



LOCAL MEETINGS IN BRIEF

A GUIDE FOR SMART TD MEMBERS ON HOW TO TAKE PART IN MEETINGS

INTRODUCTION

The Local membership meeting is the heart of the democratic labor union, and its decisions are the pulse of the organization. It would be hard to over-emphasize the importance and value of Local union meetings. It is here that the union's membership is provided an **equal and fair** opportunity to make decisions concerning the goals, activities, and direction of the Local and its associated Local Committee(s) of Adjustment (LCA). SMART Constitution - Article 21B, section 55 states, "A Local shall hold at least one regular meeting each month at the time and place specified in its bylaws."

A membership meeting should be a forum to:

- Inform the membership (and learn from the membership) about what is happening, what might be happening, and why.
- Conduct union business by allowing the membership to discuss issues and make decisions on implementing the Local's policies and programs.
- Uphold financial safeguards and transparency with the membership.
- Build unity and solidarity within the Local.

To conduct the union's business in a democratic, effective, and orderly manner, it is important to have a set of rules to go by. A meeting's business is conducted through the process of the membership recommending, discussing, and deciding on a course of action for each issue that is brought forward. This is all done by following a set of rules, called **parliamentary procedure**. The SMART Constitution specifies that "Robert's Rules of Order" be used to govern meetings. Following are some guidelines to help you take part in your Local union meetings.

QUORUM

A quorum is the minimum number of members that must be present at a meeting to conduct business. At least five (5) members in good standing must be present to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business (Article 21B, Section 55). Members in e-49 status count towards the quorum.

OFFICER ROLES AT THE LOCAL MEETING

LOCAL PRESIDENT – main responsibility is chairing the Local meeting. This person enforces the rules and designates who is to speak at any given time. If the Local President is unable to attend a meeting, the Vice President or Past President shall chair the meeting.

LOCAL SECRETARY – is to make a written record of what is done. This is called taking the meeting minutes. This person must make the minutes available for inspection by the members at reasonable times and places. They also report on the receipt and handling of communications. (Many Locals have combined this position with the Local Treasurer position into a Local Secretary-Treasurer (S&T) role.

LOCAL TREASURER – is entrusted with the Local's funds, which can only be spent by the authority of the membership, Federal/State law, or as the Local bylaws and SMART Constitution provide. This person is to provide an accurate and thorough Treasurer's Report at each meeting, and annually they are to provide the Treasurer's Annual Report (TAR) to the Local's Board of Trustees for audit.

OTHER OFFICERS/COMMITTEES – are to provide a report of work performed, findings and developments as required and necessary.

MEMBERSHIP PARTICIPATION AT THE LOCAL MEETING

The foundation of parliamentary procedure rests on four cornerstones of union democracy. Here are some important things to remember about participating in Local meetings:

1. During the meeting, every member has the same rights – and responsibilities – as every other member.
2. Only one question is considered at a time – this avoids confusion.
3. The majority rules – always.
4. Individual members have rights that the majority cannot take away – namely, the right to be heard, no matter how unpopular the opinion may be. You have the right to express your opinion on the issues being discussed. You also have the responsibility to respect the right of other members to voice their opinions.

MEMBERS IN E-49 (DUES EXEMPT) STATUS

Members in e-49 status can attend union meetings, be nominated for office, and hold office if elected. They cannot self-nominate or nominate others for elective office or vote in elections (although they must be notified of elections) or on any other subject involving grievance, hours or mileage limitation, or other methods of work distribution, unless allowed to vote by virtue of Local bylaws in Local matters only.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

SMART TD Locals use a fixed order of business as outlined in SMART Constitution, Article 21 B, Section 77 – Conduct of Local Meetings.

CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

- The meeting shall be opened by the Local President, Vice President, Past President, or in their absence any other officer or member, who shall serve as the Chairperson of the meeting, with the following statement: *“I now declare this meeting of SMART Local No. ____ open for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it.”* (Article 21B, Section 77).
- 1. Roll Call of Officers
- 2. Announce or Display: This Meeting is an environment free of discrimination and harassment.
- 3. Reading Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- 4. Admission of New Members
- 5. Treasurer’s Report
- 6. Reports of Officers and Committees
- 7. Communications
- 8. Unfinished Business
- 9. New Business
- 10. Bills of Allowance
- 11. Nomination of officers and committeepersons
- 12. Election and Installation of Officers
- 13. Safety First
- 14. Way and Means of Improving SMART
- 15. Closing

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Here is a brief description of how parliamentary procedure works:

1. A **MOTION**--seeking the Local to take some course of action--is made from the floor. The Chair asks if there is a **SECOND** for the motion. (For a motion to be discussed, it must be seconded from the floor).
2. The Chair asks if there is **DISCUSSION** of the motion. When **RECOGNIZED** by the Chair, members may **SPEAK TO** (debate) the motion. During debate, motions may be **AMENDED** by the membership--through discussion and a vote.
3. When the debate has run its course or has been **CLOSED**, the chair requests and conducts a **VOTE** on the motion.
4. Once made, all motions must be **DISPOSED OF** in some fashion--by being **PASSED**, **DEFEATED**, **TABLED**, **REFERRED**, or **PLACED IN COMMITTEE**.

Note: Rules set forth by the SMART Constitution take precedent over guidance issued in Robert's Rules of Order.

MAKING A MOTION

If you want your Local to do something – to take an action – the first step is to make a **MOTION**. Motions can cover a wide range of actions – from routine business matters to major new activities you want your Local to undertake. Getting your idea “on the floor” for discussion happens in three steps:



STEP 1: To make a motion you must be recognized by the Chair. In most Local meetings that means raising your hand and being called on by the Chair. Then you make your motion. For example, if you want the Local to start publishing a newsletter you would say: *“I move that our Local publish a newsletter.”*



STEP 2: Before your motion is taken up, there must be a **SECOND**. Some other person will have to say: *“I second the motion.”* A second to the motion shows that at least two people are interested. If there is no second, the meeting will go on to other business.



STEP 3: The Chair will then ask: *“Is there any discussion?”* At that point, you or anyone else can speak – but only about the motion on the floor.

A motion is “in order” if:

- It is related to the business present before the meeting.
- It conforms to the fixed order of business.
- It is in harmony with the rules of order. For example, a motion to give aid to Tom Jones, who has been injured, is not “in order” during a discussion about the payment of bills.

SPEAKING ON A MOTION

Once a motion is on the floor and the Chair calls for discussion, you or anyone else can speak on the motion. You can speak in favor of the motion, or you can speak against the motion. The first step is to be recognized by the Chair – usually by raising your hand to signal the Chair that you want to speak. Then wait until the Chair recognizes you. Only the person recognized by the Chair may speak. By having only one person speak at a time, we *get a chance to hear what each person has to say*.

When you speak, keep to the subject being discussed. If the group is talking about a motion regarding publishing a newsletter, then you must talk about that topic. If you do not speak to the issue that is on the floor, the Chair will rule that your remarks are “out of order.”

AMENDING A MOTION

Sometimes you may think a motion isn’t clear, or it could be improved or made more specific. You might want to add to or change part of it. You can do this by offering an **AMENDMENT** to that motion.



The first step is to get recognized by the Chair. Then (using the newsletter example) you might say: *“I move we amend the motion to publish a newsletter once a month and distribute it to all members.”* Once again, any proposed amendment requires a second. Then the Chair will say: *“Is there any discussion on the amendment?”* At that point, you or anyone else can speak, but only on the amendment just offered.



When it comes to voting, the amendment is voted on first. The Chair will restate the amendment – so everyone is clear about what they are voting on – and then say: *“Those in favor say ‘Aye.’ [Pause.] Those opposed say ‘No.’”* The amendment must be supported by a majority of members voting, or more than half of those members who vote on the issue.



If it passes, the Chair will say: *“We will now resume discussion on the main motion as amended.”* You then go back to discussing and then voting on the main motion, which now includes the amendment. If the amendment is defeated, the Chair will say: *“The amendment was defeated. Is there any further discussion on the main motion?”* Then the main motion is discussed and voted on without the amendment.

The purpose of an amendment is to make the main motion better, not to change it entirely. If you don’t like a motion, the best thing to do is defeat it, and then make another motion. Amendments must be “germane,” or in some way involve the same question raised by the motion. If an amendment that is offered is not germane, the Chair should rule that amendment “out of order.”

