

Town of Monterey, Select Board

Rules of Order

1. Matters may be discussed before a formal motion is made. It may be helpful to discuss the wording of a motion before actually proposing it, thereby avoiding the time-consuming process of amending the motion to reach the agreed form. However, formal motions and votes should be used to keep the Board on task and efficient.
2. Any member, including the Chair, can make a motion, second a motion, speak on a motion, and vote on a motion (presuming there is no conflict of interest or other prohibition).
3. Seconds are assumed, and therefore not always necessary. However, any member can respond to a motion by asking “is there a second?” If there is no second in response to this question, the motion fails due to lack of second. A motion that fails due to lack of second cannot be made again by the same member during the same meeting of the Board.
4. If a motion is made (and seconded if required), it is then open for discussion.
5. Board members and members of the public must be recognized by the Chair in order to speak. Anyone who speaks without being recognized should be ruled out of order by the Chair.
6. The Chair must be fair in recognizing speakers. The Chair has a duty to make sure contrary and possibly minority opinions are given the opportunity to speak.
7. Once Board members have had a chance to speak on an agenda item or a motion, the Chair may recognize members of the public who would like to speak. First-time speakers should be recognized before those who have already spoken. The Board reserves the right to close the floor to public comment to allow for Board deliberation, for discussions with employees, and for other reasons should the need arise.
8. Remarks must be on topic. Off topic discussion should be ruled out of order by the Chair.
9. A substitute motion can be made, or an amended motion can be made.

Reasoning: The rule for seconds applies to these motions as well. If properly made, the substitute motion would be acted on before the main motion. It's best to try to have no more than one substitute motion pending.
10. Members have a right to know at all times what the immediately preceding motion is, and to have it restated before a vote is taken.
11. Any member may make a motion to “call the question.” If successful, this motion ends discussion and calls for a vote on the motion being discussed. The rule for seconds applies, and generally this motion is not debated, although limited discussion may be allowed by the Chair. This motion should be an isolated statement and not made immediately after the same member presents an opinion.
12. The Chair shall conduct votes on each motion and declare the results.

13. Votes can occur either by general consent or by roll call.

Roll Call: Each member answers “yes” or “no” when the vote is called.

General Consent: When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chair may declare, “if there is no objection ...” The membership shows agreement by their silence, however if one member says, “I object,” the motion must be put to a vote.

14. These rules of procedure for the Board may be suspended by action of the Board.

Reasoning: A failure to comply with the rules does not affect the validity of any action. This will help in instances where someone is challenging a Board’s actions because the Board did not strictly comply with its own rules. While compliance is important, government should not be hamstrung by what is often a technicality.

Adopted May 18, 2022. Revised May 23, 2023.