

Parliamentary Procedure

Making meetings work

What Is Parliamentary Procedure?

- It is a set of rules for conduct at meetings, that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

Goals

- Make meeting run smoothly
- Maintain order
- Protect minority interests while letting majority rule
- Keep everything “legal

Organizations using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed order of business. Below is a typical example:

- Call to order.
- Reading of minutes of last meeting.
- Officers reports (Treasurer).
- Committee reports.
- Special orders --- Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.
- Unfinished business.
- New business.
- Announcements.
- Adjournment.

Quorum

- Minimum number to transact business.
- For a SWCD would be 3

Agenda

- Prepared ahead of the meeting and becomes the order items come up in the meeting.

How can I get an item on the agenda for a meeting?

- For a proposed agenda to become the official agenda for a meeting, it must be adopted by the assembly at the outset of the meeting. At the time that an agenda is presented for adoption, it is in order for any member to move to amend the proposed agenda by adding any item which the member desires to add, or by proposing any other change.
- It is wrong to assume, as many do, that the president (Office Manager) "sets the agenda." It is common for the president to prepare a proposed agenda, but that becomes binding only if it is adopted by the full assembly, perhaps after amendments as just described.

Minutes

- Not only is it not necessary to summarize matters discussed at a meeting in the minutes of that meeting, it is improper to do so. Minutes are a record of what was done at a meeting, not a record of what was said.

Minutes (con't)

- The wording used in the minutes to record a main motion that has died for lack of a second should reflect just that, e.g., "A motion by Mr.. X 'that the Society support the candidacy of John Smith for the office of Mayor' died for lack of a second", or that "A motion 'that the Society support the candidacy of John Smith for the office of Mayor' failed to receive a second."

Correcting minutes

- If corrections to minutes are made at the time when those minutes are originally submitted for approval, such corrections are made in the text of the minutes being approved. The minutes of the meeting at which the corrections are made should merely indicate that the minutes were approved "as corrected."
- If it becomes necessary to correct minutes after they have initially been approved, such correction can be made by means of the motion to *Amend Something Previously Adopted*. In this event, since the motion to *Amend Something Previously Adopted* is a main motion, the exact wording of that motion, whether adopted or rejected, should be entered in the minutes of the meeting at which it was considered.

Main Motion – To introduce new ideas to the group

Maker uses terminology “I move that...”

- **Can not be in negative form**

- **Only one main motion at a time**

Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we ..."
rather than, "I move that we do not ...".

Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.

Second

The Chairman States Your Motion

The Chairman will say, "it has been moved and seconded that we ..." Thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.

Now is in the hands of the assembly

Discussion

Main Motions Continued

- Main Motions that are not Legal
 - Break any Local, State or National Laws
 - Any motion that brings up a motion that has already been failed
 - Items that are outside the power of the group
 - Negative motions
 - Political or religious Support

- President restates motion for vote
- President states action that will happen

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the by-laws of policy of your organization.

- There are five methods used to vote by most organizations, they are:
 - paper, this method is used when secrecy is desired. By Voice -- The Chairman asks those in favor to say, "aye", those opposed to say "no". Any member may move for a exact count.
 - By Roll Call -- Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person's vote is required.
 - By General Consent -- When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chairman says, "if there is no objection ..." The membership shows agreement by their silence, however if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.
 - By Division -- This is a slight verification of a voice vote. It does not require a count unless the chairman so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.
 - By Ballot -- Members write their vote on a slip of

President Voting

- Normally President votes only to make or to break a tie. If vote is 2 Aye and 2 No –
 - President can call the motion failed and not indicate if they voted
 - Vote Aye and pass the motion
 - Vote no and fail the motion

Conflict of Interest

- Under the rules in RONR, no member can be compelled to refrain from voting simply because it is perceived that he or she may have some "conflict of interest" with respect to the motion under consideration. If a member has a direct personal or pecuniary (monetary) interest in a motion under consideration not common to other members, the rule in RONR is that he *should not* vote on such a motion, but even then he or she cannot be *compelled* to refrain from voting.

Can votes be taken in an executive session?

- ***Answer:***

Yes, votes can be taken in executive session. Proceedings in an executive session are secret, but are not restricted in any other way.

Can we hold our board meetings by conference telephone call?

- ***Answer:***

You may hold board meetings by conference telephone call only if your bylaws specifically authorize you to do so. If they do, such meetings must be conducted in such a way that all members participating can hear each other at the same time, and special rules should be adopted to specify precisely how recognition is to be sought and the floor obtained during such meetings.

