

Chapter 10 - Using Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly

There are two ways to bring a motion back before the assembly. One way is called renewing a motion: If a motion is defeated, a member can reintroduce it as new business at the next meeting. The second way is by using a group of motions that are described in this chapter. It is a parliamentary rule that any main motion that is defeated can't be brought before the assembly at the same meeting unless it is substantially a new question, its wording has changed significantly, the time or conditions in the motion have changed, or the special procedures explained in this chapter are used.

The motions discussed in this chapter show the correct way to return a question to the assembly for reconsideration. Members make these motions when no other business is pending. The purpose of each motion, its restrictions (whether it needs a second, is debatable, can be reconsidered, and so on), and the result of the motion are outlined at the beginning of each section. Examples show you how to use the motion correctly.

Take from the Table

- Purpose: To take a motion from the table.
- Needs a second.
- Not debatable.
- Requires a majority to adopt.
- Cannot be reconsidered.
- Result: Takes a motion from the table, which becomes the immediate pending business.

When a motion is laid on the table (set aside temporarily), members must take it from the table by the end of the next meeting or it dies. Members must make this motion when no other business is pending. Anyone can make this motion. It needs a second and is not debatable. The vote is taken immediately, and it requires a majority vote to adopt. If adopted, the motion that was tabled is now before the assembly. For example, if several motions were pending when it was laid on the table @md a main motion, an amendment, and refer to a committee @md the chair begins discussion with the last motion made, which was refer to a committee.

To make the motion, a member says:

Member: I move to take from the table the motion relating to the computer.

Member 2: Second.

President: It is moved and seconded to take from the table the motion relating to the computer. All those in favor say "Aye." Those opposed say "No." The ayes have it, and the motion to buy a computer and laser printer is taken from the table. The last pending motion was refer to a committee. Is there any further discussion on referring to a committee?

Reconsider

- Purpose: To reconsider the vote on a motion.
- Only a member who voted on the prevailing side can make the motion.
- Needs a second.
- Debatable if the type of motion it reconsiders is debatable.
- Requires a majority vote to adopt.
- Cannot be reconsidered.
- This motion can be made but not considered when other business is pending.
- Result: If adopted, the original motion is placed before the assembly as if it had not been previously voted on.

The motion reconsider allows the assembly to change its mind about how the membership voted on a motion. In a group whose meetings last one day, members must make this motion at the same meeting in which the vote was taken. In conventions or sessions of more than one day, members can reconsider a motion voted on at one meeting the next day. If time has run out on the motion to reconsider, members can offer the motion to rescind the action or amend something previously adopted (explained later in this chapter). If the motion was defeated at the previous meeting, a member can renew the motion by reintroducing it as new business.

Reconsider is an unusual motion; making the motion to reconsider suspends all action until the motion to reconsider is taken up or terminates. Therefore, to prevent its dilatory use by the losing side, only a member that voted on the prevailing side can make the motion, although anyone can second it. It is debatable if the type of motion to be reconsidered is debatable, and debate can go to the merits of the main motion. The motion to reconsider is not amendable and requires a majority vote for adoption.

A member who makes this motion should state that he or she voted on the prevailing side. If the member doesn't state this, it is the chair's duty to ask the member whether he or she voted on the

Rescind and Amend Something Previously Adopted

- Purpose: To change something previously adopted either by striking out the entire action or by changing part of it.
- Needs a second.
- Amendable.
- Debatable.
- If no previous notice is given, either a two-thirds vote or a majority of the entire membership is needed, whichever is more practical to obtain. If previous notice is given, the motion requires a majority vote to adopt.
- Can reconsider only a negative vote.
- Result: If this motion is adopted, the previously adopted motion is reversed or changed.

The rules concerning the two motions to rescind and amend something previously adopted by the assembly are very similar. These are considered incidental main motions. They need a second and are debatable. They are not in order if the action has already been carried out and is impossible to undo.

Debate can go to the merits of the original motion. A motion can't be rescinded or amended:

- If someone makes the motion to reconsider the vote and it can be called up.
- If action on the motion has been carried out, and it is impossible to undo.
- When a resignation is acted upon and the person notified.
- When a person is elected to membership or expelled from membership and notified. (If expelled from membership, this person has to reapply according to the bylaws.)
- When an officer is elected to or removed from office and notified. (If a person is elected to office and the members want to rescind the action, they can do so if the bylaws permit this action.)

The vote requirements for rescinding or amending a motion previously adopted are as follows:

- With previous notice, it takes a majority vote.
- Without previous notice, it takes a two-thirds vote or a majority vote of the entire membership. The reason for such a high vote is to protect the rights of the absent members.

Giving previous notice is best, especially when the issue is controversial. To give previous notice, a member can request that the notice is included in the letter sent to the membership notifying them of

the meeting; or, a member can give notice orally at the previous meeting.

To give previous notice at a meeting, a member states:

Member: Mr. President, I rise to give previous notice that at the next meeting I will make a motion to rescind the action that we give a donation to the Fourth Annual President's Night banquet.

Previous notice is never seconded. However, when the member makes the motion at the next meeting, it requires a second. The secretary records the previous notice in the minutes.

At the next meeting, the member rises and states the motion.

Member: I move to rescind the action that we give a donation to the Fourth Annual President's Night banquet.

Members 2: Second.

President: It is moved and seconded to rescind the action that we give a donation to the Fourth Annual President's Night banquet. Because previous notice has been given, it takes a majority to adopt. Is there any discussion?

If the member did not give previous notice, the chair states:

President: Because no previous notice has been given, this motion requires a two-thirds vote to adopt (or a majority of the entire membership, whichever is the easiest to obtain).

To phrase a motion to amend something previously adopted, a member says:

Member: I move to amend the motion that was adopted to give \$100 to Habitat for Humanity, by striking out \$100 and inserting \$200.

Member 2: Second.

President: It is moved and seconded to amend the motion that was adopted to give \$100 to Habitat for Humanity, by striking out \$100 and inserting \$200. If adopted, we will give \$200 to Habitat for Humanity. Is there any discussion on the proposed amendment?

Discharge a Committee

- Purpose: For the assembly to take a matter out of the hands of a committee or subcommittee before its report is given so that the assembly can decide.
- Needs a second.
- Amendable.
- Debatable. Debate can go to the merits of the question in the committee.

- If no previous notice is given, either a two-thirds vote or a majority of the entire membership is needed, whichever is more practical to obtain. If previous notice is given, the motion requires a majority vote to adopt.
- Result: If adopted, and if a motion was referred to the committee by a subsidiary motion, the motion is immediately placed before the assembly for discussion.

Note: If the committee fails to report at the time specified in the subsidiary motion, discharging a committee requires only a majority vote. Or, if the committee gives a partial report, members can discharge the committee by a majority vote.

The motion to discharge a committee is an incidental main motion and can be made only when no other business is pending. Use this motion only when a committee fails to report at the specified time or when something urgent comes up and the assembly needs to decide immediately. This motion is useful to prevent a motion or question from dying in committee.

Member: Madam President, I move to discharge the committee to select new furniture for the office.

Member 2: I second it.

President: It is moved and seconded to discharge the committee to select new furniture for the office. Because no previous notice was given, this takes a two-thirds vote to adopt. Is there any discussion?

Westside Toastmasters is located in Los Angeles and Santa Monica, California

