce, something finer far, something rarer than ability. It is the ability to recognize ability."
Elbert Hubbard

Much of the work of the Chapter is carried out through sub-structures called committees, task forces, boards, or trusts. It is usually one of the primary duties of the Chapter President to appoint individuals to serve on these committees, task forces, or trusts. Since Labor Relations is a service offered to its membership by most chapters, many of the committees are jointly constituted with local union representation [some of these may be Taft-Hartley trusts].

At the chapter level there are generally two types of committees to appoint, i.e., Standing Committees and Special or Ad Hoc Committees. Standing Committees are usually provided for in the Chapter Constitution and are committees that have a continuing long-term function. Special or Ad Hoc Committees differ from a task force in that their function centers around a particular concern or purpose but may not include an identified project; they tend to be investigatory in nature. Task Forces are appointed to accomplish a specifically defined task or project and are disbanded when their job is completed. Whether you are appointing standing, special or ad hoc committees or task forces, you must be concerned with the people you select and their qualifications. You should instruct them regarding their duties and obligations. Many committees and task forces fail because they did not understand their "charge" or mission.

These sub-structures should be composed of members who are interested in the basic mission of the committee or task force; and who have the experience, skills, and knowledge to address the mission. The Chairman must be an individual who will command the respect of his fellow members, has demonstrated leadership abilities, and who will get the job done. Ordinarily, small committees and task forces are desirable, three to five members including the chairman. It is understood that often joint committees with representation from other organizations will be larger.

The Chapter Executive and staff are valuable resources for these sub-structures. Not only are they able to provide valuable administrative services, but they can also be an essential information resource for the committee, task force, or trust. Usually your professional staff possess a broader knowledge and understanding of the issue than do other members of the committee or task force

Regardless of the committee or task force size and its function, there are two fundamental principles that need to be followed to focus on the function and objective.

1. Be certain that the committee, task force, or trust appointees know their goal and what is to be accomplished; and the financial policy implications that their decisions will impact.
2. Clearly specify expected reporting procedures and anticipated completion dates.

Effective committees, task forces, and trusts do not just happen! They are the result of a combination of the proper individuals, dedicated leadership, professional staff, and a clearly stated and achievable mission. The final ingredient is on-going supervision and support from the appointing authority, namely you, the President.

Working With National SMACNA

"There are no problems we cannot solve together, and very few we can solve by ourselves."

President Lyndon Johnson

The affairs and operation of National SMACNA, its membership, and chapters are intertwined. SMACNA as a national organization owes its existence to its local members and chapters. All are inter-related and dependent on one another. The national association functions as a service organization providing a wide range of support services and products to its members and chapters. This mutually beneficial relationship is best described as follows:

SMACNA is organized for and dedicated to the advancement of the sheet metal and air conditioning industry. It strives to represent and service the interests and needs of its membership in particular and the industry in general. To accomplish this objective, SMACNA endeavors to provide a basic package of general services to all members while at the same time recognizing and servicing the special needs and interests reflected by the diversity within the industry. The broad range of services cover management education, technical, labor relations,

and governmental affairs with more specialized and specific services provided as such needs are identified. National SMACNA's obligation is to provide services to member firms with recognition that chapters function as distributors of National services to members. National SMACNA has an interest in providing assistance to chapters to become more effective distributors of National services. In instances where chapters are not effective distributors of National services, National SMACNA has an obligation to make members aware of services available to them from National SMACNA.

As indicated above, the services National SMACNA renders to its members are disseminated primarily through its local chapters. The organizational structure of National SMACNA grants the right, responsibility, and obligation to the local chapter to convey these services at the local level. Other classes of members are serviced directly by National SMACNA.

As Chapter President you need to be aware of the services available to your chapter through National SMACNA in order to assure that services which enhance the "mission" of the chapter are fully utilized. National SMACNA believes that its services, programs, and policies are best implemented, achieved, and realized through its chapters.

The communications protocol linking the national, its chapters, and its membership is:

- **The SMACNA Membership Directory** - not only a roster of all members but a compendium of other information and useful data.
- **SMACNEWS** - SMACNA's informational newsletter published on a regular basis and distributed to the industry.
- **Membership Updates** - a compilation of reports, bulletins, notices, updates, promotional materials, etc. sent to the membership at regular scheduled intervals.
- **Chaptergram** - a compilation of chapter alerts, chapter specific information, reports, bulletins, notices, updates, promotional materials, etc. directed to Chapter Presidents, Vice Presidents, Councilors, and Executives. **NOTE:** It is the obligation of the Chapter President and Executive to convey information contained in these chapter specific mailings to their members as they deem appropriate.
- **SMACNA Website** - the SMACNA website at www.smacna.org has become a significant source for industry information and SMACNA services.

In addition to the printed materials, there are a number of regularly scheduled meetings and forums which are significant service providers for the membership and chapter leadership. They include:

- **Annual Business Meeting and National Convention** - normally scheduled for October, these meetings provide a number of educational opportunities, market sector-specific forums, technically oriented seminars, and membership business forums. They are open to the membership and other industry participants on a fee basis.
- **Council of Chapter Representatives** - meets twice each year, usually in June and December, approximately thirty [30] days prior to National SMACNA Board of Directors meetings. Chapters are entitled to send two [2] representatives, usually a contractor Councilor and the Chapter Executive. The function of the Council is serve to implement this National SMACNA policies and programs at the chapter level, to interchange information on chapter activities and programs, and to inform the Board of Directors concerning industry and chapter needs and problems.
- **Chapter Executive's Institute** - a continuing education program for your professional chapter executive. Attendance is exclusive to professional chapter staff personnel. The Institute is held each year at the location of the next SMACNA annual convention. As a result, not only is the professional staff provided continuing education opportunities in association management, but in addition they have the opportunity to become acquainted with the convention facility and city enabling them to make appropriate arrangements to enhance the experience of their members who attend the convention.
- **President To Presidents Meeting** - held annually each year at the call of the National SMACNA President and open to duly elected chapter Presidents and Vice Presidents, this meeting provides a unique opportunity for the elected leadership to meet and discuss issues affecting SMACNA and the industry at both the national and local levels.
- **Special Meetings, Conferences, and Seminars** - various meetings held throughout the year, including -
 - ◆ Labor Seminars
 - ◆ Business Management Education workshops
 - ◆ Legislative Issues Conferences

National SMACNA looks to the Chapter President and Executive to motivate members to attend and participate in these meetings.

Meeting details are distributed to chapters through the **Chaptergram** mailings.

The preceding is a thumbnail sketch of activities and services available to chapters and the membership through National SMACNA which are designed to promote and advance the sheet metal industry.

Your chapter office will no doubt have a complete library of National SMACNA information, publications, technical and business education manuals, membership promotion aids, labor relations data, and special study reports and bulletins. These resource materials and the assistance of your Chapter Executive will help to make your job as President easier.

National SMACNA also publishes a **SMACNA Products and Services Guide**, which should be included in the chapter office library. This publication provides you with a ready reference and description of the publications, materials, products, and services available through national SMACNA. These materials are also available on the SMACNA website at www.smacna.org.

