

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Agenda

The mission of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is to provide its service area with adequate and reliable supplies of high-quality water to meet present and future needs in an environmentally and economically responsible way.

L&C Committee

M. Luna, Chair
J. Garza, Vice Chair
M. Camacho
G. Cordero
L. Dick
C. Douglas
C. Kurtz
T. McCoy
C. Miller
G. Peterson
M. Ramos
K. Seckel

Legal and Claims Committee

Meeting with Board of Directors *

December 14, 2021

10:00 a.m.

**Tuesday, December 14, 2021
Meeting Schedule**

**10:00 a.m. - L&C
11:00 a.m. - Adj Exec
11:30 a.m. - Break
12:00 p.m. - BOD**

Agendas, live streaming, meeting schedules, and other board materials are available here: <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. If you have technical difficulties with the live streaming page, a listen-only phone line is available at 1-877-853-5257; enter meeting ID: 862 4397 5848. Members of the public may present their comments to the Board on matters within their jurisdiction as listed on the agenda via in-person or teleconference. To participate via teleconference 1-833-548-0276 and enter meeting ID: 815 2066 4276 or click <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81520664276pwd=a1RTQWh6V3h3ckFhNmduUWpKR1c2Zz09>

MWD Headquarters Building • 700 N. Alameda Street • Los Angeles, CA 90012

* The Metropolitan Water District's meeting of this Committee is noticed as a joint committee meeting with the Board of Directors for the purpose of compliance with the Brown Act. Members of the Board who are not assigned to this Committee may participate as members of the Board, whether or not a quorum of the Board is present. In order to preserve the function of the committee as advisory to the Board, members of the Board who are not assigned to this Committee will not vote on matters before this Committee.

1. Opportunity for members of the public to address the committee on matters within the committee's jurisdiction (As required by Gov. Code Section 54954.3(a))

2. MANAGEMENT REPORTS

a. General Counsel's report of monthly activities

[21-711](#)

Attachments: [12142021 LC 2a Report - Revised](#)

**** CONSENT CALENDAR OTHER ITEMS -- ACTION ****

3. CONSENT CALENDAR OTHER ITEMS - ACTION

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Legal and Claims Committee held November 9, 2021 [21-676](#)

Attachments: [12142021 LC 3A Minutes](#)

4. CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS - ACTION

- 7-9 Adopt amendment to the Administrative Code establishing Metropolitan-specific parliamentary procedures; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA [21-263](#)

Attachments: [12142021 BOD 7-9 B-L](#)

**** END OF CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS ****

5. OTHER BOARD ITEMS - ACTION

None

6. BOARD INFORMATION ITEMS

None

7. COMMITTEE ITEMS

- a. Report on San Diego County Water Authority v. Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, et al., San Francisco County Superior Court Case Nos. CPF-10-510830, CPF-12-512466, CPF-14-514004, CPF-16-515282, CPF-16-515391, CGC-17-563350, and CPF-18-516389; the appeals of the 2010 and 2012 actions, Court of Appeal for the First Appellate District Case Nos. A146901, A148266, A161144, and A162168, and California Supreme Court Case No. S243500; the petition for extraordinary writ in the 2010 and 2012 actions, Court of Appeal for the First Appellate District Case No. A155310; the petition for extraordinary writ in the second 2016 action, Court of Appeal for the First Appellate District Case No. A154325 and California Supreme Court Case No. S251025; and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California v. San Diego County Water Authority cross-complaints in the 2014 action and the first 2016 action. [Conference with legal counsel – existing litigation; to be heard in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Sections 54956.9(d)(1)] [21-710](#)

- b. Discussion of Department Head Performance and Goal Setting [Public employees’ performance evaluations – General Counsel; to be heard in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54957] [21-738](#)

8. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

None

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

10. ADJOURNMENT

NOTE: This committee reviews items and makes a recommendation for final action to the full Board of Directors. Final action will be taken by the Board of Directors. Agendas for the meeting of the Board of Directors may be obtained from the Board Executive Secretary. This committee will not take any final action that is binding on the Board, even when a quorum of the Board is present.

Writings relating to open session agenda items distributed to Directors less than 72 hours prior to a regular meeting are available for public inspection at Metropolitan's Headquarters Building and on Metropolitan's Web site <http://www.mwdh2o.com>.

Requests for a disability related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, in order to attend or participate in a meeting should be made to the Board Executive Secretary in advance of the meeting to ensure availability of the requested service or accommodation.



Matters Impacting Metropolitan

9th Circuit's Hexavalent Chromium Ruling Could Impose RCRA Liability on Water Suppliers

On September 29, 2021, a divided panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit held that a drinking water supplier can potentially be held liable under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) as a transporter, if its source water is contaminated by a third party's waste.

In *California River Watch v. City of Vacaville*, the plaintiff claimed that the City of Vacaville's (City) water supply wells were contaminated by hexavalent chromium, a carcinogen, which was transported to the City's residents through its water distribution system. Although the City's water complies with federal and state drinking water standards for chromium, there is currently no federal or state drinking water standard for hexavalent chromium. California River Watch (River Watch) alleged that the City was contributing to the transportation of a solid waste in violation of RCRA. In its Response to the City's Petition for Rehearing En Banc, River Watch makes clear its ultimate goal: to file lawsuits under RCRA in order to prevent water suppliers from handling and transporting in their water unregulated chemicals which allegedly may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to health or the environment.

The district court granted summary judgment in favor of the City, concluding that the hexavalent chromium in the City's water was not a solid waste under RCRA because River Watch did not show that it was a discarded material. After River Watch appealed, the Ninth Circuit vacated the district court's decision and determined that the City can be held liable as a transporter of solid waste under RCRA even if it was not involved in discarding the hexavalent chromium and inadvertently took it up through its water supply system. The court found that River Watch created triable issues as to whether: (1) the hexavalent chromium was discarded material; and (2) the City was a transporter of solid waste, reasoning that RCRA does not require that a transporter of solid waste must also play some role in discarding the waste.

Judge Tashima dissented because Ninth Circuit precedent in *Hinds Investments, L.P. v. Angioli*, 654 F.3d 846 (9th Cir. 2011), "requires that a defendant be actively involved in or have some degree of control over the waste disposal process to be liable under RCRA." Thus the City could not be held liable because it was not involved in the waste disposal process.

In November, the City filed a Petition asking all of the Ninth Circuit judges to rehear the case. The City argued that the panel majority's opinion: (1) directly conflicts with the Ninth Circuit's holding in *Hinds*; (2) improperly conflates discarded material, which may be properly regulated under RCRA as solid waste, with constituents of the solid waste – i.e., hexavalent chromium – which allegedly migrated beyond the solid waste disposal site; and (3) involves a question of "exceptional importance": when a water utility complies with its Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) obligations, liability under RCRA should be precluded by RCRA's anti-duplication provision. The Ninth Circuit panel directed River Watch to file a response to the City's Petition.

Recognizing the potentially far-reaching consequences of this published decision, Metropolitan legal staff coordinated with the Association of California Water Agencies, the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, the American Water Works Association, and the Western Urban Water Coalition to submit an amicus brief on November 15, 2021, in support of the City. These amici argue that Congress could not have intended to subject innocent water utilities to the many regulatory requirements that apply to transporters of hazardous waste. The result of the majority's opinion would be to shift significant costs to water utility *customers* instead of holding those who generated and disposed of the waste accountable to clean up the groundwater they contaminated. The National League of Cities and the League of California Cities (collectively, League of Cities) also filed an amicus brief in support of the City on November 15, 2021.

River Watch's Response to the City's Petition made numerous arguments to support its claim that the City contributed to the handling and transportation of a solid waste and contended that



RCRA is a strict liability statute, is not limited to entities involved in the disposal of solid waste, and that a solid waste under RCRA includes all of the constituents of a solid waste.

Subsequently, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) filed an amicus brief opposing a rehearing. NRDC’s main arguments are: (1) the

hexavalent chromium in the City’s water is solid waste; (2) the City is actively transporting solid waste by pumping and moving hexavalent chromium through its water system; and (3) RCRA applies absent an identifiable conflict between SDWA’s requirements and RCRA liability. Metropolitan staff will continue to monitor this lawsuit and join in amicus efforts as appropriate.

Other Matters

Finance

Legal Department staff worked with Finance staff to prepare and post Metropolitan’s annual financial information filings for fiscal year ended June 30, 2021, pursuant to continuing disclosure requirements for all of Metropolitan’s outstanding

revenue and general obligation bonds. The annual filings include certain financial and operational disclosures and the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 2021 and 2020. The annual filings are available at <http://emma.msrb.org> (the Electronic Municipal Market Access system) maintained by the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board.

