

## Using A Consent Agenda

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Contrary to popular myth, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* does not require that every single item be handled with a motion, second, debate, and vote. Some decisions are either routine, or are so widely supported that to make approval a separate action would bog the group down.

### ***Adoption by Commission***

By the adoption of a special rule of order allowing for the consent agenda process, the Commission can group as many items together as they desire, and **adopt them all at once without debate**. The consent agenda can be a powerful tool for the Commission to approve items that are routine, non-controversial or both.

### ***What should be put on the consent agenda?***

The first time the process is used, it will feel new. It is recommended that only “no-brainers” go on the consent agenda the first few times, so that members become familiar with the process.

If the members have dealt with issues for some time and all of the members are familiar with the implications, final approval of that proposal would also be a good item for the consent agenda. Routine matters such as WSCC minutes approval, non-controversial appointments and elections, travel, training, and program items are also items that may have been discussed and explained previously and additional discussion will be repetitive and unnecessary.

At first we can start out with the basic items:

- Approval of minutes
- Elections
- Annexations
- Travel for Members and Executive Director
- Training for Members and Executive Director
- Future Work Session and Meeting dates and start time.

Over time, other items can be added:

- Appointments
- Financial Reports
- Grant Proposal Approval
- Committee Recommendations

### ***Where in the meeting should the consent agenda be placed?***

It is recommended that the consent agenda be one of the first items listed on the agenda so that the meeting can start out actively supporting its purpose: to make decisions and take actions leading to fulfillment of the Commission's mission.

### ***Here's how a typical consent agenda is handled:***

1. The Chair will present the consent agenda before the members and ask if anyone wishes to remove any of the items.

If any member wants a separate vote on any item, or simply wants to discuss an item, that item must be removed from the consent agenda. It's all or nothing.

In such a case, the Chair will reiterate which item is to be removed from the consent agenda and whether to take the issue up immediately after the consent agenda is adopted, or to place it under its "regular" category heading for that meeting.

2. The Chair then asks if there are any other items are to be removed. If there are none, the Chair will motion:  
Items numbered (listing remaining item numbers) are before you. If there is no objection, these items will be adopted. (Pause, to see if there is an objection.) There being no objection, these items are adopted.
3. The consent agenda items will be individually itemized in the minutes so that a complete record is contained.
4. If the Commission chooses to use a consent agenda, it is recommended that a special rule of order motion be made.

Here is an example of the motion to adopt:

A consent agenda may be presented by the Chair at the beginning of a meeting. Items may be removed from the consent agenda on the request of any one member. Items not removed may be adopted by general consent without debate. Removed items may be taken up either immediately after the consent agenda or placed later on the agenda at the discretion of the Chair.

## **Using the Roberts Rules of Order Motion Spreadsheet**

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This “motion-making” spreadsheet may be a helpful resource in adopting motions.

It is recommended that the if the Commission chooses to use this resource that a motion to adopt is necessary.

Example of the motion to adopt:

It is resolved by the Washington State Conservation Commission, that the table of rules relating to motions contained in the current edition of ***Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*** shall govern this meeting in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with any special rules of order the meeting may adopt.

# Robert's Rules of Order Motions Chart

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)*

**Part 1, Main Motions.** These motions are listed in order of precedence. A motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion. § indicates the section from Robert's Rules.

§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§21	Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§20	Take break	I move to recess for ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19	Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18	Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17	Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§16	Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§15	Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
§14	Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§13	Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§12	Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§11	Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
§10	Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that [or "to"] ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

# Robert's Rules of Order Motions Chart

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**Part 2, Incidental Motions.** No order of precedence. These motions arise incidentally and are decided immediately.

§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§23	Enforce rules	Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	None
§24	Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
§25	Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§26	Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
§27	Divide motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§29	Demand a rising vote	I move for a rising vote	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33	Parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33	Request for information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	None

### Part 3, Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly.

No order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else is pending.

§	PURPOSE:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§34	Take matter from table	I move to take from the table ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§35	Cancel previous action	I move to rescind ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or Majority with notice
§37	Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider ...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority