

“The Meeting Will Come To Order!”
A Parliamentary Procedure Manual

Participant’s Workbook



“The Meeting Will Come To Order!” **A Parliamentary Procedure Manual**

Participant’s Workbook

Developed for:



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by:

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“The Meeting Will Come To Order!”

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Preface:

Welcome to one in a series of individualized Optimist International Skills Development Modules. Our goal is to help you, our members, learn and apply practical skills to deal with the opportunities and issues in your life. This series of modules is not designed to deal with "theoretical" issues, but rather to provide a practical "hands on" approach.

Each of these modules is to be used, written in and applied. You can learn skills on your own, or join with others in a collaborative learning venture. Each module contains an instructor's guide in addition to a separate participant's guide which can be duplicated as often as necessary to supply the needs of your Club members.

Future modules will deal with individual as well as group-oriented skills, all of which are designed to help individual Optimists enhance their personal leadership ability in any chosen field of activity, i.e., employment, home, school, and volunteer activities. This is a significant development for our organization in its service to its own members, and we hope that participants will provide feedback about each module to the International Headquarters (c/o Leadership Development). In this way, we can maintain our focus on providing meaningful leadership training to Districts, Clubs and individuals throughout our Optimist organization.

We truly hope you enjoy the journey to self-improvement.



The Meeting Will Come To Order!

Objectives: This module will help the Optimist member to understand the basic concepts of parliamentary procedure and to develop sufficient skills in making motions, giving and receiving reports and problem solving to enable the member's full participation in business meetings with confidence and enthusiasm.

Introduction:

This is such a big subject encompassing so many elements that we can only touch on the most rudimentary aspects and strive to provide only the specific information you are apt to need to be an effective member of an Optimist Club. You may not immediately use all of this information but, if you hope to move up in the association to District and International levels, you will most certainly be called upon to know all of this parliamentary procedure.

Throughout this module, you may be tempted to say, "I've never heard of such a thing. We don't do it that way in my Club." It is not surprising that members, even members with years of business meeting experience, are shocked to hear about proper procedure. When someone is elected to an office it is human nature to use the same routine his or her predecessor used in carrying out the duties of that office. For example, presiding officers who ask for a motion to approve the minutes or to adjourn the meeting are only doing what they have seen done many times by others. They have no idea that asking for those motions is unnecessary and time consuming. We'll learn why this is so and how to handle the minutes and adjournment properly in this module.

Parliamentary procedure is a set of finite rules that cover a seemingly infinite set of circumstances within the framework of conducting the business of an organization. These rules are not arbitrarily set at the whim of an ivory-towered, out-of-touch academic. **Rather, they are rules that have evolved since the Fifth Century by people striving to establish an orderly and fair approach to decision making in a group and these rules are universally recognized in democracies.** While these same rules have been used by many of the world's great leaders for centuries, they are nevertheless as up to date as today's headlines. The person who understands these rules has a decided advantage over others.

While there are many authorities on parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 1990 Edition is the foremost authority and the one on which all others are based. All the rules discussed in this module can be found in Robert.

The terms he, his, him and chairman are intended to be the gender neutral form and are not intended to limit the application of these rules in which they appear to one gender.



You may belong to other organizations besides Optimist International, but most of the meetings you attend will fall into one of the following categories.

1. **Mass Meetings** are held for the purpose of accomplishing certain goals and objectives of common interest to those in attendance and there is no official organization, only what is created on the spot.
2. **Legislative bodies** are elected or appointed legal entities established and authorized by law to enact laws and oversee business of public concern such as state, local and federal legislatures, school boards, library boards, public utility boards and the like.
3. **Conventions** are meetings of delegates representing various components of an organization. Conventions are usually an annual or biennial event.
4. **Meetings of an established organization** meeting at least quarterly or more often.

We will concern ourselves with the rules specifically for the last type - meetings of an organized society. The rules we will discuss here would generally be applicable to conventions as well, but our focus will be on number 4.

