

Green Party of Vancouver

Green Rules of Order - Full Version

Proposed June 7, 2016, and based on the rules used for both the Green Party of BC and the Green Party of Canada.

I INTRODUCTION

These are the full procedures for use at plenary sessions. A more relaxed version of these procedures may be used for smaller meetings, sub-meetings or workshops.

This document is intended primarily for facilitator training and for the reference of facilitators and others during meetings. A brief summary of these procedures, called the Abridged Green Rules of Order, is also available primarily for members attending the same meeting.

II DEFINITIONS

Facilitator: Also known as the chair or moderator, is the person who moderates discussion and recognizes speakers. See also section V FACILITATION.

Co-facilitator: Also known as the co-chair, is appointed in a large or heated discussion to maintain a speaker's list or substitute for the facilitator if s/he needs to step down temporarily. See also section V FACILITATION and section VI SPEAKERS' LIST.

Recorder: A person who records all decisions and reasons for standing aside in the official minutes of a plenary session. See also section IX MINUTES.

Timekeeper: A person who keeps track of the time spent on each area of the discussion so that the meeting may meet its time commitments. See also section X TIMEKEEPING.

Fairness Committee: Sometimes called the Mediation or Conflict Resolutions Committee. A committee of mediators, preferably who do not have voting rights at the meeting, whose task is to (1) monitor the temperature of debate in the meeting, (2) council members and others who have issue with some aspect of the meeting, and (3) actively mediate conflict or complaints that may arise from the meeting. This committee may be called upon to meet separately from the meeting in order to help opposing parties work out their differences.

Voting card(s): In a large plenary, a single voting card, or a set of coloured voting cards, may be used to indicate voting members' intention toward a motion: If coloured cards are used, a yellow card indicates that they need more

clarification or information before they can agree to or reject the motion or proposal, a green card indicates that they understand the motion or what is being proposed and agree to it, and a red card indicates that they understand the motion or what is being proposed and object to it.

Session: Different parts of the same meeting as determined by the agenda.

Concurrent Session: Agenda time were more than one sub-meeting, workshop, presentation, or combination there of, is simultaneously taking place, each at different locations.

Plenary: The meeting of the whole group with no other concurrent sessions of the group taking place.

Point of Order: A way of signalling the meeting for either clarification, language translation, procedural suggestion, or for additional information. Not to be abused. See also section VI POINTS OF ORDER.

Poll: A way to determine which procedural course the meeting wishes to take in the event there is a choice (for example, in steps (e) or (l) in section III PROCEDURE). Where the will of the meeting is obvious, the facilitator will simply proceed with the procedural course desired, thus not slowing the flow of the meeting. Where it is not obvious which procedural course the meeting as a whole wishes to take, the facilitator will conduct a more formal poll, by show of hands or by voting card of voting members present, of the available procedural options. The facilitator will proceed with the procedural course that has the most meeting support.

Motion: The proposed course of action, documented by the recorder or otherwise presented in writing to the entire meeting, currently being considered by the meeting.

Amendment: A modification or addition to the main motion proposed by one or more members at the meeting.

Friendly Amendment: A brief and quick way of polling the meeting to determine the acceptance of an amendment to solve a particular concern.

Deciding Vote: A formal way of determining the acceptance or rejection of a motion, by the voting members present, either by show of hands or by voting cards. See step (m) in section III PROCEDURE.

III PROCEDURE

- a) The facilitator will present or ask for the presentation of the resolution, proposal, or issue to be considered.
- b) The facilitator will then ask for a moment of silence during which everyone will be asked to note any questions they have concerning the resolution, proposal, or issue just presented.
- c) The facilitator will then ask if anyone requires clarification concerning the resolution, proposal, or issue just presented. If so, the facilitator or presenter will then speak to these. The facilitator will ask others to listen and to strike off their own questions as they hear their concerns answered. The resolution or proposal may not be amended at this time. [The rationale here is that it is more fair to everyone at the meeting if everyone understands what is before the meeting before the meeting proceeds to discuss, amend, or adopt/reject the motion.]
- d) The facilitator will then ask if there is a need for discussion or amendments. If decision or amendments are to be made, a time limit to conclude the decision or issue will be determined by the meeting.
- e) The facilitator then opens the floor to discussion and/or amendments, and monitors the meeting for possible solutions and/or agreement. Where it is not obvious that a majority of members present either agree or do not agree with a proposed amendment, the facilitator will poll the meeting to determine if the proposed amendment is acceptable and upon acceptance the amendment will become part of motion.
- f) If a decision is to be made and there appears to be firm disagreement over certain issues, the facilitator may propose to the meeting that those on either side of the issue, along with those who originally formulated the proposal, meet outside of the meeting to resolve the issue(s) and then report back to the meeting.
- g) If a decision is to be made and if there appears to be general agreement with a motion or motion as amended, or there is no further discussion, the facilitator will test for agreement. Agreement should not be interpreted to mean unanimity, only that all members can accept the particular motion.
- h) If any member has a strong objection to the proposed agreement, s/he may signify verbally and/or by raising their red voting card when the test for agreement is made. In doing so, s/he should be prepared to state the reason for the objection including the basic Green Party value that is at issue.

