

**Additional Q&A from MMCA parliamentary procedures webinar,
April 24, 2024**

Answers provided by Marlborough City Council President Michael Ossing

Q: Can you give more background on the motion to reconsider?

A: If a motion has been either adopted or defeated during a meeting, and at least one councillor who voted on the winning side wants to have the vote reconsidered, that councillor may make a motion to reconsider. In Marlborough, the City Council rules allow any councillor to make a motion to reconsider. The motion to reconsider must be made at the meeting where the vote occurred. The motion to reconsider is a simple majority vote and the item will appear on the next agenda.

Q: Is this when you bring new information to the floor?

A: Again, motion to reconsider is only used after a vote has been taken.

Q: What is the best way to handle the situation when that councilor (and several other councilors) want an item on an upcoming council agenda, but the council president refuses to put it on the agenda?

A: The Marlborough Council rules allow any councillor to place an item on the agenda. Speaking from my perspective as president, I allow any councillor to place an item on the agenda. Whether the votes are there to support that item would be determined when the agenda item is discussed.

Q: On our council of 11, there are some topics where we can be nearly evenly divided, and if a member recuses themselves, we have faced a 5-5 deadlock. Neither council rules or Roberts Rules clearly address what happens when a deadlock occurs. Any suggestions?

A: This is a difficult one. There have been cases in Marlboro (for the election of the president) where one councillor was absent and the vote was 5-5 after several attempts. The item was taken up at the next meeting, when all the councilors were in attendance. Unfortunately, if the vote is going to be 5-5, the item will go away with no decision at the end of the meeting unless a councilor changes their mind. The item can be added to a future agenda and determine if it has a different outcome.

Q: If there is an order on the agenda from the city, can the order be amended as a motion in a subcommittee meeting?

A: If the full council sends an order to a subcommittee for review, the order can be amended as long as the subcommittee votes favorably on the amendment. This would then be returned to the full council for a vote on the amended order.

Q: Do you have a template that you use for keeping track of who wants to speak, how often they have spoken on an issue, etc.?

A: As president, I have to keep track of that and I haven't figured out a great system yet.

From a public participation perspective, setting the time limit for speaking allows each member of the public to speak once. The time limit must be set at the start of the agenda item. As president, I write down the name of each speaker.

From a councilor participation perspective, each councilor may only speak once until every councilor that wants to speak has had an opportunity. Time limits for discussion can also be used if stated ahead of time or if specified in the council rules.