Basic Principles of Parliamentary Procedure

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There are four basic principles upon which all parliamentary rules are based. They are an amalgam of common sense, compassion and democracy.

THE FOUR BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

1. Consider one thing at a time.
2. Ensure justice, courtesy, and equal treatment to all members.
3. Serve the will of the majority.
4. Preserve the right of the minority to be heard.

1. **Consider one thing at a time.** We may have a number of motions pending - for example a main motion and an amendment or two - but only the most recently made motion is the immediately pending question and it is the only one to occupy our discussion at the moment.
2. **Ensure justice, courtesy, and equal treatment to all members.** Every member is entitled to the same basic rights and privileges of membership. Regardless of how heated a discussion becomes, every member is expected to behave with a courteous and polite manner. Meetings that are run under strict parliamentary authority afford ample opportunity for an effective expression of opinion.
3. **Serve the will of the majority.** The concept of majority rule is probably the most basic tenet of democracy.
4. **Preserve the right of the minority to be heard.** As much as we happily exercise and protect the will of the majority, so also we safeguard the right of the minority to be heard. In a free society, we jealously guard the minority opinion and its right to full expression.

If we all used these principles as our guidelines, we wouldn't need any other rules. But of course, human nature being what it is, we will always need to set some parameters of behavior for ourselves.

Kinds of Rules

There is a definite hierarchy to the rules that govern us at Optimist International. We need to take at least a cursory look at these rules and how they relate to one another.

Laws of the Land are, of course, the paramount rules that govern us. We may not enact any rules which violate the civil law.

Corporate Charter is a legal document naming the organization and clearly stating its objectives.

Requirements of incorporating vary from state to state and are governed by civil law.

Bylaws set the limits within which Optimist International will function. They describe officers' duties, committees and their duties, the chain of command throughout the organization, the dues structure and they authorize the annual convention in some detail. Bylaws are of sufficient importance that previous notice well in advance is required to amend them. Bylaws may never be suspended for any reason.

Policies have to do with the day to day administration of Optimist International and are more easily amended.

Convention Standing Rules are specifically designed to make the business of the delegates run smoothly.

Parliamentary Procedure is a set of rules that speak to the mechanics of a business meeting. When your bylaws and policies are silent on a subject, only then does the parliamentary rule prevail.

Decorum

Established practices and customs for procedure which promote the smooth and orderly conduct of business fall under the category of decorum. These practices dictate how we conduct ourselves in a meeting and, to a large extent, what we say when and to whom.

For example, all remarks that are made by any member about any subject whatever are always made to and through the chair, without exception. There can be only one person occupying the floor at a time and that person can only claim the floor if it has been assigned by the presiding officer. Even when the chair has assigned the floor to another, he is still in charge and presiding. If a member wishes to obtain information from someone other than the chair (Do we have enough money in the treasury for this project?), he still asks his question of the chair. The chair will

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then instruct the appropriate person (in this case the Treasurer or the Finance Chairman) to answer the question. That person will then direct his answer to the chair. Everyone can hear the question and answer and order is maintained because all comments were addressed to the chair who is clearly in charge. All comments, reports, debate or inquiries should begin with the member saying, "Mr. (Madam) President."

The terms Mr. and Madam President have nothing whatever to do with a person's marital status and are not considered sexist or demeaning. They are used as terms of utmost courtesy for an esteemed office and should be used for all offices and titles (Mr. or Madam Chairman, Mr. or Madam Treasurer, etc.).

When another has the floor it is incumbent on every member to listen attentively and refrain from conversation.

Let's Review



This section is not so much a test as a series of exercises to help you remember the material. Therefore, feel free to look back if you need help. But first, think it through. Parliamentary Procedure is logical.

1. Draw a circle around the 4 basic types of assemblies.

- Conventions
- Committees
- Ad Hoc Groups
- Meetings of an established organization
- Mass Meetings
- Parent Teacher Associations
- Legislative Bodies
- School Board

2. Identify into which type of meeting each of the other choices above would fit. Write your answers to the right of the correct circled meeting type.

