

Voting correctly

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The main motion and ancillary issues

Many associations are familiar with the situation: the management board has put together a deal and presents it at the general meeting, leading to various additional proposals by the members.

The individual positions must be correctly evaluated and assigned. The first thing is to determine whether the position qualifies as a motion. Saying the deal must be rejected, for example, is not a motion. It is a call to the voters to vote "no".

A **main motion** is the original proposal from the management board of an association member. An **amendment request** is a proposal to amend a main motion. An **opposing motion** is an alternative proposal (more than an amendment).

First of all amendment requests are voted on. If there are several amendment requests, the "winner" must be determined by means of a "clarification".

Example: the management board has requested an increase in member contributions of CHF 50. One member initiates a motion to increase contributions by just CHF 20, another member initiates a motion for a CHF 100 increase. Both amendment requests are set against each other.

The "winner" is proposed as an alternative to the management board's motion. Whichever motion receives the most votes (proposal by the board of management or the amendment request), is put to the vote (yes/no). It is thus possible that the motion for a CHF 20 increase receives the most votes in the second round, but that an increase is then entirely rejected in the final vote.

If an opposing motion is put forward and provided there is no amendment request, it is directly put to the vote against the main motion.

If there is a proposed amendment, the above procedure is used and the preferred motion – amendment request or main motion – is put forward as an alternative to the opposing motion.

Whichever motion receives the most votes (main/ amendment request or opposing motion), is then voted on (yes/no).

Review proposal

If a decision has been made, a motion can still be put forward by the end of the meeting to review the decision. This could be useful, for example, if the procedure leading to the decision was not correct, if new information has come to light or if another decision was subsequently taken that is incompatible with the first one. First of all the review proposal is put to the vote. If it is passed, the motion is put to the vote again. The result can be different or the same as in the first vote.

Example of proposed amendments and opposing motion

Management board motion: attend federal event with two-day trip, cost for members CHF 150.

Proposed amendment 1: attend federal event and three-day trip

Proposed amendment 2: just attend federal event without trip

Proposed amendment 3: member costs are paid from association funds

Opposing motion: no attendance at federal event, just a two-day trip

Voting sequence

1. Motion "attend federal event and three-day trip" against motion "just attend federal event"
Result of vote:
 - a. Motion "attend federal event and three-day trip": 15 votes
 - b. Motion "just attend federal event": 33 votes
2. Motion "just attend federal event" against motion "member costs paid from association funds"
Result of vote:
 - a. Motion "just attend federal event": 42 votes
 - b. Motion "member costs paid from association funds": 6 votes
3. Motion "just attend federal event" against management board motion
Result of vote:
 - a. Motion "just attend federal event": 26 votes
 - b. Management board motion: 22 votes
4. Motion "just attend federal event" against "opposing motion"
Result of vote:
 - a. Motion "just attend federal event": 18 votes
 - b. Opposing motion: 25 votes
5. Vote on opposing motion: 18 in favour/30 against

Result: no trip or attendance at federal event

Further work aids can be found at <https://www.vitaminb-e.ch/tools/work-aids>

- Agenda items and motions