

The Power of the Consent Agenda

Consent Agendas

The consent agenda is a tool used to streamline meeting procedures by collecting routine, non-controversial items into a group whereby all are passed with a single motion and vote. This method has grown in popularity in recent years and there are many variations on the theme to meet specific needs. In some meetings, the actual items to be placed on each consent agenda are selected by policy. In others, an agenda committee chooses the consent items.

The presiding officer announces the items on the consent agenda, asks if any item should be removed, then declares the consent agenda adopted unless there's objection. Commonly, no debate is allowed on the consent agenda or on any item included in it. In some organizations, the motion for adoption must receive unanimous approval.

Consent items may be read by title only in the body of a single consent agenda resolution. However, any director can have an item removed from the consent agenda for separate consideration. The remainder of the consent agenda can be voted on, omitting the challenged items.

Association Policy to Use Consent Agendas

The chairman, in consultation with the board of directors, may place items on the consent agenda. By using a consent agenda, the board has consented to the consideration of certain items as a group under one motion. Should a consent agenda be used, an appropriate amount of discussion time will be allowed to review any item upon request.

Consent items are those which usually do not require discussion or explanation prior to board action, are non-controversial and/or similar in content, or are those items which have already been discussed and/or explained and do not require further discussion or explanation. Such agenda items might include ministerial tasks such as, but not limited to, approval of the agenda, approval of previous minutes, approval of bills, approval of reports, etc. These items might also include similar groups of decisions such as, but not limited to, approval of staff contracts, approval of minutes, finances and reports.

An individual director for consideration may remove items from the consent agenda by a timely request of the chairman. A request is timely if made prior to the vote on the consent agenda. The request does not require a second or a vote by the board. An item removed from the consent agenda will then be discussed and acted on separately immediately following the consideration of the consent agenda.

Consent agenda items are approved en masse by one vote of the board. The consent agenda items shall be separately recorded in the minutes.