3. List the Four Basic Principles of Parliamentary Procedure below. (Feel free to copy from the chart in this section. Our aim here is to understand these principles, not memorize them.)

4. True or False: Read each statement below and decide it's accuracy. To the left of each statement mark T for True or F for False.

- A. ___ Anyone can claim the floor to speak in a meeting any time.
- B. ___ Even when the chair assigns the floor to another, the chair is still in charge.
- C. ___ If a member has a question for the Treasurer, the member waits to be assigned the floor and then asks the Treasurer the question
- D. ___ Bylaws list the standing committees and their duties.
- E. ___ Decorum is an established set of practices and customs which promote the smooth and orderly conduct of business.
- F. ___ There can be only one person who has the floor at any given time.
- G. ___ The terms Mr. or Madam President are used to show courtesy to the office.
- H. ___ The highest ranking rules in Optimist International are the Official Policies.

Motions

What to do

What to say

When to say it
and How.



Notes

A **main motion** is the mechanism by which a society introduces business for consideration. A topic is not in order to be discussed unless it has been properly introduced by a motion. We are going to dissect a motion and look at each part of its anatomy. However, in a business meeting when a motion is introduced, all of these parts take place quickly and smoothly and members are hardly aware of moving from one part to another.

PROCESSING A MOTION

Member Receives Recognition

That Member States the Motion

Another Member Seconds the Motion

Chair States the Question on the Motion

Members Debate the Motion

Chair Puts the Question

Chair Announces the Result

Receive Recognition from the chair first. You may have to wait your turn if many members are seeking the floor. The chair will assign you the floor in a fair and timely manner. In a large group or convention you will probably be required to queue up at a microphone, in which case you should find out if there are pro and con designations on microphones and queue up at the correct one. It is not fair to go to the wrong microphone because it has the shortest line. In a small meeting you can usually be recognized by simply raising your hand.

State the Motion by beginning with, "I move that..." and conclude with the exact wording of your motion. Use straightforward language stated in the positive so that members understand that a yes vote means they are in favor and a no vote means they are opposed to your motion. Motions should contain only one proposal. If your motion is long, write it out, read it precisely and then hand it to the

chair or the secretary so it may be recorded properly. Remember, at this point you should only state your motion with no debate. You can make a brief introductory explanation before offering the motion, but this is not the time to debate the issue. The maker of the motion has the right to speak first and last during the debate. He may not speak against his own motion but, if persuaded by debate, he may vote against it.

Another Member Seconds the Motion by saying, "Second!" or "I second the motion." The second is critical to the process because it lets the chair know that more than one person wants to spend the time of the group on discussing this issue. The fact that the motion was seconded should be recorded in the minutes but the name of the maker is immaterial and need not be recorded. The presiding officer may ask, "Is there a second?" and pause briefly to allow time for a member to react. If no second is forthcoming the motion will die for lack of second. If, however, any member makes any comment whatsoever about the motion he has thereby seconded it. Remember, the whole idea of a second is to indicate that more than the motion maker want to discuss the subject. If anyone says anything about it, even "What a dumb motion!" he just seconded it. On the other hand, it often happens that a member will second a motion to which he is opposed for the very purpose of having the group decide the issue once and for all. The member who seconds the motion may speak and vote against it.

Chair States the Motion by saying, "It has been moved and seconded that we...[stating the motion's exact wording]. Is there discussion?" At this point, and not before, the motion becomes the property of the group and only the group can dispose of it. There are many parliamentary motions at the members' disposal for handling the main motion such as Postponing it, Referring it to a Committee, Amending it and so on. A resolution is the same as a main motion except that it is always written out in a series of resolved clauses and often contains some pertinent debate in a preamble consisting of whereas clauses.

Following is an example of a properly stated motion. *I move that we operate a concession stand at all home games to benefit the marching band's Uniform Fund.*

The same motion made into a resolution.