As one might expect, national SMACNA's Constitution and Bylaws and Board approved policies place certain obligations on its chartered chapters. As Chapter President you should be aware of these obligations. Following is a summary of most of these obligations -

- Each chapter shall keep on file with SMACNA a current copy of the Chapter Constitution and Bylaws;
- Each chapter will provide the SMACNA Membership Department a current listing of all chapter members, and is responsible for maintaining this list at a current level;
- Each chapter shall obtain from its member firms and furnish to the SMACNA Membership Department such statistical information as may be requested;
- Annual Membership Fees [\$100 per member firm in the U.S. and \$50 per member firm in Canada] are to be remitted to the SMACNA Membership Department within ninety [90] days after receiving national; billing;
- Chapters located in an area with a sheet metal collective bargaining agreement requiring contributions to a local sheet metal industry fund and/or promotion fund, shall be required to remit to national SMACNA the applicable hourly rate for all hours worked by all productive employees in those firms bound by the terms of said collective bargaining agreement, whether members or not;

- Where chapter members are contributing to the **Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors National Industry Fund of the United States [IFUS]** as obligated by the terms of their local sheet metal collective bargaining agreement, then the hourly national SMACNA dues requirement is deemed to be paid [provided that the IFUS contribution is equal to or exceeds the hourly dues obligation];
- Minimum dues obligation for all regular members of national SMACNA is \$300 per year. This obligation can be met through a combination of the \$100 annual fee plus \$200 in hourly dues payments either paid through IFUS or directly to national SMACNA as hourly dues;
- The jurisdiction of each chapter in terms of geographic area served and class of business shall be as determined by the national SMACNA Board of Directors;
- Chapters shall submit to the national SMACNA Labor Department a copy of its local sheet metal labor agreement, addenda, letters of agreement, and all other documents within ninety [90] days after being reached with the local union;
- No firm shall be eligible for membership in national SMACNA unless the firm shall have first applied for membership in the local chapter ... *if the firm is rejected by the local chapter* and applies for Direct Membership in national SMACNA, the authority to accept as a national SMACNA member rests with national SMACNA, however, such applications shall be submitted to the local chapter for recommendation and comment;
- All actions of a chapter shall be in conformity with applicable Federal, State, and Local laws. National SMACNA is empowered to terminate a charter for violation and the national SMACNA Board of Directors is empowered to suspend or revoke a charter of a chapter for engaging in practices deemed harmful to SMACNA and/or industry.
- National SMACNA's obligation is to provide services to member firms with recognition that chapters function as distributors of National services to members. National SMACNA has an interest in providing assistance to chapters to become more effective distributors of National services. In instances where chapters are not effective distributors of National services, National SMACNA has an obligation to make members aware of services available to them from National SMACNA.

- Signatory status² is required as a condition of membership for all regular members of National SMACNA.

SMACNA Chapter Support Representative Program

The union segment of the sheet metal construction industry roughly represents 4500 contracting firms in the United States and Canada. SMACNA counts less than one-half this number in its membership. A number of years ago, SMACNA appointed a task force to look at this situation and evaluate barriers to membership. One of the primary barriers that the task force identified was the failure of the local chapter to provide a level of services that the eligible sheet metal contractor felt were worthy of affiliation.

The local SMACNA Chapter is a vital link in the process of delivering services to the SMACNA member contractor. It therefore is a distinct advantage to SMACNA to insure that its chapters are properly structured, organized, administered, and in possession of the information and tools that will enable them to utilize the services and products available through SMACNA National to provide quality programming and services for the SMACNA contractor member.

Over the years a number of initiatives have been undertaken by SMACNA National to assist chapters to better meet the needs of their contractor members. The latest of these is the Chapter Support Representative Program. This program provides [at the chapter's request] assistance, guidance, and training for Chapter Executives to help structure service sharing; chapter service improvement; strategic planning for chapters; and evaluation of existing chapter structure with potential for chapter mergers, formation of state associations, and/or coalitions, all of which are designed to improve delivery of services to the SMACNA membership.

Gerald "Jerry" Ramsdell was engaged in 1997 as an independent contractor to serve in the capacity of Chapter Support Representative to provide these chapter support services. Jerry was formerly the Chapter Executive for the Sheet Metal, Air Conditioning, and Roofing Contractors Association [SMARCA] in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The program has been well received and has been refunded by the SMACNA Board of Directors.

Jerry is available, by chapter request, to:

² "Signatory Status" shall mean a contractor who is signatory to one or more collective bargaining agreements. For contractors located within the United States, the collective bargaining agreement must be recognized by the Secretary of Labor as lawful.

- ◆ Conduct new Chapter Executive training on site.
- ◆ Review a chapter's service structure and offer suggestions for improvement.
- ◆ Help structure service sharing arrangements between SMACNA Chapters and/or between SMACNA Chapters and allied organizations.
- ◆ Review the various products and services available to a chapter through the facilities of SMACNA National, and how they can be utilized by the chapter.
- ◆ Facilitate strategic planning for chapters.
- ◆ Assist in the development of inter-chapter cooperative alliances.
- ◆ Assist in the formation of new local chapters.

The program is administered by Bob Roach at the National office and requests for Jerry's services should be directed to Bob. If you are interested in utilizing the service, please call Bob at 703-803-2983 or broach@smacna.org.

Jerry can be contacted at:

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4949 Diane Drive
Minnetonka, MN 55343
SMACNA # 612-930-0794
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Epilogue

"The executive exists to make sensible exceptions to the general rule." Elting E. Morison

Elting Morison's quote could easily apply to a SMACNA Chapter President who will find it necessary as he progresses through his/her term "to make sensible exceptions" to the rules and not get "hung up" with the rigidity of rules, regulations, procedures, traditions, etc.

As you identify the resources that can support you during your tenure, there is one important asset you must not overlook: **your own leadership qualities**. You bring to your chapter a wealth of knowledge about our industry and broad experience in your personal dealings with others. Those same traits that have made you successful in your contracting business will also serve you well in

your role as Chapter President. At the same time *do not* overlook the value of the association's professional staff. A good working relationship with these professionals will only enhance your leadership and make your term in office both productive and rewarding.

National SMACNA wishes your term as the President of your chapter to be a personally rewarding and enjoyable experience. It is our hope that these Guidelines will contribute to that end.

Conducting A Meeting

APPENDIX A

ROBERT'S RULES: WHAT IS IT?

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised--abbreviated here as Robert's Rules--is a system of parliamentary procedures first published in 1876 by Henry Robert, an American army general. His book borrowed heavily from earlier manuals, but it gradually became the standard in the United States. This set of rules forms the basis for the Rules of the House of Representatives of Congress, and contemporary editions of Robert's Rules are tailored toward the practices of that body.

Robert's Rules were adopted to promote orderly discourse and debate, to defend the parliamentary rights of the minority, to act on the will of the majority, and to streamline the workings of the business of the organization.

BUSINESS, MOTIONS, DEBATE

Business is conducted by means of **motions** introduced by individuals present at a general or special meeting. Business may only be conducted when a **quorum** [a specific number of the membership stipulated by the Constitution] is present.

An individual is typically permitted to speak by raising his or her hand and waiting for the acting Moderator [Chairman] to recognize the potential speaker by calling upon him or her. When an individual has been recognized, he or she is said to have **the floor**; that is, he or she has the right to offer any motion or debate that is in order at that time. A speaker may yield the floor permanently when he or she is finished speaking, or temporarily for an inquiry or for a secondary motion.

A motion that brings new business before the assembly is called a **principal** or **original main motion**, and it is submitted to consideration [debate and a vote] when it has been seconded by a show of support from some member other than the individual who proposed it. Once a main motion has been stated by the chair and has entered into debate, it is often referred to as the **question**. *Only one main motion may be considered at a time.* The assembly may bring back for further consideration a motion that has already been voted on; this is known as **reconsideration of a motion**.

COMMON SECONDARY MOTIONS

Motions which control the flow of debate, modify the question under consideration, or are otherwise auxiliary to the main motion are distinguished in Robert's Rules by the terms **procedural** or **secondary motion**. Some, but not all, of these are undebatable. Robert's Rules divides secondary motions into **subsidiary motions**, those that directly impact the question on the floor; **privileged motions**, which maintain order in the assembly; and **incidental motions**, which apply directly to the parliamentary procedure of the voting body.

Certain powerful secondary motions are referred to as **points**, which are enumerated later in this summary. *More than one secondary motion may be under consideration at the same time*, as long as precedence [rules that permit or disallow the introduction of motions] is observed.

A motion may be temporarily set aside; this is called a **laying the motion on the table** or "**tabeling**". A tabled motion can be revived **by taking the motion from the table**. A motion to **commit** or **refer** will direct the deliberation of a motion to a select committee, thus ending debate on it in the assembly as a whole. In some organizations, the bylaws require the automatic introduction and adoption of certain motions designed to structure the conduct of the business meeting; these are known as **the orders of the day**, *and they can only be rearranged by a two-thirds vote*.

BASIC MAIN MOTIONS

Basic main motions apply only when no other business is pending before the organization and are used to introduce business into a meeting.

The original main motion.

The main original motion is a motion that brings new business before the organization; *such a motion can be made only while no other motion is pending*. A main motion is out of order when another speaker has the floor; *it must be seconded; it is debatable and amendable; and it may be brought back for further consideration after it has been voted upon* (subject to limitations imposed by §36 of Robert's Rules). *A main motion requires a majority vote* except in special cases described by Robert's Rules, such as modifying a bylaw or suspending a rule.

See §§4, 11, 33, and 40 of Robert's Rules for information on the wording of a motion, descriptions of main motions that are not in order, procedures for amendment, other uses of main motions, and a description of the proper handling of a main motion.

Take from the table.

An issue that has been previously tabled may be brought up again for consideration by way of a motion to **take an issue from the table**. If it succeeds, debate immediately resumes on the motion that had previously been tabled. *A motion to take from the table is in order only when its sponsor has the floor; it must be seconded, and is neither debatable nor amendable. It requires a majority vote to bring the tabled matter before the organization again*. See Robert's Rules §35 for more information.

Rescind.

A motion to rescind provides the organization with the power to change an action ordered by a previous vote or by decision of the chair. *A motion to rescind is in order only when its sponsor has the floor; it must be seconded, and is debatable and amendable, provided the amendment*

applies to the wording of the motion that rescinds, not to the action being rescinded. It requires a two-thirds vote. See §37 for more information.

A motion to amend something previously adopted is equivalent to a motion to rescind. See the entry titled "Amend a main motion," below.

SUBSIDIARY AND PRIVILEGED SECONDARY MOTIONS

Subsidiary and privileged secondary motions control the flow of debate and the subject matter being debated. *They take precedence over any main motion* currently on the floor. They are listed here in increasing rank; that is, each of these motions may be introduced only when any of the motions listed before it is pending.

Postpone indefinitely.

A motion to postpone indefinitely is a secondary motion which banishes the question under consideration for the duration of the meeting. It is used to quickly remove a badly chosen, poorly worded, or unconscionable main motion. Postponing indefinitely is out of order when another secondary motion is under consideration, or when another speaker has the floor. It must be seconded; it is debatable but not amendable. It requires a majority vote. See §34 of Robert's Rules for a detailed description of its effect and special uses.

Amend a main motion.

One of the most common secondary motions is to modify or amend the wording of the pending question on the floor. The proposed amendment must be germane [no new subject may be introduced] and the changes to the wording of the current question are limited by Robert's Rules to certain instances of insertions, deletions, and substitutions. It is at the Moderator's [Chairman's] discretion to evaluate whether a proposed amendment is germane and valid. Robert's Rules §33 provides an extended explanation of the proper form of an amendment.

Amendments may be applied to main motions and to primary amendments, and to certain other secondary motions specified in Robert's Rules. *The speaker must have the floor to propose an amendment, and the motion to amend must be seconded and is debatable.* Debate is confined to the substance of the amendment, and may not stray into the substance of the question being amended except where it applies to the content of the amendment. An amendment to a pending motion requires a majority vote, even in cases where the question [primary motion] being amended requires a two-thirds vote.

An amendment to something previously adopted [such as a change to the bylaws] *is a main motion and is treated in the same manner as a motion to rescind. In particular, it requires a two-thirds vote,* unless otherwise specified by the resolution or document being modified. Usually the bylaws require a two-thirds majority, while the Constitution requires a three-quarter's majority, plus a one-meeting interval from its original presentation and a one-week posting period.

Commit or refer.

A motion to commit or refer dispatches a pending question [possibly with amendments] to a select committee that is charged with investigating the merits of the proposal and reporting back to the organization. If an amendment is pending on a question, a motion to commit refers both the amendment and the motion to a committee for consideration, and the committee reports on both when it is finished with its deliberation. *The speaker must have the floor to commit; it must be seconded and is debatable.* It may be amended to specify the composition of the committee to which the question is referred. It requires a majority vote to pass. See §32 of Robert's Rules.

Calling the question.

Calling for the question is a motion that closes debate immediately on the current main or secondary motion and brings it to a vote. If it passes, it supersedes any previous motion to limit or extend debate. It may be qualified by its sponsor to apply to all pending questions. See §29 for further clarifications.

The speaker must have the floor to initiate a calling of the question; it must be seconded and is neither debatable nor amendable. A two-thirds vote is required to call the question.

Lay on the table.

This motion enables the majority to temporarily set aside the consideration of the pending question (possibly with amendments), in such a way that there is no specified time for bringing up the matter again. Consideration of the tabled matter may be resumed at the will of the majority, whenever a motion to take from the table is in order. *When a question has amendments pending, the motion as well as its amendments are tabled by this motion. The speaker must have the floor to request the pending matter be tabled; it must be seconded and is neither debatable nor amendable. A majority vote is required.* See §28.

