



the Métis
Nation *of*
Ontario

**Rules of Order
2006**

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Introduction

The growth of the Métis Nation has been unprecedented in Ontario Métis history. I was fortunate to have been one of many Métis people present at George Brown House, in Toronto, October, 1993, when the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) was formed.

The Métis Nation has been structured on democratic values, as per our statement of Prime Purpose. The ballot-box election process that was completed in 1996 is evidence of these values. One person, one secret vote, in an approved process.

The continuous growth and success of the Métis Nation will be based on the decisions made at our MNO annual assemblies: at the Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO): and by our community councils, throughout Ontario.

One thing the Métis people have always done well is to unite, when challenged by and outside force. Our challenge now, is to ensure that we are not defeated as a people from within, by not allowing the voice of the minority to be heard. We have always addressed the needs of our people by calling meetings and debating the issues facing us, and then acting on the decision made.

The way we meet, make decisions, and the rules we follow have not been documented. Traditionally, parliamentary procedure has been followed, with its use of “motions”, but we strive for consensus, and the rule of the majority is only employed if necessary. *Robert's Rules of Order* (Princeton Language Institute. (1995). 21st Century Robert's Rules of Order. New York, Laurel.) has been adapted with our own Métis flavour and cultural twists.

I have put to pen what I have seen us, as a Métis Nation, doing by convention over the years. When an area has been unclear, I have drafted rules based on written parliamentary rules, and my own experience. *The Métis Nation Rules of Order* was accepted in principle at the PCMNO meeting on 3 February, 1997.

Ron Swain

Métis Nation Parliamentary Procedure and Principles for a Meeting

The active and positive participation of Métis citizens in the meetings of governing bodies of the Métis Nation is vital to the good governance of the Métis Nation. The future growth and success of the Métis Nation will be based on decisions made at these meetings. We recognize and affirm the need for fair and consistent procedural rules to guide such meetings. These Métis Nation Rules of Order shall be the procedural rules for meetings of governing bodies, and shall apply to all meetings of MNO citizens at all levels.

- ✚ The Métis Nation shall strive for consensus, which means that all eligible voters at a meeting affirmatively agree to the passage of a motion or proposal, or do not actively disagree with the passage of the proposal. If consensus cannot be reached the will of the majority shall rule.
- ✚ The minority shall be heard, and its rights protected.
- ✚ Every Métis Citizen shall have rights equal to every other Métis citizen.
- ✚ Only one topic shall be considered at a time
- ✚ Fairness and courtesy shall be extended to all, and the speakers' protocol shall apply to all meetings.
- ✚ The interests of those people absent (with cause) from the meeting shall be safeguarded.
- ✚ Métis codes, by-laws, regulations and policy shall be recognized and followed.

Speakers shall:

- ✚ Be free from the influence of drugs or alcohol
- ✚ Speak only when recognized by the Chair
- ✚ Address all comments to the Chair
- ✚ Be courteous to all participants
- ✚ Show respect for Elders and all other people
- ✚ Listen to other speakers
- ✚ Strive not to take personally comments made by other speakers
- ✚ Refrain from swearing or using inflammatory language
- ✚ Restricts remarks to the motion or issue being discussed, and not comment on the person who puts it forward, or on others who speak to the motion
- ✚ Strive to comment in a constructive manner and to put forward positive solutions to issues being discussed
- ✚ Not speak a second or third time on a matter until others who wish to speak have done so unless asked a question

Quorum

The quorum for Métis meetings of citizens including Annual Assemblies, General Assemblies and Special Assemblies is as per by-laws. At Assemblies a coloured voting card system for each day may be used. If a person does not have a card, the MNO citizenship card is prima facie proof and entitlement to vote and speak at MNO meetings.

The quorum for PCMNO meetings is as per by-laws, and for PCMNO executive meetings is as per by-laws.

The quorum for MNO Métis Community Councils is set by their own Community Charter.

Debate

What is debate? Debate is “discussions about a subject on which people have different views” (Collins, 1990). Debate, then, is the purpose of any meeting. When Métis Nation Rules of Order are used properly, debate allows Métis citizens to speak their opinions openly, without fear of condemnation or reprisal. Debate does not involve people yelling or insulting one another. On the contrary, it is a highly structured way to exchange viewpoints and resolve issues. Furthermore, debate gives the PCMNO or MNO General Assembly the ability to reach an agreement that reflects the will of the majority of Métis citizens while at the same time, ensuring the rights of the minority.

Métis Nation Rules of Debating

The Right To Speak:

First speaker: The Métis citizen who makes the motion is entitled to speak first in the debate. Every Métis citizen of an assembly is entitled to speak once on a debatable motion, limited by the time dedicated to the issue. The PCMNO and the MNO General Assemblies are deemed to be “assemblies” under parliamentary law.

Speaking A Second Time:

Every citizen may speak a second time on the same question, unless other citizens who have not already spoken wish to do so. In this case, the Métis citizen cannot speak to the same question. Asking a question, or making a suggestion, is not considered to be speaking to the motion. Such actions are not counted against the time limit.







Speaking A Third Time:

If no one objects, Métis citizens can speak a third time on the same question. However, the Chair should not recognize a person speaking a second or third time, if someone who has not spoken is waiting for the floor.

ONLY MÉTIS CITIZENS have the privilege of speaking to debateable issues. Guest speaking is limited to government presentations, dignitaries and invited guests, none of whom may join in the debate.

Interrupting Speakers:

Generally, a speaker should not be interrupted, unless the matter is urgent, for the essence of debate is the free exchange of ideas. The following interruptions are allowed in emergencies (See Appendix for definitions)

-  Point of order
-  Question of privilege
-  Appeal the decision of the Chair
-  Call a Métis citizen to order
-  Request permission to withdraw a motion
-  Call for division of a question

Time Limit:

Each Métis speaker is restricted to X minutes. This time limit helps to ensure that everyone is given a chance to speak and that the agenda can be completed. However, if a complicated issue is being debated, the Chair may deem it appropriate to extend the time limit to ten *at the* beginning of the debate. Once started, the time limit cannot be lengthened or shortened on that particular issue.

The restrictions into not applied to the President of the MNO, who may speak as many times, and for as long as s/he wishes. Guests speaking are limited to government presentations, dignitaries and invited guests, none of whom may join in the debate.

