

2021 ALASKA SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Meeting Guidelines

Common sense goes a long way toward making business sessions work well. If there is something you don't understand or if you don't understand what is before the body, ask the chair to clarify.

1. When addressing the chair, first state your name and the congregation you are representing. Address the chair as "Mr. Chairman" or "Madam Chair."
2. Making a motion: "I move..."
 - a. Must be in writing – one copy to the chair and one to the secretary.
 - b. Keep the issue clear.
 - c. Avoid having several ideas in one motion.
 - d. If a motion with more than one part is before the body, you can move to have the motion in question divided so votes will be taken on each part. This is done so you don't pass everything because you agree with one part or defeat all of it because you don't agree with one part.
3. Amendments to motions: "I move to amend the motion to"
 - a. All discussions will focus on the amendment.
 - b. If it passes, then the whole motion as amended will be before you for discussion.
 - c. If it fails, the original motion along with any previously passed amendments will be before you.
4. The maker of the motion always has the right to speak first after the motion is seconded. The maker of the motion is also allowed to speak at the end of the discussion to clarify and answer questions.
5. In speaking to a motion, state first if you are speaking for or against the motion.
6. "Point of Order"
 - a. This goes ahead of further speaking on the motion. The parliamentarian gives advice to the chair and the assembly, but the chair makes the final decision. If the assembly disagrees with the ruling, it can act to make its will known.
7. To limit debate: "I call for the previous question."
 - a. It takes a vote of 2/3 to pass.
 - b. Do not say "Question" to which the chair would respond "What is your question?"
8. Role of the Bishop at Synod Assembly:

†S8.12.As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall be an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament who shall:

 - i.2) Preside at all meetings of the Synod Assembly and provide for the preparation of the agenda for the Synod Assembly, Synod Council, and the council's Executive Committee
9. Role of the Parliamentarian:

The Parliamentarian is a consultant, commonly a professional, who advises the president and other officers, committees, and members on matters of parliamentary procedure. The parliamentarian's role during a meeting is purely an advisory and consultative one – since parliamentary law gives to the chair alone the power to rule on questions of order or to answer parliamentary inquiries.

Standing Rules

1. The governing documents of this organization are the primary authority of the assembly and take precedence over the Standing Rules and Roberts Rules of Order. The parliamentary authority for this assembly will be Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition.
2. To address the assembly:
 - Go to one of the microphones
 - Identify yourself by name, congregation you represent, city
 - Address the chair
 - Carry your red (against) or green (for) card if speaking on an issue
 - * Clarify questions on what is before the assembly or points of order are appropriate at any time
3. All substantive motions including spending plan revisions must be presented in writing to the secretary (with a copy to the chair) before any discussion takes place.
4. A person who presents a motion to the assembly will have the privilege of addressing the assembly for three (3) minutes in support of the motion after the motion has been seconded. Other persons may speak for or against the motion for a period of three (3) minutes. No person will be allowed to address the motion a second time until all who wish to speak have had the opportunity to do so. After the debate the person who presented the motion will be given three (3) minutes to answer questions or clarify issues raised by the debate.
5. Unless otherwise provided in the Alaska Synod Assembly Agenda or by the bishop or presiding officer, debate on any motion or resolution shall be limited to 30 minutes.
6. Motions from the floor that revise the spending plan must include projected expenses and revenue sources so the spending plan remains balanced.
Reminder: increases in undesignated revenue have the additional impact on first fruits, mission and churchwide benevolence i.e. expense increase requires 1.53 revenue increase (2010).
7. The following persons are granted "voice" (the right to speak) for the assembly: properly registered (1) retired or on leave from call ordained ministers or deacons on the roster of the synod; (2) the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; (3) official representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and (4) other persons granted "voice" by the bishop of the synod.
8. The following persons are granted "voice" (the right to speak) and "vote" for the assembly: properly registered (1) ordained ministers or deacons under call and on the roster of the synod, retired ordained ministers on the roster of this synod who served one year prior to retirement (see S7.22.01); (2) lay voting members representing the congregations of the synod; (3) lay voting members representing synodically authorized worshipping communities; and (4) members of the synod council.

Amendments to Rules of Order for Assembly Voting Members

ELCA Secretary Chris Boerger has suggested that synods adopt an amendment to the rules. This requires a 2/3 vote to adopt rules since these normally are changes to or additions to Robert's Rules of Order. Amendments to the rules may be offered to this motion and those require a majority to pass an amendment. It will still require 2/3 to adopt the amended rules.

Moving the Previous Question

A member who has spoken on the pending question(s) may not move the previous question(s). A motion to end debate by moving the previous question shall apply only to the immediately preceding motion. A motion to end debate on all matters on the floor or more than the immediately pending question is not in order.

Substitute Motions

When a substitute motion is made, secondary amendments may be offered first to the original motion. After all secondary amendments to the original motion have been disposed of, secondary amendments to the substitute motion may be offered. When all amendments to the substitute motion have been disposed of, the vote shall be taken on whether the substitute motion is to be substituted as the original motion or be rejected.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE ... at a glance							
To do this:	Say this:	May you interrupt the speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed?	Can it be reconsidered?
Adjourn meeting	"I move we adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Call an intermission	"I move we recess for ..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
**Complain about heat, noise, etc.	"I rise to a question of privilege."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No
Suspend further consideration of an issue	"I move to table the motion."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
End debate and amendments	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No (1)
Postpone discussion for a certain time	"I move to postpone the discussion until ..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Give closer study of something	"I move to refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes (2)
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by ..."	No	Yes	Yes (3)	Yes	Majority	Yes
Introduce business	"I move that"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
The motions listed above are in order of precedence ... Below there is no order							
**Protest breach of rules or conduct	"I rise to a point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote (4)	No
Vote on a ruling of the chair	"I appeal the chair's decision."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority (5)	Yes
Suspend the rules temporarily	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Avoid considering an improper matter	"I object to consideration of this motion."	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 (6)	(7)
Verify a voice vote by standing	"I call for a division." or "Division"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No
**Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No
Take up a matter previously tabled	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Reconsider a hasty action	"I move to reconsider the vote on ..."	Yes	Yes	(8)	No	Majority	No
**You may go to the head of the line							(5) A majority negative vote needed to reverse ruling of the chair
(1) Unless vote on question is not yet taken							(6) 2/3 negative vote needed to prevent consideration of main motion
(2) Unless the committee has already addressed the subject							(7) Only if the main motion was not in fact considered
(3) Only if the motion to be amended is debatable							(8) Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable
(4) Except in doubtful cases							