i) If there are no strong objections to the proposed agreement, the facilitator shall then confirm that agreement has been reached by asking the recorder to read back the wording of the motion and checking to see if there is still agreement. [No sense in agreeing to something, only to later disagree on what was decided because it was not properly recorded at the time.]

j) In smaller meetings, or where the meeting feels it is useful to hear such information, in the event where there is strong objection to the proposed agreement;

j.1) One at a time, the facilitator will have the meeting briefly hear from each member who objected to the proposed agreement.

j.2) For each objection, the facilitator shall ask for discussion or amendments to address the objecting members' concerns. If there is agreement on any amendments, those amendments will be added to the motion currently under consideration.

j.3) The facilitator may ask anyone who has a strong objection if s/he is willing to stand aside and allow a test for agreement of the remaining members. Members who have stood aside shall be recorded in the minutes as standing aside, and may optionally have with their reasons for doing so recorded in the minutes. If a substantial number of members stand aside, the facilitator shall recognize this as a de facto non-agreement.

j.4) When all members who have objected to the proposed agreement have been dealt with, the facilitator shall re-test for agreement.

k) If, following step (j), agreement cannot be reached, the Facilitator may propose to the meeting that everyone who has a strong objection to the proposed motion, and one or more others who support the motion, meet separately outside of this meeting to further discuss or amend the motion and report back to this meeting for a re-test for agreement on the motion.

l) If, following step (k), agreement cannot be reached, the facilitator will poll the meeting to determine if:

1) the motion should be tabled (and therefore be off the agenda for the rest of this meeting), 2) the motion should be returned to its sponsors for more work (where an improved version may be reintroduced at this meeting if there is time or reintroduced at the next meeting), 3) the meeting shall proceed to a deciding vote on the motion.

m) If a deciding vote on the motion is to occur, a vote of hands or voting cards, where those voting for and against are counted separately and recorded in the minutes, will be conducted in accordance of the B.C. Society Act which states:
1) "an ordinary resolution passes in general meeting of the members of the society by a simple majority of votes cast in person," and
2) "a special resolution passes in general meeting by a majority of not less than 75% of those members of a society who, being entitled to do so, vote in person, of which notice of the bylaws provide and not be less than 14 days' notice specifying the intention to propose the special resolution has been given."

IV VOTING RIGHTS

a) For the purposes of these procedures, a "member" is a person who is a member in good standing of the Green Party of Vancouver (GPV). A member in good standing is a person who has been a member for at least 45 days prior to the meeting or a person whose membership has lapsed in the past twelve months and has renewed her/his membership at the meeting.

b) For the purposes of these procedures, any person who does not meet the criteria of a "member" above, cannot vote or otherwise prevent agreement from being expressed toward a motion.

c) The facilitator and co-facilitator cannot vote or prevent agreement.

V FACILITATION

a) Each decision making plenary will be facilitated by a facilitator and a co-facilitator. Each facilitator person shall be chosen in accordance with the GPV's bylaws with consideration of gender balance.

b) One person will be the facilitator and the other the co-facilitator. This may be decided by the meeting session or by the two facilitators.

c) The facilitator is primarily responsible for:

- 1) Interpreting these rules of order.
- 2) Managing the meeting in a way the facilitator feels is consistent at all times with the wishes of the members present.

d) The co-facilitator is primarily responsible for:

- 1) Interpreting these rules of order.
- 2) Keeping the speakers' list.
- 3) Assisting the facilitator in managing the meeting.

e) The facilitator(s) are responsible for keeping the meeting focused on one issue at a time and may recommend to the meeting the division of items for specific discussion or decision on each part.

f) The facilitator(s) may recommend to the meeting the appointment of "helpers" to help either the facilitator or co-facilitator in maintaining the speakers list, display the wording of proposals before the meeting, maintaining the agenda's items, allotted times, priorities, etc., thus freeing up either the facilitator or cofacilitator to focus more on other aspects of conducting the meeting.

g) Any person may request the facilitator to test for agreement but only the facilitator may test for agreement or conduct a vote. The facilitator will poll the meeting if it is not obvious that the meeting is ready or not for the test for agreement.

h) The facilitators may not prevent agreement or vote.

i) If any one of the two facilitators wishes to participate actively in a discussion, object to a proposed agreement, or temporarily leave the meeting, s/he must give up her/his facilitation to the other facilitator person who then may select a stand-in co-facilitator for the duration of the discussion at hand in accordance with the GPV's bylaws. Any "step asides" of facilitation will be in effect until the matter under discussion is resolved. Following this, the original facilitator may regain her/his facilitation duties.

j) The facilitator may propose to the meeting to temporarily change, suspend, or add to any procedure, of these Green Rules of Order, if it is felt it would improve the situation at hand. In doing so the duration of the temporary change, suspension, or addition must be specified, and acceptance of the temporary change, suspension, or addition shall be determined by polling the meeting. Any accepted temporary changes, suspensions, or additions shall cease to be in effect at the conclusion of the meeting.