- It should be noted in this connection that the personal approval of a proposed action obtained from a majority of, or even all, board members separately is not valid board approval, since no meeting was held during which the proposed action could be properly debated. If action is taken by the board on the basis of individual approval, such action must be ratified by the board at its next regular meeting in order to become an official act

Elections

- Nominations can be closed by
 - Motion to close nominations (2/3 vote)
 - President calls for further nominations three times. If there are none, the President can close nominations

Elections

- If there are two candidates, vote taken
- If there is one candidate
 - I prefer a motion to elect person
 - Can be elected by “unanimous consent”

Voter

- A member can change their vote up until the vote is announced by the chair

- **The Common Motions Classified According to Their Objects.**
- (1) To Modify or Amend.
 - (a) *Amend*
 - (b) *Commit or Refer*
- (2) To Defer Action.
 - (a) *Postpone to a Certain Time*
 - (b) *Make a Special Order (2/3 Vote)*
 - (c) *Lay on the Table*
- (3) To Suppress or Limit Debate (2/3 Vote).
 - (a) *Previous Question (to close debate now) (2/3 Vote)*
 - (b) *Limit Debate (2/3 Vote)*
- (4) To Suppress the Question.
 - (a) *Objection to Its Consideration (2/3 Vote)*
 - (b) *Previous Question and Reject Question*
 - (c) *Postpone Indefinitely*
 - (d) *Lay on the Table*
- (5) To Consider a Question a Second Time.
 - (a) *Take from the Table*
 - (b) *Reconsider*
 - (c) *Rescind*

What can Happen to a Main Motion

- Postpone indefinitely
- Amend
- Refer to a committee
- Postpone definitely
- Limit Debate
- Previous Question
- Lay on the table

How can something be defeated without a direct vote on it?

- Before debate on an original (ordinary substantive) main motion has begun you may raise an *Objection to Consideration of [the] Question*, which is undebatable and can suppress the main question by a two-thirds vote against consideration
- If debate on the main motion has begun and you want to get rid of that motion without a direct vote on it, use the motion to *Postpone Indefinitely*. That motion requires only a majority vote, but until it is adopted, it leaves the main question open to debate

Postpone Indefinitely

- Used to defeat a motion without voting on the motion
- Used to test who is for or against a motion
- Can still discuss the main motion
- Proper Example: Mr. President, I move to Postpone this motion indefinitely

Amend

- Changes motion by inserting, deleting or inserting and deleting
- Must be “**germane**”
- Ex: Motion “to have a conservation tour and picnic” can be amended by
 - inserting :”on August 10th” at the end of the motion.
 - Deleting “and picnic”
 - Deleting “picnic” and adding “hog roast”

Amendment to an Amendment

- Purpose
 - To modify an amendment to make it more specific
 - Can not be amended
- Must change only the amendment
- Ex: Amendment to :”on August 10th” can be amended to strike “10” and adding “12” but not by adding “with a hog roast”

Friendly amendment

- If it appears to the chair that an amendment (or any other motion) is uncontroversial, it is proper for the chair to ask if there is "any objection" to adopting the amendment.
- If no objection is made, the chair may declare the amendment adopted.
- If even one member objects, however, the amendment is subject to debate and vote like any other, regardless of whether its proposer calls it "friendly" and regardless of whether the maker of the original motion endorses its adoption

Refer to a committee

- Should state
 - Which committee or how appointed
 - Action to be taken
 - Find information and report back
 - Find information and make recommendations
 - Take action

Refer to Committee

- Purpose

- used to send a pending question to a small group so that the question may be carefully investigated
- Mr.. President, I move we refer this motion to a committee of three appointed by the chair to report back at the next meeting

Postpone Definitely

- Purpose
 - allow for the motion on the floor to be deferred to a different day, meeting, or until after a certain event
- Proper example:
 - Madam President, I move to postpone this motion until the December Regular Meeting.

Postpone definitely

- Time must be within this meeting or the next meeting
- Requires a 2/3 vote
- Can't be used to make motion invalid i.e. A motion to have a tour August 10th can't be postponed to the August 15th meeting

Limit or Extend Debate

- Purpose

- To limit or lengthen the time allowed for discussion on a motion when it is clear that there will be an excessive amount of discussion or when the amount of time for the meeting is limited.

Limit / Extend Debate Continued

- Maker of the motion must specify
 - the amount of time
 - the number of speakers that can debate the motion
- Proper Example
 - Madam President, I move that we limit debate on this motion to 3 discussions for the motion and 3 discussions against the motion.
 - Madam President, I move to limit debate to a maximum of 5 minutes.

Previous Question

- Purpose
 - To force an immediate Vote on the motion
- Proper example:
 - Madam President, I move the previous question
 - Mr. President, I call for the previous question

Question

- It is a fairly common misconception that, after debate has continued for some time, if any member shouts out "Question!" or "I call the question!", debate must immediately cease and the chair must put the pending question to a vote. This is simply not the case.

