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# Parliamentary Guidance

*Prepared by Barbara Rosi*



The customary LWVUS rules and procedures followed during Plenary have been adapted for a virtual meeting and will be adopted at the beginning of Convention. Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition, is the parliamentary authority designated in the LWVUS Bylaws. These rules are in practice at a full range of meetings from local organizations, such as your local League, to national and international governing bodies.

The framework of Robert’s Rules is not meant to stifle anyone or inhibit debate—or confuse anyone!—but rather to encourage participation and offer a structure by which the business at hand can be discussed and decisions can be made in an efficient and effective manner.

## Making and Debating Motions

- Business is introduced to the delegation in the form of a **main motion**. A **main motion** is a formal proposal that the delegation take certain action.
- A motion made on behalf of an entity, such as a League, the Board or a committee, does not require a second. A motion made by a member needs a second to proceed.
- The Chair then restates the motion, putting it “on the floor” for debate and a vote.
- The maker of a motion is entitled to speak first to explain the rationale, that is the reason(s) the motion should be adopted.



Business is introduced to the delegation in the form of a **main motion**. *A **main motion** is a formal proposal that the assembly take certain action.*

An online form will be set up for delegates to input their motions. Main motions or any amendments to the motions must be submitted prior to the start of Plenary. This motion will be sent to staff who create the appropriate slides and share with the Chair and myself. The motion will then need to be made verbally from the floor at the appropriate time. Delegates making motions will be called on and their microphone will be unmuted.

Once unmuted begin by stating your name, League and state. If you are making a **main motion or an amendment**, refer to the motion by the number printed on the bottom, for example, “My name is Jane Doe, LWV of Happy Town, Illinois, my motion is number 001” and then read your motion, starting with, “**I move that...**” If the motion is being made on behalf of your League, then state, “**On behalf of [League], I move that...**”

A motion made on behalf of an entity (such as a League, the Board, a committee) does not require a second.

Motions made by a delegate require another member to “second the motion” or simply indicate “second.” These responses should be typed in the Q&A, not the Chat.

The Chair then restates the motion, putting it “on the floor,” so to speak, for debate and vote.

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## Making and Debating Motions

- To seek recognition to speak, to make a motion or in debate please use the Q&A function.
  - Send a message through Q&A that includes:
    - Your Name
    - Your League
    - To make motion: Motion #
    - During debate: The words PRO or CON
  - During debate, keep your remarks to **one minute**.
  - Tips to help expedite the business:
    - write down what you are going to say;
    - stay on topic; and
    - bring new information to the discussion.



To seek recognition from the Chair to speak

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Once unmuted begin by stating your name, League and state; and whether you are speaking IN FAVOR or OPPOSED to the pending motion.

During debate, keep your remarks to **one minute**. Timing will be especially important in this virtual setting.

Helpful hints to expedite business:

- write down what you are going to say before you speak so that you don't get flustered or forget the point you want to make;
- comments need to be germane--stay on the topic to what is being voted on; and
- bring new information to the discussion, rather than repeating comments already made or agreeing with another speaker.

All of this will go a long way to an efficient meeting.

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## Making and Amending Motions

- When there is a **main motion** being discussed on the floor, delegates may propose changes to the **main motion**. The different forms for amending are to insert or add, to strike out, to strike out and insert, or to substitute.
- Since most of the business for plenary is required to be “noticed” before convention, that is, distributed for delegate preview, proposed **primary amendments**:
  - must be germane (relate to the subject of the motion) cannot introduce something new; and within the scope of what was noticed (not a greater action); and
  - must be submitted in writing online prior to plenary, not during the virtual session.



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The LWVUS Bylaws require notice of six weeks prior to Convention for certain business to come before the delegation: Proposed Bylaws Amendments, Program Items and Concurrences. This information is distributed as written to be proposed on the floor. In addition to LWVUS rules, Robert’s Rules advises that when notice is required, there are limits to amending those items of business on the floor because there is the expectation of the scope of the proposed action to be taken.

Proposing a change to a Bylaws amendment being presented is allowed only within a very narrow scope; the proposals for concurrence are, by League rule, not amendable; and the Program has its own process for amending in considering Not Recommended Items.

It is also determined that amendments to business items that are noticed before plenary, will require proposed amendments to be made from the floor also be submitted prior to plenary. It is feasible and orderly for this process considering time and logistics of the virtual session.

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## Making and Amending Motions

- If an **amendment** is moved and seconded, delegates can only speak about the **motion to amend** and the idea it represents. If someone wants to propose a different amendment, they must wait until after the vote on the first amendment.
- With the explanation just given we work our way back when voting, that is a vote on the **secondary amendment**, then on the **primary amendment**, bringing the debate and vote back to the **main motion**. This is the time when a different amendment may be proposed to the **main motion**.
- After all amendments have been disposed of and debate has ended, delegates are asked to vote on the **main motion** [or **main motion as amended**].



If an **amendment** is duly proposed, delegates can only speak about the **motion to amend** and the idea it represents. If someone wants to propose a different amendment, they must wait until after the vote on the first amendment.

However, a **secondary amendment** may be proposed to make a change to the [first aka] **primary amendment** and, with that, discussion and vote is *only* on the proposed change to the **primary amendment**.

No more than one **primary amendment** and one **secondary amendment** are permitted to be pending at a time.

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How about we take a look at this with an example on how it flows.....

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## Making and Amending Motions

Main motion: “I move we purchase a computer.”

