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CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING RULES OF PROCEDURE

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Introduction

The Canadian Unitarian Council uses Robert's Rules of Procedure, 12th edition as the default, as these are the parliamentary rules specified in our bylaws, and we are not able to change the system without consulting with or informing the member congregations ahead of time, and then approving a change to the bylaws.

However, our bylaws allow us to modify our own Annual Meeting Rules, which we do annually. These annual meeting rules of procedure are found in the [CUC AGM 2026 - Public Google folder](#).

This year, we are continuing the concepts previously introduced towards being more inclusive in our participatory and decision making processes, giving delegates and observers more access, and dismantling systemic barriers to full inclusion:

- The Chair is allowing observers to speak whenever possible. When time is short, delegates, youth, ministers and official representatives of CUC Associates will have precedence.
- When it seems necessary and timely, the Chair will take the temperature of the room for an indication of whether more discussion time is needed.

Please refer to the [Delegate, Voting and Participation Instructions](#) for details on these.

Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for a summary of the most commonly used procedures and motions of Robert's Rules.

In addition, the following will apply to all Annual General Meetings and Special Meetings of the Canadian Unitarian Council.

Youth Participation

The usual rules of procedure include allowing any youth (14-19 years) present at the CUC's Annual General Meetings the same privilege to speak to the assembly as currently exists for delegates, ministers, CUC Board members, and official representatives of CUC Associates. This allowance does not extend to voting privileges, unless the youth is a duly designated delegate of their congregation.



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Speakers

Our bylaws state that the following may speak to any motion: The voting delegates of member congregations, members of the Board, the Executive Director or designate, the official representatives of Affiliates, Ministers in good standing with the Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada, staff, public accountant.

Non-delegate members of member congregations and other visitors shall have the privilege of the floor at the discretion of the chair.

For this meeting, the Chair will use discretion in allowing speakers, including observers. In the event of a time constraint, delegates will speak first.

This is within the bounds of the CUC bylaws defining who may speak. This AGM, we are bringing this practice into being at this AGM to live into our 8th Principle, to be inclusive, and as one of the ways to dismantle barriers to participation.

To Speak

A person desiring to speak shall raise their electronic hand and address the chair giving their name and society affiliation, and be duly recognized before speaking.

A person may speak for not more than two minutes at any one time unless this time limit is extended by two-thirds consent of the delegates present and voting. No one may speak twice on a particular question unless all delegates who wish to speak on that question have had the opportunity to do so except for the mover of a motion who may also speak at the close of debate.

There will be no pro and con queues; each person wishing to speak will state their opinion succinctly. If a point similar to yours has been made, please consider stepping back and allowing others to take a turn.

Motions

Motions for which previous notice is required are not in order unless they have been included in the notice of the meeting. Therefore, all motions shall be submitted for consideration to the Executive Director by December 15th prior to the Annual General Meeting.

Motions made by direction of the Board or a duly appointed committee of the assembly do not require a second; all other motions will require a delegate to second the motion.



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Motions shall be stated orally before action or debate on the motion shall take place. Only accredited delegates may introduce motions, and all motions must bear the name of the delegate and that of the society he or she represents.

There is an exception to this notice rule for a motion introducing an [Urgent Resolution](#). An Urgent Resolution may be proposed by any of the same five groups that may propose an ordinary resolution. Proposers of an Urgent Resolution shall submit their motion to the Executive Director as soon as possible, but no later than 6 p.m. seven days before the AGM is to occur.

Amendments

Any suggested amendments must be received by the Proposers of Motions by the indicated deadline, usually February 28th, to be considered. No substantive amendments will be entertained after this date.

Substantive amendments

Substantive amendments are those which significantly alter the scope or intent of the proposed resolution. A substantive motion is one that has a significant meaning outside of procedural matters. It usually expresses an opinion, directs or suggests an action, or establishes policy, or creates a subordinate body or appoints individuals to one. When a substantive motion has been distributed in advance of the meeting to delegates, the extent to which it can be amended at the meeting is limited. An amendment that would be substantive not be in order, and should be formally ruled “Out of Order” by the Chair. After the proposed wording has been distributed in advance, it cannot be amended in such a way as to introduce an unrelated material question that was not part of the conceptual thrust that had been distributed.