Matters Received by the Legal Department

<u>Category</u>	<u>Received</u>	<u>Description</u>														
Government Code Claims	2	(1) Claim relating to damage to landscaping in parkway from MWD vehicles driving over parkway to get to easement; (2) employment-related claims by a former employee														
Requests Pursuant to the Public Records Act	12	<table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Requestor</u></th> <th><u>Documents Requested</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>City of Yorba Linda</td> <td>Maps of any MWD existing facilities near project in Yorba Linda</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ESA</td> <td>Proposal and proposal evaluation documents for Regional Recycled Water Program-Environmental Planning Support</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hunsaker & Associates Irvine</td> <td>Reference plans for any MWD water improvements near project in the City of Orange</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Los Angeles Times</td> <td>Records regarding claims of retaliation that occurred for filing complaints by certain MWD employees</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Orange County Water District</td> <td>General Mineral and Physical Analysis of MWD’s Water Supplies for the period July 2020 through June 2021</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Graduate Student, University of Oxford</td> <td>MWD historical records dating back to 1920’s relating to Ezra (E. F.) Scattergood, Burdett Moody, William C. Mullendore, John B. Miller, George C. Ward, R. H. Ballard, William (W. B.) Mathews, James Howard</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Requestor</u>	<u>Documents Requested</u>	City of Yorba Linda	Maps of any MWD existing facilities near project in Yorba Linda	ESA	Proposal and proposal evaluation documents for Regional Recycled Water Program-Environmental Planning Support	Hunsaker & Associates Irvine	Reference plans for any MWD water improvements near project in the City of Orange	Los Angeles Times	Records regarding claims of retaliation that occurred for filing complaints by certain MWD employees	Orange County Water District	General Mineral and Physical Analysis of MWD’s Water Supplies for the period July 2020 through June 2021	Graduate Student, University of Oxford	MWD historical records dating back to 1920’s relating to Ezra (E. F.) Scattergood, Burdett Moody, William C. Mullendore, John B. Miller, George C. Ward, R. H. Ballard, William (W. B.) Mathews, James Howard
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Requestor

VCA Engineers

Documents Requested

As-built drawings of any MWD facilities near project in Desert Center, CA



PLEASE NOTE

- ADDITIONS ONLY IN THE FOLLOWING TABLES WILL BE SHOWN IN RED.
- ANY CHANGE IN CONTRACT AMOUNTS WILL BE SHOWN IN REDLINE FORM (I.E., ADDITIONS, REVISIONS, DELETIONS).



Bay-Delta and SWP Litigation	
Subject	Status
<p>Consolidated DCP Revenue Bond Validation Action and CEQA Case</p> <p><i>Sierra Club, et al. v. California Department of Water Resources</i> (CEQA, designated as lead case)</p> <p><i>DWR v. All Persons Interested</i> (Validation)</p> <p>Sacramento County Superior Ct. (Judge Earl)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validation Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metropolitan, Mojave Water Agency, Coachella Valley Water District, and Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency have filed answers in support • Kern County Water Agency, Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District, Oak Flat Water District, County of Kings, Kern Member Units & Dudley Ridge Water District, and City of Yuba City filed answers in opposition • North Coast Rivers Alliance et al., Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, Sierra Club et al., County of Sacramento & Sacramento County Water Agency, CWIN et al., Clarksburg Fire Protection District, Delta Legacy Communities, Inc, and South Delta Water Agency & Central Delta Water Agency have filed answers in opposition • Case ordered consolidated with the DCP Revenue Bond CEQA Case for pre-trial and trial purposes and assigned to Judge Earl for all purposes • Sierra Club, DWR, North Coast Rivers Alliance and Public Agencies’ motions for summary judgment on CEQA affirmative defenses to be heard Dec. 17, 2021 • CEQA Case <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, Planning and Conservation League, Restore the Delta, and Friends of Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge filed a standalone CEQA lawsuit challenging DWR’s adoption of the bond resolutions • Alleges DWR violated CEQA by adopting bond resolutions before certifying a Final EIR for the Delta Conveyance Project • Cases ordered consolidated for pre-trial and trial purposes • Sierra Club motion for summary judgment on CEQA cause of action hearing on Dec. 17, 2021



<p>SWP-CVP 2019 BiOp Cases</p> <p><i>Pacific Coast Fed'n of Fishermen's Ass'ns, et al. v. Raimondo, et al. (PCFFA)</i></p> <p><i>Calif. Natural Resources Agency, et al. v. Raimondo, et al. (CNRA)</i></p> <p>Federal District Court, Eastern Dist. of California, Fresno Division (Judge Drozd)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWC intervened in both <i>PCFFA</i> and <i>CNRA</i> cases • Briefing on federal defendants' motion to dismiss CNRA's California ESA claim is complete; no hearing date set and may be decided on the papers • Federal defendants circulated administrative records for each of the BiOps • December 18, 2020 PCFFA and CNRA filed motions to complete the administrative records or to consider extra-record evidence in the alternative • Federal defendants reinitiated consultation on Oct 1, 2021 • On Nov. 8, 2021, Federal Defendants and PCFFA plaintiffs stipulated to inclusion of certain records in the Administrative Records and to defer further briefing on the matter until July 1, 2022 • On Nov. 12, 2021, SWC filed a motion to amend its pleading to assert cross-claims against the federal defendants for violations of the ESA, NEPA and WIIN Act; Court has yet to set a hearing date • November 23, 2021, Federal Defendants filed a motion for voluntary remand of the 2019 Biological Opinions and NEPA Record of Decision and requesting that the Court issue an order approving an Interim Operations Plan through September 30, 2022; that the cases be stayed for the same time period; and that the Court retain jurisdiction during the pendency of the remand. State Plaintiffs filed a motion for injunctive relief seeking judicial approval of the Interim Operations Plan • December 16, 2021 – NGO Plaintiffs' deadline to file a response or opposition to the Federal Defendants' motion; NGO Plaintiffs' deadline to file a motion for preliminary injunction related to interim operations • January 10, 2022 - Defendant-Intervenors, including SWC, deadline to file oppositions to motions filed by Federal Defendants, State Plaintiffs, and NGO Plaintiffs; Federal Defendants' deadline to file response or opposition to NGO Plaintiffs' motion for preliminary injunction
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 24, 2022 – Deadline for any replies in support of Federal Defendants’, State Plaintiffs’ and NGO Plaintiffs’ motions • Hearing date(s) on the motions to be determined by the Court
<p>CESA Incidental Take Permit Cases</p> <p>Coordinated Case Name <i>CDWR Water Operations Cases, JCCP 5117</i> (Coordination Trial Judge Gevercer)</p> <p><i>Metropolitan & Mojave Water Agency v. Calif. Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, et al.</i> (CESA/CEQA/Breach of Contract)</p> <p><i>State Water Contractors & Kern County Water Agency v. Calif. Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, et al.</i> (CESA/CEQA)</p> <p><i>Tehama-Colusa Canal Auth., et al. v. Calif. Dept. of Water Resources</i> (CEQA)</p> <p><i>San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water Dist. v. Calif. Dept. of Water Resources, et al.</i> (CEQA/CESA/ Breach of Contract/Takings)</p> <p><i>Sierra Club, et al. v. Calif. Dept. of Water Resources</i> (CEQA/Delta Reform Act/Public Trust)</p> <p><i>North Coast Rivers Alliance, et al. v. Calif. Dept. of Water Resources</i> (CEQA/Delta Reform Act/Public Trust)</p> <p><i>Central Delta Water Agency, et. al. v. Calif. Dept. of Water Resources</i> (CEQA/Delta Reform Act/Public Trust/ Delta Protection Acts/Area of Origin)</p> <p><i>San Francisco Baykeeper, et al. v. Calif. Dept. of Water Resources, et al.</i> (CEQA/CESA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 8 cases ordered coordinated in Sacramento County Superior Court • Stay on discovery issued until coordination trial judge orders otherwise • All four Fresno cases transferred to Sacramento to be heard with the four other coordinated cases • SWC and Metropolitan have submitted Public Records Act requests seeking administrative record materials and other relevant information • Answers filed in the three cases filed by State Water Contractors, including Metropolitan’s • Draft administrative records produced on Sept. 16, 2021 • Certified administrative records due early March 2022



<p>CDWR Environmental Impact Cases Sacramento Superior Ct. Case No. JCCP 4942, 3d DCA Case No. C091771 (20 Coordinated Cases)</p> <p>Validation Action <i>DWR v. All Persons Interested</i></p> <p>CEQA 17 cases</p> <p>CESA/Incidental Take Permit 2 cases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases dismissed after DWR rescinded project approval, bond resolutions, decertified the EIR, and CDFW rescinded the CESA incidental take permit • January 10, 2020 – Nine motions for attorneys’ fees and costs denied in their entirety • Parties have appealed attorneys’ fees and costs rulings • Appeals fully briefed
<p>COA Addendum/ No-Harm Agreement</p> <p><i>North Coast Rivers Alliance v. DWR</i> Sacramento County Superior Ct. (Judge Gevercer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plaintiffs allege violations of CEQA, Delta Reform Act & public trust doctrine • USBR Statement of Non-Waiver of Sovereign Immunity filed September 2019 • Westlands Water District and North Delta Water Agency granted leave to intervene • Metropolitan & SWC monitoring • <u>Deadline to prepare administrative record extended to Nov. 16, 2021 Jan. 18, 2022</u> • <u>July 22, 2022 hearing on the merits</u>
<p>Delta Plan Amendments and Program EIR 4 Consolidated Cases Sacramento County Superior Ct. (Judge Gevercer)</p> <p><i>North Coast Rivers Alliance, et al. v. Delta Stewardship Council</i> (lead case)</p> <p><i>Central Delta Water Agency, et al. v. Delta Stewardship Council</i></p> <p><i>Friends of the River, et al. v. Delta Stewardship Council</i></p> <p><i>California Water Impact Network, et al. v. Delta Stewardship Council</i></p> <p>Delta Stewardship Council Cases 3 Remaining Cases (CEQA claims challenging original 2013 Delta Plan EIR) (Judge Chang)</p> <p><i>North Coast Rivers Alliance, et al. v. Delta Stewardship Council</i></p> <p><i>Central Delta Water Agency, et al. v. Delta Stewardship Council</i></p> <p><i>California Water Impact Network, et al. v. Delta Stewardship Council</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases challenge, among other things, the Delta Plan Updates recommending dual conveyance as the best means to update the SWP Delta conveyance infrastructure to further the coequal goals • Allegations relating to “Delta pool” water rights theory and public trust doctrine raise concerns for SWP and CVP water supplies • Cases consolidated for pre-trial and trial under <i>North Coast Rivers Alliance v. Delta Stewardship Council</i> • SWC granted leave to intervene • Metropolitan supports SWC • 2013 and 2018 cases to be heard separately due to peremptory challenge • SWC and several individual members, including Metropolitan, SLDMWA and Westlands have dismissed their remaining 2013 CEQA claims but remain intervenor-defendants in the three remaining <i>Delta Stewardship Council Cases</i> <p>2013 Cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing on merits of CEQA claims in the three remaining 2013 cases re-set for Feb. 25, 2022