Point of personal privilege.

A member may at any time **raise a point of personal privilege** to make a motion related to the rights and privileges of the organization or any one of its members or guests. **It was designed to provide the means to make a main motion even when another main or secondary motion is pending.** §19 of Robert's Rules describes this motion.

A **point of personal privilege** is a very powerful motion, and it is not to be abused. Its most common use is to inform the organization of a problematic situation and to request aid from the membership. In its most formal use, a non-procedural motion is put forward, debated, voted upon, and [if it passes] is acted upon.

This motion is in order when the Moderator [Chairman] has not recognized the speaker, and it is in order even when another speaker has the floor, if the urgency of the situation warrants. It is ruled upon by the

chair, who decides **only** whether or not the point of personal privilege is to be admitted before the organization. (A subsequent motion contained in the point of personal privilege is treated as a main motion; that is, it must be seconded, debated, and passed by a majority vote to take effect.).

INCIDENTAL SECONDARY MOTIONS

Incidental secondary motions deal with the parliamentary procedure of the organization's meetings. They may, in general, be applied at any time, subject to limitation imposed by the motions themselves. There is no strict hierarchy among them, and each of them applies even when a privileged or subsidiary secondary motion is pending.

Point of order, and Appeal.

A Point of Order or Appeal motion applies when an individual believes that the parliamentary rules of the organization [including Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, as well as the Constitution and bylaws of the organization] are being violated. *This motion is in order when its sponsor does not have the floor, even when it interrupts another individual with the floor. It is normally ruled upon by the acting Moderator [Chairman], unless he or she is in doubt and requests a vote. The chair's ruling may be appealed.* §21 explains this motion in greater detail.

A member of the organization may challenge a Moderator [Chairman]'s ruling on a procedural point by immediately calling for an appeal of his or her decision. If any new main motion is initiated following a questioned ruling, the ruling is no longer subject to appeal. *A motion to appeal is in order when its sponsor does not have the floor; it must be seconded and is debatable, but not amendable. Debate is limited to one contribution per speaker,* except for the Moderator [Chairman], who has no such limit. The Moderator [Chairman] need not leave his or her chair, but must stand when offering debate. In Robert's Rules, a simple majority vote carries the appeal of the decision of the chair; however, the organization bylaws may require a two-thirds vote.

Suspend the rules.

A motion to suspend the rules is used to temporarily suspend one of the organization's regular rules for the purpose of accomplishing some task that could not otherwise be performed under the guidelines imposed by parliamentary law. It cannot be used to suspend bylaws or a constitution unless the clause being suspended provides for its own suspension.

A motion to suspend the rules can be made whenever no other business is pending, or whenever the proposed suspension of the rules applies directly to a pending question. Its sponsor must have the floor, and it must be seconded; it is neither debatable nor amendable. Typically a suspension of the rules requires a two-thirds vote.

§22 explains the applications and limitations of this motion.

Objection to the consideration of a motion.

When a main motion is so offensive that it would be strongly undesirable for the motion to even come up for debate, a member may object to its consideration. It is *in order even when the objector does not have the floor, as long as debate on the motion to which it applies has not yet begun. Objection to consideration does not require a second, and it is not debatable or amendable. A two-thirds vote against consideration is required to sustain the objection.* See §23 for further explanation.

Requests: Point of inquiry or information, or Withdraw.

A member or guest of the organization may at any time ask the Moderator [Chairman] for information on a matter of parliamentary procedure or on some factual matter currently before the organization. **Questions of procedure** are satisfied through a **point of inquiry**; **questions of fact** are made through a **point of information**. *These questions may be raised even when the speaker does not have the floor. The answers are provided or solicited at the discretion of the chair.* See §27 for more information.

Under Robert's Rules §27 there is a provision *whereby the sponsor of a motion may at any time move for its withdrawal from further consideration, effectively killing it. But this motion only takes effect by unanimous consent*, since once a question enters into debate it becomes the property of the organization as a whole.

Reconsider.

Any time during a meeting that *a member on the prevailing side of a vote feels that his or her vote was cast incorrectly or without the benefit of all available information, he or she may move to reconsider a vote*, assuming the motion being reconsidered allows it. *The effect of a successful reconsideration is to open up debate again on the motion, and to call for a subsequent vote* in light of the new information introduced in the debate. For a lengthier description, see §36 of Robert's Rules.

This motion can be raised at any time during the same meeting, provided that Robert's Rules allows the questioned vote to be reconsidered, and the person moving to reconsider was on the prevailing side of the vote. The motion to reconsider must be seconded. Robert's Rules states that its mover need not have the floor and that it is debatable whenever the motion being reconsidered was debatable. However, by general consent, this motion is usually not debated, and its mover must have the floor. *It is not amendable. Successful reconsideration requires a majority vote*, and this motion merely invalidates the previous vote and brings the matter up for further consideration by the organization.

ROBERT'S RULES TID-BITS

1. **Motions to limit or close debate usually require at least a two-third majority**, and like all but a handful of secondary motions, an individual must be recognized by the chair before he or she may propose the motion. These motions are summarized in §29 and §30.

2. **The Moderator [Chairman] is not under an obligation to entertain a motion, even if it is in order.** §40 of Robert's Rules states that absurd, obstructive, offensive, or trivial motions may be ruled invalid by the Chair, regardless of whether or not they have been seconded by the membership. This applies to all motions, including secondary motions whose obvious intent is to defeat the purpose of the main motion with a motion not designated by Robert's Rules to do so.

Do not object to the consideration of an unsuitable main motion unless it is clearly offensive to the organization or to a particular member or guest [in which case the acting Moderator (Chairman) should not have allowed it in the first place]. Instead, move to postpone it indefinitely. The latter requires only a majority vote [while the former requires two-thirds], and the latter is debatable, providing you with the opportunity to quickly and forcefully argue against any further consideration of the main motion. [Objecting to consideration is not debatable, even though it is not always clear why an individual objects.]

3. Robert's Rules call **an amendment to an amendment a secondary amendment**, or an amendment in the second degree. §33, pp. 135 and 147 **forbid amendments in the third degree: that is, there can be no amendment to an amendment to an amendment, or anything worse.**
4. **The most effective way to commit a question is to amend one's own motion to commit to specify that the question be referred to a standing committee.** In this way, the motion is more likely to receive immediate consideration within an established setting.
5. The organization's membership committee meeting, the Committee of the Whole, is a special case of a motion to commit, and receives extended treatment in §55. It should be noted that Robert's Rules are applied differently in the Committee of the Whole than they are in a general meeting. In particular, business is conducted less formally, with more opportunity for members to offer debate. Many organizations deviate from Robert's Rules §55 in the following ways: during Committee of the Whole, the Membership Committee is in executive session [that is, nonmembers are asked to leave the chamber, and no part of its proceedings may be discussed outside of the committee; debate may be limited, extended, or closed by a two-thirds vote; and the committee is permitted to recess or caucus by majority vote or general consent].
6. Robert's Rules refer to Philospreak's **"calling the question"** as the previous question; this is another phrase for moving to close debate immediately and calling a vote on the current motion.
7. A **"friendly amendment"** is a special kind of amendment, not explicitly referenced in Robert's Rules, whereby a motion is amended by general consent if the main motion's

sponsor agrees to the proposed amendment. This is covered by one of the standing rules in the bylaws, as well as in §27, pp. 100-101.

