

## **SAMPLE -POLICY ON THE RULES OF ORDER**

### **Rules of Order Policy for the**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)**

All meetings of the \_\_\_\_\_ SWCD and any established committees thereof shall conduct board business using the following rules of order. In the absence of any specific legal requirement or policy established by the Board, *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (including those procedures and procedural flexibility that Robert's allows for small boards) shall apply.

However, the failure to follow Robert's Rules or any other local procedural rule(s) that have been set at the discretion of the Board shall not, standing alone, be construed to render any decisions made by the Board void, voidable, or otherwise invalid.

#### **Duties of the Presiding Officer**

1. At the appointed time and with a quorum is present at a meeting; the presiding officer shall call the meeting to order and proceed to board business. In the absence of a quorum (including as a result of the loss of a quorum during a meeting), the only official action that the Board may take is to adjourn the meeting.
2. It shall be the duty of the presiding officer at all times to preserve order at the meeting and to decide questions of order and parliamentary procedure, subject to an appeal to the Board by any two members.
3. The presiding officer has authority to make motions and vote just as other Board members do.

#### **Motions and Discussion**

1. Any Board member, including the presiding officer, shall be permitted to enter discussion on any subject on the meeting agenda. Limitations include:
  - (a) The presiding officer shall stop the discussion of a matter if the Board or committee previously agreed to limit discussions to a specified period of time and that period of time has been exceeded.
  - (b) The presiding officer shall stop any discussion that does not apply to the pending motion/subject matter.
2. Action on items of business will be taken by motion. In this policy, the term "motion" is intended to include any "resolution" of the Board. A motion stated by one Board member may be seconded by another Board member. The effect of seconding a motion is that the motion may thereafter be withdrawn or amended prior to a vote being taken only with either:
  - (1) The approval of a majority vote of the Board
  - (2) The approval by unanimous consent. Unanimous consent can be shown by verbally asking whether any individual Board member has an objection to the proposed amendment to, or withdrawal of, the pending motion.

Prior to a pending motion being seconded, the maker of the motion shall be entitled to amend or withdraw the pending motion until such time as a vote is taken.

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3. In the event a motion has been stated but not seconded, any Board member may make a "call for a second" any time prior to a vote being taken. If a pending motion is not seconded after a "call for a second" has been made, then the minutes of the meeting shall reflect that the motion "failed for lack of a second," and the presiding officer shall continue the meeting without a vote on that motion. If a main motion has received a second and a Board member wishes to dispose of the motion without a direct vote on it, the proper procedure is to make a secondary motion to postpone the main motion (either indefinitely or to a date certain), which motion also requires a majority vote in order to pass.
4. Board members are not required to obtain the floor prior to speaking or making motions.
5. Board members are not limited in the number of times they may speak to a question, except as the result of a motion to limit or end debate that has been adopted by the Board.
6. When extended discussion/debate is occurring over a pending motion, any motion to end or limit discussion/debate and move to a vote on the pending main motion must be approved by a two thirds vote of those Board members who vote on the motion. A motion to establish a specific time limit for discussion of an item of business that is set prior to the beginning of the debate/discussion (or to modify such a limit after the limit has been set) shall also require a two thirds vote.
7. A new motion shall be out of order while another motion is being discussed with the exception of appropriate secondary motions, such as the following: an amendment to the motion under discussion, a motion to adjourn, a motion to postpone the main motion (either indefinitely or to a time certain), a motion to refer the motion being discussed, or a motion to end or limit debate in order to reach a vote on the pending main motion.
8. Informal discussion of a subject is allowed without a motion pending.
9. No member shall be interrupted while speaking, unless he/she is out of order, or for the purpose of correcting mistakes or misinterpretations.
10. If any member acts in any respect in a disorderly manner, it shall be the privilege of any member, and the duty of the presiding officer to call him/her to order.

### **Voting**

1. Voting may be by a yes or no voice vote by the members present at the meeting, except when a roll call vote is required by law or by Board policy, or when requested by the presiding officer or any member of the Board or committee. All votes on a motion to convene in executive session shall be by roll call vote.
2. Members may abstain from voting on a matter where they believe they have cause for doing so, but must announce their abstention. The names of members abstaining shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
3. No Board member may cast a vote by proxy or by absentee ballot.
4. A motion is passed/adopted when a majority of the Board (3 affirmative votes) cast their votes in favor of the motion, except as otherwise required by law or by the Board.
5. On split votes, the names of the members voting with the minority shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. When a vote is taken by roll call, the minutes shall clearly reflect the vote of each voting Board member.

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6. A motion, once voted upon, and whether defeated or adopted, cannot be reconsidered at the same meeting without the approval of a motion to reconsider by a majority of the members of the Board or committee. Any Board member who voted on the prevailing side of the vote on the original motion may make such a motion to reconsider the original motion.

7. A motion to rescind (nullify) any prior motion adopted by the Board at a subsequent meeting shall be handled as provided for in Robert's Rules of Order. Any motion to suspend the rules shall require the approval of a two-thirds vote of those members who are present at the meeting.

This policy, while setting forth procedural rules for the conduct of meetings of committees, it shall not be construed to grant any committee the power to take action on behalf of the Board

This policy shall be in force until such time as it is; rescinded, amended or replaced by the duly elected or appointed Board of Supervisors holding office at that time.

Adopted by the \_\_\_\_\_ Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors on:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

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