	<p>2018 Cases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 15, 2021 - Opening Briefs • Oct. 13, 2021 - Opposition Briefs • Nov. 22, 2021 - Reply Briefs • Dec. 10, 2021 - Case Management Conference to set hearing on the merits
<p>SWP Contract Extension Validation Action Sacramento County Superior Ct. (Judge Culhane) <i>DWR v. All Persons Interested in the Matter, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWR seeks a judgment that the Contract Extension amendments to the State Water Contracts are lawful • Metropolitan and 7 other SWCs filed answers in support of validity to become parties • Four answers filed in opposition denying validity on multiple grounds raised in affirmative defenses • Case deemed related to the two CEQA cases below and assigned to Judge Culhane • DWR certified the administrative record for the validation action on May 3, 2021 • Parties stipulated to a revised briefing schedule in all three related cases (validation and CEQA): • Opening Briefs Sept. 17, 2021 • Opposition Briefs Nov. 15, 2021 • Reply Briefs Dec. 17, 2021 • Jan. 5, 2022 Hearing on the merits with CEQA cases, below
<p>SWP Contract Extension CEQA Cases Sacramento County Superior Ct. (Judge Culhane) <i>North Coast Rivers Alliance, et al. v. DWR</i> <i>Planning & Conservation League, et al. v. DWR</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions for writ of mandate alleging CEQA and Delta Reform Act violations filed on January 8 & 10, 2019 • Deemed related to DWR’s Contract Extension Validation Action and assigned to Judge Culhane • Administrative Record completed • DWR filed its answers on September 28, 2020 • Metropolitan, Kern County Water Agency and Coachella Valley Water District have intervened and filed answers in the two CEQA cases • Briefing and hearing on the merits same as for the SWP Contract Extension Validation Action, above



<p>Delta Conveyance Project Soil Exploration Case</p> <p><i>Central Delta Water Agency, et al. v. DWR</i> Sacramento County Superior Ct. (Judge Chang)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filed August 10, 2020 • Plaintiffs Central Delta Water Agency, South Delta Water Agency and Local Agencies of the North Delta • One cause of action alleging that DWR's adoption of an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for soil explorations needed for the Delta Conveyance Project violates CEQA • March 24, 2021 Second Amended Petition filed to add allegation that DWR's addendum re changes in locations and depths of certain borings violates CEQA • Deadline to prepare the administrative record extended to Nov. 8, 2021 • Dec. 16, 2021 hearing on DWR's petition to add the 2020 CEQA case to the <i>Department of Water Resources Cases</i>, JCCP 4594, San Joaquin County Superior Court
<p>Water Management Tools Contract Amendment</p> <p><i>California Water Impact Network et al. v. DWR</i> Sacramento County Superior Ct. (Judge Earl)</p> <p><i>North Coast Rivers Alliance, et al. v. DWR</i> Sacramento County Super. Ct. (Judge Earl)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filed September 28, 2020 • CWIN and Aqualliance allege one cause of action for violation of CEQA • NCRA et al. allege four causes of action for violations of CEQA, the Delta Reform Act, Public Trust Doctrine and seeking declaratory relief • Parties have stipulated to production of a draft administrative record by April 1, 2022 and to a timeline to attempt to resolve any disputes over the contents • CWIN case reassigned to Judge Earl so both cases will be heard together • <u>Hearing on SWC motion to intervene in both cases set for Jan. 14, 2022</u>



San Diego County Water Authority v. Metropolitan, et al.		
Cases	Date	Status
2010, 2012	Aug. 13-14, 2020	Final judgment and writ issued. Transmitted to the Board on August 17.
	Aug. 28, Sept. 1	SDCWA and Metropolitan filed memoranda of costs.
	Sept. 11	Metropolitan filed notice of appeal of judgment and writ.
	Sept. 14, 16	Metropolitan filed motion to strike SDCWA's costs memorandum, and SDCWA filed motion to strike or tax Metropolitan's costs memorandum.
	Jan. 13, 2021	Court issued order finding SDCWA is the prevailing party on the Exchange Agreement, entitled to attorneys' fees and costs under the contract.
	Feb. 4	Metropolitan filed opening appellate brief regarding final judgment and writ.
	Feb. 10	Court issued order awarding SDCWA statutory costs, granting SDCWA's and denying Metropolitan's related motions.
	Feb. 16	Per SDCWA's request, Metropolitan paid contract damages in 2010-2012 cases judgment and interest. Metropolitan made same payment in Feb. 2019, which SDCWA rejected.
	Feb. 25	Metropolitan filed notice of appeal of Jan. 13 (prevailing party on Exchange Agreement) and Feb. 10 (statutory costs) orders.
	Aug. 5	Metropolitan filed opening appellate brief regarding prevailing party on the Exchange Agreement and statutory costs.
	Sept. 21	Court of Appeal issued opinion on Metropolitan's appeal regarding final judgment and writ, holding: (1) the court's 2017 decision invalidating allocation of Water Stewardship Rate costs to transportation in the Exchange Agreement price and wheeling rate applied not only to 2011-2014, but also 2015 forward; (2) no relief is required to cure the judgment's omission of the court's 2017 decision that allocation of State Water Project costs to transportation is lawful; and (3) the writ is proper and applies to 2015 forward.
	Sept. 21	SDCWA filed responding appellate brief regarding prevailing party on the Exchange Agreement and statutory costs.
	<u>Mar. 16, 2022</u>	<u>Court of Appeal oral argument regarding prevailing party on the Exchange Agreement and statutory costs.</u>



Cases	Date	Status
2014, 2016	Aug. 28, 2020	SDCWA served first amended (2014) and second amended (2016) petitions/complaints.
	Sept. 28	Metropolitan filed demurrers and motions to strike portions of the amended petitions/complaints.
	Sept. 28-29	Member agencies City of Torrance, Eastern Municipal Water District, Foothill Municipal Water District, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, Three Valleys Municipal Water District, Municipal Water District of Orange County, West Basin Municipal Water District, and Western Municipal Water District filed joinders to the demurrers and motions to strike.
	Feb. 16, 2021	Court issued order denying Metropolitan’s demurrers and motions to strike, allowing SDCWA to retain contested allegations in amended petitions/complaints.
	March 22	Metropolitan filed answers to the amended petitions/complaints and cross-complaints against SDCWA for declaratory relief and reformation, in the 2014, 2016 cases.
	March 22-23	Member agencies City of Torrance, Eastern Municipal Water District, Foothill Municipal Water District, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, Three Valleys Municipal Water District, Municipal Water District of Orange County, West Basin Municipal Water District, and Western Municipal Water District filed answers to the amended petitions/complaints in the 2014, 2016 cases.
	April 23	SDCWA filed answers to Metropolitan’s cross-complaints.
	Sept. 30	Based on the Court of Appeal’s Sept. 21 opinion (described above), and the Board’s Sept. 28 authorization, Metropolitan paid \$35,871,153.70 to SDCWA for 2015-2017 Water Stewardship Rate charges under the Exchange Agreement and statutory interest.
2017	July 23, 2020	Dismissal without prejudice entered.
2018	July 28	Parties filed a stipulation and application to designate the case complex and related to the 2010-2017 cases, and to assign the case to Judge Massullo’s court.
	Nov. 13	Court ordered case complex and assigned to Judge Massullo’s court.
	April 21	SDCWA filed second amended petition/complaint.
	May 25	Metropolitan filed motion to strike portions of the second amended petition/complaint.



Cases	Date	Status
2018 (cont.)	May 25-26	Member agencies City of Torrance, Eastern Municipal Water District, Foothill Municipal Water District, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, Three Valleys Municipal Water District, Municipal Water District of Orange County, West Basin Municipal Water District, and Western Municipal Water District filed joinders to the motion to strike.
	July 19	Court issued order denying Metropolitan’s motion to strike portions of the second amended petition/complaint.
	July 29	Metropolitan filed answer to the second amended petition/complaint and cross-complaint against SDCWA for declaratory relief and reformation.
	July 29	Member agencies City of Torrance, Eastern Municipal Water District, Foothill Municipal Water District, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, Three Valleys Municipal Water District, Municipal Water District of Orange County, West Basin Municipal Water District, and Western Municipal Water District filed answers to the second amended petition/complaint.
	Aug. 31	SDCWA filed answer to Metropolitan’s cross-complaint.
2014, 2016, 2018	June 11	Metropolitan lodged administrative records.
	June 11, 21	Deposition of non-party witness.
	Aug. 25	Hearing on Metropolitan’s motion for further protective order regarding deposition of non-party witness.
	Aug. 25	Court issued order consolidating the 2014, 2016, and 2018 cases for all purposes, including trial.
	Aug. 30	Court issued order granting Metropolitan’s motion for a further protective order regarding deposition of non-party witness.
	Aug. 31	SDCWA filed consolidated answer to Metropolitan’s cross-complaints in the 2014, 2016, and 2018 cases.
	Oct. 27	Parties submitted to the court a joint stipulation and proposed order staying discovery through Dec. 8 and resetting pre-trial deadlines.
	October 29	Court issued order staying discovery through Dec. 8 and resetting pre-trial deadlines, while the parties discuss the prospect of settling some or all remaining claims and crossclaims.
	Jan. 12, 2022	Next Case Management Conference. (Sept. 17 Conference postponed.)



