

**Ottawa Area Intergroup of
Alcoholics Anonymous®**

Policies and Procedures

August 25, 2019

Disclaimer: The Policies and Procedures described in this document were approved by Ottawa Area Intergroup.

These Policies and Procedures are intended to complement the Bylaws and provide additional details.

However, if there is a conflict between this document and the Bylaws, the Bylaws will take precedence, unless otherwise agreed to by the membership of Ottawa Area Intergroup.

Contents

Business Procedures..... 5

- 1. Rules of Order 5**
- 2. Quorum 5**
- 3. Eligibility to vote 5**
- 4. Motions 6**
- 5. Elections 11**
- 6. Minutes 12**

Sections in Progress:

Roles and Responsibilities of Directors

History of Ottawa Area Intergroup

Revision Log

Revision Number	Revision Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Nature of Revision	Date Approved (Membership)
1.0	2019-08-25	Approved by Membership	2019-08-25
1.1	2020-09-06	<p>Bylaw reference updated to current published version of by-law; table of contents and page numbers added; small grammar edits/updates.</p> <p>Disclaimer added after title page to confirm relationship between Intergroup by-laws and this document in the case of any discrepancy.</p> <p>Roles and Responsibilities of Directors and History of Ottawa Area Intergroup headings added as placeholders for those sections.</p>	

Business Procedures

1. Rules of Order

All meetings are conducted according to the Policies and Procedures adopted by Ottawa Area Intergroup. The business procedures generally follow Robert's Rules of Order.

2. Quorum¹

A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of members will consist of not less than twenty-two (22) intergroup representatives and (4) officers.

The intention of the above quorum is that the number of voting intergroup representatives will always be at least 2/3 of the total vote.

For the transaction of business at director meetings, four (4) directors will form a quorum.

3. Eligibility to vote²

Intergroup representatives; (or in his/her absence, the alternate intergroup representative; or in the absence of both, a member from the group), officers, and committee chairs and are eligible to vote, or present a motion.

All officers, as elected trusted servants, each with their own relevant service experience, are individually responsible for acting in the best interests of Ottawa Area Intergroup as a whole and are expected to exercise their right of participation accordingly.

Duties of the Chair

The Chair has the same right as other members of Intergroup, but to maintain impartiality, exercises discretion with respect to their level of participation. For example, the chair will not normally participate in the discussion, nor be

¹ By-Law Article 21:00

² Concept #4, Right of Participation

expected to participate in a 'show of hands' vote especially those of a divisive nature.

In circumstances where, the chair is absent from a meeting, or in the rare occasion, the chair wishes to participate in the discussion, the duties of the chair will temporarily be performed by the next officer in the order indicated on the agenda.

4. Motions

Background

It is essential the group conscience be informed, and that all relevant information is presented before an item is discussed. Experience has taught us that it is best to have thoroughly researched and discussed an idea before a vote is taken.

Issues that are or have the potential to become contentious are best not forced to an immediate conclusion. Matters of this type are best introduced, discussed, then returned to the groups for further discussion before being brought to the floor of the next meeting.

Matters of a simple nature may be dealt with by obtaining a sense of the Intergroup body.

No decision is ever final. There is always the minority opinion and the right of appeal to force reconsideration of the voting outcome.

How Items Get to the Floor

Each intergroup representative, alternate representative (or group member acting as a representative), committee chair or intergroup officer, has an equal opportunity to raise items either through a committee or from the floor.

If information is not clear or more background information is required, it is better to defer the vote on an item rather than reach a hasty conclusion.

The following are methods of bringing business to the floor:

- a) Committee recommendation - a special service or ad hoc committee has researched the item, along with all background material and committee chair presents a recommendation to Intergroup.
- b) Each intergroup representative, alternate representative (or group member acting as a representative) committee chair or intergroup officer can bring up or present an idea for discussion or make a motion for discussion. Again, it is essential that all voting members have background material and be allowed the time necessary for a group conscience to develop.

Substantial Unanimity

In voting on important matters, Intergroup seeks to obtain "substantial unanimity." This means that at least two thirds of the voting members have voted in favor of the motion and, if applicable, any amendment to the motion. In situations where it may not be obvious, the chair may wish to ask the intergroup body if the issue is important enough to require substantial unanimity (e.g., simple majority by show of hands).

Other, less important items (e.g., if or when to take a break from business) can be decided by simple majority (i.e., more than 50%).

Motions

Motions should be simple and clear. If more than one idea or issue is included, it should be broken down into two or more separate motions.

A motion should initiate a positive action. Negative motions should be avoided.

Where practical, motions should be presented in writing and presented to the secretary before discussion.

The person making the motion will present the motion and background information to the intergroup body.

Once a motion is made, a second is required before any discussion occurs. If the motion is not seconded, it dies and discussion does not take place.

Discussion

The chairperson is responsible for facilitating discussion on a motion. It is important that the individual who made the motion be available to answer any questions that might arise during the discussion. Individuals wishing to comment or ask questions about the motion should do so preferably using a floor microphone.

