

FOREWORD

This booklet is designed to ease the burden of interpreting and reinterpreting the intricacies of parliamentary procedures. It is not meant to be definitive or complete, but it should answer most of the questions raised on parliamentary procedures.

The arrangement of the booklet is such that any organizational president or chairman can use it quickly and easily by merely referring to the side index.

While parliamentary procedures themselves can be justified on the bases of the effectiveness and uniformity they contribute to meeting procedure, there is little, if any, reason for one person to attempt to learn every rule and its related details. To know where to find the answers is enough.

THE "WHY" OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW

Parliamentary law is simple in principle. It is based largely on mere common sense and courtesy. It seems technical because it has been necessary to develop a special vocabulary for discussing it. If one knows the vocabulary, the rules come easily. For this reason, a glossary of common terms has been included in the back of the booklet and should be referred to as often as necessary in considering the fundamental rules.

The Purpose of Parliamentary Law:

1. To enable an assembly to transact business with speed and efficiency.
2. To protect the rights of each individual.
3. To preserve a spirit of harmony within the group.

To achieve these purposes, always consider the five basic principles of parliamentary procedure:

1. Only one subject may claim the attention of the assembly at one time.
2. Each proposition presented for consideration is entitled to full and free debate.
3. Every member has rights equal to every other member.
4. The will of the majority must be carried out, and the rights of the minority must be preserved.
5. The personality and desires of each member should be merged into the larger unit of the organization.

THE AGENDA OR ORDER OF BUSINESS

It is customary for every group to adopt a standard order of business for meetings. When no rule has been adopted, the following is the order:

1. Call to order:

"Will the meeting please come to order."

2. Reading and approval of minutes:

"Are there any corrections to the minutes?"

"There being no corrections, the minutes will stand approved as read."

....OR....

"Are there any further corrections to the minutes?"....

"There being no further corrections, the minutes will stand approved as corrected."

3. Reports of officers and standing committees:

Officers, boards, or standing committees should be called upon to report in the order in which they are mentioned in the constitution or by-laws of the organization.

4. Reports of special committees

5. Unfinished business:

"We come now to unfinished business. Is there any unfinished business to come before the meeting?"

6. New business:

"Is there any new business to come before the meeting?"

7. Program

8. Adjournment:

Unqualified form: Proposer moves for adjournment; motion is seconded; chairman calls for a vote; action depends upon majority vote. This motion cannot be discussed.

Qualified form: Proposer moves for adjournment within a definite time or adjournment to meet again at a specified time; motion is seconded; chairman calls for discussion; a vote is taken; action depends upon majority vote.

A
G
E
N
D
A

O
R
D
E
R

O
F

B
U
S
I
N
E
S
S

WHAT IS A MOTION?

A motion is a proposal that the group take certain action.

HOW ARE MOTIONS CLASSIFIED?

Main Motions

Motions of this group have for their object the bringing of questions, or propositions, before the assembly for consideration. Only one main motion can be considered at a given time by the assembly, and such a motion, when introduced, excludes all other main motions until it has been disposed of.

Subsidiary Motions

Motions of this group have for their object the modification or disposition of the main motion that is being considered. Their existence as motions depends entirely upon the principal motion to which they are subordinate. Since they relate to the question before the house, it is "in order" to propose them when a main motion is still before the assembly and to vote upon them before voting upon the main motion.

Privileged Motions

Motions of this group have no connection whatsoever with the main motion before the assembly, but are motions of such importance that they are entitled to immediate consideration. These motions have the privilege of setting aside temporarily the main business before the house.

Incidental Motions

Motions of this group have few general characteristics in common, but for convenience have been grouped into one class. The name, "incidental," has been chosen because they arise only incidentally out of the business of the assembly.

See pages 10 and 11 for a Chart of Precedence of Motions and a Summary of Rules Governing Them.

HOW SHOULD A MOTION PROGRESS?

1. A member rises and addresses the presiding officer.

The presiding officer should be addressed by title, as "Mr. President." If the specific title is not known, it is always correct to use the term "Mr. (or Madame) Chairman."

2. The member is recognized by the presiding officer.

The chairman recognizes a member by his name, "Mr. Member" or by a nod to him. Having thus received formal recognition from the chairman, a member is said to "have the floor" and is the only member entitled to present or discuss a motion.

3. The member proposes a motion.

A motion is always introduced in the form, "I move that" followed by a statement of the proposal. This is the only correct phraseology. Aside from very brief explanatory remarks, it is not permissible to discuss the merits of a motion either prior to, or immediately following, the formal proposal of the motion. All discussion must wait until after the chairman has stated the motion to the assembly and has called for discussion.