Cases	Date	Status
All Cases	April 15, 2021	Case Management Conference on 2010-2018 cases. Court set trial in 2014, 2016, and 2018 cases on May 16-27, 2022.
	April 27	SDCWA served notice of deposition of non-party witness.
	May 13-14	Metropolitan filed motions to quash and for protective order regarding deposition of non-party witness.
	June 4	Ruling on motions to quash and for protective order.



Outside Counsel Agreements				
Firm Name	Matter Name	Agreement No.	Effective Date	Contract Maximum
Andrade Gonzalez LLP	MWD v. DWR, CDFW and CDNR Incidental Take Permit (ITP) CESA/CEQA/Contract Litigation	185894	07/20	\$250,000
Aleshire & Wynder	Oil, Mineral and Gas Leasing	174613	08/18	\$50,000
Atkinson Andelson Loya Ruud & Romo	Employee Relations	59302	04/04	\$1,214,517
	MWD v. Collins	185892	06/20	\$60,000 <u>\$100,000</u>
	Delta Conveyance Project Bond Validation-CEQA Litigation	185899	09/21	\$100,000
	MWD Drone and Airspace Issues	193452	08/20	\$50,000
	Equal Employee Opportunity Commission Charge	200462	03/21	\$20,000
	Public Employment Relations Board Charge No. LA-CE-1441-M	200467	03/21	\$30,000
	Representation re the Shaw Law Group's Investigations	200485	05/20/21	\$50,000
	DFEH Charge- [REDACTED] (DFEH Number 202102-12621316)	201882	07/01/21	\$25,000
	AFSCME Local 1902 in Grievance No. 1906G020 (CSU Meal Period)	201883	07/12/21	\$30,000
	AFSCME Local 1902 v. MWD, PERB Case No. LA-CE-1438-M	201889	09/15/21	\$20,000
	MWD MOU Negotiations**	201893	10/05/21	\$100,000
Best, Best & Krieger	Navajo Nation v. U.S. Department of the Interior, et al.	54332	05/03	\$185,000
	Iron Mountain SMARA (Surface Mining and Reclamation Act)	158043	07/17	\$250,000
	Bay-Delta Conservation Plan/Delta Conveyance Project (with SWCs)	170697	08/17	\$500,000
	Environmental Compliance Issues	185888	05/20	\$50,000



Firm Name	Matter Name	Agreement No.	Effective Date	Contract Maximum
Blooston, Mordkofsky, Dickens, Duffy & Prendergast, LLP	FCC and Communications Matters	110227	11/10	\$100,000
Buchalter, a Professional Corp.	Union Pacific Industry Track Agreement	193464	12/07/20	\$50,000
Burke, Williams & Sorensen, LLP	Real Property - General	180192	01/19	\$100,000
	Labor and Employment Matters	180207	04/19	\$50,000
	General Real Estate Matters	180209	08/19	\$100,000
Law Office of Alexis S.M. Chiu*	Bond Counsel	200468	07/21	N/A
Cislo & Thomas LLP	Intellectual Property	170703	08/17	\$75,000
Curls Bartling P.C.*	Bond Counsel	174596	07/18	N/A
	Bond Counsel	200470	07/21	N/A
Duane Morris LLP	SWRCB Curtailment Process	138005	09/14	\$615,422
Duncan, Weinberg, Genzer & Pembroke PC	Power Issues	6255	09/95	\$3,175,000
Ellison, Schneider, Harris & Donlan	Colorado River Issues	69374	09/05	\$175,000
	Issues re SWRCB	84457	06/07	\$200,000
Haden Law Office	Real Property Matters re Agricultural Land	180194	01/19	\$50,000
Hanson Bridgett LLP	SDCWA v. MWD	124103	03/12	\$1,100,000
	Finance Advice	158024	12/16	\$100,000
	Deferred Compensation/HR	170706	10/17	\$ 400,000
	Tax Issues	180200	04/19	\$50,000
Hausman & Sosa, LLP	MOU Hearing Officer Appeal	201892	09/21	\$25,000



Firm Name	Matter Name	Agreement No.	Effective Date	Contract Maximum
Hawkins Delafield & Wood LLP*	Bond Counsel	193469	07/21	N/A
Horvitz & Levy	SDCWA v. MWD	124100	02/12	\$900,000
	General Appellate Advice	146616	12/15	\$100,000
Hunt Ortmann Palffy Nieves Darling & Mah, Inc.	Construction Contracts/COVID-19 Emergency	185883	03/20	\$40,000
Internet Law Center	HR Matter	174603	05/18	\$60,000
	Cybersecurity and Privacy Advice and Representation	200478	04/13/21	\$100,000
	Systems Integrated, LLC v. MWD	201875	05/17/21	\$40,000
Amira Jackmon, Attorney at Law*	Bond Counsel	200464	07/21	N/A
Jackson Lewis P.C.	Employment: Department of Labor Office of Contract Compliance (OFCCP)	137992	02/14	\$45,000
Jones Hall, A Professional Law Corporation*	Bond Counsel	200465	07/21	N/A
Kegel, Tobin & Truce	Workers' Compensation	180206	06/19	\$250,000
Lesnick Prince & Pappas LLP	Topock/PG&E's Bankruptcy	185859	10/19	\$30,000
Liebert Cassidy Whitmore	Labor and Employment	158032	02/17	\$201,444
	EEO Investigations	180193	01/19	\$100,000
	FLSA Audit	180199	02/19	\$50,000
LiMandri & Jonna LLP	Bacon Island Subrogation	200457	03/21	\$50,000



Firm Name	Matter Name	Agreement No.	Effective Date	Contract Maximum
Manatt, Phelps & Phillips	In Re Tronox Incorporated	103827	08/09	\$540,000
	SDCWA v. MWD rate litigation	146627	06/16	\$2,900,000
Meyers Nave Riback Silver & Wilson	OCWD v. Northrop Corporation	118445	07/11	\$2,300,000
	IID v. MWD	185900	08/20	\$ 410,000
	IID v. MWD (Contract Litigation)	193472	02/21	\$100,000
Miller Barondess, LLP	SDCWA v. MWD	138006	12/14	\$600,000
Morgan, Lewis & Bockius	SDCWA v. MWD	110226	07/10	\$8,750,000
	Project Labor Agreements	200476	04/21	\$100,000
Musick, Peeler & Garrett LLP	Colorado River Aqueduct Electric Cables Repair/Contractor Claims	193461	11/20	\$300,000
Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP*	Bond Counsel	200466	07/21	N/A
Olson Remcho LLP	Government Law	131968	07/14	\$200,000
	Ethics Office	170714	01/18	\$350,000
Ryan & Associates	Leasing Issues	43714	06/01	\$200,000
Seyfarth Shaw LLP	HR Litigation	185863	12/19	\$250,000
	Claim (Contract #201897)	201897	11/04/21	\$100,000
	Claim (Contract #203436)	203436	11/15/21	\$100,000
Stradling Yocca Carlson & Rauth*	Bond Counsel	200471	07/21	N/A
Theodora Oringer PC	OHL USA, Inc. v. MWD	185854	09/19	\$1,100,000
	Construction Contracts - General Conditions Update	185896	07/20	\$100,000



Firm Name	Matter Name	Agreement No.	Effective Date	Contract Maximum
Thomas Law Group	MWD v. DWR, CDFW, CDNR – Incidental Take Permit (ITP) CESA/CEQA/Contract Litigation	185891	05/20	\$250,000
	<u>Iron Mountain SMARA (Surface Mining and Reclamation Act)</u>	<u>203435</u>	<u>12/03/21</u>	<u>\$100,000</u>
Thompson Coburn LLP	FERC Representation re Colorado River Aqueduct Electrical Transmission System	122465	12/11	\$100,000
	NERC Energy Reliability Standards	193451	08/20	\$25,000 <u>\$100,000</u>
Van Ness Feldman, LLP	General Litigation	170704	07/18	\$50,000
	Colorado River MSHCP	180191	01/19	\$50,000
	Bay-Delta and State Water Project Environmental Compliance	193457	10/15/20	\$50,000
Western Water and Energy	California Independent System Operator Related Matters	193463	11/20/20	\$100,000

*Expenditures paid by Bond Proceeds/Finance

**Expenditures paid by another group

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

MINUTES

LEGAL AND CLAIMS COMMITTEE

November 9, 2021

Chair Dick called the teleconference meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Chair Dick, Directors Atwater, Camacho, Fellow, Goldberg, Record, Smith, and Tamaribuchi.

Members absent: Directors Kassakhian and Phan.

Other Directors present: Chairwoman Gray, Directors Abdo, Ackerman, Blois, Butkiewicz, Cordero, De Jesus, Dennstedt, Erdman, Faessel, Jung, Kurtz, Lefevre, McCoy, Morris, Ortega, Peterson, Pressman, and Ramos.

Committee Staff present: Beatty, Gaxiola, Hagekhalil, Scully, Torres, and Upadhyay.

1. OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE ON MATTERS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION

None

2. MANAGEMENT REPORTS

- a. Subject: General Counsel's report of monthly activities

General Counsel reported that the State Board issued a notice of preparation of environmental documents regarding MCLs for hexavalent chromium. She also reported on CEQA litigation filed against the Department of Water Resources by the Sierra Club and multiple other NGOs regarding the Delta conveyance project.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Smith

CONSENT CALENDAR OTHER ITEMS – ACTION

3. CONSENT CALENDAR OTHER ITEMS – ACTION

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the Legal and Claims Committee meeting held October 12, 2021.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS – ACTION

7-15 Subject Authorize an increase of \$150,000, to a maximum amount not to exceed \$250,000 for the workers’ compensation legal services contract with the law firm Kegel, Tobin & Truce A.P.C.; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Presented by: General Counsel Marcia Scully

General Counsel Marcia Scully introduced this item.

The following Directors provided comments or asked questions:

1. Ortega

Staff responded to the Directors questions and comments.

Director Fellow made a motion, seconded by Director Camacho, to approve the consent calendar consisting of Items 3A and 7-15:

The vote was:

Ayes: Directors Atwater, Camacho, Dick, Fellow, Goldberg, Record, Smith, and Tamaribuchi
Noes: None
Recusal: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Kassakhian and Phan

The motion for Items 3A and 7-15 passed by a vote of 8 ayes, 0 noes, 0 abstain, and 2 absent.

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS

5. OTHER BOARD ITEMS – ACTION

None

6. BOARD INFORMATION ITEMS

None

7. COMMITTEE ITEMS

- a. Subject Report on Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Assns., et al. v. Ross, et al., Federal District Court for the Eastern District of California, Case No. 1:20-CV-00431-DAD-SAB and Calif. Natural Resources Agency, et al. v. Ross, et al., Federal District Court for the Eastern District of California, Case No. 1:20-CV-00426-DAD-SKO [**Conference with legal counsel - existing litigation; to be heard in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54956.9(d)(1)**]

Presented by: Senior Deputy General Counsel Rebecca Sheehan

In closed session, Senior Deputy General Counsel Rebecca Sheehan gave a report on this item. No action was taken.

- b. Subject Report on San Diego County Water Authority v. Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, et al., San Francisco County Superior Court Case Nos. CPF-10-510830, CPF-12-512466, CPF-14-514004, CPF-16-515282, CPF-16-515391, CGC-17-563350, and CPF-18-516389; the appeals of the 2010 and 2012 actions, Court of Appeal for the First Appellate District Case Nos. A146901, A148266, A161144, and A162168, and California Supreme Court Case No. S243500; the petition for extraordinary writ in the 2010 and 2012 actions, Court of Appeal for the First Appellate District Case No. A155310; the petition for extraordinary writ in the second 2016 action, Court of Appeal for the First Appellate District Case No. A154325 and California Supreme Court Case No. S251025; and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California v. San Diego County Water Authority cross-complaints in the 2014 action and the first 2016 action. [**Conference with legal counsel – existing litigation; to be heard in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Sections 54956.9(d)(1)**]

Presented by: General Manager Adel Hagekhalil and General Counsel Marcia Scully

General Manager Adel Hagekhalil gave a report on this item in closed session. General Counsel Marcia Scully assisted and answered questions.

8. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

None

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

Next meeting will be held on December 14, 2021.

Meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Larry Dick
Chair



● **Board of Directors**
Legal and Claims Committee

12/14/2021 Board Meeting

7-9

Subject

Adopt amendment to the Administrative Code establishing Metropolitan-specific parliamentary procedures; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Executive Summary

The Metropolitan Board has requested options to modify the current procedures for the conduct of committee and board meetings. This letter provides multiple options for amendments to the Administrative Code establishing Metropolitan-specific parliamentary rules.

Details

Background

The Metropolitan Board has requested information regarding options for consideration to establish formal rules of parliamentary procedure in Metropolitan's Administrative Code.

The current provisions in the Administrative Code include procedural rules that cover time and place of meetings, agendas, meeting procedures, board officers, selection and duties, board committees' functions, and directors' responsibilities. The Administrative Code does not include rules of parliamentary procedure. The request for adoption of specific rules of parliamentary procedure was made when members of the Board had concerns with the Chair of the Board imposing a limitation on substitute motions for a specific Board vote.

At its March 9, 2021 meeting, the Legal and Claims Committee discussed current board procedures, including options to formally adopt rules of Parliamentary Procedures for Metropolitan's Board and committee meetings. Some Board members have indicated that the board letter was not satisfactory because it did not include a staff recommendation and seemed to favor "Chair's Rules."

Current Parliamentary Procedure

Under the current system of procedural rules, the Board or Committee Chair (collectively, "Chair"):

1. Presides over the applicable meetings.
2. Calls the meeting to order and adjourns the meeting.
3. Reviews closed session procedures.
4. May reorder the agenda.
5. Ensures timely completion of meetings.
6. Presides over debate using Robert's Rules of Order as a guide (or consulting the General Counsel).
7. Makes parliamentary rulings, which may be overruled by a majority of the Board.

This system is based on longstanding practice and is not a system of written rules that was formally adopted as the system of parliamentary procedure for Metropolitan. Members of the Board have expressed concern regarding the current system in general and, more specifically, with "Chair's Rules."

The parliamentary rules of 60 similar agencies were reviewed. Less than half of the agencies surveyed have formally adopted Robert's Rules of Order. One agency adopted Rosenberg's Rules of Order. Rosenberg's Rules was developed by a judge for use by cities and counties. Many cities and counties have adopted them.

Rosenberg's Rules is a simple system that provides for those common motions that are used to conduct public agency business. With the exception of certain provisions relating to voting that are inconsistent with Metropolitan's unique weighted voting system, Rosenberg's Rules can provide a basis for inclusion of express rules of parliamentary procedure in the Administrative Code. A copy of Rosenberg's Rules is provided as **Attachment 2** to this board letter.

Some public agencies have adopted rules specific to their agency. Staff can prepare Metropolitan-specific rules, if that is the desire of the Board.

Although members of the Board have expressed concern with "Chair's Rules," all systems of parliamentary procedure provide that the role of the Chair is to preside over the meetings and, under most systems, the Chair makes parliamentary rulings. Although there is no express provision in Metropolitan's Administrative Code providing for this, under all major parliamentary systems, the legislative body can overrule a parliamentary ruling of the Chair by majority vote.

Board Options

The prior board letter did not have a staff recommendation because the request for adoption of rules has been Board driven.

Historically, the majority of Metropolitan's business is accomplished with the use of a minimal number of motions: (1) motion to approve; (2) motion to amend an existing motion; (3) substitute motion; and (4) motion to table or defer to a later time.

The staff recommendation is to retain the current rules with amendments to Administrative Code Sections 2205 and 2401 to expressly provide that a parliamentary ruling by the Chair may be overruled by approval of a motion to overrule by a majority vote of the applicable committee or the Board. Pursuant to this option, the Chair would continue to, in his or her discretion, consult Robert's Rules of Order as a general guide, or seek assistance from the General Counsel. The current rules are easy to understand by the Board and the public, do not create the incentive for parliamentary versus substantive debates during committee and Board meetings, and do not impose constraints on debate.

If the Board would like to make more substantive changes to the Administrative Code, the following additional options are included in this letter:

- (1) Adopt parliamentary procedures based upon Rosenberg's Rules of Order, Revised 2011.
- (2) Formally adopt Robert's Rules of Order as binding on Metropolitan.
- (3) Prepare Metropolitan-specific rules of procedure.

Policy

Metropolitan Administrative Code Section 2110: Regular Meetings.

Metropolitan Administrative Code Section 2205: Duties of the Chair.

Metropolitan Administrative Code Section 2401: Officers and Members of Standing Committees.

Metropolitan Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves continuing administrative activities, such as general policy and procedure making (Section 15378(b)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines). In addition, where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed action may have a significant impact on the environment, the action is not subject to CEQA pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

CEQA determination for Options #2, #3, and #4:

None required

Board Options

Option #1

Retain Metropolitan's current procedural rules with amendments to Administrative Code Sections 2205 and 2401 to provide that a parliamentary ruling by the Chair of a committee or the Board may be overruled by a majority vote of the applicable committee or Board (**Attachment 1**).

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: Metropolitan would amend its current procedural rules for board and committee meetings to expressly provide that parliamentary rulings by the Chair of the Board or a committee can be overruled by majority vote.

Option #2

Direct staff to return with proposed amendments to the Administrative Code based upon Rosenberg's Rules of Order, Revised 2011 (**Attachment 2**).

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: Metropolitan would formally adopt a system of parliamentary procedures for board and committee meetings.

Option #3

Direct staff to return with proposed amendments to the Administrative Code to adopt Robert's Rules of Order as binding on Metropolitan.

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: Metropolitan would formally adopt Robert's Rules of Order as governing board and committee meetings.

Option #4

Direct staff to prepare and return to Committee with Metropolitan-specific parliamentary procedures based on the discussion of the Committee.

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: Staff would prepare and return to Committee with proposed parliamentary procedures based upon the direction of the Board.

Staff Recommendation

Option #1



 Marcia Scully
 General Counsel

12/9/2021

 Date

Attachment 1 – Administrative Code amendments clarifying that parliamentary rulings by the Chair may be overruled by a majority of the committee or Board

Attachment 2 –Rosenberg's Rules of Order, Revised 2011

Division II

PROCEDURES PERTAINING TO BOARD, COMMITTEES AND DIRECTORS

Chapter 2

BOARD OFFICERS

STRIKEOUT/UNDERLINE VERSION:

§ 2205. Duties of the Chair.