Members should not address the motion a second time until all persons have had a first opportunity.

Comments should be relatively brief and to the point (e.g., less than two minutes). Under special circumstances, where it is necessary to clarify an issue or provide additional background information, an individual may request that the chair grant them a specified time prior to proceeding with their comments.

If someone has already made your point it is appropriate to remain silent rather than reiterate the same point.

During the discussion, comments should be restricted to the motion on the floor.

Amending a Motion

During the discussion, someone may believe that the motion requires rewording or other modification. Anyone (including the person who originally made the motion), can make a motion for an amendment. If no one seconds the motion to amend however, it dies, and discussion on the original motion continues.

If a motion to amend is seconded, discussion and voting will proceed on the amended motion.

There are two possible outcomes:

1. The amended motion is carried by the vote and the original motion dies.
2. The amended motion is defeated, and discussion resumes on the original motion.

Tabling a Motion

During the discussion it may become apparent that more information is required to arrive at an informed group conscience. Anyone can make a motion that the motion being discussed be tabled (deferred for a specified time period or until a certain date).

If the motion to table is seconded, discussion ceases on the motion being discussed. If the motion to table is carried by a simple majority vote, the motion being discussed will be deferred and brought up as a standing motion under old business at the specified time.

Withdrawing a Motion

The person making a motion or amendment may withdraw it at any time and, if agreed to by the person who seconded the motion, it is withdrawn and discussion ceases.

Terminating the Discussion

Discussion ceases under the following two conditions:

- There are no more people at the microphone to speak to the issue. At this point the chairperson will conduct the vote.
- Someone from the floor wishes to terminate the discussion and proceed with voting. That person will take their turn at the microphone and say "I'd like to call the question." The chairperson will then ask the Intergroup if they are ready to vote. If they are in favor by two thirds majority then the chairperson will conduct the vote. If not, then discussion will resume.

Voting

The chairperson will conduct the vote, usually by a show of hands by eligible voters. Votes will be either for or against the motion. Voters may abstain but by choosing so they will not be recognized as part of the minority opinion after the vote.

Contentious issues or those likely to generate resentments should be conducted by a written vote. For example, if the general consensus of the intergroup body (e.g., simple majority by show of hands) indicates that the motion being discussed is contentious then a written vote shall be held.

Elections are *always* by written ballot following the Third Legacy Procedure.

Minority Opinion

After a vote the chairperson will invite any minority (defeated side) to speak to the issue, following the guidance outlined in the above Discussion section.

Only the minority can initially address the Intergroup. Once someone from the minority has spoken, any one person from the majority can address the Intergroup for the purpose of advising that they wish to change their vote.

Reconsideration

After notification by an individual who voted with the majority that they wish to change their vote, the chairperson will ask the Intergroup if they want to re-open the motion for discussion.

If a simple majority (51%) is in favor, then the chairperson will reopen the discussion and proceed to a re-vote in the same format as before. If not, then the remaining minority can continue to address the Intergroup. Again, a majority member can ask for a re-vote with the above procedure being followed.

All voters in the minority should be allowed the opportunity to speak to the issue.

Interpreting the Vote

Once voting is complete, the results must be interpreted. They can generally be interpreted as follows:

1. Substantial unanimity, at least two thirds of the votes cast, means the course of action should be followed.
2. If less than one third is in favor, then we should not follow the action of the motion.
3. A vote between one and two thirds indicates a "maybe." This might indicate that not enough information was available at the time of the vote. If that is the case, then the chair could ask the intergroup body if they wish to have the matter readdressed by a committee for reconsideration at a future date.

Repeat Motions

Repeat motions (those with substantially the same intent) are generally not allowed. However, Intergroup may want to reconsider a motion if new information becomes available later. In this situation it would be appropriate to obtain the sense of the Intergroup and, if a simple majority favors reconsideration, the motion will be reintroduced.

Supporting Group Conscience

Once the group conscience has spoken, it is important that individual members put aside their own preferences and cooperate as part of the group. It is important to realize that we do not have to change our opinion but simply to appreciate that our common welfare must come first. This means putting our egos behind us to preserve our unity.

5. Elections

Each candidate will present their service resume to Intergroup at an election meeting.

Voting for qualified officers and directors will be conducted by written ballot in accordance with the "Third Legacy" procedure outlined in the current A.A. Service Manual for the election of "trusted servants."

6. Minutes

The Minutes of Meetings of Ottawa Area Intergroup (OAG) will include each motion (including the name and group of the member making the motion and seconder) presented at the meeting along with the disposition of the motion (carried, defeated, tabled, withdrawn, or other). The minutes will also include a list of groups represented at the meeting and summary information from each of the reports presented.

The Secretary shall distribute the minutes of meetings to: registered intergroup representatives and alternate intergroup representatives; registered group members; and all officers of Ottawa Area Intergroup. Minutes are available on the Intergroup website and can be made available to any member of A.A. on request.

Roles and Responsibilities of Directors

History of Ottawa Area Intergroup