Lay on the table

- Temporarily sets aside an item of business for more urgent matters
- Should not be used to kill a motion
- Takes all pending motions with it
- Is on the table until the end of the next meeting

To lay on the table

- Purpose
 - To defer action on the motion until later in the meeting or until the next meeting
- Proper example:
 - Mr.. President, I move to lay this motion on the table

Can something be defeated by adopting a motion to table it?

- ***Answer:***

This is a common violation of fair procedure. Such a motion is not in order, because it would permit debate to be suppressed by a majority vote, and only a two-thirds vote can do that.

To take from the table

- Purpose
 - To take a motion that is on the table off of the table.
- Proper Example
 - I move to take the motion that reads to buy a tree planter from the table.

Reconsider

- Purpose
 - to reevaluate a decision that was made earlier
- If passed, the motion to be reconsidered is handled just as if it was never voted on
- Must be on same day as action was taken on the motion (or next day in a convention)

- Only can be made by a person who voted on the winning side
- If passed the motion is handled immediately if:
 - only a main motion with amendments is on the floor.

Rescind

- Purpose
 - To REPEAL PREVIOUS ACTION
- Proper Example
 - Madam President, I move that we rescind the motion passed at our May meeting to buy a tree planter.
- Vote either in favor of rescind or not to rescind. If passes – motion is no longer in effect
- Should go back and make a note in the minutes where that motion was passed.

Suspend the Rules

- Purpose

- allows the chapter to break the rules of parliamentary procedure, or the current constitution for a short period of time.
- Mr. President, Because of the lack of time tonight, I move to suspend the rules and skip directly to new business.

Modify or Withdraw

- Purpose
 - This motion allows for the maker of a motion to change a motion or completely take it off the floor for discussion.
- If made before President first states the motion it is automatically withdrawn with no second or vote.
- If made after President first states the motion the following steps must be taken.

Modify or Withdraw con't

- President must ask if anyone objects to the maker withdrawing the motion
 - if someone objects – must be seconded and passed with a majority vote
 - If no one objects – the motion is automatically withdrawn
- Can not be made after discussion has begun
- Proper form
 - Mr. President, I would like to withdraw my motion

Divide a Motion and consider by parts

- Purpose
 - This motion allows a motion that has been made to be split into two different motions
- This can only be made on motions that have two main ideas that are not dependent on each other

Divide a Motion Con't

- Proper example
 - Motion on the floor, I move to buy a tree planter and buy a new pick-up.
 - Madam President, I move to divide this motion into two motions. The first stating the we buy a tree planter and the second that we buy a pickup.

Divide a Motion Con't

- Can't divide a motion that would make one of the motions unenforceable
- Motion I move that we have a fair booth and that the supervisors construct the booth.
- If divided and fail having a fair booth, second part is not feasible.

Object to the Consideration

- Purpose
 - Used when a member thinks that the activity or action of the group is not appropriate.
- Proper form
 - Mr.. President, I object to the consideration of this question.
 - President should say “Objection to the consideration has been called. All those who wish to consider the motion raise your right hand. All those who object to the consideration of this question same sign.

Division of the house

- Purpose
 - When called, this forces a immediate revote by hand
- Does not require a second No vote needed
- Can interrupt another speaker
- Proper form
 - Can be made by saying “division” loud enough for the entire group to hear
 - Or by standing and saying “I call for a division of the house”

Point of Order

- Purpose

- Used when a member thinks that the rules of the group or the rules of parliamentary procedure are being violated.

- Proper example

- Mr.. President, I rise to a point of order.
- President says, “State your point”
- After member states point, president says “your point is well taken” or “Your point is not well taken”

Appeal

- Purpose

- To reverse the decision of the chairman, after they have made an error.

- Proper Example

- Mr. President I appeal the decision of the chair.
- President should say “Appeal the decision of the chair has been called, all those who wish to uphold the decision of the chair say I, all opposed same sign.”

Orders of the Day

- Purpose
 - This motion forces the group to return to the set agenda, without finishing the current business.
- Can only be made on motions that are not on the set agenda for that meeting.
- Mr.. President, I call for the orders of the day.
- President should say, Orders of the day has been called. All those who wish to return to the orders of the day, raise your hand. All those opposed to returning to the orders of the day, same sign.

Question of Privilege

- Purpose

- This allows for people in the group to ask for changes in the temperature, for ideas to be clarified, for motions to be explained, for others to repeat their discussion or motions, and anything that may help the meeting run more smoothly.

Question of Privilege (Con't)

- Proper Example
 - Madam President, I Rise to a question of privilege.
 - President says, “State Your Question”
 - Then the member says whatever they have to and the president decides on whether it will be allowed or not.

Recess

- Purpose
 - This allows for a short break in the meeting
- Must specify the length of time in the motion
- Proper example
 - Mr. President, I move to take a 5 minute recess.

Adjourn

- Purpose
 - To end the Meeting
- Proper example
 - Mr. president, I move to adjourn.
- Meeting can be adjourned by unanimous consent