

Basic Rules of Parliamentary Procedure

1. The rights of the group supersede the rights of the individual.
2. All members of the group have equal rights.
3. A quorum is necessary to transact business.
4. Majority rules
5. Silence is consent.
6. Two-thirds majority necessary when taking away the rights of member or changing something already decided.
7. One question and one speaker at a time.
8. Motions should receive full debate.
9. Once question is decided, it is out of order to raise the same motion or one just like it at the same meeting.
10. Personal remarks are always out of order.

Rights of the Individual

1. To attend meeting.
2. Make motions.
3. Nominate.
4. Vote.
5. Debate.
6. Hold office.

REGULAR MEETINGS

The date, time and location as stated in the bylaws

SPECIAL MEETINGS

Established in the bylaws as who can call a meeting, who can request the call of a meeting, the timeliness and method of notice and included in the notice the matter to be considered

AGENDA

(an outline of the meeting)

Sample

- I. Call the meeting to order
- II. Welcoming remarks and recognition of special guests
- III. Additions to the agenda
- IV. Minutes of the previous meeting
- V. Reports of officers, specifically treasurer
- VI. Committee reports
- VII. Unfinished business
- VIII. New business
- IX. Adjournment

MASS MEETINGS usually do not follow a pre set order.

CONVENTIONS customarily adopt their own schedule calling for activity, debate and voting to occur at a specific time.

At the prescribed hour of the day the President should say, "I call this meeting to order". It is extremely important to start meetings precisely on time.

The President should next ascertain that there exists a quorum present for conducting business.

QUORUM is defined as the minimum number required by the bylaws to be present to legally transact business. In both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate this number is a majority.

If not specified in the bylaws the minimum number is also a majority.

In a voluntary society it is suggested that a smaller number be used. i.e. the largest number that can be expected to attend under normal conditions.

Conventions usually require a majority of those registered at the convention.

Action taken in absence of a quorum is null and void.

Presiding Officer

This individual is normally referred to as the President, Chairman or Madam Chairperson

Primary Functions of the Position

- I. Maintain order
- II. Enforce the rules so that the organization can do its work
- III. Prepare the agenda

General Guidelines

- Start the meeting promptly on time and see that schedule is met
- Be organized and prepared
- Be a good leader, helping with procedure and motion clarity
- Control the floor
- Maintain impartiality
- Remain focused
- Normally refers to himself in the third person
- Maintains degree of formality to avoid angry exchanges
- Requests that members speak to each other through the chair

The chairperson gives up none of the rights afforded him by membership in the governing body. It is debatable whether the President should speak out on issues or in what instances the Chairperson should vote. Impartiality is paramount in giving all members the chance to participate in the debate.

Secretaries Duties

- Write the minutes as soon as possible
- Provide the chair with a copy of the minutes
- Advise the president of items of unfinished business
- Sign the minutes and record the date of approval. They are not accepted until voted upon at the following meeting

Treasurer is responsible for the funds

- Must maintain a permanent record of all funds received and paid out
- Should give a brief report at each meeting
- Will assist in preparation and maintaining of a budget

The treasury should call the board's attention to any unusual items or transaction

All corrections to accounts should be made in red and no erasures ever permitted

The treasurer's report is not approved at meetings as this is taken care of no less than annually with a professional audit

MINUTES: the minutes are the written, legal record of the meetings of an organization.

The secretary of the organization keeps them.

The minutes are a record of what was done, formal action taken, not a record of what was said.

SAMPLE:

- I. What kind of meeting was held: regular, special or adjourned.
- II. Name of the organization
- III. Date, time and place
- IV. Name of the individual calling the meeting to order and the person acting as secretary
- V. Minutes were read and approved as read or corrected.
- VI. Reports were presented
- VII. The motions that were introduced and by whom. The fact that they were seconded or died for lack thereof. The putting of the question and outcome of the vote.
- VIII. The adjournment and time of adjournment.
- IX. Signature of the secretary.

VOTING

The means by which a member of a group expresses his or her individual choice and the group reaches a decision on action to be taken.

All members of the group have a right to vote. There are those that espouse the position that the president vote only to break ties, however, if said president is a member that person is afforded same voting privileges as any other member.

