

**MANITOBA CITIZENS ON PATROL PROGRAM INC.
POLICY & PROCEDURE #12 – CONSENSUS BASED DECISIONS**

**MB COPP PROVINCIAL
BOARD**

**Policies and Procedures
Subject: Consensus-Based Decisions**

Date of Issue: April 30, 2021

Consensus-Based Decision Consensus Process (to ensure proportional representation collaborative decisions)

A consensus based decision-making process is an effort in which the MB COPP Provincial Board will be expected to work together to find a mutually acceptable solution on operational and administrative matters as they pertain to Manitoba COPP.

Broad engagement and commitment of all Board members to make decisions by consensus to come to agreement rather than by majority vote.

Consensus-Based Decision-Making Directives shall be observed to come to agreement.

The basic model for achieving consensus involves:

- Collaboratively generating a proposal
- Identifying unsatisfied concerns
- Modifying the proposal to generate as much agreement as possible

All attempts at achieving consensus begin with a good faith attempt at generating full-agreement, regardless of decision rule threshold.

Guiding Principles for Consensus Decision - Making:

- **Consensus Decision-Making** – Participants make decisions by agreement rather than by majority vote.
- **Inclusiveness** – To the extent possible, all necessary interests are represented or, at a minimum, approve of the decision.
- **Accountability** – Regional Representatives represent regional groups. They are accountable with best interests both to their regional and to the MB COPP organization as a whole.
- **Facilitation** – The Chairperson or delegate as an impartial facilitator manages the process, ensures the ground rules are followed, and helps to maintain a productive climate for communication and problem solving.
- **Shared Control/Ground Rules** – Participants share with the facilitator responsibility for setting and maintaining the ground rules for a process and for creating outcomes.
- **Commitment to Implementation** – All participant stakeholders commit to carrying out their agreement.

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Elements of a Consensus-Based Decision

- a) All parties agree with the proposed decision and are willing to carry it out;
- b) No one will block or obstruct the decision or its implementation; and
- c) All generally support the decision and implement it

Levels of Consensus

- a) I can say an unqualified “yes!”
- b) I can accept the decision.
- c) I can live with the decision.
- d) I do not fully agree with the decision, however, I will not block it and will support the decision.
- e) silence on decisions is agreement.

Ground Rules During Consensus -Rules of Procedure

The Chairperson or delegate as facilitators are resources to guide the process. Board members agree to attend and fully participate in all meetings.

1. All Board members agree to strive for consensus.
2. All Board members in the process are equal
3. Members can disagree with each other.
4. Respect each other’s opinions and remain flexible
5. Accept time constraints. No one will dominate the discussions all participants will have an opportunity to express their opinions
6. Silence Is Agreement
7. When a decision is reached, all members support the decision
8. Consensus-Minus-One.” What this means is that it takes more than one dissenting member to block consensus.
9. Rule of Decision: We agree that the rule of decision is Consensus -minus one, as described above.
10. If a time sensitive decision critical to the organization does not allow for a consensus to be developed, a vote may be taken to decide the proposal as a Final Step

Process Guidelines

Each decision arising from an agenda item follows through a simple structure:

A matter to be decided is presented as part of the agenda for the meeting.

Discussion of the item: The item is discussed with the goal of identifying opinions and information on the topic at hand. The general direction of the group and potential proposals for action are often identified during the discussion

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Formation of a proposal: Based on the discussion a formal decision proposal on the issue is presented to the group.

Clarifying questions that seek to explain points of the matter/problem or proposal, particularly how the proposal fits with our organization may be asked at this time.

Objections and concerns about conflicts with our organization or structure are then raised by participants. These are recorded and grouped according to topic, but are not addressed at this time.

A general discussion follows, during which clarifying questions, objections, and concerns are addressed, one at a time, with discussion and suggestions recorded for modifying the proposal so it better meets our organization requirements, with the goal of achieving unity.

Call for consensus: The facilitator of the decision-making body calls for consensus on the proposal or modified proposal. Each member of the group should actively state whether they agree or consent, reject or stand aside. Silence is agreement.

Identification and addressing of concerns: If consensus is not achieved, each dissenter presents his or her concerns on the proposal, potentially starting another round of discussion to address or clarify the concern.

Modification of the proposal: The proposal is amended, re-phrased in an attempt to address the concerns of the decision-makers. The process then returns to the call for consensus and the cycle is repeated until a satisfactory decision passes the consent threshold for the group.

The agreed proposal as a consensus of the matter/ problem is recorded in the minutes for future reference.

When consensus cannot be achieved

The dissenting party or parties are required to present an alternative proposal for solving concerns with the resolution under consideration, that they believe to be more agreeable according to the following procedure.

1. This alternative must be presented within a reasonable period of time, as appropriate to the gravity of the resolution. The date for determination of the alternative resolution must be set at the time of defeat of the original resolution. If consensus cannot be achieved in scheduling a meeting for consideration of the alternative resolution, the Chair has the authority to schedule such a meeting.
2. The requirement for an alternative resolution may be waived by unanimous consent at the time of the defeat of the original resolution.
3. Those participating on the alternative resolution must include at least a majority of those who participated in the original resolution. Every effort must be made to include all those who participated on the original resolution.

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Final Step - If Consensus can't be reached and the matter must be resolved

If a member cannot support a proposal / resolution and cannot allow the rest of the meeting to support it, then that member should express their position by "blocking consensus." This is the strongest form of disagreement. A person who blocks consensus is saying, "I cannot support this or allow the group to support this. " To block consensus is to state a belief that to proceed in the way proposed is wrong. When the timing of a decision critical to the organization does not allow for a consensus to be developed, a vote may be taken to decide the proposal at the direction of the Chairperson.

Conclusion

These Rules of Procedure have been developed as a guide. Over time, we may follow the general principles but have the option to modify our approach slightly. The key is that all times participants understand the process and the meeting unfolds in an effective and harmonious way.