VI SPEAKERS' LIST

a) Any person (both members and non-members) may be placed on the speakers' list by signalling the cofacilitator, or other person maintaining the speakers' list, unless the meeting has decided otherwise.

b) The speakers' list may comprise two lists, one for female persons wishing to speak, and the other for male persons wishing to speak.

c) Leave to speak may alternate between genders and will start with the first person placed on the list(s).

d) If the meeting appears to be dominated by one or a small group of people, the facilitator or co-facilitator may alter the order of the lists in order that people who have not spoken are granted leave to speak sooner.

e) The facilitator(s) may recommend to the meeting to "close the speakers' list" and hear from only those already on the speakers' list in order to meet allotted time commitments or to proceed quicker if it is felt agreement is at hand.

f) The speakers' list is cleared if the motion is agreed to, tabled, returned to its sponsors for more work, passed or rejected by a vote, or the agenda item ends.

VII POINTS OF ORDER

a) Any member of the meeting may signal the facilitator on a Point Of Clarification if s/he does not understand the procedure or believes that a violation of these rules has taken place. In doing so, s/he must state at the outset the section of these rules at issue. The facilitator may call for contrary views or at her/his discretion may rule on the point.

b) Any member of the meeting may signal the facilitator on a Point Of Order if s/he has a procedural suggestion that s/he feels will aid or improve the facilitation of the discussion at hand.

c) Any member of the meeting may signal the facilitator on a Point Of Information or the facilitator or recorder may independently request a Point Of Information:
1) when there is some item of information that is necessary for the discussion; or
2) when there is an item in discussion which must be accurately recorded in the minutes.

d) Where the meeting is being conducted in more than one language, any member of the meeting may signal the facilitator on a Point Of Translation if needed.

VIII CHALLENGING THE FACILITATION OR CONDUCT OF OTHERS

a) A member of the meeting, other than the facilitators, may challenge the facilitation or challenge the conduct of another person in the meeting:

- 1) if s/he feels that the facilitator has not made a fair and accurate ruling;
- 2) if s/he feels that a person is misrepresenting the rules for preventing a decision;
- 3) if s/he feels that a person is being obstructionist; or
- 4) if s/he feels that some other serious violation has taken place.

b) Upon any such challenge listed in step (a), and for the duration of the challenge, the meeting closes to any further business. If it is the facilitation that is being challenged, the facilitator must immediately give up facilitation of the

meeting to the co-facilitator, who in turn may ask for the appointment of a temporary co-facilitator.

c) The facilitator will hear the nature and reasons for the challenge and may call for contrary views or seek the opinion of the Fairness Committee. The facilitator will then poll the meeting on the challenge.

d) The challenge will be considered carried if a majority of the members at the meeting polled, not including the members initiating or subject to the challenge, accept the challenge. Upon acceptance of the challenge, the facilitator, in consultation with the meeting, may propose to the meeting, a further resolution to resolve issues related to the success of the challenge.

IX MINUTES

a) Each decision making plenary will have at least one person designated a recorder to record the minutes at all times. For large, teleconference, and/or important meetings, electronic recording of the meeting is also recommended in addition to the designated recorder.

b) The minutes shall include (at a minimum):

- 1) The title and purpose of the meeting and session;
- 2) The date, time, and place the meeting or session convened;
- 3) The persons in attendance and their membership/voting status. Approximations may be necessary for large plenary sessions.
- 4) The names of the facilitators, recorder(s), and timekeeper(s).
- 5) Agenda items or discussion topic headings, each followed by the approved wording of any motions accepted during the agenda item, and the context or rationale for a particular decision including any major points brought forward. Such context provided in addition to any approved wording of motions, should be in summary form and not personalized where possible.
- 6) The date, time, and place the meeting or session adjourned.
- 7) Relevant or necessary attachments or appendices.

c) The recorder shall ensure that completed minutes are forwarded to the party or meeting secretary for formatting, filing and distribution. The party or meeting secretary shall ensure that completed minutes are received from the recorders of each session.

d) The recorder shall be permitted to participate actively in the meeting to the extent that her/his voting or membership status allows.

X TIMEKEEPING

a) Each decision making plenary will have a person designated as timekeeper to keep track of time spent on parts of the session determined by the meeting.

b) At a minimum, as determined by the meeting, the timekeeper will notify the facilitator when

- 1) Allotted time is close to running out.
- 2) Allotted time has run out.

c) The timekeeper shall be permitted to participate actively in the meeting to the extent to which her/his voting or membership status allows.

XI PROCEDURAL ITEMS NOT COVERED BY THESE PROCEDURES

a) The facilitator may propose to the meeting, using the procedure outlined in step (j) of section V FACILITATION, procedural items not covered by these procedures or covered by any other relevant procedures of the GPV.