There is no precise line between a substantive and a non-substantive amendment. The decision falls to the Chair in each instance, subject, of course, to appeal and decision by the assembly.

Limit on Debate

Not more than 20 minutes shall be allowed for debate on any given motion, except by two-thirds consent of the delegates present and voting, when debate on such a motion may be extended for a further period or periods of fifteen minutes.



Discussion and decision-making

The Chair will facilitate discussion of the motions, and if it seems necessary, will ask for a round of reactions from all participants to decide if further discussion is needed. We will use the Gradients of Agreement to do this.

Using the Gradients of Agreement to take the temperature:

This introduces a new concept to the AGM. Prior to voting and if it seems necessary, the Chair may take the temperature of the assembly. We will use the Gradients of Agreement to do this. Some items will not need a lot of discussion, for example, the approval of the agenda, and this temperature-taking step can be skipped. Refer to the [full document here](#).

How does this work? For the discussion round:

1. A motion is made and seconded, followed by discussion, clarifying questions, and statements of opinion in favor or against.
2. After this discussion, a survey vote of five choices is launched. People make one choice.
 - a. ENDORSE (ie Approve): You think the idea is good and will support it with your effort and/or money.
 - b. SUPPORT: You approve of the motion and would like it passed.
 - c. NEUTRAL: You don't have an opinion if the motion in its present form should pass at this time.
 - d. DON'T LIKE: You don't like the motion but don't feel strongly enough to oppose it.
 - e. OPPOSE: You strongly oppose the motion and feel it will be detrimental to the life of the national Unitarian Universalist community. You don't want the motion to go ahead.
3. Depending on the results of the survey vote, there might be another round of discussion. It should not be a rehash of what has already been said but should be about how we handle the information from the Survey Vote.

Persons who voted Oppose should be given the opportunity to express their concerns which should be considered carefully.



Voting

Only accredited and registered delegates shall be entitled to vote. Zoom's poll feature will be used. Please refer to [Voting and Participation Information](#) for full details.

Robert's Rules of Order

([Robert's Rules of Order - Summary table below](#))

The following are examples of amendments that may be used as alternatives to defeating a motion. All these motions must be seconded and are not in order when another has the floor.

Subsidiary Motions

- *A motion to postpone indefinitely*

A motion to *postpone indefinitely* has the effect of dropping the main motion *without taking a definite position on the main motion*. This motion must be seconded and is not in order when another has the floor. The original motion cannot be brought up again at the same session (meeting) but can be moved again (in the same or modified form) at a later session. *A motion to postpone indefinitely is debatable and requires a majority vote*. As well, debate on the motion to *postpone indefinitely* can go fully into the merits of the main question. In the event the motion to *postpone indefinitely* is defeated, the motion to *postpone indefinitely* cannot be moved in regards to the same main question again.

- *A motion to lay on the table*

A motion to *lay on the table* is used to temporarily suspend consideration of the current question (for example, a motion to adopt the recommendations of a report) in order to consider another matter of immediate urgency. The intent of a motion to *lay on the table* is that you would lay the current motion (ex: the report recommendations) on the table, consider the more pressing matter, and once the more pressing matter has been dispensed with the Chair would entertain a motion to *take from the table* the previously tabled motion to resume consideration.

A motion that is *laid on the table* only remains on the table for the duration of the current session. In most cases, including the CUC's case, each meeting constitutes a separate session. As such, the motion *laid on the table* would have to be taken from the table again at the same meeting, or else the motion would effectively die on the table when the meeting is adjourned. **Using a motion to lay on the table as a**



means of stopping debate, with no intent to take the motion from the table again, is a misuse of the motion.

- A motion to *take from the table* must be seconded, is not debatable, cannot be amended, cannot be reconsidered, and requires a majority vote.
- A motion to *postpone to a certain time*

This motion would postpone consideration of the question until later, but a question can only be postponed to a later session, provided that later session is no later than a quarterly time interval (i.e. 3 calendar months) after the meeting where the question is postponed.