Whereas, the school has expressed a desire for us to operate our concession stand at home games, and

Whereas, the marching band's uniforms are faded, threadbare and outdated, therefore be it

Resolved, that we operate a concession stand at all home games, and be it further

Resolved, that we donate the proceeds to the marching band's Uniform Fund.



RESOLUTIONS

A resolution does not have to have whereas clauses and they should not be contrived just for the sake of form. The chair would put the resolved clauses up for debate first and then the whereas clauses.



“In my opinion...”

Members Debate the Question.

This is the time when members may fully express their opinions on the motion and the collective wisdom of the group can be achieved. For this to happen, however, members should understand the rules of debate and good decorum and use those rules. The general rule of debate is that each member may speak twice, for 10 minutes, to each motion, but may not speak a second time until all members who wish to have spoken once. Now logic tells us that if this happened for every motion and many members wished to speak the group would not get very much accomplished. That is why we have the motion to Limit or Extend the Limits of Debate. Groups often adopt a Special Rule limiting debate to a shorter time. Members may not yield unexpired debate time to another member. Members must address all of their discussion to the chair and must resist the temptation to debate directly with other members. If this happens the chair must call the members to order and insist that all remarks be addressed to the presiding officer.

During debate is the appropriate time to make parliamentary motions that will improve the motion or will dispose of it either temporarily or permanently such as Amend, Postpone, Refer to Committee and Lay on the Table. Parliamentary motions that have an impact on debate such as Limit Debate and Previous Question are also in order during debate on the main motion.

Tips for the Chair When Presiding Over Debate

Alternate calling on members pro and con, when possible.
Be even-handed and courteous to everyone.
Make sure everyone knows precisely what the question is.

Make sure everyone understands the correct wording.



**"JOSHUA THREW A FIT AT JERICO,
JERICO, JERICO.
JOSHUA THREW A FIT AT JERICO,
AND THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN!"**

Stick to the rules of time and decorum.

To nudge members into voting ask, "Is there any new information to come forward?" or "Are you ready for the question?"

Be sensitive to the wishes of the group.

Be ready to act immediately and put the question to a vote the moment you sense that the group is ready.

Chair Puts the Question When there appears to be no further discussion the chair will put the question, a parliamentary term meaning he will put the question to a vote. If any discussion has taken place the chair should repeat the motion clearly in its present form and give precise instructions on how to vote, such as, "**The question before us is that we will operate a concession stand at all home games and donate the proceeds to the marching band's Uniform Fund. As many as are in favor of this motion say 'yes' (pause). Thank you.**"

"as many as are opposed to this motion say 'no' (pause). Thank you."

Then the chair announces the results in three ways:
“**The yeses have it, the motion is carried, and the Concession Stand Committee is ordered to begin work on this project.**” or
“**The noes have it, the motion is lost and we will not operate a concession stand at home games.**”

By letting everyone know which side prevailed, whether that meant the motion was carried or lost and what the resulting action would be the chair has maximized everyone’s clear understanding of what happened. Even if the yest vote sounds unanimous, the chair should always ask for the no vote. In the interest of democracy, this step must not be omitted. The chair should always give clear instructions. The outmoded method of asking those opposed to give the same sign (“Those opposed, same sign”) is a confusing and archaic custom that has people voting yes when they mean no. Don’t do it!

Voting Methods

It often comes as a surprise to members to learn that there are so many types of votes and that most methods have specific reasons for their use and specific times when they are appropriate.

VOTING METHODS

Voice Vote
Show of Hands
Rising Vote
Roll Call
Ballot
General Consent
Mail or Proxy Vote
Secretary to Cast One Ballot

Voice Vote is the most often used and can easily be taken quickly by simply asking the members to say yes or aye if they favor a proposal or to say no or nay if they are against it.

Show of Hands can be used in small groups where everyone can be seen, such as a Committee or Board meeting. Members are asked to raise their hands to indicate their preference on the proposal.

Rising Vote is used when a 2/3 vote is required and it is also used to verify the vote when a member doubts the results of a vote and calls for a Division of the Assembly.

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What’s Wrong With This Picture?