4. Another member seconds the motion.

Another member, without rising or addressing the chairman, may say, "I second the motion." Seconding a motion is merely an indication that the member seconding it wishes the matter to come before the assembly for consideration. If no one seconds the motion, the chairman may ask, "Is there a second to the motion?" If there is none, he may declare, "The motion is lost for want of a second."

5. The presiding officer states the motion to the assembly.

When a motion has been properly proposed and seconded, the chairman repeats the motion to the assembly, or "states the motion." After it has been formally stated to the assembly, it may be spoken

of as a "question," a "proposition," or a "measure."

6. The assembly discusses or debates the motion.

After the motion has been formally stated by the chairman, any member has a right to discuss it. He must obtain the floor in the same manner as when presenting a motion. Normally the first person who asks recognition is entitled to speak, but when several members wish to speak or present motions at the same time, certain guiding principles should determine the decision of the chairman:

- a. The chairman should always show preference to the proposer of the motion.
- b. A member who has not spoken has prior claim over one who has already discussed the question, or who has proposed another motion.
- c. If the chairman knows the opinions of the various members regarding the measure before the house, he should alternate between those favoring the measure and those opposing it.
- d. The chairman should recognize a member who seldom speaks in preference to one who frequently claims the attention of the assembly.

DISCUSSION MUST BE CONFINED TO THE QUESTION THAT IS "BEFORE THE HOUSE."

7. The presiding officer takes the vote on the motion.

When all members who desire to discuss the question have done so, the chairman "puts the motion to a vote." He may, before taking the vote, inquire, "Is there any further discussion?" or "Are you ready for the question?" If no one rises, the chairman presumes discussion is closed. He will proceed to take the vote by announcing, "All in favor of the motion (STATE THE MOTION) say 'Aye'." Following response from the assembly, the chairman then says, "Those opposed say 'No'." If the chairman cannot determine from the volume

of voices which way the majority has voted, he says: "The chair is in doubt. Those in favor of the motion please rise." After counting, he says: "Be seated. Those opposed, rise. Be seated." Another alternative is to simply call for a show of hands. Certain motions may be voted on by ballot.

8. The presiding officer announces the result of the vote.

The chairman formally announces the result of the vote, saying: "The motion is carried; therefore (STATE THE INTENT OF THE MOTION)." If a majority voted in the negative, "The motion is lost." As soon as the vote has been announced by the chairman, another motion is in order.

HOW MAY A MOTION BE AMENDED?

The purpose of the motion TO AMEND is to modify a motion that has already been presented in such a manner that it will be more satisfactory to the members.

Methods of Amending:

By addition or insertion

To add something to the motion which it did not contain.

By elimination or by striking out

To subtract or eliminate something from a motion that was originally a part of it.

By substitution

This method is a combination of the first two methods, since in amending by substitution something is stricken out and something inserted in its place. The substituted portion may consist of a word, a phrase, a clause, or an entirely new motion.

The most important principle to understand in connection with any form of the motion TO AMEND is that an amendment "MAY BE HOSTILE, BUT IT MUST BE GERMANE."

By "hostile" is meant opposed to the spirit and aim of the motion to which it is applied.

By "germane" is meant having direct bearing upon the subject matter or the motion; that is, relevant, or relating to it.

An amendment may be opposed to the actual intent of the original motion and, in fact, nullify it, but if it relates to the same subject matter, it is germane.

HOW TO HANDLE AMENDMENTS

Types of Amendments:

Amendment of the First Rank

An amendment to a motion.

Amendment of the Second Rank

An amendment to the amendment. (The amendment to the amendment must modify and relate directly to the amendment and NOT to the main motion, otherwise it is OUT OF ORDER.)

NO AMENDMENT BEYOND THAT OF SECOND RANK IS POSSIBLE. It is never in order to propose more than one amendment of each rank at one time. If one desires to amend two separate and unrelated parts of a motion, this must be done by two amendments of the first rank, and one must be voted upon before the other is proposed. It is possible, however, to have a *motion*, one amendment to the motion (*amendment of the first rank*), and one amendment to the amendment (*amendment of the second rank*) before the assembly at once. Until the amendment of the second rank has been voted upon, no other amendment of the second rank is in order. Until the amendment of the first rank has been voted upon, no other amendment of the first rank can be proposed.

