

# **“Rules of Meeting” for the Conduct of Business Meetings (Section 4.15 of the Church Bylaws)**

## **Founding Principles**

1. Everyone’s contributions and viewpoints are important because they are valuable to the decision-making process.
2. To ensure, as much as possible, that each person understands the merits and implications of a proposal or motion before committing to a binding vote.
3. To ensure that brothers and sisters are heard, and to treat each individual fairly so that everyone has an equal opportunity to ask questions, discuss matters, and voice opinions.
4. At the same time, everyone’s time is precious. Therefore, it is important to keep discussions focused and productive, stay on track, and move matters along when there are multiple agenda items.
5. To eliminate ineffective time drains (wasteful use of everyone’s time on less important or irrelevant matters) and ensure that all agenda items receive proper attention, meetings should be conducted in an orderly, structured, and respectful manner.
6. Striking the right balance — being effective, efficient, and focused at the same time — is tremendously challenging. Therefore, some meeting ground rules are necessary to help us.

## **Rules in Relation to Motions, Discussions, Q&A, and Voting**

### **1. Motions**

- a. A motion is a formal step taken to ask the group to consider something. For example, when a member makes a motion to approve a meeting agenda, the member is asking the other members present to decide whether they agree with what is planned for the meeting.
- b. If you wish to submit proposals or agenda items, please follow the rules set out in ONCA by submitting them to the Board for determination at least two weeks before the members’ meeting.***

## 2. During the Members' Meeting

- a. The chair, ministry leader, or member rises to introduce the motion and provide the necessary background information, as well as the Board's position or comments.
- b. Another member must second the motion.
- c. The chairperson restates the motion.
- d. Discussion, debate, and Q&A begin.
- e. A member who wishes to speak in debate must first be recognized by the chair. The general rule is that the chair calls on the first person seeking recognition (e.g., by raising his or her hand). Names will be noted in order, and the chair will call on individuals accordingly.
- f. If the member who made the motion seeks recognition and has not yet spoken on the motion, that member should be called on next, even if he or she was not the first to seek recognition.
- g. Two-turn limit: all members should be given the opportunity to speak once before anyone is permitted to speak a second time.
- h. Unless the other members give permission for an extension, a member's speaking time must remain within the limits set by the rules of the Board: ***one question or comment per member, with a maximum of three minutes per person.***
- i. Specifically, in relation to discussion or debate:
  - i) "It isn't what you say, but how you say it."
  - ii) No interruptions — please allow everyone to finish speaking.
  - iii) Critique ideas, not people. The hand-raising technique applies.
  - iv) Debate must be limited to the merits of the specific motion being discussed, not the general subject. If both a main motion and an amendment to that motion are on the floor, discussion must be limited to the amendment.
  - v) The chair reserves the right to redirect conversations that become too heated or go off topic.
  - vi) The chair may also make a motion to postpone an issue to a later time (i.e., delay the topic to a future meeting) or refer the matter to a committee. If a question requires further study, additional information, or handling by a smaller group, it may be referred to a committee or another forum. The committee will then report back to the main assembly at a future time.

vii) *What if the discussion continues to drag on?*

- 1) If a member wanders off topic, the chair may interrupt the speaker and remind him or her of the specific subject under discussion. The chair may “call for the orders of the day” to bring the discussion back on topic.
- 2) The chair may also ask participants to limit repetitive comments or refrain from introducing entirely new opinions. The chair may ask: “We have heard a great deal of constructive discussion; are you ready for the vote?”
- 3) If the meeting is running too long or the debate becomes repetitive, any member may make a motion (which requires a seconder and approval by *two-thirds (2/3) of the votes present*) to *limit or extend* the normal discussion time limits.
- 4) As a last resort, under extenuating circumstances, if the intention is to stop debate entirely and proceed immediately to a vote, a motion called the “Previous Question” may be made and requires a two-thirds majority to pass.

### **3. Voting**

- a. The chairperson restates the motion and calls for a vote.
- b. Each member present is entitled to one vote per motion. Ordinary motions are carried by a simple majority of the votes cast, as stated in Church Bylaw 4.11(a).
- c. For extraordinary matters outlined in Bylaw 4.11(b), a quorum of 30% of voting members is required, and the motion may only be carried with a majority exceeding three-quarters (3/4) of the valid votes cast.
- d. The chairperson should announce the number of votes recorded in favor of and against the motion and declare whether the motion has been carried in accordance with the required majority stipulated above. This shall be recorded in the minutes of the corporation.