Limiting Or Extending Debate:

Since the time granted for each topic is at the discretion of the Chair, a Métis citizen may request that the Chair limit or extend debate. The person making the request can speak to why the time should be extended or restricted. The Chair makes the final decision. The President has the privilege of extending or limiting debate, by standing and making this statement “Mr. /Madame Chair, I wish to extend the debate by 15 minutes.” The Chair must recognize the President and grant the extension. The time the President can extend the debate is limited to 20 minutes. The President can also limit debate by standing and making this statement: “Madame/ Mr. Chair, I wish to shorten debate time by half.” The President can shorten debate time by a maximum of one half.

SPEAKING ON AMENDMENTS:

A Métis citizen who has used up their time limit debating a motion, may still speak on amendments and other motions. A new time limit is allowed because the question is in a different stage of discussion.

Transfer of Debate Rights:

A Métis citizen cannot transfer his/her debate time to another Métis citizen. Likewise, a Métis citizen cannot reserve any portion of his/her debate time for a later time. “Use it or lose it”, is the rule that governs debate time.

The Chair May Not Encage In Debate:

Not allowing the Chair to debate helps ensure that the Chair remains impartial; thereby, protecting the rights of the minority. If the Chair wishes to speak, s/he must step down from the role of Chair. This rule is set aside in committees.

When A Decision Of The Chair Has Been Appealed:

- ✚ The Chair may speak twice on the topic without leaving the chair. These speaking opportunities can occur once at the end.
- ✚ Citizens may speak once to the appeal.(This is different from the Chair's privilege, the Chair may speak twice to the issue)
- ✚ The PCMNO or Assembly, then votes. A two-thirds majority is required to overturn a decision of the Chair.

The Chair's decision on time limits, extensions, or reductions, cannot be appealed.

Debate Decorum

Debate must be confined to the merits of the pending question and to the agenda. Citizens may not speak to other issues, no matter how important they may be to the speaker. Despite the clear-cut practices of the Métis Nation Rules of Order, debates can become heated and tempers flare. To help Métis citizens avoid "getting hot under the collar", the policy is to stick as closely as possible to Métis Nation Rules of Order, and to avoid dragging personalities into the debate. Here are some general guidelines for maintaining debate decorum.

Referring To Other Citizens:

Rather than referring to other citizens by name, try to say "the Métis citizen who spoke previously" or "the Métis citizen who spoke previously". If names must be used the last name is to be used in all issues, i.e. Ms. Smith, Mr. Jones. The Chair should always be addressed as "Madame Chair" or "Mr. Chair". The President should be addressed as "Mr. President, Madame President". Or "President Smith" The Officers or senators should be addressed as "Senator" or "Senator Green". Likewise "Secretary" or "Secretary White", the use of titles discourages, name calling, the assignment of blame and the making of personal accusation. Furthermore, it demonstrates the serious nature of Métis deliberations and our commitment to our Aboriginal rights.

Condemning Motion, Not Motive:










Citizens may not impugn the motives of other citizens, but they can condemn the nature and result of the motion. Re: Métis citizen, it is the motion not the Métis citizen that is open to attack.

Obeying The Chair:

All citizens should immediately stop talking, if the Chair asserts privilege. For instance, if the Chair rises to state a Point of Order, give information on, or speak on any issue, the speaker must stop talking and sit down if standing, until the Chair's remarks are concluded. People should not whisper, rustle papers, walk around the room or in any way disrupt the Chair or any speaker. If the Chair calls a Métis citizen "out of order", the Métis citizen must immediately cease talking and sit down if standing. If the Métis citizen violates decorum, or Métis Nation Rules of Order, after two warnings, the Métis

citizen cannot speak again, if anyone objects. The PCMNO or Assembly must vote to reassert the Métis citizen's rights. This cannot be debated.

Motions That Cannot Be Debated

-  Closing debate
-  Questions about granting permission to continue a speech to someone who violates debate decorum
-  Fixing a time at which to adjourn
-  Adjourning
-  Objections to the consideration of a motion
-  Tabling a motion
-  Questions about reading papers
-  Questions about withdrawing motions
-  Extending debate

How to End Debate

When it is clear that the vast majority of citizens have expressed their opinions and that the PCMNO or assembly is ready to make a decision the Chair can ask if “question” is called. When calling for a vote, the Métis Nation has always used the word “question”. Any Métis citizen of the council or assembly may call out “question”, and hold up his/her arm. The Chair must acknowledge the request for a vote. However, the Chair may also suspend the vote if no debate has been heard at all, or if the debate has been under half the allotted time. The only other way to suspend the vote is for a motion to be put forward by a PCMNO, or MNO citizen suspending “question” until after the allotted time. This motion must be seconded and only the mover can make a short statement before it is voted upon. The majority rules. The Chair reads the motion and states, “Question has been called. Do we have consensus? Does anyone object to the motion or abstain?” This statement is repeated three times. If no one objects or abstains the motion is carried by consensus. If someone abstains and says that s/he is close to supporting the motion but thinks that some qualification should be made, indicating an amendment, an amendment can be entertained. If none of those who object or abstain makes a statement, the Chair will ask if any minor changes will cause people to change their mind, and bring about consensus. If no one answers, the motion is put to a vote and the majority rules. Those who have objected or abstained may make a short statement for the record, indicating why they did not support the motion.

How to Build a Motion

The Métis Nation's method of ensuring an appropriate group decision is to build a motion through a consensus process. This method eliminates a complicated amendment procedure after an initial motion has been proposed. It also ensures that a large majority will agree with the motion, rather than the mere 51% required by typical voting procedure.

Example

Ms. Smith says: “I move the adoption of the agenda as presented.”

Mr. Jones says: “I second that motion.”

