

**SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE PROCEDURES**  
**As Adopted by Area 70 Area Committee Meeting**  
**August 17, 2014**

Generally Speaking, Area 70 follows *Robert's Rules of Order*, and proceeds on as informal a basis as possible consistent with the rights of all concerned. It is important to remember that the purpose of rules of order is to make it easier for Area 70 to conduct its business; rules exist to allow Area 70 to do what it needs to do to carry out the will of the Fellowship by reaching an informed group conscience. Over the years, the General Service Conference has adopted some exceptions to *Robert's Rules*, which Area 70 also uses. These help us to proceed more closely in accord with the spirit of A.A. Tradition.

**COMMITTEE SYSTEM**

Area 70 uses the "Committee system" to handle our business, especially the important 12<sup>th</sup> Step business which occurs between Area Committee Meetings and our Full Area Assemblies. Recommendations of Area Committees are automatically motions that have been made and seconded. Members are urged to resist the temptation to edit motions from committees "on the floor."

**SUBSTANTIAL UNANIMITY**

All matters of policy require substantial unanimity, that is, a *two-thirds majority*. Because the number of voting members present for any vote varies from time to time, the phrase "two-thirds majority" is taken to mean two-thirds of the members voting.

**MINORITY OPINION**

After each vote on a matter of policy, the side which did not prevail will always be given an opportunity to speak to their position. If the motion passes with two-thirds vote, the minority may speak. If the motion receives a majority vote, but fails to pass for lack of a two-thirds vote, the majority may speak. Remember, that saving "minority opinions" for after the vote, when there is no rebuttal, is a time-waster for it can force the body to

reconsider a question that might well have been decided the first time around if it had been thoroughly examined from all sides. After minority opinions have been heard, a Motion for Reconsideration may be made (see below.)

**GENERAL RULES OF DEBATE AND VOTING**

- People who wish to speak will raise their hand and wait to be recognized by the Area Chair.
- Each person is urged to share in as concise a manner as possible (note the Conference allows each person 2 minutes to speak.)
- No one may speak for a second time on a topic until all who wish to have spoken for the first time.
- *Full* discussion of a motion should take place before each vote.
- Everyone is entitled to, and should, express his or her opinion. However if your perspective has already been stated by someone else, it is not necessary to say it again.
- Premature actions (e.g. amending motions early in the discussion or hastily calling the question) can divert attention from the subject at hand, thus confusing and/or delaying business.
- Voting is by show of hands.

### **TABLING A MOTION**

Tabling a motion (postponing discussion to a later time during the same Area Committee Meeting or Full Area Assembly):

- Must be made without comment.
- Requires a second.
- Is not debatable.
- Needs only a *simple majority* to pass.
- No minority opinion will be heard.

### **POSTPONING A MOTION**

Postponing a motion (postponing discussion to a subsequent Area Committee Meeting or Full Area Assembly):

- Must include in the motion when the discussion on the original motion will resume.
- Must be made without comment.
- Requires a second.
- Is not debatable.
- Needs only a *simple majority* to pass.
- No minority opinion will be heard.

### **CALLING THE QUESTION**

Calling the question brings debate to a halt while voting members decide whether to proceed directly to a vote (the question) or to go on with the debate. A motion to call the question:

- Must be made in order at the microphone.
- Must be made without comment .
- Requires a second.
- Is not debatable.
- Requires a *two-thirds vote* to pass.
- No minority opinion will be heard.
- If the motion passes, a vote on the motion under debate is held. If the motion fails, debate resumes.

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### **RECONSIDERATION**

A motion to reconsider a vote may be made only by a member who voted with the prevailing side, but it can be seconded by anyone.

- Only a *simple* majority is required.
- If the majority votes to reconsider, *full* debate, pro and con, is resumed. (Members are urged to limit discussion to *new* information only.)
- No action may be reconsidered twice.

### **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Order of Business is set by the Area Chair following this general format:

- Area Officer Reports in the following order: Secretary\*, Treasurer\*, Delegate, Alternate Delegate, Area Chair)  
\*accepted by motion with second and a vote
- Committee Chair Reports (alphabetical)
- DCM Reports
- Ad Hoc Committee Reports
- Break
- GSR Concerns (only at Full Area Assembly)
- Old/Unfinished Business (from previous meeting)
- New Business
- Ask It Basket (only at Full Area Assembly)

The Area Chair prepares an agenda for the current meeting and brings copies for members to follow the order of business. Old business will be that which is unfinished from previous meeting. New business items are often submitted to the Area Chair prior to the current meeting, but may arise after the agenda has been prepared. Motions must be submitted in writing before discussion is opened on the motion. The exceptions to this practice are the procedural motions outlined herein or motions to approve the Minutes or Treasurer's Reports.