ENDING DEBATE



If you think the discussion has gone on long enough and want it stopped, here's what you can do: First, get recognized by the Chair and say: *"I move we close debate"* or *"I call the question"* or *"I move the previous question."* They all mean the same thing: **LET'S END THE DEBATE.**



There will have to be a second to your motion. Then the Chair will say: *"We are now voting on whether or not to end debate."* A vote is conducted, and this vote requires the support of two-thirds of the members present and voting.



If the motion to end debate is passed, the Chair will say: *"We will now vote on the motion that is on the floor."* The Chair will restate the motion – so everyone is clear about what they are voting on – and then say: *"Those in favor say 'Aye.' [Pause.] Those opposed say 'No.'"* Here the majority rules. The motion is either passed or defeated.

OTHER WHAT-TO-DO'S IN MEETINGS

Here are examples of some common things that may happen during meetings, along with "what to do" when they happen.

- **The meeting gets confusing, and you are not sure what is going on or you feel you need additional info to properly consider a motion.**



Stand up and state: *"I rise for a point of information."* The Chair will then ask you what you want to know and you can ask the Chair your question.

- **You think a member is not speaking to the motion on the floor.**



Stand up and say: *"I rise on a point of order."* The Chair will then ask for your point and, once you have stated your concern, the Chair must rule on whether the person's remarks are or are not "out of order."

- **You think the Chair has made a ruling that is wrong, and the error is serious enough that it should be corrected.**



Stand up and say: *"I would like to appeal the ruling of the Chair."* The question of whether to uphold the ruling of the Chair or agree with your appeal is then put to a vote by the members. The members make the final decision by majority vote.

- **You believe that more information or time is needed for the group to make a good decision on the motion being discussed, and you want to postpone the decision.**



There are a couple things you can do. First, you can move to postpone the motion. After being recognized by the Chair, say: *"I move that we postpone this matter to _____."* If there is a second, the Chair will call for a discussion and vote on postponing the entire issue.



A second option is to refer the motion to a committee. Get recognition from the Chair and say (again using the example of the publication of a newsletter): “*I move we refer the motion to the Communications Committee.*” This also requires a second BUT a motion to refer can be debated and amendments can be offered.

ROBERT’S RULES OF ORDER: CHART OF MOTIONS & PROCEDURES

These motions are listed in order of precedence. A motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

Purpose	You Say	Can Interrupt	Requires a Second	Debat -able	Can be Amended	Vote Required
Close the meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Register a complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
Lay to motion aside temporarily	I move to table the motion	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	I call the question OR I move to end debate	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to a committee	I move to refer the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Modify the wording of the motion	I move to amend the motion by...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone the decision indefinitely	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

If you have questions about Local Meetings or parliamentary procedure, you can email the SMART TD President's Department at President_TD@smart-union.org or call 216-228-9400.

The motions below have no order of precedence. These motions arise incidentally and are decided immediately.

Purpose	You Say	Can Interrupt	Requires a Second	Debat-able	Can be Amended	Vote Required
Enforce the rules	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	None
Submit the matter to the group	I appeal the decision of the Chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
Suspend the rules	I move to suspend the rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Divide the motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Demand rising vote	I call for a division	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask a question about parliamentary procedure	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
Request for information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	None

The motions below have no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else is pending before the group.

Purpose	You Say	Can Interrupt	Requires a Second	Debat-able	Can be Amended	Vote Required
Take the matter from the table	I move to take from the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Cancel a previous action	I move to rescind	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3; or Majority with notice
Reconsider a motion*	I move to reconsider the vote	No	Yes	Yes, if motion it applies to is debatable	No	Majority

*Can be made only by someone who voted for the prevailing side in the previous vote on the motion and on the same day the vote sought to be reconsidered was taken

TERMS THAT MAY BE REFERENCED AT LOCAL MEETINGS

ARTICLE 21B – the portion of the SMART Constitution that sets forth the political structure and functioning of the Transportation Division.

BILLS OF ALLOWANCE – the part of the Local meeting where individual motions are made for disbursements that require the Local or LCA memberships' approval prior to being paid.

BYLAWS – a union record all SMART TD Locals are required to have that documents how to compensate certain Local officers on reoccurring basis, the method for regularly scheduled elections, the day/time/location of the Local meeting, and other provisions pertaining to the Local as deemed appropriate. They must first be approved by Local membership using the two-meeting process/Section 48 and submitted to the SMART-TD President for review and final approval by the SMART General Secretary-Treasurer.