1. **STEP ONE:** Describe the issue or problem confronting the MNO. State the problem clearly and concisely. If it is a complex issue, do it in writing. It has been the role of the President and executive to identify the problems and the priority each is given. However, each Métis citizen of the council can also identify issues. Listing new issues and ensuring that they are on the agenda takes place at the beginning of each meeting.
2. **STEP TWO:** Gather all information relevant to the problem. All pertinent facts and ideas need to be heard in order to make a wise decision. The Chair will distinguish between facts and opinions,
3. **STEP THREE:** The Chair decides whether the item needs to be deferred, or if a motion to table the topic can be put forward immediately. Often, a decision can be made right away. However, sometimes action needs to be deferred so that additional information can be gathered.
4. **STEP FOUR:** At this point it must be determined whether the item is a “motion” or a “resolution” A “motion” is a formal proposal by a council Métis citizen, made at a meeting that the people take action on a specific matter. If the “motion” calls for a greater level of formality, it should be presented in the form of a “resolution”. A “resolution” is longer and more complex than a “motion” and is prepared in writing before the meeting and then read to the PCMNO or the MNO Assembly. The resolution usually has a preamble or introduction and is much more descriptive with several paragraphs starting with “Whereas”, and ending with “Therefore, be it resolved.” In order to be discussed by the council or assembly, the “motion” or “resolution” must be seconded.
5. **STEP FIVE:** Before debate begins, the Chair must state the motion and set a time limit for debate, such as 15 minutes or 20 minutes if at the end of that time debate is not finished, the Chair must decide whether to end debate or to extend the period. Often if people have spoken twice on the issue, they will not speak again. However, the object is to gain consensus on the issue.
6. **STEP SIX:** When calling for a vote, the Métis Nation has always used the word “question”. Any Métis citizen of the council or assembly may call out “question” and hold up his/her arm. The Chair must acknowledge the request for a vote. However, the Chair may also suspend the vote if not debate has been heard at all, or if the debate has been under half the allotted time. The only other way to suspend the vote is for a motion to be put forward by a PCMNO, or MNO citizen suspending “question” until after the allotted time. This motion must be seconded and only the mover can make a short statement before it is voted upon. The majority rules. The Chair reads the motion and states, “Question has been called. Do we have consensus? Does anyone object to the motion or abstain?” This statement is repeated three times, If no one actively disagrees the motion is carried by consensus, If someone actively disagrees and says that s/he is close to supporting the motion but thinks that some qualification should be make, indicating and amendment, an amendment can be entertained. If none of those who object makes a statement indicating major disagreement, the Chair will ask if any minor changes will cause people to change their minds, and

bring about consensus. If no one answers, the motion is put to a vote and the majority rules. Those who have objected or abstained may make a short statement for the record, indicating why they did not support the motion.



How to Change a Motion

Example:

Mr. Jones says: "Before the Chair reads the motion, I would like to modify it to read" "I move that we hold the annual assembly in Sault Ste. Marie, and that it be an outdoor assembly, with time for recreational and cultural events."

The Chair asks the seconder if he agrees with the change. If the answer is "yes" the modified motion is read by the Chair and then the Chair opens debate, stating the time limit. If the answer is "no" the Chair asks if someone else would like to second Mr. Jones motion in its changed form. After the Chair has read the motion to the assembly if can be amended or withdrawn only with the consent of the assembly.

After the motion has been read by the Chair a person can move and amendment to the motion, providing that it does not substantially change the original motion. For instance, in the example above Mr. Jones' motion could not be changed to "I move that the annual assembly not be held in Sault Sainte. Marie....." Any amendment must be seconded and the assembly must vote on the change (amendment) before the motion can be voted upon. Any debate on the amendment must be short and must not debate the main motion. It is at the discretion of the Chair to call an amendment "out of Order"

-  If the person who made the motion changes his/her mind, then s/he can withdraw the motion. The process is different, depending upon when the person wants to withdraw the motion (See examples.)
-  If the person who made the motion decides that the motion should be changed and debated in the changed form, then that person can modify the motion.

Example

Mr. Jones says: "I move that we hold the annual assembly in Sault Ste. Marie."

Mr. Smith says: "I second that motion"


How to Amend a Motion

-  Add words at the end of the motion.

Example:

Mr. Jones: "Mr. Chair I move that the MNO purchase office equipment for each Community council."

Ms. Smith: Mr. Chair, I amend the motion to read: "...the MNO purchase office equipment for each community council at a cost not to exceed \$300."

 Insert words at any place in the motion.

Example:

Ms. Black: Madame Chair, I move that the MNO hold a meeting in region 5, regarding fishing and hunting issues.

Mr. White: Madame Chair, I amend the motion to read "...that the MNO hold a meeting in region 5, at Sault Ste. Marie, regarding fishing and hunting issues."

 Strike out words.

Example:

Mr. Green: Mr. Chair, I move that the MNO create an annual assembly committee to organize all upcoming assemblies.

Ms. Fed: Mr. Chair, I amend the motion to strike out the word "all" in the motion.

 Strike out words, and add others.

Example:

Ms. Black: Madame Chair, I move that the event be an outdoor assembly."

Amendments that are simple and accepted by the citizens or council may be adopted by unanimous consent, without going through the formal amending process.

Division Of Question:

When a motion pertaining to a single question has a number of different parts, each of which can stand as a distinct proposition, the parts can be separated and voted on individually. This achieved by adopting the motion called, "division of question".

It is usually best to divide the question when it is first proposed, but it can be divided at any point in the debate.

The motion "to divide" must clearly state the way in which the motion is to be divided. If several different proposals are made, they should be voted on in the order in which they are made.

Example:






Ms. Smith: Madame Chair, I move that the MNO fund all delegates' travel to the annual assembly at a rate of 20 cents per km., and that the MNO delegates be five citizens per community council, and the community representatives.

Mr. Jones: Madame Chair, I second the motion

Ms. White: Madame Chair I move that we divide the question so as to consider separately, the number of delegates, from the amount of funding.

Mr. Brown: Madame Chair, I second that motion of division.

Rules that apply to the Division of a Question




-  It takes precedence over the main motion
-  It must be seconded
-  It cannot be debated
-  It can be amended
-  It requires consensus or majority vote to be adopted

Consensus

The Métis Nation will first attempt to reach consensus (everyone in agreement). If consensus cannot be reached, the Chair will call for a vote, and the majority will rule, or if required, the two-thirds rule will apply. The Métis Nation shall strive for consensus on the decisions made. The consensus process was approved at the first Annual Assembly of the Métis Nation of Ontario, at River Valley. Consensus means that all eligible voters at a meeting affirmatively agree to the passage of a proposal or do not actively disagree with the passage of the proposal. “Abstaining” is not active disagreement.

