

NOTES ON THE CONDUCT OF EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

A. Call the meeting to order:

1. Strike the gavel, both to bring the room to order and to notify WisconsinEye that the meeting has been convened.
2. Ask members and visitors to take their seats.

B. Ask the clerk to call the roll.

C. If the executive session is held immediately following a public hearing, adjourn the hearing before convening the executive session. A separate roll call is required.

D. If the executive session is held part way through a public hearing (as in a Senate hearing on an executive appointment), *recess* the hearing before convening the executive session. Again, a separate roll call is required.

II. OPENING REMARKS

A. You may want to announce the order in which you will take up business, especially if you will deviate from the order on the meeting notice.

B. You may want to request that committee members and visitors set cell phones to vibrate only.

III. THE EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Announce the first item of business.

1. You may want to have the Legislative Council staff briefly summarize the bill.
2. Some chairs provide a brief summary, themselves.

B. Indicate what amendments are before the committee, including unIntroduced drafts.

C. Announce the first amendment to be considered.

1. You may wish to have the Legislative Council staff briefly summarize the amendment.
2. Ask for a motion and second.
3. Entertain debate on the amendment.
 - a. In general, you will want to limit debate to the amendment under consideration.

4. When there is no further debate, ask the clerk to call the roll.

D. When all amendments have been acted on, ask for a motion and second for passage of or concurrence in the main proposal.

1. Entertain debate on the proposal.
2. When there is no further debate, ask the clerk to call the roll.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

- A. When all business is completed, declare the meeting adjourned, striking the gavel.
- B. Under Assembly Rule 11 (5) (a), the vote must be held open after adjournment of the committee session to allow an absent member to vote until 5:00 p.m. on the day on which the committee is adjourned or 30 minutes after adjournment, whichever is earlier. The absent member shall cast his or her vote in the committee room where the meeting is held.

V. UNWRITTEN RULES AND COMMON PRACTICES:

- A. The chair is in charge. The chair mediates all discussion and members speak with the permission of the chair. Chairs vary in how strictly they observe this rule.
- B. Procedural rules are adhered to more strictly in executive sessions than in hearings, but the chair still has some discretion.
- C. While members of the public may observe, discussion in an executive session is limited to committee members. On rare occasions, a committee chair will ask a member of the public for input during an executive session.
- D. Legislative Council staff is available to assist the committee, answering questions regarding:
 - 1. Technical matters relating to the conduct of the executive session, such as the correct sequence of motions.
 - 2. Technical matters and background information relating to the substance of the proposals before the committee.
- E. In general, voting is by roll call. For non-controversial motions (such as introduction of an amendment), you may ask for unanimous consent.
 - 1. If unanimous consent is granted, the clerk records a unanimous vote of the members present.
 - 2. If unanimous consent is not granted, a roll call is required.
- F. In general, all votes are cast in the presence of the committee. If a member cannot be present when the roll is called, the following practices are suggested:
 - 1. The member may leave his or her votes with the committee before the roll is taken.
 - 2. The chair and clerk may wait for the member to return to the meeting room to cast his or her votes.

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