Show of Hands



There’s one in every crowd

Roll Call verifies attendance and records how each member votes.

Ballot vote can be done by paper or by machine and it keeps the voter's choice a secret. The chair may vote when the vote is by secret ballot since how he votes cannot unduly influence others.



General Consent is a method of voting on routine matters, such as approval of the minutes. The members agree to an action by keeping silent and not raising an objection. Any member can and should object if he feels the need.



General Consent

Mail or Proxy voting must be authorized in the bylaws. Without such authorization this type of voting cannot occur. **The Secretary to cast one ballot** is an outmoded and poor idea and can only be done if authorized in the bylaws.

Voting Types

VOTING TYPES

Majority

2/3 vote

Plurality

Tie vote

Majority, unless the bylaws state otherwise, is any number greater than half the votes cast.

2/3 vote means 2/3 of those present and voting.

Plurality means the largest number of votes to be given any candidate or proposition when three or more choices are possible. A plurality vote never elects unless the bylaws authorize it.

Tie vote results from an equal number of votes being cast for both sides of the question. A tie vote means the motion is lost. A chairman, if he has not already voted, may vote to break a tie. The chair may also vote to create a tie.

Let's Review



1. Match each parliamentary term with the correct definition.

- A. The Floor
- B. Debate
- C. Second
- D. I move
- E. Resolution
- F. Preamble
- G. Putting the Question
- H. Main Motion

- __ This indicates to the Chair that more than one person is interested in debating the issue.
- __ The mechanism by which a society introduces business for consideration.
- __ Taking the vote on a motion.
- __ A formally phrased, written motion containing one or more Resolved clauses.
- __ When a member is recognized by the Chair the member is said to have this.
- __ One or more clauses beginning with "Whereas" which explain the reasons for a resolution.
- __ Discussion on the merits of the pending question.
- __ The correct way to begin to offer a motion.

2. Fill in the blanks.

- A. "If there are no objections we will buy a computer" is an example of taking a vote by _____.
- B. More than half the votes cast is a _____ vote.
- C. When members' rights are being infringed upon by a motion, usually a _____ vote is required.
- D. When a motion receives an equal number of yes and no votes it is a _____ vote and the motion is _____.
- E. A _____ vote ensures the voters' secrecy.
- F. When members are required to stand as an expression of their vote it is said to be a _____ vote.



Agenda



Every endeavor needs a plan. Whether you are traveling across country, waging a war or building a fence, you need a clearly laid out idea of your ultimate goal and exactly how you are going to accomplish it. An agenda is the road map, the battle plan, the building instructions for a business meeting. It is the order of business to be followed in a meeting and it is prescribed in the parliamentary authority. If you were chairing a committee meeting your agenda might simply be a list of items to discuss. But in a regular meeting for the members you would use the agenda in this chart with minor variations to fit your group. Look at the chart below. We will discuss each item and how to handle it in a regular meeting. Suggested language for presiding officers and others will be in bold face type.

AGENDA

Call to Order
Reading & Approval of Minutes
Correspondence
Treasurer's Report
Executive Board & Officers' Reports
Standing Committee Reports
Special Committee Reports
Special Orders
General Orders
Unfinished Business
New Business
Program
Announcements
Adjournment

Call to Order - After determining a quorum (the minimum number of members who must be present at meetings for business to be legally transacted), the Chair will call the meeting to order by a light rap of the gavel and announce **"The meeting will please come to order."**

A Word About the Chair

“The agenda is filled with exciting events.”

The Chair pieces together the agenda by consulting the minutes, conferring with the secretary and Committee Chairmen well in advance. The onus is on the Chair to make the meeting an exciting event rather than a boring drudgery that members want to avoid. It is the duty of the presiding officer to know all the carry over business to come before the group whether from a Committee or via unfinished business. During the meeting the Chair announces each agenda heading as he comes to it and introduces the business under that heading. It is incumbent upon the presiding officer to know enough about the rules to be able to enforce them in an even-handed, courteous and efficient manner.