Primary amendment: “I move to amend the motion by adding the words “at a cost not to exceed \$1,000.”

Secondary amendment: “I move to amend the primary amendment by striking out \$1,000 and inserting \$2,000.”

*Don't forget to vote on the main motion as amended.*

Main motion: “I move we purchase a computer at a cost not to exceed \$2,000.”



The process I just explained may be easier to understand with a flow chart of sorts. Review steps in this example.

## Other Motions: Previous Question

*(not a Red Card motion)*

**Main motion:** “I move we purchase a computer at a cost not to exceed \$2,000.”

**Subsidiary motion:** “I move the Previous Question.” **Second.**

**Chair:** “The Previous Question has been moved and seconded to close debate.

Those in favor, raise your right hand. You may lower them.

Those opposed, raise your right hand. You may lower them.

There being two-thirds in the affirmative, the motion is adopted and debate is closed.”

*Don't forget to vote on the main motion:*

**Main Motion:** “The question is...(restate main motion and take vote)



### **Previous Question:**

When a member believes there has been enough debate on the motion(s), a delegate recognized by the Chair may **“call the question.”** Note that this is not what LWVUS has considers a ‘Red Card’ motion. The member must be recognized in the course of debate.

This motion is to end debate and have the delegates vote immediately. This may be in the form to vote on the immediately pending motion or all pending motions. The Chair then calls for a vote on whether to end debate. With a two-thirds vote, debate ends, and then the Chair calls the vote on the pending motion(s).



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## Other Motions: Lay on the Table

**Main motion:** “I move we purchase a computer at a cost not to exceed \$2,000.”

**Subsidiary Motion:** “I move to Lay on the Table the pending motion.” **Second.**

*For what purpose? This is to set aside temporarily and then take from the table and continue.*

**OR**

**Subsidiary Motion:** “I move to Postpone Indefinitely the pending motion.” **Second.**

*To kill the motion for this session. The motion can be renewed at a future meeting.*



There is widespread misunderstanding of the use of the motion Lay on the Table. Let's take a look at that by this chart and learn the correct motion for action intended.

**Lay on the Table:** The processing of a motion can be interrupted if a matter of an urgent nature needs to be taken care of by moving to “**Lay on the Table**” the pending motion. This requires a majority vote. After the urgent matter is taken care of, any member may move to “**Take from the Table**” the motion that was set aside temporarily and continue processing.

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## Other Motions: Point of Order

*(Red Card motion)*

- A member may interrupt with a “Point of Order” if rules are not being followed.
- The Chair will ask the member to state the point.
- The Chair rules on whether the point is well taken and corrects procedure or is not well taken.
- If the member does not agree, a motion can be made to Appeal the Decision of the Chair. Needs a second.
- Chair further explains decision and there is debate. Chair can speak last before vote is taken.
- Vote is taken and assembly decides whether to uphold the decision of the Chair. This vote cannot be appealed.



A Point of Order is used to call attention to improper procedure and it is given immediate recognition. There is a process to question and remedy, if needed.

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## Other Motions: Known as 'Red Card'

- **Request for Information:** Seek urgent information necessary before making a decision.
- **Parliamentary Inquiry:** Ask for direction on a parliamentary procedure.
- **Question of Privilege:** Relating to operation of the assembly or comfort of the delegates.
- **Reconsider a Vote:** Can only be made by a delegate who voted on the prevailing side and only on same or next succeeding day. Requires second. Other rules may apply.



The first two of these must be posed as a question. What is your question? Cannot get into discussion.

The next may be inability to hear the audio on a virtual meeting, perhaps static or interference. Action should be taken to remedy, if possible.

To Reconsider a Vote that has been taken has specific time restrictions.

When submitting in Zoom using the Q&A – in addition to your name, also indicate: **Point of Order, Question, Reconsider**

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## How This Works In Zoom

- Main Motions: *prior to plenary*
  - Submitted via an online form dedicated to motions
- Amendments to Motions: *prior to plenary*
  - Submitted via an online form dedicated to amendments
- Second/Point of Order/Questions/Reconsider
  - Submit in Zoom using the Q&A



**Barbara:**

The following is how we will handle receiving and presenting motions and amendments in Zoom.

All actions from the floor such as seconding, a point of order, questions or motion to reconsider should be done in Zoom using the Q&A function.

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## Voting Methods

- Unanimous Consent
  - Hand raising function to object
- Votes on Amending Main Motions
  - Hand raising function (voice vote = Division)
- Votes on Main Motions
  - Zoom poll
- Backup
  - Email Poll



The method of voting is at the discretion of the chair and it will be made clear before each vote how it will be taken and what is needed for a vote to pass. All of these require that you be logged into Zoom from your computer, tablet, or app on your mobile device. If you are calling in via a telephone you will not be able to participate in the vote.

In cases of routine business or where there seems to be no opposition on questions, time can often be saved by the procedure of **unanimous consent**. The Chair would say, “If there is no objection...” or “Is there any objection to...” and states the action to be taken, for example to adopt the Credentials Report. If no one says, “I object” then the Chair says, “Since there is no objection...” and states the action is decided upon, such as the Credentials Report is adopted. If a delegate objects, then the Chair assumes and processes the motion for a vote.

- Unanimous Consent will be voted on using the hand raising function to object
- Proposed Amendments to Motions will be voted on using the hand raising function: as a Voice Vote = Division (cannot be called)
- Main motions will be voted on using the Zoom poll function
- Should it be needed we will have an external online voting system prepared on our registration software