

## Proposal for Handling Information Items at Council Meetings

### Problem

Items that are brought to the body without documentation cannot be reviewed in advance of meetings, and when information is presented, it may come from many individuals. When others wish to respond to the idea or proposal, they are responding to individuals rather than one primary information source.

### Solution

The initiator is responsible for ensuring that appropriate documentation is prepared in advance, and to ensure that s/he commits to what is in writing. If the information will become an action item, then the information should be provided in the form of a written proposal so that everyone has access to the proposal.

The co-chairs are responsible for ensuring that appropriate documentation is provided in advance of meetings.

### Problem

Items that are brought to the body through a written proposal are sometimes critiqued without a balanced perspective, which can lead to a lack of acknowledgement of the work that went into the proposal and the beneficial features associated with it.

### Solution

After allowing the initiator/presenter to review the proposal, the chair should follow a two-staged approach: first, provide individuals the opportunity to speak to the favorable aspects, then, provide individuals the opportunity to speak to areas needing improvement.

### Problem

Items that garner substantial input about areas needing improvement are sometimes not modified when the proposal comes up for action. If a vote is taken, perhaps due to a misunderstanding of Robert's Rules with respect to "calling the question," it may appear to some members that the item is being pushed through in the hopes of tipping the vote in favor. Regardless of whether the motion succeeds or fails, the losing side is unhappy, the winning side is unlikely to be completely satisfied, and the institution loses either way. In these instances, there appears to be a disregard for working toward consensus, which is an expectation of council member responsibilities:

“Council members commit to working toward consensus in Council deliberations prior to taking action...”

### Solution

The initiator of the proposal is responsible for listening carefully to and seriously considering the areas needing improvement, which may result in working toward making modifications prior to the item being brought back for action.

Council members are generally responsible for committing to work toward consensus in Council deliberations. [language already appears in handbooks]

The manner of calling the question and moving directly to voting should not be allowed, but rather Robert's Rules should be followed, whereby two-thirds of the voting members must vote in favor of the motion to move the previous question.