Methods of voting include the following:

1. Voice vote. The president shall say "all of those in favor say aye, and all of those opposed say no". This is most common method when action does not require more than majority vote.
2. Rising vote or show of hands. Normally used when a two-thirds majority is needed for action.
3. Ballot. Used only when specifically called for in the bylaws or ordered by the group. Done so to protect the privacy of those voting.
4. General consent. Initiated by the president in matters of routine nature. i.e. if there are no objections the minutes are approved as read.

TIE VOTE: the motion is defeated.

TYPES OF MOTIONS

- a. Main motion
- b. Subsidiary motion
- c. Privileged
- d. Incidental
- e. Restorative
- f. Resolution

MAIN MOTION : A motion is a formal request by a member of the group for the group to take specific action.

Procedure:

- I. The member obtains the floor and says " I move that, or I move the adoption of the following resolution, 'Be it resolved that.....'".
- II. Another member says " I second the motion".
- III. Chairman then states the question of the motion. Note: this is not putting the question, calling it to a vote, but is opening the question for debate. The motion is now "pending".
- IV. Debate occurs.
- V. "Put the question" the chairman asking for those in favor first, followed by those opposed.
- VI. Chair announces ayes or nays have it, motion carried or lost and the effect of the vote.
- VII. Next item of business.

Rules for main motion:

1. Person must obtain the floor prior to making a motion or entering the debate. i.e. by rising and addressing the chairman.
2. It is out of order to seek recognition before the floor has been yielded.
3. First to rise should receive recognition. Exceptions: Priority given to one making the motion and who has not yet spoken, to another who has not yet spoken, and if known to one of opposite opinion.
4. Once a motion has been made, that matter must receive a determination by the question or laid aside before another main motion can be entertained.
5. Prior to the chairman stating the question, the maker of the motion has the right to amend the motion. After the stating of the question only others can seek to amend.
6. Following a motion and / or a second, the chairman can and should seek to clean up a messy motion.
7. During debate the following rules apply:
 - a. Debate is limited to each individual speaking twice. There can be limits to length of time an individual can speak.
 - b. Alternation between opposing viewpoints suggested.
 - c. Confinement of the debate to the merits of the pending question.
 - d. Cannot close debate until all members have had a chance to exercise their rights. Exception: Assembly can by two-thirds vote limit debate and call for the question.

e. AVOID PERSONALITY CONFLICTS

SUBSIDIARY MOTION: This type motion is always applied to a main motion and exists for no other purpose. A common misconception is that there can be only one motion on the floor at a time. There can be many motions, however, only one question and all pending motions must relate to the main motion.

TYPES OF SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS ranked from lowest to highest:

1. Amend: To change the wording of a main motion. Majority vote required.
2. Commit: To send to committee. Majority required.
3. Postpone definitely: To defer to no later than the next meeting. Majority.
4. Limit debate: Two-thirds majority.
5. End debate: Two-thirds majority.

PRIVILEGED MOTION: This refers to motions not related to business on the floor, but to the rights of the members and organization. They are not debatable.

TYPES OF PRIVILEGED MOTIONS ranked from lowest to highest:

1. Questions of privilege: refer to those affecting the comfort, safety, dignity or reputation of a member or the organization.
2. Recess: requires a second, a majority and a length of time.
3. Adjourn: requires a second and a majority.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS involve the procedure and not the specific motion.

1. Point of order: to enforce rules
2. Appeal: protest ruling of the chairman
3. Point of information: to request information
4. Parliamentary inquiry: to request parliamentary help
5. Division: verification of vote totals
6. Division of a question: divide a motion into two separate parts
7. Object to consideration: remove an improper matter from the floor
8. Permission to withdraw: withdraw a motion that person made

RESTORATIVE MOTIONS allows the group to change its mind.

1. Rescind: to nullify a previously adopted motion.
2. Reconsider: to bring a motion back for further consideration.

RESOLUTION is a main motion submitted in writing.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER

Robert's Rules of Order is based primarily upon the foundation of government of the people and by the people. Decisions generally afforded to the rule of the majority greater than half.

Regarding a requirement of a quorum, if too few people attend, too much power is granted too few.

The strict adherence of rules concerning debate is founded upon the premise that one cannot vote intelligently unless you have heard debate from both sides of the issue.

More bees can be had with honey than with vinegar- the highest degree of respect should be afforded all members in the decision making process.

If it has to be whispered or shouted it should not be said--the rights to individual privacy should not be confused with doing business in secret.

The rules (laws) in society are meant to protect you, not to give you an edge.

Get the job done.