CBA – Collective Bargaining Agreement. A legal contract between an employer and the union.

CHARITABLE/SOCIAL SPENDING – refers to disbursements requested/made for things such as donations to other organizations/individuals/members, gatherings put on by the Local or purchases of items that intend to build solidarity. Dependent on the amount, these must be approved by the Local membership using the two-meeting process/Section 48 and in accordance with the SMART-TD President's memo regarding the matter.

CLAIMS/GRIEVANCES – these types of representation activities are to be included in the report of Local Chairpersons (or their designee) at the Local meeting. Claims are submissions made in writing to the carrier/company for an individual claiming a sum of money for violation of the CBA. A grievance is a complaint filed due to an unresolved interpretation/application of the CBA, work rules or conditions with the carrier/company. These terms may be used interchangeably depending on the CBA language.

COMMITTEE DAY/DAILY RATE – a type of compensation disbursement that a Local or LCA can move to use for work performed for the Local or LCA. The dollar amount used must be approved by the Local or LCA membership and documented in at least one union record. Payment of Committee Day disbursements must be approved by the Local or LCA membership and documented in at least one union record.

DISBURSEMENT CLAIM – a request for payment of compensation and/or expenses made by an officer or member that documents the union purpose. Local or LCA membership approval is required prior to the payment being made and must be documented in at least one union record.

E-49 STATUS – shorthand for "Exempt from Article 21B, Section 49 – Payment of Dues and Assessments" of the SMART Constitution. This section explains that dues and assessments of members are paid in advance, before the first day of the month in which they are dues, but if a member is off work for the entire calendar month, they are not required to pay dues – although there are some exceptions to this rule.

TERMS THAT MAY BE REFERENCED AT LOCAL MEETINGS (CONT'D)

FUNDS – Money handled by Local Treasurers is split into at least two funds – a local fund and a fund for each LCA. The money belonging to each fund is managed and examined separately, but all the money is held together in one bank account. The Treasurer uses specialized bookkeeping software to accurately track the individual funds. For this reason, bank statement balances do not provide an accurate financial report. It is not permitted to transfer money between the funds.

LCA FUND – is used to pay for the costs of representing the members who work under the jurisdiction of the LCA. The income for the LCA fund is LCA dues. If the Local has multiple LCAs, each one will have its own fund.

LCA PROCEDURES – a union record that the membership of an individual LCA may move to put in place that documents how to compensate LCA officers on a reoccurring basis and other provisions pertaining to the LCA as deemed appropriate. Provisions related to any kind of disbursement must be approved by the LCA membership using the two-meeting process/Section 48. LCA procedures should be submitted to the SMART-TD President for review. They do not need to be approved by the SMART General Secretary-Treasurer.

LOCAL FUND – is used to pay for the costs of operating the Local union along with any charitable/social spending. The income for the Local fund is Local dues.

LOST TIME CLAIM – a type of compensation disbursement that a Local or LCA can move to use for work performed for the Local or LCA. To be valid, the claimant must provide documentation proving that time was lost working for the carrier/company while the Local or LCA work was done. Payment of Committee Day disbursements must be approved by the Local or LCA membership and documented in at least one union record.

MINUTES – the written record of what is done at the Local meeting where exact wording for all motions is documented along with whether they were approved or denied.

SALARY - a type of reoccurring compensation disbursement that a Local or LCA can move to use for work performed for the Local or LCA. Salaries must be approved by the Local or LCA membership using the two-meeting process/Section 48 and documented in at least one union record.

SIGN-IN REGISTER – a document or book that members personally fill out with their name and Local number when attending a Local meeting.

SPECIAL MEETING – a meeting conducted in addition to a regular monthly Local meeting that may be called by the Local President for a specific purpose. Reasonable notice must be given to all members, and only business related to the specific purpose may be conducted. (see SMART Constitution, Article 21B, Section 55)

TD CONNECT – a web-based program used by Local Treasurers to maintain member records and manage monthly dues and premium billing.

TERMS THAT MAY BE REFERENCED AT LOCAL MEETINGS (CONT'D)

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT (TAR) – a report generated by Local Treasurers in January that provides a comprehensive overview of the Local finances and performance of business-related activities during the previous year. The Board of Local Trustees (3) is responsible for auditing and confirming the information found on the TAR and reporting the results of the audit at a Local meeting for membership approval. The audited TAR must be submitted to the TD Office by March 31st each year.

