



TIMOTHY WYNN, PRP
PRESIDENT

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Making Better Motions

Important Terms

The Question: This refers to a proposal (motion) that the assembly is asked to decide. The chair will say, “The question is on the motion ‘to refer the resolution to the finance committee.’”

State the Question: This refers to placing a motion before the assembly. The chair does this by saying, “It is moved and seconded ‘that a new sofa be purchased for the break room.’” The chair must state the question on a motion immediately after it has been made and seconded, provided that the motion is clear and in order.

Are You Ready for the Question?: The chair says this as a way of asking if any member wants to debate or make any secondary motions before the pending question is put to a vote. If no one seeks the floor, the chair puts the motion to a vote.

Put the Question: This means to put the pending motion to a vote. The chair does this by saying, “The question is ‘That Sunshine Gardening be hired to maintain the office grounds.’ Those in favor say aye... Those opposed say no.”

Voice Vote: This is when the chair asks for those in favor to say “aye” and those opposed to say “no.” This is the method used for most motions.

Rising vote: This is when the chair asks those in favor to rise and be seated, then asks those opposed to rise and be seated. This method is used for a two-thirds vote or when the result of a voice vote is in doubt.

Division: This is a demand that a voice vote be retaken as a rising vote, in cases where the member doubts the outcome of a voice vote or feels that a rising vote would generate a better representation of the will of the assembly. Each member has an individual right to call for a division, which is done without obtaining the floor.



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More Doughnuts, Please



BAD MOTION:

“I’d like to see more doughnuts at the weekend picnics. We’re always running out and everybody’s miserable about it. I can’t enjoy myself if I have to be worried about watching the doughnut box to make sure people aren’t taking four or five at a time. I like to have two or three over the course of the day, but I don’t want to hide them somewhere, just so I can get my fair share. I don’t understand why we can’t have enough for everyone. I mean, at the end of the day, we’re always throwing away piles of corn on the cob and mashed potatoes, but we always run out of doughnuts... I’d like to see us put this to a vote.”

What would be adopted? What was the motion? What goes in the minutes?

GOOD MOTION:

“I move that five dozen doughnuts be provided at each weekend picnic.”

If adopted, that exact language would go in the minutes. It is clear and specific.

- ▶ The motion comes first. Debate comes after the assembly knows the exact motion.
- ▶ The motion has a clear objective.
- ▶ The motion can be amended by increasing or reducing the number of doughnuts.

BETTER MOTION:

“I move that the Food and Beverage Committee be instructed to provide five dozen doughnuts at each weekend picnic.”

1. We know who is responsible for carrying out this decision.
2. It is the duty of the secretary to provide committees with any instructions.
3. Instructions to employees or committees can be drafted as Resolutions or Orders.



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Organization Letter Head

“Resolved, that the Food and Beverage Committee be instructed to provide five dozen doughnuts at each weekend picnic.”

I certify that the above resolution was adopted by ACME CORP, on January 1, 2012.

John Doe, Secretary