

# CUPE 3902 General Meeting Rules of Order

Our union uses rules of order based on *Bourinot's Rules of Order*, with a few modifications. These exist to ensure that meetings proceed smoothly and democratically. The rules of order are intended to facilitate equitable participation, not limit it. Please take a moment to review the points below, and remember, not knowing the rules of order should not deter you from speaking. You can always ask the Chair how best to proceed.

## Agenda

This sets the topics of discussion for the meeting. For general meetings, agendas are established and published in advance on the Local website. It is best that agenda items be sent to the Chair or Communications & Recording Secretary at least a week in advance. The agenda may be amended on the floor of the meeting by a supermajority vote (2/3).

## Minutes

These serve as the institutional record of proceedings, and are very important. All significant contributions (motions, actions, key discussion points) should be recorded accurately and without editorial comment. Amendments to minutes may be made on the floor of a meeting. Generally, these are accepted without discussion; however, if the amendment is contested, there would be a vote to accept or reject the amendment.

## Reports

Much of the meeting will focus on reports from various committees and members. These reports must be either *received* or *adopted*. Receipt of a report indicates that the report has been presented and entered into the official record. Adoption of a report indicates that the recommendations or motions included in the report have been accepted for action by the membership.

## Motions

Motions are used to direct action, and take the form of "I move that..." or "Be it resolved that..." Any member or committee may move a motion at a meeting, as long as it directly relates to the agenda item under discussion. An exception to this is a

motion to extend time limits. Motions must be seconded by another member prior to discussion commencing. Motions must pass by majority vote (50%+1).

## Discussion

Generally, there is debate on one motion at a time, and it alternates between those speaking in favour (pro) or against (con). The Chair will keep a speakers' list, and each speaker may be given a time limit, or given only one opportunity to speak to a motion. Any member on the speakers' list may *call the question*, which forces a vote on whether to end discussion. If you wish to call the question, you may not first speak to the motion. You may, however, *give notice* of a subsequent motion while speaking to the motion on the floor. This means the meeting may consider your alternative motion while voting on the current motion. Motions may also be *tabled*, which means they are delayed until later in the meeting or put off to a later meeting.

## Points

A *point of order* is called when a member thinks that the rules of order are not being followed, or that a motion conflicts with the bylaws. A *point of privilege* is called when a member feels that something about the way the meeting is going prevents him/her or another member or group from participating fully. A *point of clarification* is called when a member finds the information not complete enough to allow for full consideration of the motion under discussion. Points may be called immediately, and may interrupt a speaker, though it is best not to use points to unnecessarily disrupt debate.

## Decorum

Discussion at our general meetings should always be respectful. Impugning the character of other members, presuming to know the motives of other members, inflammatory language, and speaking out of order are not allowed. If during the course of a meeting you feel that the tone of the discussion or the actions of another member prevent you from participating, you may bring this to the attention of the Chair or any union officer present.

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The motions below are listed in order of precedence, with the lowest-ranking motion at the bottom of the list. With some exceptions, a motion is in order provided it is higher on the list than the question before the membership.

Type of Motion	Use if you want to:	You Say:	May interrupt the Speaker?	Seconded?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Required to carry
Privileged	End the meeting <sup>1</sup>	I move to adjourn the meeting	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	Take a break <sup>1</sup>	I move to recess the meeting until ...	No	Yes	No	Yes, only time	Majority
	Object to something that prevents you from participating	Point of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	No vote, chair must rule
	End debate without voting on a motion	I move that we proceed to the next order of business	No	No	No	No	Majority
Incidental	Appeal the ruling of the chair on the grounds that the Rules of Order were not followed	I challenge the ruling of the chair	No	Yes	No <sup>2</sup>	No	Majority
	Object to incorrect procedure or enquire about proper procedure	1) Point of order: the rules of order state that ...; or 2) Point of Order: What do the rules state about ...?	Yes	No	No	No	No vote, chair must rule
	Dismiss a motion that is irrelevant, objectionable or unworthy of the membership's time	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes <sup>3</sup>	No	No	No	Supermajority (2/3)
	Suspend procedural rules (i.e. non-Bylaw or Constitutional) for a specific -- typically urgent -- reason (such as extending the meeting to deal with unattended business, etc)	I move that we suspend the rule ...	No	Yes	No	No	Unanimous
	Withdraw a motion	I move to withdraw my motion	No	No	No	No	Unanimous

<sup>1</sup> The chair of a meeting may, at her/his discretion, recess or adjourn a meeting that cannot be brought to order.

<sup>2</sup> When the chair's ruling is challenged, the chair typically steps down and the vice-chair presides over the challenge. The challenging member is given the opportunity to state how the chair did not uphold the Rules of Order and the chair is then allowed to explain his/her ruling. The presiding officer then asks the membership: "shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?"

<sup>3</sup> This motion must be made *before* debate on a motion begins.

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Type of Motion	Use if you want to:	You Say:	May interrupt the Speaker?	Seconded?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Required to carry
Subsidiary	Postpone a motion until explicitly reintroduced	I move to table the motion	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	End debate and vote on a motion	I call the question	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	Limit interventions during a debate	1) I move to limit each speaker to X minutes; or 2) I move that members shall not speak more than once on a motion until all who wish to speak have done so; or 3) I move to limit the number of speakers to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Postpone a motion to later in the meeting or to a subsequent meeting	I move that we defer consideration of the motion until ...	No	Yes	Yes, only time	No	Majority
	Send a motion to a standing or <i>ad hoc</i> committee for greater consideration	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes, only on referral	Yes, only on referral	Majority
	Amend an amendment	I move to amend the amendment to read ...	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	Amend a main motion	I move to amend the motion to read ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Amend the agenda <sup>4</sup>	I move to amend the agenda to add/remove ...	No	Yes	Yes	No	Supermajority (2/3)
	Amend the order of the agenda	I move to amend the order of the agenda ...	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Main	Propose a course of action to the assembly (once moved and seconded, a motion may only be withdrawn with unanimous consent)	I move that ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Provide notice of a forthcoming motion	I rise to give notice that a motion to [...] will be introduced at the next meeting	No	No	No	No	n/a
	Reintroduce a tabled motion	I move to take from the table the motion to ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	Reconsider a defeated motion <sup>5</sup>	I move that the motion about [...] be reconsidered	No	Yes	Yes	No	Supermajority (2/3)

<sup>4</sup> The Local adopted this requirement in 2008 – SC approval, 5 May 2008; GMM approval, January 2009 – after unannounced amendments to the agenda derailed an AGM. The budget was not passed and only two items of business were dealt with, one of which was the item added to the agenda without notice.

<sup>5</sup> Reconsideration can only happen with a notice of motion or when dealing with matters arising out of the previous minutes. The mover and seconder must *both* have voted with the prevailing side in the original vote for a motion of reconsideration to be in order.