Order of Voting:

Amendments are voted upon in inverse order; that is, the one of second rank is disposed of first.

1. Discussion is held and the vote taken upon the amendment to the amendment (amendment of second rank.)
2. Discussion is called for and the vote is taken upon the amendment to the motion (amendment of first rank.)
3. When the vote on this has been taken, discussion upon the original or main motion *as amended* is opened and when completed a vote is taken upon it.

CHART OF PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS AND SUMMARY OF GOVERNING RULES

	May Inter- rupt a Speaker	Requires a Second	Debatable	Vote Required	Motions that May Apply
Privileged Motions					
1. To fix time to which to adjourn	No	Yes	Limited	Maj.	Amend, Reconsider
2. To adjourn (unqualified)	No	Yes	No	Maj.	None
3. To take a recess	No	Yes	Limited	Maj.	Amend
4. To rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	Chmn. rules	All
5. To call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	None	None
Subsidiary Motions					
6. To lay on the table	No	Yes	No	Maj.	None
7. To call for the previous question	No	Yes	No	2/3	Reconsider
8. To limit, or extend limits, of debate	No	Yes	Limited	2/3	Amend, Reconsider
9. To postpone definitely	No	Yes	Limited	Maj.	Amend, Recon., Prev. Ques.
10. To refer to a committee	No	Yes	Limited	Maj.	Amend, Recon., Prev. Ques.
11. To amend	No	Yes	Yes	Maj.	Amend, Recon., Prev. Ques.
12. To postpone indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	Maj.	Limit De, Prev. Ques., Recon.
Main Motions					
13. a. General main motions	No	Yes	Yes	Maj.	All
b. Specific main motions					
To take from the table	No	Yes	No	Maj.	None
To reconsider	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.	Lim. Deb., Prev. Ques., Table,
To reconsider and have entered on the minutes	Yes	Yes	No	None until Called for	Postpone definitely
To rescind	No	Yes	Yes	2/3	All
To expunge	No	Yes	Yes	2/3	All
To adopt a resolution	No	Yes	Yes	Maj.	All
To adjourn (qualified)	No	Yes	Limited	Maj.	All
To create orders of the day (Special)	No	Yes	Yes	Gen, Maj; Spec.	All
To amend (constitution, etc.)	No	Yes	Yes	2/3	All
Incidental Motions					
To suspend rules	No	Yes	No	2/3	None
To withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Maj.	Reconsider
To read papers	No	Yes	No	Maj.	Reconsider
To object to consideration	Yes	No	No	2/3	Reconsider
To rise to a point of order	Yes	No	No	Chmn. rules or Maj.	None
To rise to parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	None	None
To appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Limited	Maj.	All except amend
To call for a division of the house	Yes	No	No	Maj.	None
To call for a division of a question	No	Yes	No	Maj.	Amend

C
H
A
R
T

O
F

M
O
T
I
O
N
S

&

G
O
V
E
R
N
I
N
G

R
U
L
E
S

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

A nomination is the formal presentation to the assembly of the name of a candidate for the office to be filled.

Nominations From the Floor:

- a. Nominations do not require a second.
- b. Nominations are in order as soon as the chairman calls for them.
- c. As a nomination is made, the chairman repeats it and the secretary records it.
- d. No member may nominate more than one candidate for each office.
- e. If there are no further nominations, the chairman may declare the nominations closed.
- f. A motion to close the nominations requires a two-thirds vote.
- g. Prior to voting but following the formal closing of nominations, nominations may be reopened by a motion, which requires only a majority to carry.

Nominations by Nominating Committee:

- a. Committee may be appointed or elected as assembly may choose or as stated in the by-laws.
- b. Nominating committee report presents to the organization the names of one or more members as candidates for each office.
- c. The report of the nominating committee is not adopted, but the names are posted and treated as if the persons named had been nominated from the floor.
- d. Further nominations may be made from the floor.

Nominations by Ballot:

- a. Chairman directs tellers to pass out ballots and the member writes after each office the name of one person whom he desires to nominate.
- b. If a candidate receives a majority in this manner, it is usual to declare that candidate elected.
- c. If no majority is received, a second ballot is then taken, in which candidates nominated by previous ballot are voted upon. If a candidate receives a majority on this ballot, he is elected.
- d. If no one is elected on the second ballot, a motion that only the two highest candidates on the pre-

vious ballot be considered on the next ballot is in order before this third ballot. The third ballot then become the decisive vote, or the electing ballot.

