

## The Previous Question, Key Points

§16:1–28 & Table II & III, #70

- 1 closes debate and stops amendment
- 2 does not prevent moving higher-ranking motions
  - is not allowed in committees

### Characteristics

- 1 supersedes
  - the effect of an unexhausted order limiting debate
  - any earlier order closing debate at a future time
- 2 can be applied
  - to any immediately pending debatable or amendable motion
  - to any consecutive part of a series, beginning with the immediately pending question
  - to an entire series of pending debatable or amendable motions
- 3 Is out of order when another has the floor
- 4 Must be seconded
- 5 Is not debatable
- 6 Is not amendable
  - when the previous question is immediately pending it can be made again with more or fewer pending questions included
- 7 Requires a two-thirds vote
- 8 reconsider
  - an affirmative vote before any vote has been taken under the order of the previous question
  - if a motion to reconsider an affirmative vote prevails,
    - a the vote is presumed to have carried out the reconsideration and
    - b reversed the vote on the previous question
    - c it will be impossible to obtain a two-thirds vote in favor of the previous question
  - a negative vote only until progress makes it essentially a new question

### Further Rules and Explanation

- a motion for the previous question made in nonstandard form is subject to the rules
- sometimes moving the previous question may motivate unanimous consent to adopt
- when a resolution having a preamble is pending, the order does not apply to the preamble, to which the assembly proceeds before voting on the resolution

# The Previous Question, Key Points

§16:1-28 & Table II & III, #70

## **Interruption of execution** of the previous question

- if a question or series of questions under the order ceases to be the pending business before the motions affected by the order have been voted on, execution of the order is interrupted
- before or after an order for the previous question has been partly carried out it is possible for its execution to be interrupted by a higher-ranking motion
- interruption by the intervention of a special order set for a particular hour

## **Exhaustion** of the previous question

- motions on which it was ordered have been finally disposed of
  - motions not yet finally disposed of are no longer affected by the order
- 1 when motions on which the previous question was ordered have been voted on
  - 2 when motions not yet voted on have either been committed or postponed indefinitely
  - 3 at the end of the session in which the previous question was ordered
    - after the previous question is exhausted, any remaining questions that come up again are open to debate and amendment just as if there had been no order for the previous question
    - if the questions were referred to a committee and later reported, the previous question is exhausted and the motions are open to debate and amendment, even if it is during the same session
    - if the interruption of execution occurred by any other means than referral and the questions come up again during the same session, the order remains in effect
    - if the questions do not come up again until a later session, the previous question is exhausted, regardless of how the interruption of execution occurred

## **Effect on subsequent motions** generally

- while one or more motions on which the previous question has been ordered remain pending, the order applies to any other motions that may take precedence over these pending questions
- if a question of privilege is raised and admitted for immediate consideration, it is independent of an unexhausted order for the previous question applying to business it interrupts

## **Form...**

- calls of "Question!" by members from their seats are not in order
- the chair does not pause or ask, "Are you ready for the question?" but puts the question for a rising vote on the motion for the previous question immediately
- the chair in announcing an affirmative result at once states the question on the motion that is immediately pending
- if a member wishes to make a higher-ranking motion she seeks limited recognition by immediately rising and addressing the chair

## Motions Chart & Characteristics

Rank	Motion	4 Second	5 Debate	6 Amend	7 Vote	8 Reconsider
<b>Incidental Motions</b>						
0	point of order	no	no	no	chair rules	no
0	parliamentary inquiry	no	no	no	chair advises	no
0	request for information	no	no	no	chair directs	no
0	appeal from decision of the chair	yes	unless <sup>1</sup>	no	majority or tie <sup>2</sup>	yes
0	suspend the rules of order	yes	no	no	two-thirds	no
0	choose the method of voting	yes	no	yes	majority	yes
0	division of question	yes	no	yes	majority	no
0	division of assembly	no	no	no	one	no
0	object to consideration of question	no	no	no	neg two-thirds <sup>3</sup>	if lost
0	request permission withdraw motion	if maker	no	no	majority	if lost
0	consider in sequence	yes	no	yes	majority	no
0	create a blank by striking out	yes	no	no	majority	no
0	request permission to read	if maker	no	no	majority	yes
<b>Privileged Motions</b>						
1	fix the time to which to adjourn	yes	no	yes	majority	yes
2	adjourn	yes	no	no	majority	no
3	recess	yes	no	yes	majority	no
4	raise a question of privilege	no	no	no	chair rules	no
5	call for the orders of the day	no	no	no	one	no
<b>Subsidiary Motions</b>						
6	lay on the table	yes	no	no	majority	if lost
7	previous question	yes	no	no	two-thirds	yes
8	limit debate	yes	no	yes	two-thirds	yes
9	postpone to a certain time	yes	yes	yes	majority	yes
10	refer to committee	yes	yes	yes	majority	yes
11	amend the amendment	yes	if motion	no	majority	yes
12	amend the motion	yes	if motion	yes	majority	yes
13	postpone indefinitely	yes	yes	no	majority	if lost
<b>Main Motion</b>						
14	main motion	yes	yes	amend	majority	yes
<b>Motions that bring a question again before the assembly</b>						
-	take from the table	yes	no	no	majority	no
-	rescind (or repeal, or annul)	yes	yes	yes	two-thirds	if lost
-	amend something previously adopted	yes	yes	yes	two-thirds	if lost
-	discharge a committee	yes	yes	yes	two-thirds	if lost
-	reconsider	yes	if motion	no	majority	no