TREASURER'S MONTHLY MEETING REPORT – a report given by the Local Treasurer (or their designee) at the Local meeting. The report must include the list of new or re-admitted members, the financial details of the Local fund, the financial details for each LCA fund, the checking account activity since the last meeting, a list of business-related tasks completed since the last meeting, and the list of members that qualified for e-49 status. (See Funds)

TWO-MEETING PROCESS/SECTION 48 – refers to Article 21B, Section 48 of the SMART Constitution along with guidance provided by the SMART TD President for certain disbursement actions taken by the Local or LCA. This provision establishes an approval process where at the first meeting, the motion is made, debated, and amended by the affected membership. Then it is set aside until the next meeting. Between the two meetings, the Local Secretary must notify the affected members at least 10 days prior to the second meeting of the motion and the intention to vote. At the second meeting the affected membership votes on the same motion by secret ballot. This process is used for motions that establish/amend Local or LCA dues, a Local or LCA assessment, officer salaries, a committee day/daily rate amount, or provisions of Local bylaws/LCA Procedures or to approve charitable/social spending under \$1600.

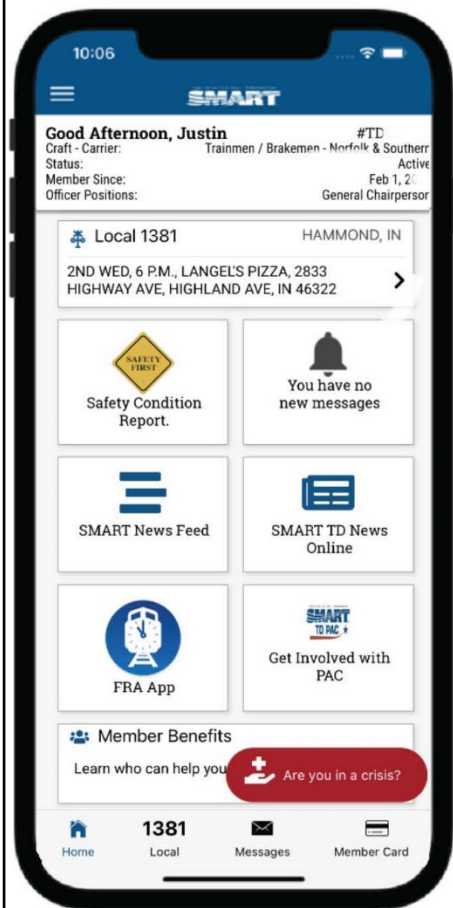
UNION RECORD – for the purpose of this guide, this refers to Local meeting minutes, Local bylaws or LCA Procedure documents.

WINSTABS – SMART-TD's proprietary bookkeeping software used by Local Treasurers to manage, examine, and report on finances.

If you would like to read more about Local Meetings or Parliamentary Procedure, check out the following resources:

- SMART TD Guide: Local Basics – A Guide for Local Officers on Running Effective Meetings
- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief* by H. Robert, W. Evans, D. Honemann, T. Balch
- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition* by H. Robert III (also found at RulesOnline.com)

Download the new SMART Mobile App



- See your Member Status, Exempt Status, Member Since Date, and other membership information
- Get the most recent info from your Local on the dedicated **Local Page**
- Quick access to your Local leaders using the **Local Directory**
- Receive **Messages** from your Chairperson, Legislative Reps, President, Secretary, and Treasurer via push notifications and alerts
- Access your Electronic TD Membership Card
 - Easy and quick access to report a **Safety Condition** and read the **TD News**
- Take advantage of your Union benefits like the **Membership Assistance Program**

A QUICK TECH TIP:

If members with a previous version of the SMART app installed on their devices have automatic updates enabled, the new version — 4.1.12 — will be installed with no action needed on the part of the user. If automatic updates are not turned on, members will have to visit the Apple App Store or Google Play (or use the URL or QR code on this flyer) to install this new update manually. **For all users, if not prompted to log in, please log out, then log back in manually for the new update to take effect.**

Download the App Today



<http://smart-union.org/mobile>

or follow the QR code at left with your smart device.