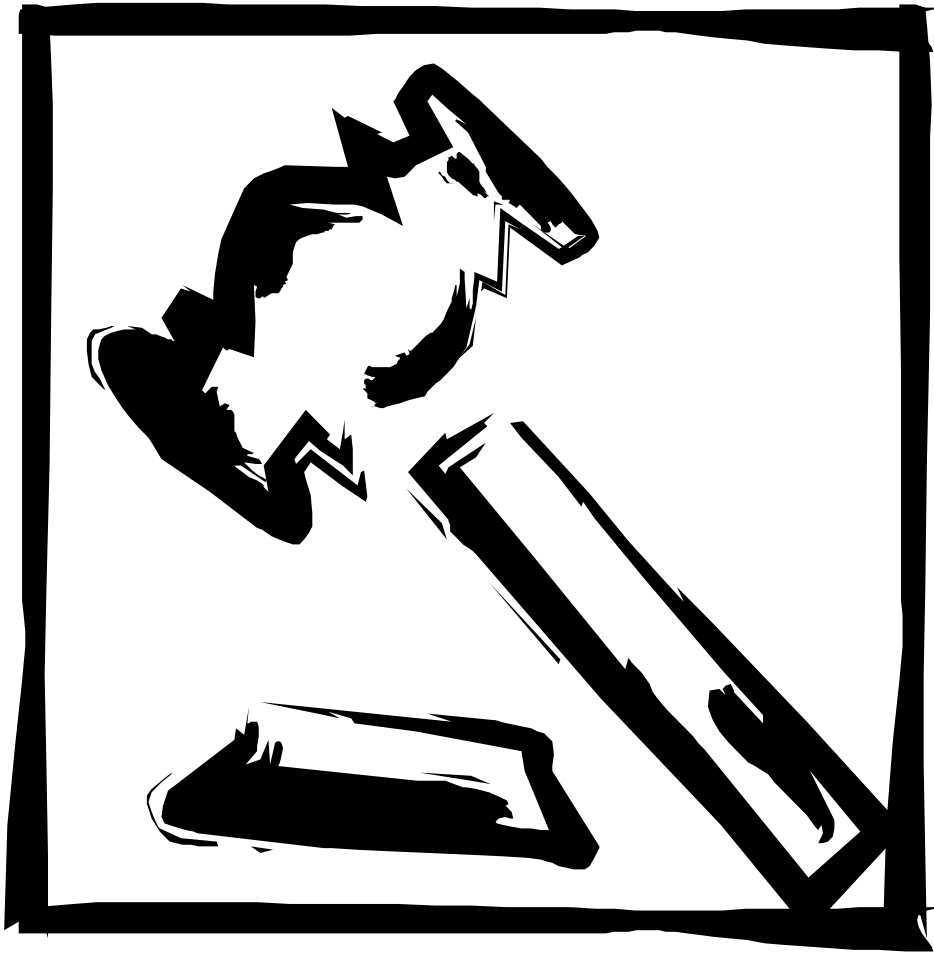


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PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

A Primer for FEW Chapter Presidents

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

A PRIMER FOR FEW CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

Parliamentary procedure is necessary for the efficient conduct of a meeting and, when used properly, can make the meeting more productive and enjoyable. Below are some general guidelines for using parliamentary procedure in your chapter. For more specific information, chapters may obtain detailed instruction through a variety of publications or through the services of a registered parliamentarian.

What is parliamentary procedure and where did it come from?

Parliamentary procedure is merely a set of rules for the conduct of meetings. These rules, when effectively used, allow *everyone* attending the meeting to be heard and to participate in the decision making process. They also help eliminate confusion.

Parliamentary procedure originated in the early English Parliaments and was brought to America with the first settlers. In 1876, Henry M. Robert published these procedures as a uniform manual on parliamentary law. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is widely used today by most clubs and organizations and is the basic handbook for presiding officers.

Why is parliamentary procedure important?

Parliamentary procedure has become an essential tool in conducting meetings because:

- it allows for democratic rule, flexibility, protection of rights, and a fair hearing for all participants;
- it has been tested over the years and has proven successful; and
- it is adaptable to any organization.

How do we use parliamentary procedure?

Parliamentary procedure is used in a variety of ways in planning and conducting meetings, most notably by preparing and following a set agenda, by establishing a quorum (the number of members that must be present for business to be conducted legally), and by making motions.

Motions

A motion is merely a proposal that the body takes a stand or takes action on some issue. Motions are presented, seconded, debated and decided (by vote). There are four general types of motions.

Main motions introduce subjects to the body for its consideration. Main motions cannot be made while another motion is before the assembly. Main motions yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions. An example of a main motion is, “I move the chapter sponsor a training seminar on November 5, 2007.”

Subsidiary motions are more commonly known as amendments. The purpose of a subsidiary motion is to change the main motion or affect how it is handled. The proposed amendment must relate to the subject as presented in the main motion. An example of a subsidiary motion is, “I move the question before the assembly be amended by striking out ‘November 1’ and adding ‘November 15’.”

Privileged motions are most urgent and pertain to special or important matters not related to pending business. An example of a privileged motion is, “I move we adjourn.”

