

## Handling the Motions

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Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website ([mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained daily by MTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee municipal government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Reference Number: MTAS-1008

1. Council member addresses the chair. *Mr./Madam Mayor, I'd like to have the floor to make a motion.*
  2. Mayor recognizes speaker: *Council member \_\_\_\_\_, you have the floor.*
  3. Council member: *I move the adoption of ordinance 2017-002 on first reading.*
  4. Another council member: *I second the motion*, or simply *Second*.
  5. Mayor states the motion: *The motion to adopt ordinance 2017-002 on first reading has been made by Council member \_\_\_\_\_ and the motion has been seconded ...Is there any discussion?* This opens the floor to debate on the ordinance. The person who made the motion has the right to discuss it first. Discussion must be addressed to the mayor. The motion may be changed by amendment (another motion). If the council does not wish to take final action on the motion, it may dispose of the motion in some other way (most typically by postponing definitely [usually to the next meeting], or postponing indefinitely [which kills the motion]).
  6. Under RONR decorum rules, members are allowed to speak on a motion only twice, and not for a second time until all members have had a first opportunity.
  7. Debate then begins and may end one of two ways:
    - a. A member may close (end) debate by requesting the floor from the mayor, then saying: *I move the previous question*

Another elected official seconds the motion, *I second the motion* or *Second*.

The mayor states: *There is a motion and a second to move the previous question which is adopting ordinance 2017-002 on first reading. Those in favor of ordering the previous question say "aye"... those opposed say "no"*The mayor states the outcome of the vote: *The ayes have it and the motion carries* or *The nos have it and the motion fails, so debate continues.*If the motion carried, the mayor immediately moves into taking a vote on the ordinance: *Those in favor of adopting ordinance 2017-002 on first reading say "aye"... those opposed say "no"*
    - b. The mayor may close debate by stating: *If there is no more discussion on the motion to adopt ordinance 2017-002 on first reading, let's move to a vote.* If no one opposes (there is silence) then the mayor states: *All those in favor of adopting ordinance 2017-002 on first reading say "aye." Those opposed say "no."* If an elected official speaks out against closing debate, then debate continues.
  8. Otherwise, the mayor states the outcome of the vote: *The "ayes" (or "nos") have it. The motion is carried* (or defeated).
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