

# FLOOR PROCEDURE GUIDELINES

## *Louisiana Area Assembly*

These guidelines are intended as a guide to conducting business on the floor of the assembly.

### **WHO ARE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS?**

Area GSRs and DCMs, Area Officers & Past Delegates, and chairpersons of the area standing committees (including Registrar & Hotel Coordinator) are full voting members of the Louisiana Area Assembly. Alternates attending in place of an absent member are also voting members during their period of attendance.

### **ORDER OF BUSINESS OF THE AREA SERVICE MEETING**

The order of business of the area business meeting is determined by the Area Agenda Committee at the agenda planning meeting of each assembly. The business meeting format is usually as follows:

- Opening by Area Chairman
- Officers Reports
- Committee Reports
- Budgetary Motions
- Old Business
- New Business
- Adjournment

### **PLACING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Any member of AA in Area 27 may place an item on the agenda by presenting it in written form to a member of the area committee. All motions that involve the expenditure of money should be submitted to the Budget & Finance Committee prior to being introduced on the floor.

### **SECONDS TO MOTIONS**

Any voting member of the assembly may second a motion by saying, "Second". A second to a motion does not necessarily mean the member supports the motion, just that the member wants it to be considered and discussed.

### **WITHDRAWAL & AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS**

Permission to withdraw a motion may be requested by the member sponsoring the motion at any time prior to a vote. The chairman will then seek to obtain general consent of the assembly and, if obtained, announce the motion has been withdrawn. Amendments to motions must be related to the motion. After a motion has been stated by the chair, any voting member may offer an amendment, but it must be seconded and passed by a majority vote. The chair then restates the amended motion and business proceeds. The procedure for voting on the motion as amended is to vote on the amendment first, then on the motion as amended. If the amendment fails, the original motion is voted upon.

### **DEBATE & DECORUM**

Debate is any spoken comment on the merits of a pending motion. When a motion is made and seconded, it must be stated by the chair before any debate. Any member wishing to speak in debate must come to the microphone and wait until no other member is speaking. Comments are limited to three minutes and are timed by the alternate chair. No member shall speak to the same motion more than twice and may not speak a second time until all other members who desire to speak to the motion have had an opportunity to speak. If at any time the chair is required to state a point of order or otherwise speak within the privileges of the chair, then the member speaking should defer to the chair. Such an interruption will not count toward the member's time to speak to the motion.

### **CALL THE QUESTION**

A motion to close debate, commonly referred to as "CALL THE QUESTION," must be made in order at the microphone. This motion can be used only to close debate, not to prohibit debate, and is considered "out of order" if made before debate has begun. The call the question motion requires a second, is not debatable, and requires a two-thirds vote to end debate. If passed, the motion on the floor is voted on. This motion yields to the motion to "LAY ON THE TABLE."

### **LAY ON THE TABLE**

A motion to lay on the table is to remove the main motion from consideration and entrust it to the care of the secretary until its consideration is resumed at a later area assembly. It requires a second, is undebatable, unamendable, and requires a majority vote. A motion to lay on the table may be made at any time prior to the vote on the main motion. The tabled motion may be considered at a later assembly by a member making a motion to "take the tabled motion from the table." Such a motion requires a second, is undebatable, unamendable, and requires a vote commensurate with the original motion (e.g., simple majority or substantial unanimity). If a motion is not taken from the table at the next assembly after it was tabled, it expires upon adjournment of that assembly.

### **POINT OF ORDER**

A point of order is an assertion that a procedure is being violated and a request that the procedure be enforced by the chair. It takes precedence over any other pending motion out of which it arises. It is in order when another has the floor even if it is necessary to interrupt a speaker. It does not require a second and is not debatable or amendable. It is decided by the chair, subject to appeal. To make a point of order, a member rises and says, "Point of Order." The chair asks the member to state his point, and the member does so, being as specific as possible without entering into debate or asking a question. The chair then rules on the point of order.

An appeal of the decision of the chair is permitted by a member announcing, "I appeal the decision of the chair." If the appeal is seconded, the chair then defines the issue involved, explains the reasons for his decision, and says, "Shall the decision of the chair be sustained?" An appeal is debatable, but no member may speak more than once in debate, and the chair may defend his decision once again at the end of the debate. A majority vote sustains the chair's decision.

### **VOTING - MATTERS OF POLICY – SUBSTANTIAL UNANIMITY**

All matters of policy require substantial unanimity, that is, a two-thirds majority. Any actions, including amendments, that affect a matter of policy, or motions that might result in a matter of policy, also require a two-thirds majority. Because the number of members present in the hall during Assembly varies from time to time, the phrase "two-thirds vote" is taken to mean two-thirds vote of the members voting.

### **MINORITY VOICE**

After voting on a matter of policy, the losing side will always be given an opportunity to speak to their position. Then, a Motion to Reconsider a vote must be made by a member who voted with the winning side, but it can be seconded by anyone. [If the main motion receives a majority vote, but fails to pass for lack of a two-thirds vote, the majority may speak to their position, and the Motion to Reconsider must be made by someone who voted against the motion.]

A simple majority is required to reconsider. No action may be reconsidered twice. If the majority votes to reconsider, *full debate*, pro and con, is resumed. (Members are urged to limit discussion to *new considerations of the question under debate*.)

### **ELECTIONS – THIRD LEGACY PROCEDURE**

AA's Third Legacy Procedure has traditionally been used for electing area officers at the Louisiana Area Assembly and is outlined in the AA Service Manual. Election assemblies are held in August of even-numbered years for the Louisiana Area. To be eligible to vote at an election assembly, GSRs must provide a letter from their group stating that they are representing their group. All other members of the Assembly are eligible to vote. All members of the area committee are automatically nominated for all positions if they are eligible to serve. The nomination can be declined by the member during the roll call

prior to the election for each office. Persons not members of the area committee may be nominated from the floor by a voting member of the assembly.

#### **WHO MAY VOTE**

Business Meeting	All members of the Louisiana Area Assembly
DCM Committee	DCMs only
Agenda Committee	Area Committee members
Other Committee	Any member attending a committee meeting may vote on committee matters

#### **TIPS, HINTS, WORDS OF CAUTION**

*Full* discussion of a recommendation should take place *before* the vote. Premature actions (e.g., amending motions early in discussion or hastily calling the question) can divert attention from the subject at hand, thus confusing and/or delaying Assembly business. 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 go to the mike and say it again. Remember, too, that saving minority opinions for after the vote, when there is no rebuttal, is another time-waster, for it can force the Assembly to reconsider a question that might have been decided the first time around if it had been thoroughly examined from all sides.