8. Philospeak's "**point of personal privilege**" is a question of privilege in Robert's Rules. §19, invites, but does not require, a question of privilege to include a motion. **Using a point of personal privilege to raise a procedural motion that does not have the right to interrupt the floor--e.g., to move to table or to move to close debate--is dilatory and should not be entertained by the chair, per §40.**
9. There may be some confusion over the motion with the highest precedence, that of fixing the time to which to adjourn. The object of the motion to set a time [and sometimes the place] for the start of the next meeting to continue business. It is for this reason that it is given the highest precedence, so that it can be executed while a motion to adjourn is pending. See §16 of Robert's Rules.
10. **A point of order applies only to a current violation of parliamentary procedure; it may not be applied to a past decision or action.** Past violations must be appealed, rescinded, or censured. See §§21, 37 and 72.
11. **Reconsiderations only apply to reconsiderable votes taken within the same meeting;** see §36.
12. **An objection to consideration of a motion is in order even after the motion has been seconded, as long as debate on it has not commenced.** See §23.
13. A point of information has come to be used as a way to quickly volunteer information [without being recognized by the Moderator (Chairman)] regarding a question of fact before the Organization, which is not what Robert's Rules §27 intended it for--it should be used only to ask a question.
14. **The acting Moderator [Chairman] should take care when offering debate to limit his or her comments to those of a factual nature and should avoid betraying his or her own opinions on the matter at hand.** If the chair through its debate can be shown to be partial toward one side or the other on a particular issue, Robert's Rules state that the chair must step down for the remainder of the debate.
15. Per Robert's Rules §4, **the following motions are in order even when another individual has the floor:**
 - **call for the orders of the day**
 - **division of the question**
 - **point of inquiry or information**
 - **point of order, point of personal privilege**

- **motion to withdraw**
- **objection to consideration**
- **motion to appeal.**

All other motions (except some obscure ones) are in order only when their sponsor has obtained the floor by being recognized by the acting Moderator [Chairman].

16. Per Robert's Rules §45, **the following motions are not debatable:**

- **motion to adjourn or recess**
- **call for the orders of the day**
- **lay on the table**
- **objection to consideration**
- **point of order**
- **call the question**
- **point of personal privilege**
- **motion to withdraw**
- **suspend the rules**
- **take from the table**
- **extend or limit debate**
- **reconsideration.**

All other motions (except for rare motions and special cases of common ones) are debatable by the organization.

17. Per Robert's Rules §33, **the following motions are not amendable:**

- **motion to adjourn**
- **call for the orders of the day**
- **lay on the table**
- **objection to consideration**
- **call the question**
- **motion to withdraw,**
- **suspend the rules take from the table**
- **appeal**
- **postpone indefinitely**
- **and all points of order, privilege, inquiry, and information.**

All other debatable motions (except for some uncommon exceptions) are amendable by the organization.

TABLE OF RULES RELATING TO MOTIONS

This table is taken from Robert's Rules of Order, Revised (1915 edition. The following abbreviations are used:

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Motion Name: Name of the motion, including modifying circumstances and special notes. The section of this summary document that describes the motion is listed in parentheses.

Need Floor: Is this motion out of order when another has the floor? "No" means that this motion is allowed even when its mover has not obtained the floor.

Must Second: Does this motion require a second? "No" means no second is needed.

Is Debatable: Is this motion debatable? "No" means debate is not permitted.

May Amend: Can this motion be amended? "No" means no amendments are allowed. If it can be amended, there may still be restrictions on valid modifications.

Vote Needed: The vote that is required (majority, two-thirds, or other) to pass this motion.

This table lists exceptions to the general rule that these questions are all answered in the affirmative. If the entry is blank, the answer to the question at the top of the column is "yes." If there is a number in the column, refer to the corresponding note below.

<u>MOTION NAME [Summary]</u>	<u>Floor</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Debate</u>	<u>Amend</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Adjourn, when privileged [1]			No	No	majority
Adopt, accept or agree to a report					majority
Amend a pending main motion [3]					majority
Amend an amendment				No	majority
Amend constitutions, by-laws, order					[5]
Amend standing rules					2 thirds
Appeal, relating to indecorum [7]	No		No	No	2 thirds
Appeal, all other cases	No			No	2 thirds
Call question, previous question [14]			No	[21]	2 thirds
Commit or refer, or recommit					majority
Debate, to close, limit, or extend [9]			No		2 thirds
Division of assembly	No	No	No	No	majority
Division of the question	[10]	[10]	No		majority
Fix the time to which to adjourn [1]			[11]		majority
Informal consideration, or committee of the whole				No	majority
Information, point of, or inquiry	No	No	No	No	[19]
Inquiry, point of	No	No	No	No	[19]
Lay on the table			No	No	majority
Main motion or question					majority
Nominations, to open [20]		No		No	majority
Nominations, to close			No		2 thirds
Objection to consideration [12]	No	No	No	No	2 thirds
Order, question of, or point of	No	No	No	No	[19]

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<u>MOTION NAME [Summary]</u>	<u>Floor</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Debate</u>	<u>Amend</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Order, to make a special					2 thirds
Orders of the day, to call for	No	No	No	No	majority
Parliamentary inquiry, point of	No	No	No	No	[19]
Postpone definitely, or to a certain time					majority
Postpone indefinitely				No	majority
Previous question [14]			No		2 thirds
Privilege, point of personal	No	No	No	No	[19]
Reading papers			No	No	majority
Recess, when privileged [1]					majority
Reconsider			No	No	majority
Rescind or repeal					2 thirds
Suspend the rules			No	No	[23]
Table, to, or "Lay on the Table"			No	No	majority
Take from the table			No	No	majority
Take up a question out of its proper order			No	No	2 thirds
Voting, motions, other than division			No		majority
Withdraw a motion		No	No	No	[24]

END NOTES

[1] An excellent introduction to parliamentary procedure appears in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised (1915 edition. For a history of Robert's Rules, see Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, foreword pp. iv-vi and, and Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (1990 edition), introduction. Congress and Robert's Rules: See Congressional Quarterly's Guide to Congress (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Service, 1971) and Robert's Rules.

[2] Law 4, Section 1 of the By-Laws of the Organization establishes that questions of order are decided according to the rules set forth in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, which refers to the 1915 edition of Robert's Rules.

[3] Obvious examples are the Second Censor and the Scriba, but all elected and appointed officers serve the organization well by making sure that parliamentary procedure is not being grossly violated. (And I take it for granted that the Moderator [Chairman] and the First Censor have read the full text of Robert's Rules.)