To avoid getting “the Red River Cart before the horse” some background is required. A rule of parliamentary procedure, which states that “discussion can take place only after a motion is proposed”, can actually hamper a free and easy exchange of ideas, in fact, a motion is a proposed course of action, a solution to a problem, or a decision. Focusing the attention of the group on a solution before the scope of the problem has been fully realized, may result in the group voting on something that is entirely inappropriate.

During meetings, issues requiring a decision shall be put forward by means of motions or resolutions and shall be read out at least two times. The Chair shall then encourage full and fair discussion of the matter. The motion or resolution may be amended as required. The Chair shall ask three times if the motion or resolution is agreed upon by Consensus. Citizens may at this time, express concerns about the matter and may state that in spite of their concerns they consent to pass the motion or resolution if no one actively disagrees, the motion or resolution shall be passed by Consensus. If some participants disagree then the Chair may:

-  Reopen the discussion
-  Suggest that the motion be tabled until the next meeting, if in the opinion of the Chair further information or consultation might lead to Consensus.
-  Call for a vote.

What to Do When Consensus Cannot Be Reached

Use a majority vote in order to accomplish the following actions:

- ✚ Adopt an amendment of a pending motion
- ✚ Approve a main motion
- ✚ Adopt the agenda
- ✚ Adopt a report
- ✚ Approve minutes
- ✚ Call for adjournment
- ✚ Call for an adjournment at a future time
- ✚ Dispense with the reading of the minutes
- ✚ Divide a question or motion
- ✚ Be excused from duty for the day
- ✚ Fix the time at which to adjourn
- ✚ Table a motion or agenda item
- ✚ Grant permission to continue speaking after being censured for speaking out of turn
- ✚ Make nominating motions
- ✚ Postpone to a certain time
- ✚ Raise a question of privilege
- ✚ Ratify
- ✚ Read papers
- ✚ Recess
- ✚ Refer to committee
- ✚ Re-open nominations
- ✚ Re-open tables agenda item
- ✚ Withdraw motion

When Consensus Cannot Be Reached – The two-Thirds Vote

Use a two-thirds vote only in the case of specific motions:

- ✚ Those that limit certain privileges of a person.
- ✚ Those that suspend or change the rules
- ✚ Those that prevent a question from being brought to the floor
- ✚ To close nominations
- ✚ To close debate
- ✚ To give another person additional privileges

Examples

- ✚ Adopt Métis Nation Rules of Order
- ✚ Change Métis Nation Rules of Order
- ✚ Amend a motion previously adopted
- ✚ Rescind a motion previously adopted
- ✚ Discharge a committee
- ✚ Postpone a pending motion to a certain time
- ✚ Amend the by-laws
- ✚ Challenge the decision of the Chair



Amend an adopted agenda when specific items have not been treated

Voting Methods

When calling for consensus the chair asks if anyone is abstaining or against the motion. If citizens actively disagree and are against the motion, and the Chair decides that a vote is required, the vote still takes place in the regular fashion, normally a show of hands. (A call for a secret vote, by ballot must be in the form of a motion with a seconder, and is not debatable) The majority rules or two-thirds rules, depending upon the issue. The Chair then asks all those⁴ apposed to the motion to raise their hands and then all those who abstained are asked to raise their hands. In the event of a tie the Chair votes or the Co-Chair, if that person is chairing the meeting. The Chair will vote in favour of what s/he believes is best for the MNO.

The MNO Assembly is held once a year and many citizens unknown to the Chair(s) may be participating in the debate. At such meetings citizens are required to register, and are issued a voting card and identification tag. When voting the Chair may ask citizens to stand and hold up their voting cards. This makes it easier to count votes and may help eliminate the need for a re-vote.

Re-Vote Motion:

A re-vote motion must be made immediately after the Chair announces the results of a vote. It is made when someone does not agree with the Chair's count, or doubts the validity of the results. Normally, a re-vote is only done if the count is close, or if people suspected of voting who do not have that right. In order to obtain a re-vote a Métis citizen stands and says: "Madame/Mr. Chair I move a re-vote and call for division." The motion has to be seconded, and is not debatable. However, the mover can briefly state why s/he has made the motion. If this motion receives consensus, or a two-thirds vote in favour, a re-vote is taken. The person who made the motion is then asked to join the Chair and count the second vote. A re-vote is never taken by the same method as the original vote. If a secret ballot has been used a re-vote motion cannot be made unless a scrutineer has identified a major error in the voting, such as a name being left off a ballot. A re-vote motion cannot be raised once the PCMNO or MNO Assembly has moved on to other business.

Scrutineers:

For the most part, scrutineers are used in an election-type process. Candidates for an election are given an opportunity to name a scrutineer, and then the Chair and Co-Chair count the ballots with the scrutineers watching. On a motion secret ballot, the Chair and Co-Chair count the ballots, with the mover of the motion being given the option of naming a scrutineer.

Absentee Voting:

The Métis Nation does not permit citizens who are not present at the meeting to vote.

Right Of Abstention:

No Métis citizen is compelled to vote. As a result, every Métis citizen has the right to abstain and after the result has been declared; those who abstained may make a brief statement for the record as to why they abstained.

Minutes of Meetings

The secretary of the MNO is mandated by the by-laws to take the minutes of all PCMNO meetings, PCMNO executive meetings, and the MNO Annual General Assembly. The secretary can assign another person to keep minutes of meetings, but it is the responsibility of the secretary to ensure that minutes are kept.

All PCMNO minutes must be completed within ten days of the meeting, and can only be circulated to PCMNO citizens until they are approved at the next meeting. A separate Motion Minutes Report must be completed within five days of any meeting. (See also, Motion Minutes Report 2nd Stage, which follows “Minutes”) and can be widely circulated, but must have “draft” on all pages of the Motion Minutes Report. The Motion Minutes Report has only the motions recorded, and no debate. The Minutes include both the motions and the debate.

“Taking the Minutes” sounds simple, but in fact, requires a special talent. The exact wording for each motion must be recorded, but the debate and the issues discussed are not recorded word for word, but are summarized. During the approving process, citizens can have corrections made to motions, and debate summaries, or have information added to the summaries, if they feel it would help explain the debate, and why a decision was made in a certain way. Once the minutes have been approved, they must be signed by the President, the Chair, and the Secretary.

