

BACK to BASICS – HANDLING MOTIONS ¹

By: Steve Glanstein, PRP

1. Handling a debatable motion (general)

Member: *(Rise and be recognized)*

M: "Mr. Chairman" or "Madam Chairman."

C: "The Chair recognizes _____."

Member: *(Make a motion)* ²

"I move that _____."

Another Member: *(Seconds motion)*

"I second the motion." or "I second it" or "second!"

Chair: *(States the motion)*

"It is moved and seconded to _____."

(Chair looks toward member who made the motion.)

If the maker is ready or someone else claims the floor, the Chair states, "The Chair recognizes ..."

Otherwise, the Chair states, "Are you ready for the question?" or "The question is on the adoption of the resolution just read." ³

(Chair looks toward member who made the motion.)

¹ This information is based upon the 10th edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. It is abbreviated "RONR" in this handout.

² There are several forms of this motion. If presented by a committee, then it should start with ... "By direction of the committee, I move ..." In this case no second is required. See RONR (10th ed.), p. 489, l. 31-33.

³ Many parliamentarians prefer the form, "Is there any discussion?" This is used by other parliamentary authorities but is **not present in RONR**. See RONR (10th ed.), p. 36, l. 14-24

Members: *(Debate the motion.)*

Chair: *(After debate has concluded - put the question to a vote)*

"Are you ready for the question? *(Pause)* The question is on the motion to _____
Those in favor of the motion, say aye. *(Pause)* Those opposed, say no." *(Pause)*

Chair: *(Announce Result - Motion Adopted)*

"The ayes have it and the motion is adopted." *(The chair can make a short statement indicating the effect of the motion.)*

-OR-

Chair: *(Announce Result - Motion Lost)*

"The noes have it and the motion is lost."

Chair: *(Main motions – Immediately proceed to the next item of business.)*

"The next item of business is ... "

-OR-

Chair: *(Continue with pending business.)*

"The question is on the motion to _____."

2. Handling an undebatable motion (general)

Member: *(Rise and be recognized)*

M: "Mr. Chairman" or "Madam Chairman."

C: "The Chair recognizes _____."

Member: *(Make a motion)*

"I move that _____."

Another Member: *(Seconds motion)*

"I second the motion." or "I second it" or "second!"

Chair: *(States the motion and takes it to a vote)* ⁴

"It is moved and seconded to _____. " The question is on the motion to _____
____ Those in favor of the motion, say aye. *(Pause)* Those opposed, say no." *(Pause)*

Chair: *(Announce Result - Motion Adopted)*

"The ayes have it and the motion is adopted." *(The chair can make a short statement indicating the effect of the motion.)*

-OR-

Chair: *(Announce Result - Motion Lost)*

"The noes have it and the motion is lost."

Chair: *(Main motions – Immediately proceed to the next item of business.)*

"The next item of business is ... "

-OR-

Chair: *(Continue with pending business.)*

"The question is on the motion to _____."

⁴ The chair does not ask, "Are you ready for the question?" when the motion is not debatable. Obviously, the chair should not ask, "Is there any discussion?" when the motion is undebatable. The chair proceeds directly to a vote. RONR (10th ed.), p. 36, l. 33-36

3. Handling a *Point of Order*

Member: *(Rise and immediately address the chair.)*⁵

M: "Mr. Chairman" or "Madam Chairman" ... "I rise to a *Point of Order*."
C: "The member will state his/her *Point of Order*."

Member: *(State the rule that is broken.)*

"I make the *Point of Order* that _____."

Chair: *(Agrees/Disagrees with the maker of the Point of Order)*

"The chair rules that the Point is [well taken] [not well taken] because ..."⁶

"Well-taken" refers to a ruling by the chair that agrees with the maker of the *Point of Order*.

"Not well-taken" refers to a ruling by the chair that disagrees with the maker of the *Point of Order*.

Chair: *(Main motions – Immediately proceed with the next item of business.)*

"The next item of business is ... "

-OR-

Chair: *(Continue with pending business.)*

"The question is on the motion to _____."

⁵ RONR (10th ed.), p. 244, I. 30-32 through RONR (10th ed.), p. 245, I. 1-19

⁶ Make sure that the chair's reasons are clearly stated. All points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost, together with the reasons given by the chair for his or her ruling, since they will go in the minutes. RONR (10th ed.), p. 453, I. 18-20