As prescribed by the Board, the Chair's duties include:

- (a) Presiding over meetings of the Board, with the exception that the Board may, by a majority vote, overrule parliamentary rulings of the Chair;
- (b) Ex officio membership on standing or special committees as designated in this Code;
- (c) Making committee appointments as set forth in this Code; and,
- (d) Other Board duties not specifically delegated to another Board officer or director.

Chapter 4

STANDING COMMITTEES

§ 2401. Officers and Members of Standing Committees.

(a) Members, Chair, and Vice Chair of standing committees with the exception of the Executive Committee shall be appointed subject to the approval of the Executive Committee and the Board on the basis that each director, with the exception of the Chair of the Board, serve on at least one standing committees, in addition to the Executive Committee. Such appointment shall be made by the Chair of the Board unless a new Chair-elect has been selected by the Board to take office on the next January 1, in which event appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of standing committees shall be made by the Chair-elect.

(b) Chair and Vice Chair of standing committees with the exception of the Executive Committee are to be appointed in even-numbered years at the December meeting of the Board for a two-year term commencing on January 1 of odd-numbered years. No director shall be appointed to the same committee office for more than two consecutive full terms.

(c) The Chair of the Board or the Vice Chair to whom the Chair has assigned the Chair's membership pursuant to Section 2204 is a member ex-officio, with right to vote, of all standing

and special committees of the Board. However, the Chair or the Vice Chair to whom the Chair's membership has been assigned shall not be considered a member of any committee of which the officer is a member ex-officio for the purpose of determining whether a quorum of the committee is present unless the Chair or Vice Chair is actually present at the meeting of the committee.

(d) The committee Chair's duties include presiding over meetings of the committee, with the exception that the committee may, by a majority vote, overrule parliamentary rulings of the Chair.

CLEAN VERSION:**§ 2205. Duties of the Chair.**

As prescribed by the Board, the Chair's duties include:

- (a) Presiding over meetings of the Board, with the exception that the Board may, by a majority vote, overrule parliamentary rulings of the Chair;
- (b) Ex officio membership on standing or special committees as designated in this Code;
- (c) Making committee appointments as set forth in this Code; and,
- (d) Other Board duties not specifically delegated to another Board officer or director.

Chapter 4**STANDING COMMITTEES****§ 2401. Officers and Members of Standing Committees.**

(a) Members, Chair, and Vice Chair of standing committees with the exception of the Executive Committee shall be appointed subject to the approval of the Executive Committee and the Board on the basis that each director, with the exception of the Chair of the Board, serve on at least one standing committees, in addition to the Executive Committee. Such appointment shall be made by the Chair of the Board unless a new Chair-elect has been selected by the Board to take office on the next January 1, in which event appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of standing committees shall be made by the Chair-elect.

(b) Chair and Vice Chair of standing committees with the exception of the Executive Committee are to be appointed in even-numbered years at the December meeting of the Board for a two-year term commencing on January 1 of odd-numbered years. No director shall be appointed to the same committee office for more than two consecutive full terms.

(c) The Chair of the Board or the Vice Chair to whom the Chair has assigned the Chair's membership pursuant to Section 2204 is a member ex-officio, with right to vote, of all standing and special committees of the Board. However, the Chair or the Vice Chair to whom the Chair's membership has been assigned shall not be considered a member of any committee of which the officer is a member ex-officio for the purpose of determining whether a quorum of the committee is present unless the Chair or Vice Chair is actually present at the meeting of the committee.

(d) The committee Chair's duties include presiding over meetings of the committee, with the exception that the committee may, by a majority vote, overrule parliamentary rulings of the Chair.



Rosenberg's Rules of Order

REVISED 2011

Simple Rules of Parliamentary Procedure for the 21st Century

By Judge Dave Rosenberg



MISSION AND CORE BELIEFS

To expand and protect local control for cities through education and advocacy to enhance the quality of life for all Californians.

VISION

To be recognized and respected as the leading advocate for the common interests of California's cities.

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Established in 1898, the League of California Cities is a member organization that represents California's incorporated cities. The League strives to protect the local authority and autonomy of city government and help California's cities effectively serve their residents. In addition to advocating on cities' behalf at the state capitol, the League provides its members with professional development programs and information resources, conducts education conferences and research, and publishes Western City magazine.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dave Rosenberg is a Superior Court Judge in Yolo County. He has served as presiding judge of his court, and as presiding judge of the Superior Court Appellate Division. He also has served as chair of the Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee (the committee composed of all 58 California presiding judges) and as an advisory member of the California Judicial Council. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Rosenberg was member of the Yolo County Board of Supervisors, where he served two terms as chair. Rosenberg also served on the Davis City Council, including two terms as mayor. He has served on the senior staff of two governors, and worked for 19 years in private law practice. Rosenberg has served as a member and chair of numerous state, regional and local boards. Rosenberg chaired the California State Lottery Commission, the California Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board, the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District, the Yolo County Economic Development Commission, and the Yolo County Criminal Justice Cabinet. For many years, he has taught classes on parliamentary procedure and has served as parliamentarian for large and small bodies.

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INTRODUCTION

The rules of procedure at meetings should be simple enough for most people to understand. Unfortunately, that has not always been the case. Virtually all clubs, associations, boards, councils and bodies follow a set of rules — *Robert's Rules of Order* — which are embodied in a small, but complex, book. Virtually no one I know has actually read this book cover to cover. Worse yet, the book was written for another time and for another purpose. If one is chairing or running a parliament, then *Robert's Rules of Order* is a dandy and quite useful handbook for procedure in that complex setting. On the other hand, if one is running a meeting of say, a five-member body with a few members of the public in attendance, a simplified version of the rules of parliamentary procedure is in order.

Hence, the birth of *Rosenberg's Rules of Order*.

What follows is my version of the rules of parliamentary procedure, based on my decades of experience chairing meetings in state and local government. These rules have been simplified for the smaller bodies we chair or in which we participate, slimmed down for the 21st Century, yet retaining the basic tenets of order to which we have grown accustomed. Interestingly enough, *Rosenberg's Rules* has found a welcoming audience. Hundreds of cities, counties, special districts, committees, boards, commissions, neighborhood associations and private corporations and companies have adopted *Rosenberg's Rules* in lieu of *Robert's Rules* because they have found them practical, logical, simple, easy to learn and user friendly.

This treatise on modern parliamentary procedure is built on a foundation supported by the following four pillars:

1. **Rules should establish order.** The first purpose of rules of parliamentary procedure is to establish a framework for the orderly conduct of meetings.
2. **Rules should be clear.** Simple rules lead to wider understanding and participation. Complex rules create two classes: those who understand and participate; and those who do not fully understand and do not fully participate.
3. **Rules should be user friendly.** That is, the rules must be simple enough that the public is invited into the body and feels that it has participated in the process.
4. **Rules should enforce the will of the majority while protecting the rights of the minority.** The ultimate purpose of rules of procedure is to encourage discussion and to facilitate decision making by the body. In a democracy, majority rules. The rules must enable the majority to express itself and fashion a result, while permitting the minority to also express itself, but not dominate, while fully participating in the process.

Establishing a Quorum

The starting point for a meeting is the establishment of a quorum. A quorum is defined as the minimum number of members of the body who must be present at a meeting for business to be legally transacted. The default rule is that a quorum is one more than half the body. For example, in a five-member body a quorum is three. When the body has three members present, it can legally transact business. If the body has less than a quorum of members present, it cannot legally transact business. And even if the body has a quorum to begin the meeting, the body can lose the quorum during the meeting when a member departs (or even when a member leaves the dais). When that occurs the body loses its ability to transact business until and unless a quorum is reestablished.

The default rule, identified above, however, gives way to a specific rule of the body that establishes a quorum. For example, the rules of a particular five-member body may indicate that a quorum is four members for that particular body. The body must follow the rules it has established for its quorum. In the absence of such a specific rule, the quorum is one more than half the members of the body.

The Role of the Chair

While all members of the body should know and understand the rules of parliamentary procedure, it is the chair of the body who is charged with applying the rules of conduct of the meeting. The chair should be well versed in those rules. For all intents and purposes, the chair makes the final ruling on the rules every time the chair states an action. In fact, all decisions by the chair are final unless overruled by the body itself.

Since the chair runs the conduct of the meeting, it is usual courtesy for the chair to play a less active role in the debate and discussion than other members of the body. This does not mean that the chair should not participate in the debate or discussion. To the contrary, as a member of the body, the chair has the full right to participate in the debate, discussion and decision-making of the body. What the chair should do, however, is strive to be the last to speak at the discussion and debate stage. The chair should not make or second a motion unless the chair is convinced that no other member of the body will do so at that point in time.

The Basic Format for an Agenda Item Discussion

Formal meetings normally have a written, often published agenda. Informal meetings may have only an oral or understood agenda. In either case, the meeting is governed by the agenda and the agenda constitutes the body's agreed-upon roadmap for the meeting. Each agenda item can be handled by the chair in the following basic format:

First, the chair should clearly announce the agenda item number and should clearly state what the agenda item subject is. The chair should then announce the format (which follows) that will be followed in considering the agenda item.

Second, following that agenda format, the chair should invite the appropriate person or persons to report on the item, including any recommendation that they might have. The appropriate person or persons may be the chair, a member of the body, a staff person, or a committee chair charged with providing input on the agenda item.

Third, the chair should ask members of the body if they have any technical questions of clarification. At this point, members of the body may ask clarifying questions to the person or persons who reported on the item, and that person or persons should be given time to respond.