- A motion with a **lower number** than the pending question is **in order at this time**.
- A motion with a **higher number** than the pending question is **not in order at this time**.
- An applicable **incidental** motion is in order and **decided** before proceeding with business.

<sup>1</sup> Unless it relates to (a) indecorum, (b) priority of business, (c) ...undebatable question.

<sup>2</sup> Majority or tie sustains the decision of the chair.

<sup>3</sup> Two-thirds against consideration sustains the objection.

## At the monthly meeting

At the monthly meeting under new business there are five motions pending with the status indicated on the chart.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Sequence	Rank	Motion	move, call, rise, appeal	seconded	chair stated	pending	adopted	lost
12								
11								
10								
9								
8								
7								
6								
5	9	postpone to next session	√	√	√	√		
4	10	refer to it committee	√	√	√	√		
3	12	amend insert dell before laptop	√	√	√	√		
2	13	postpone indefinitely	√	√	√	√		
1	14	main motion purchase laptop	√	√	√	√		

## Script 1 immediately pending motion

Debate is not included in the script; it is understood members debate debatable motions. The left hand column identifies the person speaking; [instructions are in gray type] and Mbr's words are in black type.

Five pending motions are stacked up as the chair puts the question.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to postpone the main motion to the next session.

Chair Are you ready for the question?<sup>1</sup> [Pause for response]

Mbr **6** [Raise your hand and call out] Madam chair!

Chair The chair recognizes member 6.

Mbr **6** I move the previous question.

Mbr [Call out] Second!

Chair It is moved and seconded to order the previous question.

Chair Those in favor say raise your hand. [15 raise their hand]

Chair Hands down.

Chair Those opposed raise your hand. [7 raise their hand]

Chair Hands down.

Chair There are 15 in the affirmative and 7 in the negative.

Chair There are two-thirds in the affirmative, and the motion is adopted.

Chair The previous question is ordered on the immediately pending motion.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to postpone the main motion to the next session.

Chair Those in favor say aye. [A majority say aye]

Chair Those opposed say no. [A minority say no]

Chair The ayes have it, and the motion is postponed to the next session.

Chair Is there any further business to come before the assembly? [pause for response, and when no one responds adjourn the meeting]

Chair There being none the meeting is adjourned.

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<sup>1</sup> The chair is asking members (1) Do you want to vote? (2) Do you want to debate? or (3) Do you want to make another motions?

## Script 2 top two motions in sequence

Debate is not included in the script; it is understood members debate debatable motions. The left hand column identifies the person speaking; [instructions are in gray type] and Mbr's words are in black type.

Five pending motions are stacked up as the chair puts the question.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to postpone the main motion to the next session.

Chair Are you ready for the question? [Pause for response]

Mbr 6 [Raise your hand and call out] Madam chair!

Chair The chair recognizes member 6.

Mbr 6 I move the previous question on the motions to postpone and refer.

Mbr [Call out] Second!

Chair It is moved and seconded to order the previous question on the motions to postpone and refer.

Chair Those in favor raise you hand. [15 raise their hands]

Chair Hands down.

Chair Those opposed raise your hand. [7 raise their hands]

Chair Hands down.

Chair There are 15 in the affirmative and 7 in the negative.

Chair There are two-thirds in the affirmative, and the motion is adopted.

Chair The previous question is ordered on postpone and refer.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to postpone the main motion to the next session.

