

Nassau General Service Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

P.O. Box 7, Garden City, NY 11530

aanassaugs-ny.org

How We Run Our Meetings

1. Our business meetings are not traditional A.A. group meetings for sharing about our recovery. They exist to share information, make decisions based on our collective group conscience, and to manage our resources in accordance with our 7th Tradition. While we don't "share" about recovery in the meeting, please raise your hand immediately and tell us if you need to talk to someone one-on-one (outside the meeting) on a personal recovery matter.
2. The running of A.A. business meetings is guided by the principles outlined in A.A.'s Three Legacies: Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts for World Service.
Among those principles:
 - a. We are reminded why we are here (A.A. Tradition 5).
 - b. We are reminded to act with humility in the greater interest of the area and A.A. as a whole (Traditions 1 and 12), and with faith (A.A. Tradition 2).
3. Where our principles & by-laws provide insufficient guidance, we use the principles & procedures described in the book Robert's Rules of Order.
 4. Who is entitled to participate & vote?
 - a. All registered GSRs and their alternates in Nassau County, but each group has only one vote.
 - b. All registered DCMs and their alternates in Nassau County, but each district has only one vote.
 - c. Elected Nassau County General Service officers and appointed standing committee chairs.
 - d. No person is allowed more than one vote.
 - e. Interested AA members are welcome and encouraged to attend our meetings, but they do not have a vote. They may speak only after all voting members who wish to speak have done so, and if time permits. (Non-voting members are encouraged to make their opinions known to their GSR or DCM before or after the meeting.)
5. Our meeting procedures are based on our collective experience. Please remember common courtesy, common sense, and 'principles before personalities' (Tradition 12). Our procedures are also designed to balance the need to conduct our business with equal & fair treatment of our members.
 - a. If you want to speak during the meeting, please raise your hand and wait to be called upon by the Chair. Please wait to be called on by the Chair before speaking.
 - b. Let others be heard once before seeking to be heard a second time on anything being discussed.
 - c. Keep your comments brief (suggested not more than 2 minutes) and to the item being addressed as described in the Agenda.
 - d. If another speaker has made your point, please don't repeat it.

e. Voting members may ask questions when reports are made by our trusted servants, but must first be recognized by the Chair and may be limited to complete the meeting on time. Members are encouraged to ask questions after the meeting unless they're certain it will be of common interest to most other members at the time.

6. Basic rules of order:

a. The Chair is responsible for conducting the meeting on behalf of all members, and ensuring that we all follow our own principles and procedures to make good decisions through an informed group conscience. The Chair votes only in the case of a tie. Generally, the Chair does not participate in discussion. Members are expected to respect the decisions of the Chair. (A motion to overrule the decision of the Chair may be made, there is no discussion, and requires a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote.)

b. No discussion is permitted on any subject until a motion is made by a voting member and seconded by a different voting member. Motions need to be acknowledged by the Chair -- and seconded -- before discussion can begin; the Chair facilitates the discussion.

c. Motions may be amended. Amendments are motions to change the original motion. Request the Chair's attention by saying "I propose an amendment to the motion." A second is required. They are dealt with (by discussion & vote) before returning to the original motion. Amendments may be amended, but after that a new motion is required to make further amendments. (Please note: Amendments can get confusing, and often confound the discussion; the Chair will clarify what's "on the floor" before any vote is taken.

d. A motion to table or postpone may be proposed to defer a vote and any further discussion. It's appropriate when a member wants to consult the group they represent before voting, or when more information is required, or when time runs out before discussion can be completed. To table means to set the matter aside until a motion to continue discussion is passed. To postpone means to set the matter aside until a later meeting. A motion to take up a postponed question is not needed. The postponed question becomes "old business."

e. Voting:

i. Decisions are reached by majority vote (either $\frac{2}{3}$ or a simple majority) while allowing for minority opinion. Policy decisions are reached by $\frac{2}{3}$ majority, because we want to have substantial unanimity before making major changes. (A.A. Concept 12)

ii. Most procedural questions can be decided by a simple majority.

iii. Officers, standing committee chairs, GSRs & DCMs may vote.

iv. Alternates vote only in the absence of their 'principal'.

v. Each voting member gets only one vote

vi. Each group gets only one vote.

f. A point of order allows members to ask a question about procedures, or calls a presumed procedural error to the Chair's attention. The Chair accepts or rejects the point subject to appeal to the meeting. A Point of Order is appropriate at any time you want to ask the Chair about procedure.

- g. A point of information allows members to ask for information on something being presented or discussed. It is not appropriate to use a point of information to give information or offer an opinion, which would be done in the usual course of discussion.
- 7. “Throughout our structure, a traditional ‘Right of Appeal’ ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.” (A.A. Concept 5)
 - a. Minority opinion invites anyone who voted on the minority side only to explain the reason for their vote, in an attempt to change the mind of those who voted on the majority side. (“Minority side” means those who voted on the “losing side”.)
 - b. It is not a reopening of discussion.
 - c. Please limit minority opinion to no more than two minutes.
 - d. The chair will ask for “minority opinion” after a vote on an “important matter”. If no one who voted in the minority wants to speak, the Chair will move onto the next Agenda item.
 - e. If any member who voted with the majority decides to change their vote after hearing the minority opinion, they may offer a motion to reconsider the question. (Such a motion must come from the majority.) If seconded , an immediate vote will be held on whether or not to reopen discussion. it requires a simple majority to carry. If carried, the question is reopened to discussion and vote as if the original vote had not occurred.

(Adapted from: Suggested Meeting Guidelines for SENY Committee Meetings)