The “draft copy” of minutes should be circulated to the PCMNO as soon as completed. Changes to these minutes must be made at a PCMNO, if they are PCMNO minutes, or at an Annual General Assembly, if they are Annual Assembly minutes. The “Draft Motion Minutes” exist so that people can conduct business immediately on the motions passed.

What the Minutes Include

- ✚ Date, time, and place of the meeting
- ✚ Names of the Chair, those reporting, and those absent with explanation, if any
- ✚ A statement that the minutes of the previous meeting were “approved as read” or “corrected”
- ✚ Copy of agenda
- ✚ Exact wording of all motions, points of order, and appeals, whether they were sustained or lost
- ✚ The names of citizens who made motions, and seconders, whether the motion passed by consensus, majority or two-thirds if required
- ✚ Program topic(s), type of presentation, name(s) of presenter(s), and important points covered
- ✚ Copies of submitted reports or presentation appended to the minutes, and a statement at the bottom of the last page of the minutes that the report is available if requested
- ✚ Time of recess
- ✚ Roll calls listing all absent citizens
- ✚ Citizens declaring a conflict of interest

- ✚ Time of adjournment
- ✚ Personal opinion or commentary
- ✚ Direct transcription of meeting dialogues or conversation
- ✚ Mention of withdrawn motions
- ✚ Personal attacks or slander towards an individual or individuals
- ✚ Topics discussed “in camera”
- ✚ Names of persons who were discussed, but not present
- ✚ Any items the PCMNO or Annual Assembly deems necessary

Motion Minutes Report 2nd Stage

The Motion Minutes Report (see preceding page) is circulated so that everyone knows what the motions and resolution were, and can take immediate action on the. The Motion Minutes Report 2nd Stage is the responsibility of the secretary. It lists the motions and resolutions in one column and the action taken on the motion or resolution in another column, including who was assigned the task. The President is responsible for assigning the tasks and the Chair is responsible for ensuring that the motions are carried out (as per The Role of the Chair). If no action has been taken, the date on which action will be taken should be included. The Motion Minutes Report 2nd Stage is a fluid document and must have a new date each time the Motion Minutes Report 2nd Stage is updated and what draft it is.

EXAMPLE:

Fourth Draft, 06 December, 1997

An updated Motion Minutes Report must accompany every PCMNO meeting kit and MNO Annual Assembly kit until the motions or resolution are acted upon, or are declared “not applicable” by the PCMNO or the MNO Assembly.

The secretary of the MNO must bring the following to all meetings:

- ✚ Minute Book
- ✚ List of unfinished business
- ✚ Citizenship lists for all regions of the MNO
- ✚ List of current and standing special committees, including the PCMNO
- ✚ The most current MNO by-laws
- ✚ Ballots
- ✚ Sufficient copies of all minutes not yet approved for all citizens of the PCMNO
- ✚ All past meeting Motion Minutes Reports with action taken section and person assigned (See Motion Minutes Report 2nd Stage, on previous page).
- ✚ Last financial statements report
- ✚ Main correspondence

Special Note re: Computers

It is the responsibility of the secretary to keep all material electronically, as well as in hard copy. It is extremely important that back-up files be kept of all the material listed

above. Back-up files can be stored on disks, which can be stored in a safe place. A scanner should be used to copy all reports, so that they may be stored electronically.

Conflict Of Interest (Coi):

Any person, who holds office, including President, Chair, Co-Chair, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, Senator or Councillor, or any person who is employed by the Métis Nation, its branches, or the Métis Community Councils, shall not use that office or employment for personal gain to the detriment of the interests of the Métis Nation or Métis Community Council.

“Personal Gain” shall mean financial benefit for the individual or for the Métis citizens of his or her immediate family.

“Family shall mean a spouse, including a common-law spouse, children, parent, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, uncle, aunt, grandparent, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and also includes any relative permanently residing in the person’s household.

Definition of a Personal COI

“A personal COI occurs when a group member (or his or her close relative or possibly a close friend or associate) has the opportunity to gain personally from a decision that the group is about to make. This becomes a personal COI if:

- ✚ This Métis citizen stands to gain in a way that is unique to him or her, and no other Métis citizens stands to gain in the same way
- ✚ This potential gain has the potential of clouding the Métis citizen’s judgement and reducing his or her capacity to exercise due diligence and scrutinize ideas. (The Business Meetings Source Book).

What a Citizen who has a personal COI Should Do

A person or decision-maker who is in a conflict of interest situation will declare that conflict of interest and the nature of the conflict and remove him or herself from the room during discussion of the matter and for the decision itself. A decision-maker who is in a conflict of interest situation will not participate in the decision-making process for as long as the conflict continues. A decision-maker shall declare a conflict on interest if s/he has a potential or suspected interest which might affect or be seen to affect his/her judgement in the matter. A citizen who has a financial stake, or conflict of interest, in any business of the Métis nation of Ontario should not take part in debate related to his/her interests.

In this situation, the citizen should gain the floor and state: “Mr. /Madame Chair, I have a conflict of interest in this matter and for the record declare this conflict. I will not be taking part in the debate or vote, and I will leave the room until the issue is resolved.” No seconder or vote is required. The Chair is responsible for notifying the citizen when the issue has been resolved.

What a Citizen Should Do if They Are Unsure Whether They Have a Personal COI




A Citizen who believes she or he may be in a COI position, but is not sure, should disclose this fact to the Chair or to the group and ask for a rulling.

What a Citizen Who Believes Someone Else Has a Personal COI Should Do

A Citizen who believes someone else is in a COI position, and becomes aware of the problem while a meeting is in progress, should pass a note to the meeting Chair expressing concern, or ask for a break to confer privately with the facilitator, or just interject and explain the concern: (The Business Meetings Source Book).

What Should Happen if a COI Is Discovered After a Decision Was Made

If an important decision is made, and it is later discovered that a member was in a COI position and participated in the discussions, the following may need to be done:

-  Analyze the situation and if the organization was compromised
-  Revisit the decision: is it possible to reverse it? Should it be left unchanged?
-  Should there be disciplinary action

Purpose

As we move forward towards implementation of our right of self-government and self-determination, the Metis Nation of Ontario has undertaken to begin work on a Peace Keepers Code through the initial process of establishing a Conflict Resolution Policy.

