

How To Run an RR Group Business Meeting.

Rules of Order for use at Refuge Recovery Business Meetings

This document presents a simple version of rules of order for use in the business meetings of Refuge Recovery Groups and does reflect common practice.

- We gather in a spirit of cooperation to discover our group democratic voice. We need never fear the voice of the group.
- For each discussion, every voting member of the group should have the chance to speak once before anyone may speak a second time.
- Everyone has the right to know what is going on at all times.
- Only urgent matters may interrupt a speaker.
- The members discuss only one thing at a time.

RR Group Officers

The Group Representative

The Group Representative is responsible for the RR Group and runs the group business meeting according to these rules of order. In general, no one should speak without first being recognized by the GR, and if people start speaking out of turn, the GR will call for order.

The RR Group Secretary

Each RR Group needs a secretary. This position is separate from the “meeting secretary” who is responsible for running the open Refugee Recovery meeting. The duty of the RR Group Secretary is to take notes so that they can prepare an official written record of the RR Group Business meeting, called the “minutes.” Clear, accurate minutes are very important – they will be used to keep track of the group’s conscience, as well as unfinished business from previous business meetings.

The Secretary need not record everything that is said; the minutes are not a transcript. They should include:

- Officer’s reports, if any were made during the meeting.
- The wording of any motions introduced, and whether the motion was passed, defeated, or tabled or sent to committee.

If at any time the Secretary is unclear about something, he/she should ask for clarification immediately. The Secretary can vote, introduce motions, and participate in discussion.

The Treasurer of an RR group is responsible for the funds which are donated to the group and for the distribution of these funds. The Treasurer keeps an accurate record of all the group's financial transactions and reports the financial status of the RR Group in each group business meeting.

For the purpose of most groups, officers usually consist of a Group Representative, Secretary and a Treasurer. In very small groups, the Secretary and Treasurer duties can be combined until an additional member becomes qualified to serve as a group officer.

A standard RR business meeting format

RR Group business meetings are run according to the following format:

1. Minutes of the previous business meeting should be read by the Secretary. After they are read, if there are no objections to the content, a motion to accept the minutes should be passed.

2. Officers' Reports. If necessary, trusted volunteers report to the group. It is usual to always have a monthly financial report from the Treasurer or the GR.

3. Old Business.

- A. If there are any motions pending from a previous business meeting, they should be taken up for consideration at this time.

- B. If there are items of business that needed to be researched and to have new information presented to the group, this would be the time to report.

4. New Business. If any voting member wishes to bring up a new topic for the consideration of the group, it should be done during this phase.

Motions

- A motion is the topic under discussion (e.g., “I move that we elect a group Treasurer”). After recognition by the GR, any member can introduce a main motion when no other motion is on the table. A main motion requires a second to be considered. A main motion must be disposed of (passed, defeated, tabled, or postponed indefinitely) before a new main motion may be considered.

Once a motion has been introduced and seconded, it “belongs” to the group, not the person who introduced it. Instead of the mover “withdrawing” a motion, the group should amend it, or move to postpone the motion indefinitely (a way of killing the motion without voting it down).

- To bring a new idea before the group: After recognition by the GR, present your motion by stating “I move that we ____”. A second is required for the motion to go to the floor for discussion, or consideration. If a motion passes, it goes into effect immediately or at a specified

time. Typically, defeated motions cannot be reintroduced for 6 months.

A note about main motions: in adversarial assemblies, nothing is discussed without a motion. In Refuge Recovery, cooperation is assumed, and it is often not helpful to introduce a main motion before there has been some discussion of its subject matter. After every voting member has had a chance to offer input by speaking for an equal and limited amount of time, the intent of the group is usually clearer, and the GR can be of service by attempting to combine what he or she has heard into a coherent motion, and ask if anyone will introduce the motion.

For All Voting Members

- To change or add to the wording of a motion under discussion: After recognition by the GR, move to amend the motion by proposing a specific change. The member who proposed the motion, the mover, can then accept the proposed change. Most amendments are friendly, arising naturally out of the group's discussion of the motion, and are usually accepted by the original mover. But if the original mover objects, a vote will still amend the original motion. An amendment can completely reword or replace a motion without voting it down.

- To recommend more study and/or investigation be given to a motion: Move to refer to a committee. Refers a question to be investigated by a specified group, with a specified purpose, and a specified time to report back to the entire group. Requires a vote.
- To postpone a motion until some later time: Move to table the motion until a specific time. The motion may be taken from the table after 1 item of business has been conducted. If the motion is not taken from the table by the end of the next meeting, it is dead. A majority is required to table a motion.
- To end the meeting: Move to close business meeting. All pending motions will be tabled until next biz meeting. This motion takes immediate precedence and is not discussed. It requires a vote to pass.
- If you are confused about a procedure being used and want clarification: Without recognition from the GR, call for a “point of information.” The GR will ask you to state your question and will attempt to clarify the situation.
- If you think the rules of order have been violated: Without recognition, call for a “point of order.” The GR will ask you to state your question and will attempt to clarify the situation.

- You want to change an action voted on at an earlier meeting. Move to rescind. A 2/3 vote is required.

You may influence WHAT the members discuss:

- if you would like to discuss something - motion
- if you would like to change a motion under discussion - amend

You may influence HOW and WHEN a motion is discussed:

- if you want a committee to evaluate the topic and report back – refer to committee
- if you want to discuss the topic at another time – table until later in meeting or next meeting

You may INTERRUPT a speaker for these reasons only:

- to get information about business - point of information
- to get information about rules - parliamentary inquiry
- if you see a breach of the rules - point of order

Voting in Refuge Recovery groups

Refuge Recovery business meetings operate on the principle of group unanimity in voting. This typically requires 60-70% of the voting members present to be in

favor of a motion, for that motion to pass. This does not mean 100% consensus. This does not mean one person can block any vote. It means that a larger majority than 51% is required to pass motions. This percentage number should be decided by the group and should be no larger than 70%. This voting method, combined with pre-motion discussion by all voting members present, is the most balanced approach we have for accomplishing necessary group business while promoting group unity. These methods were presented at the second RR Conference in 2016, and have been practiced successfully in group business meetings and by the Refuge Recovery service board since that time.