Chair Those in favor say aye. [A minority say aye]

Chair Those opposed say no. [A majority say no]

Chair The noes have it, and the motion is lost.

Chair The main motion is not postponed to the next session.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to refer to committee.

Chair Those in favor say aye. [A majority say aye]

Chair Those opposed say no. [A minority say no]

Chair The ayes have it, and the motion to refer is adopted.

Chair The motion to purchase a laptop is referred to the IT committee.

Chair Is there any further business to come before the assembly [pause for response and when no one responds adjourn the meeting.

Chair There being none the meeting is adjourned.

## Script 3 all pending motions

Debate is not included in the script; it is understood members debate debatable motions. The left hand column identifies the person speaking; [instructions are in gray type] and the Mbr's words are in black type.

Five pending motions are stacked up as the chair puts the question.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to postpone the main motion to the next session.

Chair Are you ready for the question? [Pause for response]

Mbr 6 [Raise your hand and call out] Madam chair!

Chair The chair recognizes member 6.

Mbr 6 I move the previous question on all pending motions.

Mbr [Call out] Second!

Chair It is moved and seconded to order the previous question on all pending motions.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to order the previous question on all pending motions.

Chair Those in favor raise you hand. [15 raise their hands]

Chair Hands down.

Chair Those opposed raise your hand. [7 raise their hands]

Chair Hands down.

Chair There are 15 in the affirmative and 7 in the negative.

Chair There are two-thirds in the affirmative, and the motion is adopted.

Chair The previous question is ordered on all pending motions.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to postpone the main motion to the next session.

Chair Those in favor say aye. [A minority say aye]

Chair Those opposed say no. [A majority say no]

Chair The noes have it, and the motion is lost.

Chair The main motion is not postponed to the next session.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to refer to committee.

Chair Those in favor say aye. [A minority say aye]

Chair Those opposed say no. [A majority say no]

Chair The noes have it, and the motion is lost.

Chair The question is not referred to the IT committee.

### Script 3 all pending motions

Chair The question is on the adoption of the primary amendment to insert the word "Dell" before the word "laptop."

Chair If adopted the main motion will read that we purchase a Dell laptop.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to insert the word "Dell" before the word "laptop."

Chair Those in favor say aye. [A majority say aye]

Chair Those opposed say no. [A minority say no]

Chair The ayes have it, and the motion is adopted.

Chair The main motion now reads that we purchase a Dell laptop.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to postpone indefinitely.

Chair Those in favor say aye. [A majority say aye]

Chair Those opposed say no. [A majority say no]

Chair The noes have it, and the motion is lost.

Chair The motion is not postponed indefinitely.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to purchase a Dell laptop.

Chair Those in favor say aye. [A majority say aye]

Chair Those opposed say no. [A minority say no]

Chair The ayes have it, and the motion is adopted.

Chair We will purchase a Dell laptop.

Chair Is there any further business to come before the assembly. [Pause for response and when no one responds adjourn the meeting]

Chair There being none the meeting is adjourned.



## Script 4 series of previous questions aka filling the blank

Debate is not included in the script; it is understood members debate debatable motions. The left hand column identifies the person speaking; [instructions are in gray type] and Mbr's words are in black type.

Five pending motions are stacked up as the chair puts the question.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to postpone the main motion to the next session.

Chair Are you ready for the question? [Pause for response]

Mbr **6** [Raise your hand and call out] Madam chair!

Chair The chair recognizes member 6.

Mbr **6** I move the previous question on the motion to postpone and the motion to refer.

Mbr X [Call out] Second!

Chair It is moved and seconded to order the previous question on the motion to postpone and the motion to refer.

Mbr **7** [Call out without hesitation] Madam president!

Chair The chair recognizes member 7.

Mbr **7** I move the previous question on the all pending motions.

Mbrt X [Call out] Second!

Chair It is moved and seconded to order the question on the all pending motions.

Mbr **8** [Call out without hesitation] Madam president!

Chair The chair recognizes member 8.

Mbr **8** I move the previous question on the immediately pending motion.

Mbrt X [Call out] Second!

Chair It is moved and seconded to order the previous question on the immediately pending motion.

Chair The chair will take the vote on the motions for the previous question in sequence starting with the previous question on the largest number of motions.

Chair The first motion to receive a two-thirds vote will be adopted

Chair The question is on the motion to order the previous question on all pending motions.

Chair Those in favor raise your hand. [15 raise their hand]

Chair Hand down.