Fourth, the chair should invite public comments, or if appropriate at a formal meeting, should open the public meeting for public input. If numerous members of the public indicate a desire to speak to the subject, the chair may limit the time of public speakers. At the conclusion of the public comments, the chair should announce that public input has concluded (or the public hearing, as the case may be, is closed).

Fifth, the chair should invite a motion. The chair should announce the name of the member of the body who makes the motion.

Sixth, the chair should determine if any member of the body wishes to second the motion. The chair should announce the name of the member of the body who seconds the motion. It is normally good practice for a motion to require a second before proceeding to ensure that it is not just one member of the body who is interested in a particular approach. However, a second is not an absolute requirement, and the chair can proceed with consideration and vote on a motion even when there is no second. This is a matter left to the discretion of the chair.

Seventh, if the motion is made and seconded, the chair should make sure everyone understands the motion.

This is done in one of three ways:

1. The chair can ask the maker of the motion to repeat it;
2. The chair can repeat the motion; or
3. The chair can ask the secretary or the clerk of the body to repeat the motion.

Eighth, the chair should now invite discussion of the motion by the body. If there is no desired discussion, or after the discussion has ended, the chair should announce that the body will vote on the motion. If there has been no discussion or very brief discussion, then the vote on the motion should proceed immediately and there is no need to repeat the motion. If there has been substantial discussion, then it is normally best to make sure everyone understands the motion by repeating it.

Ninth, the chair takes a vote. Simply asking for the “ayes” and then asking for the “nays” normally does this. If members of the body do not vote, then they “abstain.” Unless the rules of the body provide otherwise (or unless a super majority is required as delineated later in these rules), then a simple majority (as defined in law or the rules of the body as delineated later in these rules) determines whether the motion passes or is defeated.

Tenth, the chair should announce the result of the vote and what action (if any) the body has taken. In announcing the result, the chair should indicate the names of the members of the body, if any, who voted in the minority on the motion. This announcement might take the following form: “The motion passes by a vote of 3-2, with Smith and Jones dissenting. We have passed the motion requiring a 10-day notice for all future meetings of this body.”

Motions in General

Motions are the vehicles for decision making by a body. It is usually best to have a motion before the body prior to commencing discussion of an agenda item. This helps the body focus.

Motions are made in a simple two-step process. First, the chair should recognize the member of the body. Second, the member of the body makes a motion by preceding the member’s desired approach with the words “I move ...”

A typical motion might be: “I move that we give a 10-day notice in the future for all our meetings.”

The chair usually initiates the motion in one of three ways:

1. **Inviting the members of the body to make a motion**, for example, “A motion at this time would be in order.”
2. **Suggesting a motion to the members of the body**, “A motion would be in order that we give a 10-day notice in the future for all our meetings.”
3. **Making the motion**. As noted, the chair has every right as a member of the body to make a motion, but should normally do so only if the chair wishes to make a motion on an item but is convinced that no other member of the body is willing to step forward to do so at a particular time.

The Three Basic Motions

There are three motions that are the most common and recur often at meetings:

The basic motion. The basic motion is the one that puts forward a decision for the body’s consideration. A basic motion might be: “I move that we create a five-member committee to plan and put on our annual fundraiser.”

The motion to amend. If a member wants to change a basic motion that is before the body, they would move to amend it. A motion to amend might be: "I move that we amend the motion to have a 10-member committee." A motion to amend takes the basic motion that is before the body and seeks to change it in some way.

The substitute motion. If a member wants to completely do away with the basic motion that is before the body, and put a new motion before the body, they would move a substitute motion. A substitute motion might be: "I move a substitute motion that we cancel the annual fundraiser this year."

"Motions to amend" and "substitute motions" are often confused, but they are quite different, and their effect (if passed) is quite different. A motion to amend seeks to retain the basic motion on the floor, but modify it in some way. A substitute motion seeks to throw out the basic motion on the floor, and substitute a new and different motion for it. The decision as to whether a motion is really a "motion to amend" or a "substitute motion" is left to the chair. So if a member makes what that member calls a "motion to amend," but the chair determines that it is really a "substitute motion," then the chair's designation governs.

A "friendly amendment" is a practical parliamentary tool that is simple, informal, saves time and avoids bogging a meeting down with numerous formal motions. It works in the following way: In the discussion on a pending motion, it may appear that a change to the motion is desirable or may win support for the motion from some members. When that happens, a member who has the floor may simply say, "I want to suggest a friendly amendment to the motion." The member suggests the friendly amendment, and if the maker and the person who seconded the motion pending on the floor accepts the friendly amendment, that now becomes the pending motion on the floor. If either the maker or the person who seconded rejects the proposed friendly amendment, then the proposer can formally move to amend.

Multiple Motions Before the Body

There can be up to three motions on the floor at the same time. The chair can reject a fourth motion until the chair has dealt with the three that are on the floor and has resolved them. This rule has practical value. More than three motions on the floor at any given time is confusing and unwieldy for almost everyone, including the chair.

When there are two or three motions on the floor (after motions and seconds) at the same time, the vote should proceed *first* on the *last* motion that is made. For example, assume the first motion is a basic "motion to have a five-member committee to plan and put on our annual fundraiser." During the discussion of this motion, a member might make a second motion to "amend the main motion to have a 10-member committee, not a five-member committee to plan and put on our annual fundraiser." And perhaps, during that discussion, a member makes yet a third motion as a "substitute motion that we not have an annual fundraiser this year." The proper procedure would be as follows:

First, the chair would deal with the *third* (the last) motion on the floor, the substitute motion. After discussion and debate, a vote would be taken first on the third motion. If the substitute motion *passed*, it would be a substitute for the basic motion and would eliminate it. The first motion would be moot, as would the second motion (which sought to amend the first motion), and the action on the agenda item would be completed on the passage by the body of the third motion (the substitute motion). No vote would be taken on the first or second motions.

Second, if the substitute motion *failed*, the chair would then deal with the second (now the last) motion on the floor, the motion to amend. The discussion and debate would focus strictly on the amendment (should the committee be five or 10 members). If the motion to amend *passed*, the chair would then move to consider the main motion (the first motion) as *amended*. If the motion to amend *failed*, the chair would then move to consider the main motion (the first motion) in its original format, not amended.

Third, the chair would now deal with the first motion that was placed on the floor. The original motion would either be in its original format (five-member committee), or if *amended*, would be in its amended format (10-member committee). The question on the floor for discussion and decision would be whether a committee should plan and put on the annual fundraiser.

To Debate or Not to Debate

The basic rule of motions is that they are subject to discussion and debate. Accordingly, basic motions, motions to amend, and substitute motions are all eligible, each in their turn, for full discussion before and by the body. The debate can continue as long as members of the body wish to discuss an item, subject to the decision of the chair that it is time to move on and take action.

There are exceptions to the general rule of free and open debate on motions. The exceptions all apply when there is a desire of the body to move on. The following motions are not debatable (that is, when the following motions are made and seconded, the chair must immediately call for a vote of the body without debate on the motion):

Motion to adjourn. This motion, if passed, requires the body to immediately adjourn to its next regularly scheduled meeting. It requires a simple majority vote.

Motion to recess. This motion, if passed, requires the body to immediately take a recess. Normally, the chair determines the length of the recess which may be a few minutes or an hour. It requires a simple majority vote.

Motion to fix the time to adjourn. This motion, if passed, requires the body to adjourn the meeting at the specific time set in the motion. For example, the motion might be: "I move we adjourn this meeting at midnight." It requires a simple majority vote.

Motion to table. This motion, if passed, requires discussion of the agenda item to be halted and the agenda item to be placed on “hold.” The motion can contain a specific time in which the item can come back to the body. “I move we table this item until our regular meeting in October.” Or the motion can contain no specific time for the return of the item, in which case a motion to take the item off the table and bring it back to the body will have to be taken at a future meeting. A motion to table an item (or to bring it back to the body) requires a simple majority vote.

Motion to limit debate. The most common form of this motion is to say, “I move the previous question” or “I move the question” or “I call the question” or sometimes someone simply shouts out “question.” As a practical matter, when a member calls out one of these phrases, the chair can expedite matters by treating it as a “request” rather than as a formal motion. The chair can simply inquire of the body, “any further discussion?” If no one wishes to have further discussion, then the chair can go right to the pending motion that is on the floor. However, if even one person wishes to discuss the pending motion further, then at that point, the chair should treat the call for the “question” as a formal motion, and proceed to it.

When a member of the body makes such a motion (“I move the previous question”), the member is really saying: “I’ve had enough debate. Let’s get on with the vote.” When such a motion is made, the chair should ask for a second, stop debate, and vote on the motion to limit debate. The motion to limit debate requires a two-thirds vote of the body.

NOTE: A motion to limit debate could include a time limit. For example: “I move we limit debate on this agenda item to 15 minutes.” Even in this format, the motion to limit debate requires a two-thirds vote of the body. A similar motion is a *motion to object to consideration of an item*. This motion is not debatable, and if passed, precludes the body from even considering an item on the agenda. It also requires a two-thirds vote.

Majority and Super Majority Votes

In a democracy, a simple majority vote determines a question. A tie vote means the motion fails. So in a seven-member body, a vote of 4-3 passes the motion. A vote of 3-3 with one abstention means the motion fails. If one member is absent and the vote is 3-3, the motion still fails.

All motions require a simple majority, but there are a few exceptions. The exceptions come up when the body is taking an action which effectively cuts off the ability of a minority of the body to take an action or discuss an item. These extraordinary motions require a two-thirds majority (a super majority) to pass:

Motion to limit debate. Whether a member says, “I move the previous question,” or “I move the question,” or “I call the question,” or “I move to limit debate,” it all amounts to an attempt to cut off the ability of the minority to discuss an item, and it requires a two-thirds vote to pass.