[4] Common practice allows both members and non-members to introduce motions to the organization.

[5] Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, §4: "A motion is a proposal that the assembly take certain action, or that it express itself as holding certain views." Robert's Rules §1: "[B]usiness is brought before [an assembly] either by the motion of a member, or by the presentation of a

communication to the assembly." Robert's Rules §64: "A Quorum of an assembly is such a number as must be present in order that business can be legally transacted. The quorum refers to the number present, not the number voting." Philomathean Constitution, Article IV, Section 3: "A quorum shall consist of one-third of the members in good standing."

[6] It has been noted that it is distracting and rude to raise one's hand in an attempt to get the chair's attention while another individual is speaking. Furthermore, Robert's Rules specifically forbids the floor from one who behaves so. See Robert's Rules: "It is out of order to be [requesting the floor] when another has the floor, and the one guilty of this violation of the rules" cannot claim first priority of assignment of the floor.

[7] Robert's Rules §3: "Before a member can make a motion, or address the assembly in debate, it is necessary that he should obtain the floor. . . . If the member is entitled to the floor, the chairman 'recognizes' him, or assigns him the floor, by announcing his name." Apocrypha of Etiquette, chapter IV, section 5c: "Correct form is to raise your hand, be recognized by the Moderator [Chairman] or person who has the floor, then, stand to speak when you are given the privilege (floor) to speak." The term yield is used in Robert's Rules §3 to refer to the action taken when an individual is finished speaking, and the term interrupt is used to refer to the temporary yielding of the floor for selected secondary motions, after which the speaker is assigned the floor again.

[8] Robert's Rules §11: "A Main or Principal Motion is a motion made to bring before the assembly, for its consideration, any particular subject." And: "original main motions are those which bring before the assembly some new subject, generally in the form of a resolution, upon which actions by the assembly are desired." §5: "As a general rule, with the exceptions given [in Robert's Rules §5], every motion should be seconded. This is to prevent time from being consumed in considering a question that only one person favors. . . ." §2: "[T]he assembly [must] know what is before it for consideration and action, that is, what is the immediately pending question." §11: A main motion "cannot be made while any other question is before the assembly. . . ." §36: To reconsider a motion "is to place before the assembly the original question in the exact position it occupied before it was voted upon. . . ."

[9] Robert's Rules §8: "To assist in the proper disposal of the question various subsidiary [§12] motions are used, such as to amend, to commit, etc., and for the time being the subsidiary motion. . . becomes the immediately pending question. While these are pending, a question incidental to the business may arise, . . . and this incidental [§13] question interrupts the business and. . . becomes the immediately pending question. And all of these may be superseded by certain motions, called privileged [§14] motions, . . . of such supreme importance as to justify their interrupting all other questions. All of these motions that may be made while the original motion is pending are sometimes referred to as secondary motions."

[10] points--known as questions or requests in Robert's Rules--of privilege, order, inquiry, and information are fully annotated later in this document. Robert's Rules, introduction, p. 21: Precedence refers to "what motions may be pending and yet it be in order to make and consider [a specified] motion," and "what motions may be made and considered while [a specified] motion is pending. . . ."

[11] Terms in this paragraph are introduced now because they are both fundamental to debate and not obvious in meaning. See the next section of this document for full treatments of tabling, committing, and removing from the table. Orders of the day: See the By-Laws, Law 1. Robert's Rules §20: "When one or more subjects have been assigned to a particular day or hour. . . they become the orders of the day for that day or hour, and they cannot be considered before that time, except by a two-thirds vote" A call for the orders of the day "is a demand that the assembly conform to its program or order of business. . . ." By-Laws, Law 18, Section 2: "No Article or Section of these By-Laws shall be suspended unless by a vote of two-thirds of the members in good standing present." (Hence a two-thirds vote is needed to modify the orders of the day.)

[12] Robert's Rules §11: A main motion "takes precedence of nothing. . . and it yields to all Privileged, Incidental, and Subsidiary motions. . . . Main motions are debatable, and subject to amendment. . . . As a general rule, they require for their adoption only a majority vote. . . ; but amendments to constitutions, by-laws, and rules of order already adopted. . . require a two-thirds vote. . . ; and a motion to rescind action previously taken requires a two-thirds vote. . . ." This motion does not appear in the list in §4 of motions that are in order when another has the floor. §5 does not list this motion among the motions that do not require a second.

[13] §35: "When taken up, the question with everything adhering to it is before the assembly exactly as it when it was laid before the table." And, "To Take from the Table takes precedence of no pending question. . . . It is undebatable, and no subsidiary motion can be applied to it." This motion does not appear in the list in §4 of motions that are in order when another has the floor. §5 does not list this motion among the motions that do not require a second. §48 does not list this motion as requiring a special two-thirds vote.

[14] §37: "Any vote taken by an assembly, except those mentioned [in Robert's Rules §37], . . . may be rescinded without notice by a two-thirds vote. . . . It is a main motion without any privilege, and therefore can be introduced only when there is nothing else before the assembly. It may be made by any member; it is debatable." This motion does not appear in the list in §4 of motions that are in order when another has the floor. §5 does not list this motion among the motions that do not require a second. See also §37: "[V]otes cannot be rescinded after something has been done as a result of that vote that the assembly cannot undo; or where it is in the nature of a contract and the other party is informed of the fact; or, where a resignation has been acted upon, or one has been elected to, or expelled from, membership or office. . . ."

[15] Robert's Rules §12: "By means of [subsidiary secondary motions] the original motion may be modified, or action postponed, or it may be referred to a committee to investigate and report, etc. They may be applied to any main motion, and when made they supersede the main motion and must be decided before the main motion can be acted upon." §14: "Privileged Motions are such as, while not relating to the pending question, are of so great importance as to require them to take precedence of all other questions and, on account of this high privilege, are undebatable." The order in which motions are listed in this section follows the order of precedence laid out in Robert's Rules. Note, however, that not all motions from Robert's Rules are listed; the following are not included: postpone to a certain time, limit or extend debate, call for the orders of the day, recess, and fix the time to which to adjourn.

[16] Robert's Rules §34: "The object of this motion is not to postpone, but to reject the main motion without incurring the risk of a direct vote on it. . . . If adopted, its effect is to suppress the main motion for that [meeting], unless the vote is reconsidered." §34: This motion "cannot be amended. . . . It is debatable and opens the main question to debate. . . ." This motion does not appear in the list in §4, p. 32, of motions that are in order when another has the floor. §5 does not list this motion among the motions that do not require a second. §48 does not list this motion as requiring a special two-thirds vote.

[17] §33: "An amendment must be germane to the subject--that is, it must relate to it. . . ." "An amendment may be in any of the following forms: (a) to insert or add. . . ; (b) to strike out; (c) to strike out and insert, or to substitute. . .

[18] An amendment is debatable except when the motion to which it is applied is not debatable: motions to limit or extend debate, motions related to voting, motions related to nominations, and a few other rare ones.