Voting for Candidates Not Nominated:

Voters may vote for anyone who is eligible regardless of whether or not he has been nominated, and anyone receiving the necessary majority is elected. This is commonly called a "sticker ballot."

Voting on Nominations:

- a. After the nominations are closed, the assembly proceeds to vote upon the names by the method prescribed in the constitution.
- b. An election becomes effective immediately, if the candidate is present and does not decline, or if he is absent but has consented to his candidacy. If he is absent and has not consented to his nomination, the election becomes effective as soon as he is notified, if he does not decline immediately.
- c. Unless some other time is specified in the by-laws, an officer assumes the duties of office as soon as he has been elected.

Most organizations make specific and detailed provisions for nominating and electing new officers in their constitution and by-laws. The provisions ordinarily include such details as time of nomination, time of elections, method of nominating and electing, and time of installation.

ACTION FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

Kind of Motion	Object	Effect
To lay on the table	Clear the floor for more urgent business	Delays action
To call for the previous question	Secure immediate vote on pending question	Ends debate
To limit or extend time for debate	Provides more or less time for discussion	Shortens or lengthens discussion period
To postpone definitely (to a certain time)	Often gives more time for informal discussion and for securing followers	Delays action
To commit or refer	To enable more careful consideration to be given	Delays action
To amend	To improve the motion	To change the original motion
To postpone indefinitely	To prevent a vote on the question	To suppress the question
To raise a point of order	To call attention to violation of rules	Keeps group functioning according to parliamentary procedures
To appeal from the decision of the chair	To determine the attitude of the group on the ruling made by the chair	Secures ruling of the group rather than by the chair

ACTION FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

Kind of Motion	Object	Effect
To suspend the rules	To permit action not possible under the rules	Secure action which would otherwise be prevented by the rules
To object to the consideration of a question	Prevent wasting time on unimportant business	Suppress the motion
To divide the question	Secure more careful consideration of parts	Secures action by parts
To call for a division	(a) To determine the accuracy of a viva voce vote (b) To secure expression of individual member's vote	Secures an accurate check on vote
To nominate	Suggest names for office	Places before the group names for consideration
To make a request growing out of pending business	To secure information or ask to be excused from a duty	Provide information
To fix the time at which to adjourn	To have legal continuation of the meeting	Sets definite continuation time
To adjourn	End the meeting	Adjourns the meeting
To take a recess	To secure an intermission	Delays action
To raise a question of privilege	To correct undesirable conditions	Corrects undesirable condition

ACTION FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

Kind of Motion	Object	Effect
To call for the order of the day	To secure adherence to order of business	Same as object
To take from the table	Continue the consideration of the question	Continue consideration of question
To reconsider (Only a member of the prevailing side may make this motion)	To reconsider the question	Secures further consideration and another vote on the question
To reconsider and have entered on the minutes (Only a member of the prevailing side may this motion)	To reconsider the question at the next meeting	Secures further consideration and another vote on the question
To rescind	Repeal action previously taken	Same as object
To ratify	Approves previous action taken	Same as object

GLOSSARY OF STANDARD TERMS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Amend

To change a motion either by adding to it, taking from it, or by altering it in some other way. (See *Amendments.*)

Blanks, Filling

"Filling blanks" is a term used to indicate a method of decision regarding a matter where several different courses of action are possible. The term "blank" is used because usually this method is applied in motions where an exact amount, a name, a date, or some other essential, specific information is left blank.

Business, Order of

The regular program of procedure of a society. (See *Agenda.*)

Chair

The Chairman. "Addressing the chair" means speaking to the chairman or president. This is done by rising to one's feet when no one else is speaking (with some exceptions) and saying, "Mr. Chairman." Being "recognized by the chair" means being given permission to speak further. (See *Progress of Motions.*)

Power of chair

The chairman has the following authority:

- a. He may decide in what order speakers shall be recognized.
- b. He may refuse to recognize members offering dilatory, absurd or frivolous motions or motions intended, in his judgment, to obstruct business.
- c. He may restrain speakers within the limits of the rules.
- d. He may enforce good decorum.
- e. He may appoint committees.
- f. He may decide points of order.
- g. He may vote in cases where his vote would change the result; e.g., to make or break a tie.
- h. He should avoid influencing a vote by his own comment on a motion under consideration.

Actions of the chairman are, of course, subject to appeal. (See *Incidental Motion*, "to appeal from the decision of the chair.")

Commit

To refer to a committee.