The Metis Nation of Ontario is committed to fostering community collaboration and a nation built on harmony and respect. The conflict resolution process provides an internal mechanism for resolving differences that will arise from time to time.

MNO Provincial Conflict Resolution Committee

A Provincial Conflict Resolution Committee has been established comprised of three (3) permanent members and one (1) or more Ad Hoc members depending on circumstances:

-  MNO Chair – Gary Lipinski
-  MNO Co-Chair – France Picotte
-  Human Resources – Jean McIsaac-Wiitala
-  Ad Hoc Member from pool of Trainees – As Identified.

Policy

Any MNO citizen or elected representative may exercise a right to have their differences resolved through the Conflict Resolution Process. The process may vary depending on the situation, the parties involved and the nature of the difference or issues.

It is understood that prior to submitting a request for conflict resolution, every effort will be made to address and resolve issues between the parties at a local and/or individual level.

Procedure

1. Written request to be submitted to Provincial Conflict Resolution Committee member or Executive Director, MNO Secretariat.
2. Initial review of facts and issues will be conducted, applicable parties will be consulted and agreement will be sought on course of action to follow.

3. Resolution mechanisms that may be utilized include, but are not limited to training sessions, Third Party Neutral process, group facilitations, mediation sessions, conciliation, talking circles, etc.

Confidentiality Guidelines

MNO Policy

The MNO will avoid actual or potential conflict of interest in Council and committee decisions by introducing and using Conflict of Interest Guidelines in the governance of its affairs. MNO Directors, management and staff will avoid actual or potential conflict of interest in their relationships with others while in a position of trust or employed at the MNO.

It is the responsibility of any management or staff to acknowledge and formally declare in writing any actual or potential conflict of interest, or that of another person of which he or she is aware, in discussions and decisions of the MNO. Conflict of interest guidelines will also govern awarding of service contracts ensuring MNO meets standards of tendering for the highest level of transparency, fairness and equity. Refer to Financial Policies for more details.

Conflict of interest will be considered to exist if there is an actual or perceived personal or financial gain on the part of MNO's Officers and Directors, management or staff or any member of their immediate family or any business or personal ventures of which they are associated.

Procedure

1. It is mandatory for management and staff and all Directors of MNO or affiliated entities to make themselves aware of this policy and declare all real or perceived conflicts and to be orientated and introduced to the policy.
2. Implementation of the policy as it relates to employees is governed by the Executive Director.
3. Depending upon the actual or potential conflict of interest after the conflict has been declared the actions taken may be as follows:
 - ✚ Leave the room for the discussions and the decision;
 - ✚ Remain in the room but do not participate;
 - ✚ Remain in the room and redeclare the conflict each time they participate;
 - ✚ Remain in the room and participate fully;
 - ✚ Completely dissociate from decisions or discussion for a period of time.

It is imperative that the individual with the potential conflict both declares it and seeks advice on what if any level of participation would be appropriate and supportable.

The declaration of actual or potential conflict of interest, plus the continued involvement (or lack of involvement) by the participant will be documented in the minutes.




4. Every employee has the responsibility of declaring a conflict or highlighting a conflict of another individual without fear of reprisal.

Committees

The MNO recognizes that meetings are too brief to do more than plan for work to be done and debate pressing and major issues. As the amount of work and the pace of

activities increase, this problem will intensify. How can the MNO get through all the work to be done in a timely, equitable manner? Delegation to committees is required.

The MNO recognizes three types of committees

-  Standing Committee
-  Special, or Ad Hoc Committee
-  Committee of the Whole

Standing Committee

A term of parliamentary law which refers to committees which have a continued existence and which are not formed for one specific task like ad hoc or special committees. Standing committees usually exist as long as the organization to which they report. Budget, finance and nomination committees are standing committees.

The Métis Nation of Ontario's 3rd Annual General Assembly in Stanley, Ontario passed by consensus motion #4 which read as follows:

“Whereas financial accountability is of paramount importance within the Métis Nation of Ontario; therefore, be it resolved that a financial committee of the PCMNO will be created to actively review the books, assets, liabilities, receipts, payables, cash flow, and disbursements of the MNO. The finance committee will consist of four (4) appointed Citizens of the PCMNO, as well as the Secretary/Treasurer and President of the MNO in an ex-officio and non-voting position. The Finance Committee will be responsible to meet quarterly to oversee and monitor the finances of the MNO and prepare approved quarterly financial statements and quarterly budget projections, pursuant to by-law #37. The Finance Committee will be responsible to present a finance update at each meeting of the PCMNO and at the Annual Assembly”.

As specified by the MNO's by-laws, once amended by this motion, a standing committee can also be created by a resolution passed by a two-thirds majority vote at a PCMNO meeting, or by the Annual Assembly. This motion has since been amended at a subsequent AGA to change the composition of the FINANCE COMMITTEE.

Term of Office

Because standing committees remain in existence permanently, citizens serve extended terms. Therefore, new members of standing committees are appointed when new officers are elected to head the MNO. Members of standing committees are limited to citizens of the MNO, except for an area of expertise that has to be approved by the PCMNO.

SPECIAL Or AD HOC COMMITTEE

An Ad Hoc Committee refers to a temporary committee or a temporary joint committee on behalf of the MNO. All MNO committees created to reconcile differences in legislation are considered ad hoc committees.

Other ad hoc committees are created for a one-time purpose [e.g. to investigate a scandal] or to focus on examining a specific subject. Most are created with a deadline by which they must complete their work, or expire.

Method Of Selection

The PCMNO, or Assembly

Term Of Office

Special committees are disbanded when the particular task is completed. They may be re-created at a later date, however, when the task once again presents itself.

Function

To accomplish a specified task. (The motion which creates a Special or Ad Hoc committee must specify what the task and duties of the committee are, as well as when that task is expected to be completed and the committee's report delivered.)

Committee Of The Whole

Is a device which enables the entire assembly to operate under committee rules, which are less stringent (Robert's Rules 1995).

Method Of Selection

PCMNO or assembly can create a committee of the whole by a citizen's motion.

Example:

Mr. Smith: Mr. Chair, I move to go into a committee of the whole, to consider the pending question.

