

Dawson Support Staff Union (DSSU)
Syndicat du personnel de soutien de Dawson (SPSD)

DSSU BYLAW No. 3

PROCEDURES FOR DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLIES

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BYLAW No. 3

PROCEDURES FOR DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLIES

Introduction

The point of having procedures for assemblies is to ensure debates take place in an orderly fashion and that the rights of each member are respected:

“Procedures are meant to facilitate debates, not complicate them.”

Before the beginning of any assembly, it is essential that the chair remind everyone of the procedures stipulated by the Constitution and Bylaws of the DSSU.

Members present must sign an attendance sheet.

1. ROLE OF THE CHAIR OF THE ASSEMBLY

1. The chair ensures the smooth functioning of the assembly by:
 - making sure that procedures are respected;
 - recognizing members entitled to speak;
 - calling members to order;
 - fixing the time for debates;
 - stating the motions and announcing results;
 - controlling quorum.

2. She may propose a special procedure.

3. She should not take part in the substance of a debate.

4. Preferably, the chair should not be member of the DSSU Executive Committee.

2. THE TYPES OF MOTIONS

A) MAIN AND SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

1. Main motion

Aimed at settling what is being debated by the assembly

Must be seconded
Debate
Amendments possible
Majority vote required

2. Indefinite postponement

To stop the discussion and postpone the decision or definitely end the debate

May be moved at any time
Must be seconded
Debate on the proposal to postpone
No amendments
Majority vote required

3. Call to question

To end the discussion and take an immediate vote on the motion being debated

The person introducing the motion should not participate in the debate
Must be seconded
No debate
No amendments
2/3 vote required

4. Postpone to a certain time

To end the debate and postpone it to another date or another time which could be later in the same meeting or to a different meeting

Must be seconded
Amendments possible on the date only
Majority vote required

5. Referral

To end the debate, order it to be studied by the appropriate body or postpone the decision

Must be seconded
Debate
Amendments possible
Majority vote required

6. Amendment

Modifies, adds to, eliminates from, or replaces part of a motion

Must be seconded
Debate
Amendments to amendments possible
Majority vote required

7. Amendment to amendment

Modifies, adds to, eliminates from, or replaces part of an amendment

Must be seconded
Debate
No amendments
Majority vote required

8. Counterproposal

Aimed at requesting the adoption of a motion which is contrary to what was expressed in the main motion

Must be seconded
Debate
Amendments possible
A vote is first taken on the main motion
Majority vote required

9. Notice of motion

A motion to add, amend or modify the Constitution and Bylaws of the DSSU

Debate
Must be submitted to all members of the DSSU within the time limits specified in the DSSU Constitution
2/3 vote required

B) INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

1. Motion to appeal a ruling made by the chair

To invalidate a ruling made by the chair

May be requested at any time
Does not need to be seconded
Two opportunities to speak only, the chair first, followed by the person making the appeal
No discussion
Majority vote required

2. Motion to withdraw a motion

Made by the assembly, not by the person who made the motion

Consent of proposer required
No debate
Majority vote required

3. Motion to suspend the rules

To temporarily suspend the rules of procedure

Must be seconded
No debate
2/3 vote required

C) PRIVILEGED MOTIONS (which can interrupt a debate in mid-course)

1. Motion to fix the time to which the assembly shall adjourn

To fix the time when the assembly will meet again

Must be seconded
Debate
Amendments possible
Majority vote required

2. Motion to adjourn

To end the assembly

Must be seconded
Debate
Majority vote required

3. Question of privilege

To correct a violation of the rights of individuals or questions of order

May be requested at any time
Does not need to be seconded
No debate

The chair makes a ruling

The person making the motion can appeal the chair's ruling. The assembly would then decide the question

4. Point of order

To tell the chair that order is not being respected or an error in procedure is being made

May be requested at any time Does not need to be seconded Justification by the member making the motion
No discussion

The chair makes a ruling

The person making the motion can appeal the chair's ruling. The assembly would then decide the question

D) SPECIAL MOTIONS (once the debate has ended)

1. Motion to reconsider

To revisit a vote or any issue within the same meeting

May be requested at any time
Must be seconded
Debate

2/3 majority required to debate the possibility of reconsidering

2. Count

To demand a count to verify the results of a vote

By the chair, in case of doubt by a delegate
Does not need to be seconded
Granted by the chair

3. VOTING

Only eligible members of the Union have the right to vote and present motions;

Voting is done with raised hands unless a member requests a secret ballot or a roll call vote.

