

# **BACK to BASICS – HANDLING MOTIONS** <sup>1</sup>

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## 1. Handling a debatable motion (general)

**Member:** *(Rises and is recognized by the Chair)*

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

C: "The Chair recognizes \_\_\_\_\_."

**Member:** *(Makes motion)* <sup>2</sup>

"I move that \_\_\_\_\_."

**Another Member:** *(Seconds motion)* <sup>3</sup>

"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?", "Is there any debate?", or, "The question is on the adoption of the resolution just read." <sup>4</sup>

**Members:** *(Debate the motion.)*

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<sup>1</sup> This information is based upon the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*. It is abbreviated "RONR" in this handout.

<sup>2</sup> The motion has several forms. If presented by a board or committee, then it should start with, "By direction of the committee, I move ..." RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), pp. 514-524.

<sup>3</sup> A second is not required if presented by a board or committee (provided the board or committee consists of more than one person). RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 36, ll. 15-23.

<sup>4</sup> RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), pp. 37-38.

**Chair:** *(After debate has concluded - restates the question and puts it 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:** *(Announces 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:** *(Announces 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:** *(Rises and is recognized by the Chair)*

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)*<sup>5</sup>

"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:** *(Announces 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:** *(Announces 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:** *(Continues with pending business.)*

"The question is on the motion to \_\_\_\_\_."

### 3. Handling a *Point of Order*

**Member:** *(Rises and immediately addresses the chair.)*<sup>6</sup>

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

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

"I make the *Point of Order* that \_\_\_\_\_."

<sup>5</sup> The chair does not ask, "Are you ready for the question?" when the motion is neither debatable nor amendable. If the motion is not debatable but amendable, the chair may also ask, "Are there any amendments?" There is no authority for asking, "Is there any discussion?" If the motion is neither debatable nor amendable, the chair proceeds directly to a vote. RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), pp. 37-38, p. 38fn.

<sup>6</sup> RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 253, ll. 7-22.

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

"The chair rules that the Point is [well taken] [not well taken] because ..." <sup>7</sup>

"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 \_\_\_\_\_."

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<sup>7</sup> The chair's reasons should be 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 (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p. 470, ll. 15-16. The chair's ruling on a *Point of Order* or the assembly's decision on an *Appeal* may constitute persuasive precedent for future actions. RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), pp. 251-252.