

## **Ordinance 2024-25-85**

**Section 2-2.7:3.1. Rules of Order for meetings of School Board and Committees of the School Board; Governing Principles; Basic Principles; Basic Definitions; General Procedure for handling a main motion; General Rules of Debate.** — A. In order to maintain decorum at all meetings of the School Board and any meeting held by a committee appointed by the School Board to carry out delegated functions, the School Board adopts the following informal parliamentary procedure in lieu of the more formal parliamentary procedure set forth in the Robert's Rules of Order.

B. Governing principles for these rules include the following:

- (1) promote justice and courtesy for all;
- (2) maintenance of order;
- (3) consideration of one item at a time;
- (4) all sides of an issue are heard;
- (5) ability for each member to provide input;
- (6) majority rule; and
- (7) protection of the rights of the members including the minority.

C. Basic principles include the following:

- (1) a quorum must be present for business to be conducted
- (2) all members have equal rights, privileges and obligations
- (3) no person should speak until recognized by the chair
- (4) only one question at a time may be considered, and only one person may have the floor at any one time
- (5) members have a right to know what the pending question is and to have it restated before a vote is taken
- (6) full and free discussion of every main motion is a basic right.
- (7) a majority decides a question except when basic rights of members are involved or a rule provides otherwise.
- (8) Silence gives consent. Those who do not vote allow the decision to be made by those who do vote.
- (9) The chair can speak in discussion without leaving the chair and votes on all questions.

D. Basic Definitions and responsibilities include the following:

- a. Motion* — A formal proposal made to bring a subject before the assembly for its consideration and action. Begins with "I move that..."
- b. Second* — A statement by a member who agrees that the motion made by another be considered. Stated as "Second," or "I second the motion."
- c. Amendment* — Before the vote is taken on a motion, it may be amended but the assembly must agree to amend the motion before it can be thought of as a main motion. A motion can be amended by:
  - (i) Striking out words;
  - (ii) Inserting or adding words
  - (iii) Striking out words and inserting others in their place
  - (iv) Substituting one (1) paragraph or resolution for another

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d. *Voting* — All members are allowed to vote on all motions by either “yea” or “nay” or a member can abstain from voting. But in order for a member to abstain from voting, the member must clearly express the reason for abstaining from the vote before the member exercises the right to abstain.

e. *Presiding Officer/Chair* — The individual who facilitates the meeting. In the absence of the chair, the vice-chair will facilitate the meeting. If neither the chair or vice-chair is present, then a meeting cannot take place.

f. *Role of the Presiding Officer* — The presiding officer is responsible for the following:

- (i) introduces business in proper order as provided for by the meeting agenda
- (ii) recognizes speakers
- (iii) determines if a motion is in order
- (iv) keeps discussion focused on the pending motion
- (v) maintains order and decorum of the meeting
- (vi) puts all motions to a vote

E. General Procedure for handling a main motion include the following:

- (1) a member must obtain the floor by being recognized by the chair
- (2) any member can make a main motion, except for the chair
- (3) a motion must be seconded by another member before it can be considered
- (4) if the motion is in order, the chair will restate the motion and open debate
- (5) the maker of the motion has the right to speak first in debate
- (6) the main motion is debated along with any secondary motions that are debatable
- (7) debate on subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions (if debatable or amendable) take precedence over debate on the main motion and must be decided before debate on the main motion can continue
- (8) motion to close or limit debate are not permitted
- (9) the chair calls the vote either via electronic voting or by roll call
- (10) the chair then announces the result

F. General Rules of Debate include the following:

- (1) a motion does not have to be pending in order to discuss a subject informally
- (2) all discussion must be relevant to the immediately pending question
- (3) no member should speak more than twice to each debatable motion. The second time takes place after everyone wishing to debate the motion has had an opportunity to speak once
- (4) each time a member speaks on a debatable motion, the member is subject to the ten-minute limit, unless the members decide otherwise
- (5) all remarks should be addressed to the chair — no cross debate is permitted

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- (6) debate must address issues not personalities
- (7) cannot attack a member's motives for speaking for or against or presenting a motion
- (8) address all statements and remarks through the chair
- (9) cannot speak adversely on a prior action that isn't pending and has already been finalized
- (10) refrain from speaking against his/her own motion
- (11) only allowed to read from reports or quotations without objection or with permission; a member may read from reports or quotations with the chair's permission as long as no other member objects
- (12) when possible, the chair should let the floor alternate between those speaking in support and those speaking in opposition to the motion
- (13) members must not disrupt the assembly

(Ordinance 23/24-38, Effective: December 14, 2023)

**Legal Authority** - Virginia Code §22.1-78 (1950), as amended.