Ms. Jones: Mr. Chair, I second that motion. If the motion is carried, the Chair immediately calls on the Co-Chair or a designate to chair the committee

Term Of Office

The committee is disbanded when the particular task is completed. A committee of the whole cannot alter the resolution it is debating. A time limit is established and citizens can speak to the issue under the rule of informal procedure. When all citizens understand a proposal, a vote may be taken without a formal motion being introduced.

Example:

Mr. Brown: Committee of the Whole Chair, I make a motion that the committee rise and report. (The motion to rise and report is the same as a motion to adjourn. It cannot be debated. Citizens immediately see if there is consensus; if not a vote is taken. If it passes the Chairs resume their places.)

The Chair of the committee then rises and says:

“As Chair of the committee of the whole, I report that the committee has gone through the business referred to it, and I am ready to make a report when the PCMNO or Assembly is ready to receive it.”

OR

“As Chair of the committee of the whole, I report that the committee has business referred to it, and has made the following amendments (specify amendments). The

question is on the adoption of the amendments by PCMNO or assembly when ready to receive them.”

The report or recommendations are not binding on the PCMNO or Assembly, but consensus may be to send the question to a smaller committee or to accept the report. At this point the matter comes before the assembly as if reported by a committee. The Chair’s report becomes part of the regular minutes.

The responsibilities of Committee Chairs

- + Understand the committee’s tasks
- + Formally write out the task and give it to each committee member
- + Explain the committee’s goals to members.
- + Call meetings and ensure there is a quorum (a majority of members in attendance)
- + Ensure ex-officio members are advised. (See Appendix for definitions)
- + Guide (not direct) the discussion
- + Co-ordinate suggestions.
- + Make sure all statements are clearly understood
- + Keep an open mind
- + Report in a concise, organized manner to the PCMNO, or Assembly

The Rights of Ex-Officio members

- + Share the same rights as any other committee member
- + Make motions and vote (unless limited by resolution or by-law)
- + Not counted as part of quorum
- + Not obligated to attend meetings

The Duties of a Committee Clerk

One member of the committee must be the clerk.

- + Take accurate detailed minutes of all committee meetings. (Minutes remain the property of the committee and can be read only by committee members.)
- + Provide at each committee meeting the following:
 - + List of committee members
 - + Copy of the resolution referred to committee
 - + Statement of the committee’s task and any special instructions.
 - + Statement of the committee’s powers
 - + Copies of any pertinent rules
 - + Copies of any relevant correspondence
 - + Copies of any previous decisions relevant to the issue
 - + The date the report is due to the PCMNO or Assembly
 - + Budget if one is available or funding details.

Preparing and Using Committee Reports

To fulfill its mission, a committee must report to the assembly or PCMNO, describing its findings and including any resolutions. Most of the time committee reports are accepted by the assembly or PCMNO, and the course of action is determined.

A committee report should include the following:

- ✚ Identification of the submitting committee
- ✚ Statement of the resolution given to the committee
- ✚ Brief summary of the methods of investigation used by the committee
- ✚ Brief summary of the information gathered by the committee
- ✚ Brief summary of the work accomplished
- ✚ Findings of the committee
- ✚ Recommendations of the committee

The report should be in writing, but the recommendations must be in writing. In keeping with the aim of parliamentary procedure, the committee report should reflect the voice of the majority while protecting the rights of the minority. An effort should be made to reach consensus within the committee. To this end, one committee member writes a first draft of the report and circulates it to other committee members. The report is then revised and corrected by the group through discussion. If consensus is not reached within the committee, the minority may file its own report. If a minority report is submitted, the PCMNO or assembly must allow the report with a two-thirds vote, or consensus.

Adopting the Report

When the report is completed and delivered to the PCMNO or Assembly it is read aloud, or if too long to be read in entirety during the meeting, copies of the report are provided to the assembly in advance of the meetings, so that they have time to read the report. Then, the summary and recommendations are read aloud. At this time the PCMNO or assembly must make a motion “to adopt”, “to accept” or “to agree” to the report. Although these three terms have the same definition as far as parliamentary law is concerned, they do carry shades of meaning that can affect their use.

Note the difference:

- ✚ “To adopt” the report in whole or in part, commits the MNO to some or all of the recommendations of the report, and often implies some action to be taken, because the report contains opinions and facts, but also resolutions.
- ✚ “To accept” the report acknowledges that the report contains statements of both opinions and facts, which are accepted, but no action will be taken on the resolutions; unless specified.

In addition to the above examples the PCMNO or assembly may:

- ✚ File the report without comment
- ✚ Return the report to the committee for additional information
- ✚ Refer the report to another committee for study

Types of Meetings

Regular Meeting refers to the periodic business meeting of the PCMNO to conduct the business of the MNO. This meeting is called by the President, with written notice of 14 days by mail or fax, prior to the meeting. No error or omission in giving notice of any meeting of the Provisions Council or any adjourned meeting of the PCMNO shall invalidate such meeting or make void any proceedings taken thereat and any director may at any time waive notice of any such meeting and may ratify, approve and confirm any or all proceedings taken.

Special Meetings are called to deal with urgent matters of business that cannot wait until the next regular meeting. These are called by the President with at least three clear days notice by phone or fax. The use of a telephone conference call is the normal way of meeting. The issues are usually specific in nature and only a few topics can be discussed. All the rules apply to telephone conference calls, and it is deemed to be a valid meeting. No error or omission in giving notice of any meeting of the Provisional Council or any adjourned meeting of the PCMNO shall invalidate such meeting or make void any proceedings taken thereat and any director may at any time waive notice of any such meeting and may ratify, approve and confirm any or all proceedings taken.

In Camera Meeting is a meeting of which the proceedings are secret. During any PCMNO or Annual Assembly, the meeting can go “in camera”. The term “Executive Sessions” was originally used to refer to those meetings where Presidential business was conducted in drawing up important treaties; the matter of secrecy was paramount. The Métis Nation has always used the term “in camera” because we use the term, “executive meetings” for meetings of the PCMNO executive council. The “in camera” session is used to discuss sensitive matters, or matters that should not be disclosed to the general public, such as something that might embarrass an individual, or the PCMNO; disciplinary issues; personnel issues; and finance.

