

GUIDE TO COMMON MOTIONS

Purpose of Motions and Committee Procedures

The purpose of rules of procedure is to facilitate – not hinder – an effective meeting. This helps ensure fairness, efficiency, and orderly debate. Procedural rules are not meant to disrupt or delay business or intimidate or shut down input from other members. Staff can assist in correcting any procedural errors.

How a Motion Works

1. Make the motion. A member says: “I move to ...” and states the action clearly.

Examples:

- *“I move to amend the first sentence in paragraph one to instead say XYZ.”*
- *“I move to strike the word XYZ in Section 3”*
- *“I move to replace the word ABC in Section 3 with the word XYZ.”*
- *“I move to recommend to the Metro Council for adoption the following regional key performance indicators as set forth in XYZ document.”*

2. Second the motion. Another member says: “I second.” A second means only that the matter is worth discussing. It does not mean that the member who seconds necessarily supports the motion.

**Note. If no second is offered, the motion fails for lack of a second and the matter is dropped without a vote.*

3. Debate. The chair opens discussion. Members speak in turn. No member speaks a second time while others who have not spoken wish to be heard.

4. Vote. The chair calls the vote. Unless the bylaws or applicable law require otherwise, if a majority of the voting members who are present vote “yes,” then the motion passes.

Voting Method

The Committee may act by voice vote, roll-call vote, show of hands, unanimous consent, or other method authorized by the chair and consistent with applicable law and Metro Code. Members may not vote by proxy, absentee, vote by mail, or secret ballot. All votes must be recorded in the minutes.

Required Vote

A majority vote of the voting members is required for Committee action (10 of 18 voting members).

Modified Consensus Voting

The proposed decision-making process is modified consensus. Each member may cast one “3-2-1” vote per decision:

- *A “3” vote: “Yes. I support the decision and support moving forward with the proposed action.”*

- A “2” vote: *“Yes. I support the decision, but with hesitation or caution; I support moving forward with the proposed action.” The voter is given the opportunity for more discussion if needed.*
- A “1” vote: *“No. I oppose this decision and have significant concerns about moving forward with the proposed action.” The voters are given the opportunity to explain their concerns and propose an alternative solution.*
- A “3” or “2” vote is considered a “yes” vote and the majority vote prevails.

There is no default rule on a set fixed time limit for individual speakers on a pending motion. The chair facilitates discussion to ensure all members who wish to speak have an opportunity and may ask members to avoid repeating points already made. If debate becomes prolonged, any member may move to *Call the Question* (see below), which is essentially a motion to end debate. Note that a *Motion to Call the Question* (aka a *Motion to End Debate*) requires two-thirds to pass. A single member does not have unilateral authority to end debate.

A Note on Debate Timelines

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Common Motions

Motion	What It Does	Second?	Debate?	Vote to Pass
Main Motion	Brings a matter before the committee for action.	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend	Modifies a pending motion before it is voted on.	Yes	Yes	Majority
Call the Question	Ends debate immediately and forces a vote on the pending motion.	Yes	No	2/3

Key Motions Explained

Amend. Before a vote is taken, any member may move to change the wording of a pending motion. State the change precisely: “I move to amend the motion by striking ‘X’ and inserting ‘Y’.” The committee votes on the amendment first. If the amendment passes, the amended version becomes the motion before the committee.

Note 1: Members are encouraged to provide a copy of their proposed amendment at least 48 hours in advance to the committee chair and designated staff.

*Note 2: A motion and second on the proposed action must be made **before** a member moves to amend.*

Note 3: Metro committees do not accept so-called “friendly amendments.” Once a motion has been made and seconded it belongs to the committee, not the individual. It is open to discussion, debate, and further amendment. The chair will treat a so-called “friendly amendment” like any other motion to amend and will ask for a second.

Call the Question. This is a motion to end debate and force an immediate vote on the pending motion. Because it takes away members’ right to speak, it requires a two-thirds vote to pass. If it fails, debate continues. A member calls the question by saying: “I move to call the question” or “I move to end debate.”

Quick Tip for Members

If you are unsure whether a motion is in order or how to word it, simply tell the chair what outcome you are trying to achieve. The chair, staff, or the Metro Attorney representative can help you frame it correctly. You do not need to know parliamentary terminology or procedure to participate.