Other Rules of Procedure

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (12th edition), shall apply.

- **Point of Privilege:** Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc. - may interrupt only if necessary!
- **Parliamentary Inquiry:** Inquire as to the correct motion - to accomplish a desired result, or raise a point of order
- **Point of Information:** Generally applies to information desired from the speaker: "I should like to ask the (speaker) a question."
- **Orders of the Day (Agenda):** A call to adhere to the agenda (a deviation from the agenda requires Suspending the Rules)
- **Point of Order:** Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised immediately after the error is made
- **Main Motion:** Brings new business (the next item on the agenda) before the assembly
- **Divide the Question:** Divides a motion into two or more separate motions (must be able to stand on their own)
- **Consider by Paragraph:** Adoption of paper is held until all paragraphs are debated and amended and the entire paper is satisfactory; after all paragraphs are considered, the entire paper is then open to amendment, and paragraphs may be further amended. Any Preamble can not be considered until debate on the body of the paper has ceased.



- **Amend:** Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or resolutions. Not applicable for CUC AGMs if the amendment is substantive.
- **Withdraw/Modify Motion:** Applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor
- **Commit /Refer/Recommit to Committee:** State the committee to receive the question or resolution; if no committee exists include size of committee desired and method of selecting the members (election or appointment).
- **Extend Debate:** Applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain time or for a certain period of time
- **Limit Debate:** Closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time
- **Object to Consideration:** Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated
- **Reconsider:** Can be made only by one on the prevailing side who has changed position or view
- **Previous Question:** Closes debate if successful - may be moved to "Close Debate" if preferred
- **Informal Consideration:** Move that the assembly go into "Committee of the Whole" - informal debate as if in committee; this committee may limit number or length of speeches or close debate by other means by a 2/3 vote. All votes, however, are formal.
- **Appeal Decision of the Chair:** Appeal for the assembly to decide - must be made before other business is resumed; NOT debatable if relates to decorum, violation of rules or order of business
- **Suspend the Rules:** Allows a violation of the assembly's own rules (except Constitution); the object of the suspension must be specified



APPENDIX A

Robert's Rules of Order - Summary by [Board Effect](#)

Action	What to Say	Can interrupt speaker?	Need a Second?	Can be Debated?	Can be Amended?	Votes Needed
Introduce main motion	<i>"I move to..."</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	<i>"I move to amend the motion by it (add or strike words or both)"</i>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Move item to committee	<i>"I move that we refer the matter to committee."</i>	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Postpone item	<i>"I move to postpone the matter until..."</i>	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	<i>"I move the previous question."</i>	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Object to procedure	<i>"Point of order."</i>	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decision
Recess the meeting	<i>"I move that we recess until..."</i>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adjourn the meeting	<i>"I move to adjourn the meeting."</i>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Request information	<i>"Point of information."</i>	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Overrule the chair's ruling	<i>"I move to overrule the chair's ruling."</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority



Action	What to Say	Can interrupt speaker?	Need a Second?	Can be Debated?	Can be Amended?	Votes Needed
Extend the allotted time	<i>"I move to extend the time by ___ minutes."</i>	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Enforce the rules or point out incorrect procedure	<i>"Point of order."</i>	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Table a Motion	<i>"I move to table..."</i>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Verify voice vote with count	<i>"I call for a division."</i>	No	No	No	No	No vote
Object to considering some undiplomatic matter	<i>"I object to consideration of this matter..."</i>	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up a previously tabled item	<i>"I move to take from the table..."</i>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	<i>"I move to reconsider our action to..."</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	<i>"I move to suspend the rules and consider..."</i>	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Close the meeting for executive session	<i>"I move to go into executive session."</i>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Personal preference - noise, room temperature, distractions	<i>"Point of privilege"</i>	Yes	No	No	No	No vote

*A member may make a motion to reconsider something that was already disposed; however, the reconsidered motion may not be subsequently reconsidered. A motion to reconsider must be made during the same meeting and can extend to a meeting that lasts for more than one day.