If opening exercises are customary, they would be held immediately after the call to order. Remember, protocol demands that items be taken up in the following order: God, country and family, so that an invocation would happen before the national pledge and any pledge or ceremony having to do with the organization (family) would be done last.

Minutes - The Chair announces this agenda item by saying **“We will now hear the reading of the minutes by the Secretary”** or **“You have all received a copy of the minutes.”** Then he asks **“Are there any corrections to the minutes?”** (pause to allow members to react) **Hearing none, the minutes stand approved as read** (or as written, or as mailed, or as published, in which case they need not be read during the meeting).” If there are corrections, the Chair instructs the Secretary to make the correction and then he asks for any further correction. After a pause to allow members to react, the Chair declares the minutes approved as corrected.

Contents of Minutes

Minutes are a written record of what actually happened at a meeting as opposed to what was said. Rarely should debate be included in the minutes unless it is so ordered by a majority vote of the members present. The minutes should always be written in the third person and always in prose rather than sentence fragments. The first paragraph of any minutes should contain the following:

1. The kind of meeting (regular, special, adjourned, etc.)
2. The name of the assembly
3. The date and time of the meeting
4. The fact that the presiding and recording officers were present or, in their absence, who substituted as pro tem officers
5. Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as read or as corrected.

The body of the minutes should contain the following:

- All main motions stated in full, with the name of the maker and the fact that it was seconded, and action that was taken.
- All points of order or appeals, whether sustained or lost.
- A separate paragraph for each subject. Subject titles in the left margin are helpful, but this is strictly a matter of style preference.
- The last paragraph should state the hour of adjournment.
- The name of each Committee and the reporting member are listed in the minutes with a notation that the report is attached to the minutes. No effort is made to paraphrase a member's remarks or report.
- When a count has been ordered or the vote is by ballot, the number of votes for each side is recorded in the minutes.
- In correcting minutes, the secretary simply draws a line through the error, being careful not to obliterate it, and writes the correction in the margin or directly above the error.
- The Secretary signs the minutes and lists his title after his name. The phrase "Respectfully submitted" represents an archaic and outdated custom and should not be used.

The Minutes



Correspondence is not listed as an agenda item in Robert but it is often necessary to read letters from District or International officers, letters of gratitude and the like. This is a logical place on the agenda to handle these items. Another method of handling these items is to funnel each piece of correspondence to the appropriate officers and Committee Chairmen for inclusion in their reports with the President handling unassigned correspondence in his own report.

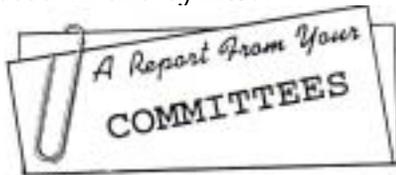


Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report requires no vote. It is given for information only and should generally not be read in its entirety. The Treasurer reports the balance on hand as of his last report, the total receipts and total disbursements since that report and the current balance on hand as of this report. The last figure is the only one recorded in the minutes. The Treasurer should be prepared to answer questions on the details of his report. At some predetermined point during the year an audit or review should be held and the auditor's or reviewer's report is adopted at that time.

Executive Board and Officers' Reports

An Executive Board and its composition must be authorized in the bylaws. If your Club has an Executive Board, the Secretary or President usually gives the report. Any other officers who have a report would be called on in the order in which they are listed in the bylaws.



Standing and Special Committee Reports

A Committee report is a statement agreed upon by a majority of the Committee. It should be written and need not be addressed or dated since it is understood to be for the assembly and the date is on the minutes to which it will be attached. It is written in third person prose. The minutes of the Committee meeting are never appropriate as the report. The Committee Chairman signs the report alone, he should add his title behind his name. If the entire Committee signs

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the report, the Committee Chairman signs first without a title. In any case, "Respectfully submitted" should not be used. When called upon, the reporting member rises, addresses the Chair and begins his report by identifying his Committee. **"Mr. President, the Soccer Program Committee reports that..."** or **"Mr. President, the Special Committee on the Band Uniforms reports that..."** If the report includes a recommendation for action, the report should conclude with the implementing motion as drafted by the Committee. **"Mr. President, by direction of the Committee I move that we purchase 16 band uniforms for the high school marching band at a cost not to exceed \$165.00 each and, contingent on funds being available, we buy 16 more uniforms next April."** This motion does not require a second because it comes from a Committee comprised of members, a majority of whom agreed to bring the motion to the assembly. The Chair restates the motion, asks for discussion and processes the motion before going on to the next item of business.