Committee of the Whole

Sometimes certain matters come up which can be properly studied and digested only as a committee would go into them,

G
L
O
S
S
A
R
Y

but which, because of their importance, should be considered by all members, and therefore should not be referred to a small committee. Then the meeting, on motion duly made, may "resolve itself into a committee of the whole." This means that the meeting officially is discontinued while everyone remains and becomes a member of a large special committee including everyone present. The chairman of the regular meeting does not preside over a committee of the whole; a special chairman is appointed.

Consideration, Informal

When a member moves "informal consideration," and the motion is adopted, the meeting lays aside formal rules, allowing each man present to speak once on the subject under consideration.

Debate

Discussion or argument over a motion.

Division

"Division" in parliamentary law means simply a vote whereby all who are in favor and all who are opposed to a motion stand separately in groups as the chairman calls for "ayes" and "nays."

Floor

The privilege of speaking before the assembly. Thus, when one "obtains the floor," he is granted an opportunity to speak.

Inquiry, Parliamentary

An investigation or checking to determine the proper course of procedure.

Motion

A formal proposal to a meeting that it take certain action. A motion is a "motion" when stated by its proponent and until repeated by the chairman when presented by him for acceptance or rejection, at which time it becomes a "question," a "proposition," or a "measure." (See *Progress of Motions*.)

Motion, Incidental

An incidental motion is one growing out of another already under consideration, which secondary motion must be disposed of before the original motion may be proceeded with. (See *Motions*.)

Motion, Main

A main motion is one which independently presents an idea for consideration. (See *Motions*.)

Motion, Privileged

A privileged motion is one which is so vital in character that it takes precedence over all others. (See *Motions*.)

Motion, Subsidiary

A subsidiary motion is one growing out of and applied to another already under consideration which is made use of "to enable the assembly to dispose of it in the most appropriate manner," but which need not necessarily be decided before the question out of which it has arisen. (See *Motions*.)

Order

When this term is applied to an act of an assembly it means an expression of a will of the assembly in the form of a command. An "order" differs from a "resolution" in that the latter is not a command, but a declaration of fact or an expression of opinion or purposes.

Order, General

"Making a general order" is setting a future time for the discussion of a special matter. Making a *general order* differs from making a *special order* in that the former does not involve the breaking of any rules.

Order of the Day

Regular order or program of business. A motion "calling for the orders of the day" is a motion demanding that the present discussion be dropped and that the chairman announce the next matter to be taken up in accordance with the organization's customary and established business routine. The term "orders of the day" has more specific meaning when a certain time has been set aside for the consideration of a given matter. Then a demand for the "orders of the day" is a request that this specific thing be taken up at the time set for it.

Order, Special

"Making a special order" is setting aside all rules for the consideration of some important question at a future time.

Postponement, Indefinite

This term is clear in the ordinary meaning of the words included in it except that the object of indefinite postponement is not merely to postpone, but, in effect to *reject*.

Privilege

The term "privilege" in parliamentary law has a restricted meaning and refers specifically to the privileges or rights of the meeting or those attending chiefly in connection with matters of physical comfort; such as inability to hear a speaker, the heating, lighting and ventilation of the meeting room, noises and other disturbances, etc., and the ineligibility or misconduct of a mem-

ber in a meeting at the time. These "questions of privilege" should not be confused with "privileged motions." Questions of privilege may be involved in motions, but privileged motions include other matters.

Question

The question in parliamentary law is the proposition or motion after it has been placed before the meeting for action by the chairman. To "move the previous question" is to demand that the chairman take a vote on a motion which is being discussed. A "question," when adopted becomes an "order," "resolution," or "vote." (See *Motions*.)

Question, Division of

To separate a motion so that different parts of it may be considered individually.

Refer

To refer to a committee.

Resolution

The act of an assembly, the purpose of which is to declare facts or express opinions or purposes, and not to command. (See section on *Order*)

Rules, Suspension of

"When the assembly wishes to do something that cannot be done without violating its own rules, and yet is not in conflict with its constitution or by-laws, or with the fundamental principles of parliamentary law, it 'suspends the rules that interfere with' the proposed action."--*Robert*.

Second

A motion, in order to be considered by the meeting, must have a "second," i.e., a sponsor in the form of a second member who indicates that he will support the motion by saying, "I second the motion." (See section on *Motions*)

Sine die

Latin meaning "without day." Meetings frequently adjourn *sine die*. This means that no date is set for a future meeting.

Table

The "table" in parliamentary law is literally the speaker's table, but to "lay on the table" or "to table" a motion means to delay action on it.