

Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ

2022 Annual Meeting

Definitions and Recommended Procedures for Virtual Annual Meeting

1. RESOLUTIONS

- ▶ All resolutions except for emergency or courtesy resolutions must be submitted by the deadlines set, in advance of the meeting, so that delegates and churches may study the issues before the voting. Resolutions that have been submitted have been distributed to all delegates. Emergency Resolutions may be accepted by the Business Committee (the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors) no later than Sunday, February 28, 2022.

2. MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

- ▶ **All motions and amendments from the floor shall be presented to the meeting chair in the Questions and Answers panel in Zoom.**

3. DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

- ▶ When necessary, the meeting Chair may impose the following limits on debating motions and resolutions:
 - ▶ A limit on the total time for discussion of the motion or resolution.
 - ▶ A limit of two minutes for any one speaker. Time to be kept by an appointed timekeeper.

4. USE OF RAISING HAND FEATURE TO SPEAK

- ▶ Delegates must use the raise hand feature in Zoom in order to address the assembly. Once called upon to speak delegates must state whether they are for or opposed to the amendment or resolution.

5. VOTING

- ▶ Delegates will vote by using the poll feature when called upon to do so. (how will we know who is a delegate will this have to be a breakout room and poll? Or holding up their name tag/or when called upon to do so or to show a voting slip in order to receive a paper ballot if a ballot vote is called for. Tellers will be appointed to count the votes in the various sections of the auditorium. Please keep your voting slips raised until the teller for your area asks you to lower them.

6. RULES OF ORDER

- ▶ Robert's Rules of Order shall be used to guide debate and action. The meeting Chair may seek the advice of the Parliamentarian at any time. A delegate, in the question-and-answer panel, may seek a ruling by the Parliamentarian.
- ▶ Significant Rules from *Robert's Rules of Order*:
 - ▶ A motion or resolution may be amended and an amendment to a motion or resolution may be amended, but an amendment to an amendment cannot be further amended.
 - ▶ No speaker may speak to an issue more than twice unless the rules are suspended by the body to allow him or her to do so. Pro and con sides of the issue will alternate.
 - ▶ An amendment may affect the action to which it is related by adding or inserting, striking out, striking out and adding, substituting, or dividing the question.

6. RULES OF ORDER (Cont.)

▶ Significant Rules from *Robert's Rules of Order*:

- ▶ When making a motion it is best to put it positively. It can be stated by saying, “I move that...” It must be seconded before it comes before the assembly for discussion or action.
- ▶ To obtain the floor, a delegate or guest who has been granted voice must approach a floor microphone then address the Chair stating name and church or office. After being recognized by the Chair, the delegate may speak to the issue.
- ▶ A delegate who has the floor cannot be interrupted except for one of the following reasons:
 1. a call for the Order of the Day (to return to the items scheduled on the agenda for that time);
 2. A question of Privilege (a pressing situation affecting the rights of the assembly.)
 3. Point of Order (questioning whether the present procedure is appropriate.)
 4. Parliamentary inquiry (a request for guidance on the correct procedure in this instance.
 5. A call for Division of the House (standing vote)
 6. Expiration of the time allotted to the speaker.

6. RULES OF ORDER (Cont.)

- To close debate, a delegate obtains the floor and says, “I move the previous question,” or “I move to close debate.” This motion cannot be debated or amended and must be carried by a two-thirds majority.
- ▶ A motion maybe made to “lay on the table” one item of business so that another more pressing one may be addressed. This motion should be made with the intention of taking up the original matter again after the intervening matter is dealt with. A motion may also be made to “postpone indefinitely” when there is no intention of considering the matter further at this meeting. Both the action “to lay on the table” and the action “to postpone indefinitely” require a simple majority vote. “Laying on the table” is not a debatable motion, while “postponing indefinitely” is debatable.
- ▶ When a report is given, it is not necessary to move that it be accepted or received; it is, in fact, received by being presented to the assembly. The report, following its presentation, may be discussed and amended by the assembly.

7. SOME SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR A CHURCH MEETING

- ▶ As members of a faith community, we should consider the feelings of others on the losing side when deciding whether or not to applaud the result of the vote on a contested issue.
- ▶ Making a motion to get an immediate note on an issue (“I move the previous question” or “I call the question”) is an important parliamentary tool, but if there are still those wishing to speak, they may feel treated as unimportant. This tool should be used sparingly in a church assembly.
- ▶ There are other more obscure parliamentary maneuvers which can sometimes be used to “win” a point. Those familiar with these should be careful about invoking them since decisions in a faith body should be made on the basis of discernment of the Spirit and rational argument rather than manipulation of the rules.

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A COVENANT FOR DIALOGUE

“But **speaking the truth in love**, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

Ephesians 4:15-16

We covenant with one another to sustain a congregational culture in which we will communicate with integrity and mutual respect, and in which our creative energy—both individual and collective—will be free to flourish.

1. We will repeat in our own words what the other has said to confirm that we have understood them, and ask them to do the same if we feel we have not been understood.

2. We will communicate directly with each other, using the first person, using “I.”

3. We will try to make our meaning clear and say what we mean and mean what we say.

4. We will identify merit in another person's idea or suggestion before we identify its deficiencies.

5. We will be willing to inquire into another person's reasons and reasoning and will welcome inquiry into our own reasons and reasoning.

6. We will listen to understand, but don't necessarily have to agree.

7. We will not say outside the meeting what we are unwilling to say inside the meeting.