[19] §33: An amendment "can be applied to all motions except those in the List of Motions that Cannot be Amended. It can be amended itself. . . . An amendment is debatable in all cases except where the motion is undebatable. An amendment of a pending question requires only a majority vote for its adoption, even though the question to be amended requires a two-thirds vote." §45: "A subsidiary motion. . ."--hence an amendment--"is debatable to just the extent that it interferes with the right of the assembly to take up the original question at its pleasure." This motion does not appear in the list in §4 of motions that are in order when another has the floor. §5 does not list this motion among the motions that do not require a second.

[20] §37: "To rescind is identical with the motion to amend something previously adopted. . . . It is a main motion without any privilege. . . ." §11: "[A]mendments to constitutions, by-laws, or rules of order already adopted. . . require a two-thirds vote for their adoption, unless the by-laws, etc., specify a different vote for their amendment." §33: "An amendment of a constitution

or by-laws, or rules of order, or order of business, previously adopted, requires a two-thirds vote; but an amendment of that [still pending] amendment requires only a majority vote

[21] Conventional practice has accorded the acting Moderator [Chairman] with the power to appoint a chair and members of the committee, unless otherwise stipulated by the motion to commit.

[22] §32: "The object of the motion to refer to a standing or special committee is usually to enable a question to be more carefully investigated and put into better shape for the assembly to consider, than can be done in the assembly itself." "Pending amendments go with the main motion to the committee." "It is debatable but only as to the propriety of committing the main motion." This motion does not appear in the list in §4 of motions that are in order when another has the floor. §5 does not list this motion among the motions that do not require a second. §48 does not list this motion as requiring a special two-thirds vote.

[23] Robert's Rules §29 refers to this as "the previous question." §29: The effect of this motion "is to close debate immediately, to prevent the moving of amendments or any subsidiary motions except to lay on the table, and to bring the assembly at once to a vote on the immediately pending question, and such other pending questions as were specified in the. . . motion." In §30 Robert's Rules states that motions to extend and limit debate yield to, among others, calls for the previous question--i.e., calling the question takes precedence over a previous motion limiting debate.

[24] "It is undebatable, and cannot be amended. . . . It may be qualified so as to apply to a series of pending questions. . . . It requires a two-thirds vote for its adoption. After [the question has been called]. . . the questions that have not been voted on may be laid on the table. . . ." This motion does not appear in the list in §4 of motions that are in order when another has the floor. §5 does not list this motion among the motions that do not require a second.

[25] §28: "The Effect of the adoption of this motion is to place on the table. . . the pending question and everything adhering to it. . . ." §28: "It is undebatable and cannot have any subsidiary motion applied to it." It "requires only a majority vote. . . ." This motion does not appear in the list in §4 of motions that are in order when another has the floor. §5 does not list this motion among the motions that do not require a second.

[26] Robert's Rules §19 refers to this as a "question of privilege." §19: "Questions relating to the rights and privileges of the assembly, or to any of its members, take precedence of" all but a very few motions. And the procedure for and examples of questions of privilege are enumerated.

[27] §19: "If the question is one requiring immediate action, it may interrupt a member's speech. . . . But if it is not of such urgency it should not interrupt a member after he has commenced his speech." And, "The chair directs [the individual raising the point] to state his question, and then decides whether it is of privilege or not." Later on p. 67: "Whenever his motion is made and stated, it becomes the immediately pending question and is open to debate and amendments. . . just as any main motion."

[28] Robert's Rules §13: "Incidental Motions are such as arise out of another question which is pending, and therefore take precedence of and must be decided before the question out of which they rise. . . ." Regarding "no strict hierarchy": nowhere do I find this statement in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, but it is clear that--when Robert's Rules allows that the motion is in order--each takes precedence over the rest according to reverse chronological order of introduction.

[29] §21: "It is. . . the right of every member who notices the breach of a rule, to insist upon its enforcement." And, "It is in order when another has the floor. . . ; does not require a second; cannot be amended. . . ; and must be decided by the presiding officer without debate. . . ." And, "[A]ny two members have the right to [raise an] appeal from the decision. . . ." §5 does not list this motion among the motions that do not require a second.

[30] Except when it applies to indecorum or a transgression of the rules of speaking or of the priority of business.

[31] §21: "An appeal made be made from any decision of the chair. . . , but it can be made only at the time the ruling is made." Later on p. 81: "An appeal cannot be amended." And, "An appeal cannot be debated when it relates simply to indecorum, or to transgression of the rules of speaking, or to the priority of business, or if made during a division of the assembly, or while the immediately pending question is undebatable. When debatable. . . no member is allowed to speak more than once except the presiding officer. . . . Whether debatable or not, the chairman when stating the question on the appeal may, without leaving the chair, state the reasons for his decision." Although Robert's Rules §21 states that a majority vote is required to successfully appeal, Law 4, Section 2 of the By-Laws reads: "It shall require a two-thirds vote. . . to reverse the decision of the presiding officer."

[32] §22: "When the assembly wishes to do something that cannot be done without violating its own rules, and yet it is not in conflict with its constitution, or by-laws, or with the fundamental principals of parliamentary law, it `suspends the rules that interfere with' the proposed action. The object of the suspension must be specified, and nothing else can be done under the suspension."

[33] Unless the rule being suspended protects a minority of one-third or less, in which case the vote opposed to suspension must be less than the size of the minority it protects. See p. 85: "No rule can be suspended when the negative vote is as large as the minority protected by that rule. . ."

[34] §22: "Nothing that requires. . . a two-thirds vote for its amendment can be suspended by less than a two-thirds vote." And, "The motion to suspend the rules may be made at any time when no question is pending; or while a question is pending, provided it is for a purpose connected with that question." Further, "It is undebatable and cannot be amended. . . ." This motion does not appear in the list in §4 of motions that are in order when another has the floor. §5 does not list this motion among the motions that do not require a second.

[35] §23: This motion is an "objection to the consideration of any original main motion, and to no others, provided it is made before there is any debate or before any subsidiary motion is stated." And, "If decided in the negative [i.e., in favor of objection] by a two-thirds vote, the whole matter is dismissed for that session. . . ." And, "[I]t can be made when another has the floor, and does not require a second. . . . It cannot be debated, or amended. . . ." See also Apocrypha of Etiquette, Chapter IV, item 5d: "[A]buse of the Objection to Consideration subverts the whole debate process." And: "The Objection to Consideration is appropriate for one narrow purpose: if one sincerely believes that a proffered motion is beyond the scope of the Organization's purposes. . . ."

[36] §27: "A parliamentary inquiry, if it relates to the question that requires immediate attention, may be made while another has the floor, or may even interrupt a speech." Later, "The chairman asks [the individual raising the point] to state his inquiry, and if he deems it pertinent, he answers it." In §27: "A request for information relating to the pending business is treated just as a parliamentary inquiry, and has the same privileges." If the information is desired from the chair, "the chair directs him to state the point upon which he desires information, and the procedure continues as in the case of a parliamentary inquiry." If the information is desired of the individual currently speaking, the inquirer asks the chair if the speaker will yield for a question. The paragraph continues, "The chairman inquires if the speaker is willing to be interrupted, and if he consents, he directs the inquirer to proceed." This section of Robert's Rules requires that all inquiries and replies go through the chair; this justifies Moderator [Chairman]ial strictures against "cross-talk," which--in addition to being clamorous and confusing--is out of order.