Script 4 series of previous questions  
aka filling the blank

- Chair The opposed raise your hand. [8 raise their hand]
- Chair Hands down.
- Chair There are 15 in the affirmative and 8 in the negative.
- Chair There are not two-thirds in the affirmative, and the motion is lost.
- Chair The previous question is not ordered on all pending motions.
- Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to order the previous question on the motion to postpone and to refer.
- Chair Those in favor raise your hand. [15 raise their hand]
- Chair Hands down.
- Chair Those opposed raise your hand. [7 raise their hand]
- Chair Hands down.
- Chair There are 15 in the affirmative and 7 in the negative.
- Chair There at two-thirds in the affirmative, and the motion is adopted.
- Chair The previous question is ordered on the motion to postpone and the motion to refer.
- Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to postpone the main motion to the next session.
- Chair Those in favor say aye. [A minority say aye]
- Chair Those opposed say no. [A majority say no]
- Chair The noes have it and the motion is lost.
- Chair The main motion is not postponed to the next session.
- Chair The question is on the motion to refer the motion to the IT committee.
- Chair Those in favor say aye. [A majority say aye]
- Chair Those opposed say no. [A minority say no]
- Chair The ayes have it and the motion is adopted.
- Chair The motion is referred to the IT committee
- Chair Is there any further business to come before the assembly. [Pause for response and when no one responds adjourn the meeting]
- Chair There being none the meeting is adjourned.

## Script 5 previous question interrupted

Debate is not included in the script; it is understood members debate debatable motions. The left hand column identifies the person speaking; [instructions are in gray type] and Mbr's words are in black type.

Five pending motions are stacked up as the chair puts the question.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to postpone the main motion to the next session.

Chair Are you ready for the question? [Pause for response]

Mbr 6 [Raise your hand and call out] Madam chair!

Chair The chair recognizes member 6.

Mbr 6 I move the previous question on all pending motions.

Mbr X [Call out] Second!

Chair It is moved and seconded to order the previous question on all pending motions.

Mbr 7 [Raise your hand and call out] Madam chair!

Chair The chair recognizes member 7

Mbr 7 I move to recess for five minutes.

Mbr [Call out] Second!

Chair It is moved and seconded to recess for five minutes.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to recess five minutes.

Chair Are you ready for the question? [Pause for response]

Chair Those in favor say aye. [A majority say aye]

Chair Those opposed say no. [A minority say no]

Chair The ayes have it, and the motion is adopted.

Chair We will recess for five minutes.

[Five minutes later, the chair reconvenes the meeting]

Chair The meeting will come to order.

Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to order the previous question on all pending motions.

Chair Those in favor raise you hand. [15 raise their hands]

Chair Hands down.

Chair Those opposed raise your hand. [7 raise their hands]

Chair Hands down.

Chair There are 15 in the affirmative and 7 in the negative.

Chair There are two-thirds in the affirmative, and the motion is adopted.

## Script 5 previous question interrupted

- Chair The previous question is ordered on all pending motions.
- Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion to postpone the main motion to the next session.
- Chair Those in favor say aye. [A minority say aye]
- Chair Those opposed say no. [A majority say no]
- Chair The noes have it, and the motion is lost.
- Chair The main motion is not postponed to the next session.
- Chair The question is on the motion to refer to the IT committee.
- Chair Those in favor say aye. [A minority say aye]
- Chair Those opposed say no. [A majority say no]
- Chair The noes have it, and the motion is lost.
- Chair The motion is not referred to the IT committee.
- Chair The question is on the adoption of the primary amendment to insert the word "Dell" before the word "laptop."
- Chair If adopted the main motion will read we purchase a Dell laptop.
- Chair Those in favor of inserting the word "Dell" before the word "laptop" say aye. [A majority say aye]
- Chair Those opposed say no. [A minority say no]
- Chair The ayes have it, and the primary amendment is adopted.
- Chair The question is on the adoption of the motion postpone indefinitely.
- Chair Those in favor say aye. [A minority say aye]
- Chair Those opposed say no. [A majority say no]
- Chair The noes have it, and the motion is lost.
- Chair The main motion is not postponed indefinitely.
- Chair The question is on the adoption of the main motion as amended that we purchase a Dell laptop.
- Chair Those in favor say aye. [A majority say aye]
- Chair Those opposed say no. [A minority say no]
- Chair The ayes have it, and the motion is adopted.
- Chair We will purchase a Dell laptop.
- Chair Is there any further business to come before the assembly. [Pause for response]
- Chair There being none the meeting is adjourned.