

RMRC Adopted Practice of Consensus Decision Making

Final May 2, 2019

Overall: The council definitely prefers face to face meetings rather than email discussion or conference calls. Zoom visual technology may help but if at all possible, we need to meet in person. Meetings begin and end with prayer.

1) Our general practice during meetings will be to slow down and engage each person around the table, listening, asking or responding to clarifying questions and engaging with Love, respect, emotional strength and intelligence, commitment to the common good and foregoing personal agendas.

2) Facilitators will ask if there are any opposing views on every decision and wait for a response, and also to call on those not vocal during issue discussions. If the facilitator prefers, s/he may ask for a volunteer to take the role of assuring that we are hearing from all voices during the meeting.

Members may request to abstain from a particular decision if there are unusual circumstances such as a conflict of interest.

If the group is divided, we will: Yield. Stop. Pray. Listen. Try to identify how a problem emerged, if it is local or regional, and the source of resistance by going around the table. Honor no crosstalk as each person responds uninterrupted. After hearing from everyone, if there is not clear consensus, use the 5-finger model:

5. I love it. I insist on it. I can't live without it.

4. I prefer it. I like it. But I can live without it. And if it is the group's decision... I will support it.

3. I am neutral on the question. I have no preference. And if it is the group's decision... I will support it.

2. I prefer not to do it/support it. I don't like it. But I can live with it. And if it is the group's decision... I will support it.

1. I hate it. I insist against it. I can't live with it. I veto it.

3) Repeat :) We cannot move forward if 1s or 5s are present. We listen again and amend.

4) If consensus cannot be reached, hit the pause button and postpone the decision until the next meeting. At the next meeting, if we still can't reach consensus we may resort to voting as we continue to listen to the minority voices (see below). If consensus is blocked and no new

consensus can be reached, the group may stay with whatever the previous decision was on the subject, or does nothing if that is applicable.

5) Major philosophical or moral questions that will come up with each affinity group will have to be worked through as the group forms and re-forms with each new member.

Difficulties in reaching consensus: If a decision has been reached, or is on the verge of being reached that you cannot support, there are several ways to express your objections:

- Non-support ("I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along.")
- Reservations ("I think this may be a mistake but I can live with it.")
- Standing aside ("I personally can't do this, but I won't stop others from doing it. ")
- Blocking ("I cannot support this or allow the group to support this. It is immoral." If a final decision violates someone's fundamental moral values they are obligated to block consensus.)
- Withdrawing from the group. Obviously, if many people express non-support or reservations or stand aside or leave the group, it may not be a viable decision even if no one directly blocks it. This is what is known as a "lukewarm" consensus and it is just as desirable as a lukewarm beer or a lukewarm bath.

***The facilitator of the meeting is responsible to bring a copy of this document to the meeting.