Incidental motions are questions of procedure that arise out of other motions. They must be considered before the other motion; for example, “I move to suspend the rules for the purpose of...”.

For a motion to be considered “in order”, it must relate to the business at hand and be presented at the proper time. It must not be obstructive, frivolous, or contrary to the bylaws.

Most motions require a ‘second’ i.e., an affirmation that another member of the body wishes to consider the motion. This practice prevents the body from spending time on a question that interests only one member.

The right to free and open debate is provided for on *most* motions; some privileged and incidental motions are not debatable.

Most motions require only a majority vote, but motions concerning the rights of the assembly or its members require a 2/3 vote for adoption.

Some motions can be re-debated and re-voted to give members an opportunity to change their mind. The ‘move to reconsider’ must come from the winning side.

Methods of voting on motions

There are five methods of voting to decide the outcome of motions; by voice, by show of hands, by roll call, by ballot, and by general consent.

Voting by voice is the most frequently used method in chapter meetings. In this instance the chairperson asks those in favor to say “aye” and those opposed to say “no”. This method is only used for motions that require a majority vote. Members may move for an exact count.

Voting by show of hands is accomplished by the members raising their hands for sight verification. It does not require a count; however, members may move for an exact count. This method is frequently used to clarify the results of a voice vote.

Voting by roll call. If a record of each person’s vote is needed, each member responds “yes” or “no” when her/his name is called.

Voting by ballot is used when secrecy is desired. In this type of voting, the members cast their votes on a slip of paper.

Voting by general consent is sometimes used when the motion is unlikely to be opposed. If someone objects to this method, the motion must be put to a vote.

In addition to the options of voting for or against an issue, a member may also abstain from voting (choose not to vote).

More about motions

A “motion to table” (lay on the table) is used to temporarily lay on issue aside to tend to a more urgent matter. The option “to take from the table” is always available to enable the body to reconsider the motion.

A “motion to postpone indefinitely” is a strategy to dispose of a motion without making a decision for or against. It is useful in the case of a badly chosen main motion for which either a “yes” or “no” vote would have undesirable consequences.



PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AT A GLANCE

1. A motion must be on the floor before any topic is discussed.
If a person starts to discuss something, the chair must interrupt to ask
“Does someone want to make a motion”? Someone makes a motion.
2. The Chair reads the motion and asks, “Is there a second”?
3. Someone will second.
If no one seconds the motion there cannot be discussion on topic.
4. The Chair asks, “Is there any discussion”?
“Would the maker of the motion like to speak to the motion?”
5. Individuals are recognized by the Chair and allowed to speak for or against the motion.
6. Discussion must all relate to the topic in the motion.
7. The Chair asks, “Is there any further discussion?”
“Hearing none – the motion before us is (read the motion).”
8. “All those in favor of the motion say “Aye”
All those opposed say “No”.
The motion carries or the motion fails.
9. Amendments to Motions:
Always vote on amendments first before voting on the Main Motion (original motion).
10. If there is no credentials chair, establish a quorum by calling role.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE MATRIX

TO DO THIS	YOU SAY THIS	Interrupt the speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	What vote is needed	Can it be reconsidered?
ADJOURN MEETING	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
CALL AN INTERMISSION	"I move that we recess for ..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
COMPLAIN ABOUT HEAT, NOISE, ETC	"I rise to a question of privilege"	No	No	No	No	Majority	No (usually)
TEMPORARILY SUSPEND CONSIDERING AN ISSUE	"I move to table the motion"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No ¹
END DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS	"I move the previous question" "I call the question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
POSTPONE DISCUSSION FOR A CERTAIN TIME	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
GIVE CLOSER STUDY OF SOMETHING	"I move to refer the matter to committee"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes ²
AMEND A MOTION	"I move to amend the motion by ..."	No	Yes	Yes ³	Yes	Majority	Yes
INTRODUCE BUSINESS	"I move that"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes

THE MOTIONS LISTED ABOVE ARE IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE ... BELOW THERE IS NO ORDER

PROTEST BREACH OF RULES OR CONDUCT	"I rise to a point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote ⁴	No	
VOTE ON A RULING OF THE CHAIR	"I appeal from the chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Yes	
SUSPEND RULES TEMPORARILY	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No	
AVOID CONSIDERING AN IMPROPER MATTER	"I object to consideration of this motion"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 ⁶	Maybe ⁷	
VERIFY A VOTE BY MEMBERS STANDING	"I call for a division" or "Division!"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No	
REQUEST INFORMATION	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No	
TAKE UP A MATTER PREVIOUSLY TABLED	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	
RECONSIDER A HASTY ACTION	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	Yes	Yes	Maybe ⁸	No	Majority	No	
Notes:	1 Unless vote on question is not yet taken.	2 Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.	3 Only if the motion to be amended is debatable	4 Except in doubtful cases.	5 A majority vote in negative needed to reverse ruling of chair.	6 A 2/3 vote in negative needed to prevent consideration of main motion	7 Only if the main question or motion was not, in fact, considered.	8 Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable.

From the a-b-c's of Parliamentary Procedures, a Scriptographic Booklet, 1974