About Committees

Committees are the foot soldiers of an organization. The real grunt work of the group gets done by Committees. A Committee is comprised of one or more persons elected or appointed to consider, investigate and possibly take action on behalf of the society. Standing Committees are established in the bylaws and are called upon for reports in the order in which they are listed in the bylaws. Special Committees are known as Ad Hoc or Select Committees because they are appointed or elected to take up a specific task. When they give their final report they are automatically dissolved as a Committee. Standing Committee reports are heard first and then Special Committees are called on in the order in which they were named. The Chair generally does not call on Committees if he knows they have no report.

Special Orders are items of business which have been postponed to a specific time in a meeting and have been given, by a 2/3 vote, the priority designation of "special order." The Chair determines if there are special orders to be introduced by consulting the minutes.



"I DON'T KNOW WHY EVERYONE
CRITICIZES OUR COMMITTEE. WE
HAVEN'T DONE A THING!"

General Orders are items of business which have been postponed to the next meeting by a majority vote. The Chair finds these items in the minutes as well.

Unfinished business are items that have been carried over from the previous meeting due to having adjourned without completing the prescribed order of business. The presiding officer should never ask if there is any further unfinished business. It is the business of the Chair to know all unfinished business and exercise leadership in bringing it, unsolicited, to the attention of the members. The term “old business” should be avoided.

New business is the point in the agenda when new subjects may be introduced in the form of main motions. Motions to take from the table may be made under this heading also. Remember that a group may not be required to decide a question more than once in any given session, except through the process of Reconsideration, Rescind, or Amendment of Something Previously Adopted, so that under this heading only motions that are essentially brand new questions are in order.

Program - Some groups customarily have a program of entertainment or education which sometimes includes a guest speaker. This is the point in the program when such a function could take place. However, it may be taken up anytime in the meeting by enacting a special rule or by suspending the rules.

Announcements are in order before adjournment. Previous notice of a member’s intention to offer a motion at the next meeting may be given at this time.

Adjournment - When there is no further business on the agenda and no one is seeking the floor the President may simply tap the gavel lightly and adjourn the meeting without a motion by saying, “**There being no further business, (pause briefly) this meeting is adjourned.**” The motion is assumed, the vote is by general consent and it is utterly efficient and expedient.

Let's Review



1. Match each parliamentary term with the correct definition.

- A. Chair
- B. Quorum
- C. Minutes
- D. Standing Committee
- E. Special Committee
- F. Special Orders
- G. General Orders
- H. New Business

- ___ A Committee, sometimes called "Ad Hoc," named to undertake a specific task for a specific time
- ___ Items of business that have been postponed by a majority vote.
- ___ The official written record of the proceedings in a meeting.
- ___ The presiding officer of a meeting.
- ___ The minimum number of members who must be present at a meeting for business to be legally transacted.
- ___ The point in the agenda when brand new subjects may be introduced.
- ___ Items of business that have been postponed and are guaranteed to come up at a certain time by a 2/3 vote.
- ___ A Committee named in the bylaws to deal with a particular segment of the organization's business.

2. Fill in the blanks.

- A. The Chair constructs specifics of the agenda by conferring with _____ and _____.
- B. To approve the minutes the Chair asks, "Are there any _____ to the minutes?"
- C. Minutes are a written record of what _____ in a meeting.
- D. The name of each Committee and the reporting member are listed in the minutes with a notation that the report is _____.
- E. When a count is ordered or the vote is by ballot, _____ is recorded in the minutes.
- F. A motion coming from a Committee does not need a _____.