Motion to close nominations. When choosing officers of the body (such as the chair), nominations are in order either from a nominating committee or from the floor of the body. A motion to close nominations effectively cuts off the right of the minority to nominate officers and it requires a two-thirds vote to pass.

Motion to object to the consideration of a question. Normally, such a motion is unnecessary since the objectionable item can be tabled or defeated straight up. However, when members of a body do not even want an item on the agenda to be considered, then such a motion is in order. It is not debatable, and it requires a two-thirds vote to pass.

Motion to suspend the rules. This motion is debatable, but requires a two-thirds vote to pass. If the body has its own rules of order, conduct or procedure, this motion allows the body to suspend the rules for a particular purpose. For example, the body (a private club) might have a rule prohibiting the attendance at meetings by non-club members. A motion to suspend the rules would be in order to allow a non-club member to attend a meeting of the club on a particular date or on a particular agenda item.

Counting Votes

The matter of counting votes starts simple, but can become complicated.

Usually, it’s pretty easy to determine whether a particular motion passed or whether it was defeated. If a simple majority vote is needed to pass a motion, then one vote more than 50 percent of the body is required. For example, in a five-member body, if the vote is three in favor and two opposed, the motion passes. If it is two in favor and three opposed, the motion is defeated.

If a two-thirds majority vote is needed to pass a motion, then how many affirmative votes are required? The simple rule of thumb is to count the “no” votes and double that count to determine how many “yes” votes are needed to pass a particular motion. For example, in a seven-member body, if two members vote “no” then the “yes” vote of at least four members is required to achieve a two-thirds majority vote to pass the motion.

What about tie votes? In the event of a tie, the motion always fails since an affirmative vote is required to pass any motion. For example, in a five-member body, if the vote is two in favor and two opposed, with one member absent, the motion is defeated.

Vote counting starts to become complicated when members vote “abstain” or in the case of a written ballot, cast a blank (or unreadable) ballot. Do these votes count, and if so, how does one count them? The starting point is always to check the statutes.

In California, for example, for an action of a board of supervisors to be valid and binding, the action must be approved by a majority of the board. (California Government Code Section 25005.) Typically, this means three of the five members of the board must vote affirmatively in favor of the action. A vote of 2-1 would not be sufficient. A vote of 3-0 with two abstentions would be sufficient. In general law cities in

California, as another example, resolutions or orders for the payment of money and all ordinances require a recorded vote of the total members of the city council. (California Government Code Section 36936.) Cities with charters may prescribe their own vote requirements. Local elected officials are always well-advised to consult with their local agency counsel on how state law may affect the vote count.

After consulting state statutes, step number two is to check the rules of the body. If the rules of the body say that you count votes of “those present” then you treat abstentions one way. However, if the rules of the body say that you count the votes of those “present and voting,” then you treat abstentions a different way. And if the rules of the body are silent on the subject, then the general rule of thumb (and default rule) is that you count all votes that are “present and voting.”

Accordingly, under the “present and voting” system, you would **NOT** count abstention votes on the motion. Members who abstain are counted for purposes of determining quorum (they are “present”), but you treat the abstention votes on the motion as if they did not exist (they are not “voting”). On the other hand, if the rules of the body specifically say that you count votes of those “present” then you **DO** count abstention votes both in establishing the quorum and on the motion. In this event, the abstention votes act just like “no” votes.

*How does this work in practice?
Here are a few examples.*

Assume that a five-member city council is voting on a motion that requires a simple majority vote to pass, and assume further that the body has no specific rule on counting votes. Accordingly, the default rule kicks in and we count all votes of members that are “present and voting.” If the vote on the motion is 3-2, the motion passes. If the motion is 2-2 with one abstention, the motion fails.

Assume a five-member city council voting on a motion that requires a two-thirds majority vote to pass, and further assume that the body has no specific rule on counting votes. Again, the default rule applies. If the vote is 3-2, the motion fails for lack of a two-thirds majority. If the vote is 4-1, the motion passes with a clear two-thirds majority. A vote of three “yes,” one “no” and one “abstain” also results in passage of the motion. Once again, the abstention is counted only for the purpose of determining quorum, but on the actual vote on the motion, it is as if the abstention vote never existed — so an effective 3-1 vote is clearly a two-thirds majority vote.

Now, change the scenario slightly. Assume the same five-member city council voting on a motion that requires a two-thirds majority vote to pass, but now assume that the body **DOES** have a specific rule requiring a two-thirds vote of members “present.” Under this specific rule, we must count the members present not only for quorum but also for the motion. In this scenario, any abstention has the same force and effect as if it were a “no” vote. Accordingly, if the votes were three “yes,” one “no” and one “abstain,” then the motion fails. The abstention in this case is treated like a “no” vote and effective vote of 3-2 is not enough to pass two-thirds majority muster.

Now, exactly how does a member cast an “abstention” vote?

Any time a member votes “abstain” or says, “I abstain,” that is an abstention. However, if a member votes “present” that is also treated as an abstention (the member is essentially saying, “Count me for purposes of a quorum, but my vote on the issue is abstain.”) In fact, any manifestation of intention not to vote either “yes” or “no” on the pending motion may be treated by the chair as an abstention. If written ballots are cast, a blank or unreadable ballot is counted as an abstention as well.

Can a member vote “absent” or “count me as absent?” Interesting question. The ruling on this is up to the chair. The better approach is for the chair to count this as if the member had left his/her chair and is actually “absent.” That, of course, affects the quorum. However, the chair may also treat this as a vote to abstain, particularly if the person does not actually leave the dais.

The Motion to Reconsider

There is a special and unique motion that requires a bit of explanation all by itself; the motion to reconsider. A tenet of parliamentary procedure is finality. After vigorous discussion, debate and a vote, there must be some closure to the issue. And so, after a vote is taken, the matter is deemed closed, subject only to reopening if a proper motion to consider is made and passed.

A motion to reconsider requires a majority vote to pass like other garden-variety motions, but there are two special rules that apply only to the motion to reconsider.

First, is the matter of timing. A motion to reconsider must be made at the meeting where the item was first voted upon. A motion to reconsider made at a later time is untimely. (The body, however, can always vote to suspend the rules and, by a two-thirds majority, allow a motion to reconsider to be made at another time.)

Second, a motion to reconsider may be made only by certain members of the body. Accordingly, a motion to reconsider may be made only by a member who voted in the majority on the original motion. If such a member has a change of heart, he or she may make the motion to reconsider (any other member of the body — including a member who voted in the minority on the original motion — may second the motion). If a member who voted in the minority seeks to make the motion to reconsider, it must be ruled out of order. The purpose of this rule is finality. If a member of minority could make a motion to reconsider, then the item could be brought back to the body again and again, which would defeat the purpose of finality.

If the motion to reconsider passes, then the original matter is back before the body, and a new original motion is in order. The matter may be discussed and debated as if it were on the floor for the first time.

Courtesy and Decorum

The rules of order are meant to create an atmosphere where the members of the body and the members of the public can attend to business efficiently, fairly and with full participation. At the same time, it is up to the chair and the members of the body to maintain common courtesy and decorum. Unless the setting is very informal, it is always best for only one person at a time to have the floor, and it is always best for every speaker to be first recognized by the chair before proceeding to speak.

The chair should always ensure that debate and discussion of an agenda item focuses on the item and the policy in question, not the personalities of the members of the body. Debate on policy is healthy, debate on personalities is not. The chair has the right to cut off discussion that is too personal, is too loud, or is too crude.

Debate and discussion should be focused, but free and open. In the interest of time, the chair may, however, limit the time allotted to speakers, including members of the body.

Can a member of the body interrupt the speaker? The general rule is "no." There are, however, exceptions. A speaker may be interrupted for the following reasons:

Privilege. The proper interruption would be, "point of privilege." The chair would then ask the interrupter to "state your point." Appropriate points of privilege relate to anything that would interfere with the normal comfort of the meeting. For example, the room may be too hot or too cold, or a blowing fan might interfere with a person's ability to hear.

Order. The proper interruption would be, "point of order." Again, the chair would ask the interrupter to "state your point." Appropriate points of order relate to anything that would not be considered appropriate conduct of the meeting. For example, if the chair moved on to a vote on a motion that permits debate without allowing that discussion or debate.

Appeal. If the chair makes a ruling that a member of the body disagrees with, that member may appeal the ruling of the chair. If the motion is seconded, and after debate, if it passes by a simple majority vote, then the ruling of the chair is deemed reversed.

Call for orders of the day. This is simply another way of saying, "return to the agenda." If a member believes that the body has drifted from the agreed-upon agenda, such a call may be made. It does not require a vote, and when the chair discovers that the agenda has not been followed, the chair simply reminds the body to return to the agenda item properly before them. If the chair fails to do so, the chair's determination may be appealed.

Withdraw a motion. During debate and discussion of a motion, the maker of the motion on the floor, at any time, may interrupt a speaker to withdraw his or her motion from the floor. The motion is immediately deemed withdrawn, although the chair may ask the person who seconded the motion if he or she wishes to make the motion, and any other member may make the motion if properly recognized.

Special Notes About Public Input

The rules outlined above will help make meetings very public-friendly. But in addition, and particularly for the chair, it is wise to remember three special rules that apply to each agenda item:

Rule One: Tell the public what the body will be doing.

Rule Two: Keep the public informed while the body is doing it.

Rule Three: When the body has acted, tell the public what the body did.



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