[37] §27: "A request for leave to withdraw a motion. . . may be made at any time before voting on the question has commenced, even though the motion has been amended. It requires no second. . . . It is undebatable. . . . When a motion is withdrawn, the effect is the same as if it had never been made. . . . When the mover requests permission to modify or withdraw his motion,

the chair asks if there is any objection, and if there is none he announces that the motion is withdrawn or modified in such and such a way, as the case may be."

[38] §36: The effect of this motion "is to place before the assembly the original question in the exact position it occupied before it was voted upon. . . ."

[39] §36: "It can be made only on the day the vote to be reconsidered was taken. . . . It must be made by one who voted on the prevailing side. Any member may second it." And on p. 158: "A reconsideration requires only a majority vote, regardless of the vote necessary to adopt the motion considered." Immediately after: "The motion to reconsider cannot be applied. . . when practically the same result may be attained by some other parliamentary motion; or when the vote has been partially executed. . . , or something has been done as a result of the vote that the assembly cannot undo; or to an affirmative vote in the nature of a contract. . . ; or to a vote on the motion to reconsider." Although further it reads, "It is undebatable only when the motion to be reconsidered is undebatable. Robert's Rules also says that it is not necessary to have the floor to move to reconsider a vote. There is some justification for this on p. 157: "While the making of this motion to reconsider has such high privilege, its consideration has only the rank of the motion to be reconsidered. . . ." Hence the vote on whether to reconsider a motion has the same rank of precedence as the original motion itself, and there is no need to give it the power to interrupt current proceedings.

[40] This justifies the Moderator [Chairman]'s cry, "Frivolous!"

[41] By general consent in some organizations, the motion to reconsider can only be made by an individual who has the floor, in spite of the actual text of Robert's Rules.

[42] By general consent in some organizations, the motion to reconsider is not debatable, in spite of the actual text of Robert's Rules.

Hypothetical Example:

The following is an example of the typical type of activity one may encounter in dealing with motion at a chapter meeting.

The association meeting agenda carries the topic of local association financing. The Chairperson asks if there are any comments concerning the topic and Member 1 suggests that the association consider adjusting the industry fund language in the labor agreement. Member 1 offers the following motion -

Member 1: " I move that the Labor Negotiating Committee be directed to negotiate language in the labor agreement providing for an industry fund contribution of 2.5% of the basic journeyman wage rate."

Chairperson: "Is there a second to the motion?"

The motion must be seconded before it can be placed on the floor for discussion. If it is not seconded it dies for lack of a second and cannot be considered for any action.

Member 2: "I second the motion."

Chairperson: "A motion has been duly made and seconded and the floor is now open for discussion of the motion."

Member 3: "I move that the membership reject this proposal."

This second motion is out-of-order since there is already a valid motion on the floor which must be disposed of before another motion can be legally entertained.

Chairperson: "Your motion is out-of-order since we already have a motion on the floor."

Debate and discussion are held on the topic of the motion. Debate or discussion should continue until all positions on the issue have been addressed. A rule-of-thumb is that members be recognized no more than twice during the debate on an issue. Let us suppose that during the debate on our example the following is offered -

Member 4: "I move that the motion be amended to reduce the percentage from 2.5 to 2.0."

Member 5: "I second the motion to amend the motion."

The motion to amend the current motion is proper and once it is seconded it is then open for floor discussion and potential additional amendment. This motion to amend now becomes the topic for floor discussion. During this discussion Member 6 is recognized by the Chair and given the floor and offers the following -

Member 6: "I call for the question."

In essence Member 6 is saying that he/she has enough information on the topic and is calling for the Chairperson to stop discussion and secure a vote of the membership on the amendment to the main motion. This is a motion and **does require a second. It requires a two-thirds vote to carry. The motion is neither amendable nor debatable and once seconded a vote must be taken.** The person making the motion must have the floor [be recognized by the Chair and authorized to speak]. If the motion is seconded and carries with the required two-thirds vote, then a vote on the motion on the floor must be taken.

With regard to voting, when the main motion has been amended, the vote must first be taken on the amendment. If the amendment carries, then a vote is taken on the main motion as amended. If the amendment fails, a vote is then taken on the main motion as originally offered.

Let us suppose in this example that discussion on the motion to amend the main motion continued and during this discussion the following occurred -

Member 7: "I move that the amendment be amended to increase the percentage to 3.0."

Member 8 "I second the motion."

You now have an amendment to amend the amendment to the main motion and discussion centers on the amendment to amend the amendment.

In this situation discussion continues until the Chair determines that the issue has been fully discussed and the Chair calls for a vote, or a motion calling for the question passes. When the vote is taken, the voting progression is as follows -

1. Amendment to the amendment;
2. Amended amendment or amendment to the main motion [depending on the outcome of the previous vote];
3. Amended motion or main motion [depending on the outcome of the previous votes].

According to the outcome of the voting the motion may be approved as amended, or it may be approved as originally presented, or it may be rejected. In this particular scenario we could end up with a motion to negotiate language in the labor agreement providing for an industry fund contribution of 2.5% of the basic journeyman wage rate [all amendments are voted down, but the main motion carries]; or 2.0% [the amendment to the amendment is defeated, the motion to amend carries, and the main motion as amended carries]; or 3.0% [the amendment to amend the amendment carries, the amended amendment to the main motion carries, and the amended main motion carries]; or the whole concept rejected [all motion are defeated].

NOTE: Remember Robert's Rules call **an amendment to an amendment a secondary amendment**, or an amendment in the second degree. §33, pp. 135 and 147 **forbid amendments in the third degree: that is, there can be no amendment to an amendment to an amendment, or anything worse.**

There are two other situations that may typically be encountered during a meeting. They are the motion to **table** and the motion to **reconsider**.

If a member introduces a motion to table an issue and it is seconded, it is a privileged motion and is **not** subject to debate. The Chair must recognize the motion to table and once seconded call for a vote immediately. If the motion to table carries, the issue is place in abeyance [on the table] until such time as a motion is made, seconded, and carried to take the issue from the table. If such a motion to remove the issue from the table is not made or does not carry the issue remains on the table and will remain an unfinished item of business for the association; and as

such will be carried on the agenda for future meetings until action is taken to dispose of the issue.

A motion to **reconsider** a previous action **must** be made by a member who was on the prevailing side of the original vote; can apply to either affirmative [carried] votes or negative [rejected] votes; must be made during the course of the same meeting in which the original action was taken; requires a second; is debatable; and itself, cannot be reconsidered.

The information in this Section was compiled and edited by Executive Director of Operations J. Robert Roach. The source of much of the data comes from **Robert's Rules of Order** and by permission of a number of internet sites.