Any vote for a strike or a walkout must be by secret ballot.

Destruction of Ballots

All counted ballots will be held by the Returning Officer for a period of thirty (30) days following the vote. The Returning Officer will subsequently destroy all counted ballots.

Simple majority vote: any vote which receives the support of 50% plus one of the votes cast. (Abstentions are not counted when determining this percentage).

Absolute majority vote: any vote which receives the support of 50% plus one of the members officially present. (In this case, abstentions are counted when determining the percentage).

2/3 majority vote: any vote which receives the support of 2/3 of the votes cast.

Secret vote

Motion to have the vote taken by secret ballot

Requested immediately before a vote is taken
Does not need to be seconded
25% support of members present needed to authorize secret vote

Roll call vote

Requires that each member personally state their position for or against a motion
Each person's vote is recorded in the minutes

Requested immediately before a vote is taken
2/3 of the members present must vote in favour of holding a roll call vote
Members are called upon to vote individually

Division of a motion

Motion to divide a motion into separate motions

Requested immediately before a vote is taken
No debate
The chair makes a ruling
The chair's ruling can be appealed

4. ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

INTERVENTIONS

a) The right to speak and to vote

Members have the right to speak and the right to vote.
Observers only have the right to speak.

b) Exercising the right to speak

Before obtaining the floor to speak, a person must have the consent of the chair of the assembly.

The person shall address himself to the chair and not to anyone in particular.

c) Interruption of the right to speak

A person cannot be interrupted, except by an appeal for order from the chair or for any other question of privilege invoked by a delegate.

5. THE SEQUENCE OF THE ASSEMBLY

A) ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda must include the following points in the following order:

- Verification of quorum;
- Appointment of a chair of the debates;
- Appointment of a secretary of the assembly;
 1. Adoption of the agenda
 2. Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting
 3.
 4.
 5. New business

When members want to add or re-arrange items on the agenda, the chair shall treat the request the same as any other point on the agenda.

Once the « new business » is complete, it shall be considered to be closed. New subjects cannot, therefore, be added during the assembly, unless a reconsideration of the adoption of the agenda is called for. The assembly can decide to keep the « new business » item open.

It should not be forgotten that the assembly is sovereign, i.e., it has all powers.

B) PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

1- Presentation of a topic

The topic is presented by a member of the Executive Committee or a resource person.

If there is a recommendation, it is presented by a member of the Executive Committee and shall then become the main motion.

2- Plenary session

The plenary session is a period during which a person may speak to a subject in a general way.

The chair of the assembly shall fix the duration of the plenary session and can extend the duration of the session if she deems it necessary.

To assist in the comprehension of a subject, interventions should take the form of questions.

A person may speak many times during a plenary session. The duration of each intervention is limited to three (3) minutes.

3- Plenary session to announce motions

The chair of the assembly shall fix the duration of the plenary session to announce new motions and amendments.

She shall present the order of the motions and amendments and identify discussion blocks, i.e., the motions that will be dealt with as a group.

4- Deliberative assembly

Period during which people state whether or not they support a motion.

The chair shall fix the duration of this assembly.

At the beginning of this period each member may present their motion. The duration of this presentation shall be two (2) minutes.

Members who then intervene must discuss the motions being debated and indicate which way they are leaning. The duration of the intervention shall be limited to two (2) minutes.

At the end of the deliberative assembly, each person who has made a motion has a right to a reply of two (2) minutes.

5- The vote

The chair of the assembly reviews the order of the votes to be taken, indicating each time how the results of one vote may affect other motions or amendments.

She then proceeds to hold a vote for each motion or block of motions.

While a vote is being taken, no interventions, questions of privilege or points of order shall be accepted.

The chair then announces the adoption or rejection of a motion or block of motions.

During a vote, the doors of the room of the assembly must be closed and only scrutineers can circulate.

6- Registering dissent

After the voting period, a member can register his dissent with respect to the adoption or rejection of a motion.

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