Those who participate in an “in camera” session must keep the discussions confidential and return any circulated documents to the secretary/treasurer. Minutes are kept, but only for the distribution to the “in camera” session, not for general distribution. All guests, non-Métis, and press must leave when an “in camera” session is called. Special guests or employees whose comments are necessary to resolve a problem may be included in an “in camera” session. Any citizen can move to go “in camera”, and a majority vote is required.

During “in camera” sessions only recommendations or motion wording recommendations can be passed that are not binding on the PCMNO or MNO Assembly. Actual recommendations must not be voted upon “in camera”, or they may not be binding.

Executive Council Meeting is called by the President, and notice can be immediate, if no one objects. The executive council consists of the President, Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, and Provincial Senator. If an executive officer objects, then eight hours notice must be given. The purpose of executive meetings is to make decisions on items where the policy has already been drafted by the entire PCMNO. If an issue comes up that does not require the entire PCMNO to make a decision, then an executive meeting will be held to debate the issue and make a decision.

The executive can make a decision on urgent matters, but a special PCMNO meeting must be called as soon as possible to deal with the issue.

Mno Annual Assembly Meetings

The Annual Assembly shall be held at any place in Ontario that the PCMNO may determine, and on such days as the directors shall appoint. At every annual meeting, in addition to any other business that may be transacted, the reports of the directors, the financial statements, and the report of the auditors shall be presented, and auditors appointed for the ensuing year. The citizens may consider and transact any business at any meeting of the citizens. Fourteen days written notice shall be given to each citizen of any annual assembly. Each voting citizen present at a meeting shall have the right to exercise one vote. All MNO citizens, 16 years of age and older, may vote. The by-laws of the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat may be amended by a majority of the directors at a meeting of the PCMNO and sanctioned by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the citizens at an Annual Assembly.

MNO Special General Meeting of Citizens

The Annual Assembly or any other general meeting of the citizens shall be held at any place in Ontario that the PCMNO may determine and on such days as the directors shall appoint. The citizens may consider and transact any business at any meeting of the citizens duly called. Fourteen days written notice shall be given to each citizen of any assembly. Each voting citizen present at a meeting shall have the right to exercise one vote. All MNO citizens, 16 years of age and older, may vote. The by-laws of the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat may be amended by a majority of the directors at a meeting of the PCMNO and sanctioned by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the citizens at an Annual Assembly.

The Agenda

The Agenda for meetings of the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) and the Annual Assemblies set out in writing the business the Métis Nation will address and sets the priority each is given. The agenda for each meeting is actually a listing of the issues that are before the Métis Nation. The Métis have, since our very beginning, been an independent people; free traders, interpreters, entrepreneurs, people who care for our families. The Métis travel to where economic opportunities exist. In time of crisis, during Louis Riel's leadership, or during the great buffalo hunts in the west, the Métis have always come together to debate the issues on behalf of the Métis.

The role of President is well established and documented among the Métis, with Louis Riel being our most famous leader. The position the president holds today is much the same as in the past. Most Métis today are busy with trying to survive, working, playing, raising families, going to school, and just living. The average Métis now, as in the past, puts her/his fate and trust into the person we have elected to lead us into the eve of the 20th century as a Métis Nation. The responsibility, of course, belongs to every Métis person, but the Métis, because we are so spread out in Ontario and Canada, must also rely on the office of President to lead us, and set our Métis agenda.

The President of the Métis Nation is the only salaried, full-time elected person among the PCMNO. The Métis understand that we need and rely on this person extensively. As

a result, the position has developed privileges to help stay the course when dealing with often conflicting political issues of time and resources.

One of the privileges is to set a certain number of protected items on the agenda at every executive meeting, PCMNO meeting, Annual Assembly meeting, and Special Citizen's Meeting. The President also has the right to call special PCMNO meetings, and executive meetings; has no limit to debate time in any MNO meeting, but is able to limit or extend debate time at meetings, within the rules. The President is also an ex-officio officer to all committees.

Protected President's Agenda Items

At the beginning of every Métis meeting the agenda is reviewed and items taken off or added. The group then votes on approving the agenda. The *Métis Nation Rules of Order* state that President can list three items that must be addressed and their order cannot be changed. This does not include the President's Report which is in addition to the three protected items. This ensures that the President can have three agenda items addressed that are priorities. This privilege can be exercised at PCMNO meetings, Executive meetings, Annual Assemblies, and Special Meetings of Citizens.

The President's items have a distinguishing mark and must be addressed first.

Example:

1. *Call to order*
2. *Opening Prayer*
3. *Minutes of last meeting*
4. *President's Report*
5. *Self-Government negotiations (P)*
6. *Canadian constitutional issues (P)*
7. *Mets registration (P)*
8. *Treasurer's Report*

Annual Assembly Agenda

The PCMNO is responsible for tabling a draft agenda before the Annual Assembly, and any Special Assemblies. The Chair is responsible for tabling a draft agenda before any PCMNO meeting. The recommended topic must be forwarded to the Chair in writing for inclusion on the draft agenda. The draft agenda is reviewed at every meeting, and items and their order can be changed, except for the President's protected items. The Chair is responsible for examining the agenda with the Co-Chair and assigning time slots for each agenda item. The Chair should post the time slots allotted to the agenda as soon as the agenda has been approved. This is done during the break, or during debate, with the Co-Chair taking over until it is done.

Ejection of Citizens or Persons

The Métis Nation has the collective right to conduct business through PCMNO meetings, executive meetings, committees, Annual Assemblies, special meetings of Citizens, and community meetings. All meetings are deliberate assemblies and have the right to be free from disturbances.

- ✚ The strike rule is no alcoholic beverages while business is being conducted. Intoxicated persons will be asked to leave a meeting place.
- ✚ Persons who do not recognize the Métis Nation Rules of Order, after being warned two times to conform, may be told to leave the meeting.
- ✚ The Métis Nation does not condone physical violence, but the appropriate police service can be called, or a Sergeant at Arms can escort (a) person(s) from the room.
- ✚ Any physical violence by any citizen, or by the general public against a citizen participating in the debate, will be persecuted to the full extent of Canadian law. A zero tolerance for violence will be enforced at all meetings.
- ✚ No acts of liable will be allowed to be circulated or spoken against any person at any meeting.