3. True or False: Read each statement below and decide its accuracy. To the left of each statement mark "T" for True or "F" for False.

- A. ___ To approve the minutes the Chair asks, "Do I have a motion to approve the minutes?"
- B. ___ Minutes are a written record of what was said and done in a meeting.
- C. ___ In correcting the minutes the Secretary simply draws a line through the error and writes in the correct wording.
- D. ___ Debate should always be included in the minutes.
- E. ___ The Treasurer's report requires no vote.
- F. ___ The only detail of the Treasurer's report that is included in the minutes is the current balance.
- G. ___ Standing Committees are called on for reports in the order in which they are listed in the bylaws.
- H. ___ Special Committees are called on in the order of preference of the Chair.



LEADERSHIP

OPPORTUNITIES

Leadership is the name of the game in any organization. The person who knows the most about the organization and the rules that govern it gets to be in charge. Sometimes, when there is no one who knows the rules very well, the person who is the gutsiest and can sell his own rules as he makes them up gets to be in charge precisely because no one knows enough to mount a challenge. This works very well so long as everyone is happy doing one person's personal agenda. However, what usually happens is that members become disgruntled and resent being manipulated.

The only defense against such abuse by someone with a little knowledge is for someone else to acquire more of the same kind of knowledge. The best defense against abuse of the rules is the rules themselves. Here we will take a basic look at the parliamentary motions so you can have, at least, a modicum of understanding of what they are used for and how you can make them work for your group.

When a main motion has been introduced and becomes the property of the assembly, the members have a wide range of parliamentary options available for disposing of the question either permanently or temporarily. You will find these options in the two charts on the following page. It may be helpful to flip back and forth as you read these pages, pausing occasionally to consult the charts.

There is no question about the fact that, if you attend many meetings of this and other societies, you will need to know at least a little bit about these motions. The charts contain legends which are self-explanatory. Below is a brief explanation of the purpose of each of these motions. Take the time to read the purpose of each motion and then consult the chart to see whether or not it needs a second, can be debated and amended and what vote is necessary for adoption.

Privileged Motions

Name	Purpose
13 Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn	To set the time when the meeting will continue
12 Ajourn	To end the meeting
11 Recess	To pause briefly during the meeting
10 Raise a Question of Privilege	To attend to matters of comfort, accuracy, confidentiality, or convenience concerning members or the assembly
9 Call for the Order of the Day	To compel adherence to the agenda

Subsidiary Motions

8 Lay on the Table	To temporarily lay aside a question
7 Previous Question	To end debate
6 Limit or Extend Debate	To change the general debate parameters
5 Postpone to A Set Time	To delay action on a question and control precisely when it will be considered
4 Refer to Committee	To obtain additional information
3 Amend	To modify the question
2 Postpone Indefinitely	To kill the question without a direct vote

Incidental Motions

Point of Order	To call attention to a breach of procedure
Appeal Decision of Chair	To require the assembly to decide the correctness of the Chair's decision on a point of order
Suspend the Rules	To lay aside a rule temporarily
Object to Consideration	To prevent the assembly from dealing with a particular question
Division of the Question	To prevent two separate questions from being considered in one motion
Division of the Assembly	To compel a standing vote on a question when the result is doubted
Consider the Seriatim	To consider paragraph by paragraph
Point of Information	To obtain facts on the substantive issue or the Chair's opinion on the parliamentary situation
Object to General Consent	To force a voice vote on a motion
Withdraw a Motion	To prevent one's own motion from being considered

Second Chance Motions

Take from the Table	To make a tabled question pending
Rescind or Amend Something Previously Adopted	To undo or modify prior action
Discharge a Committee	To remove a Committee
Reconsider	To bring a question again before the assembly as if there'd been no vote

The motions in the top chart are ranking motions. That is, they take precedence over one another in graduating steps up the page. The highest number, Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn, is the highest ranking. The lowest number, Postpone Indefinitely, is the lowest ranking. If one of these motions is introduced, no motion that is lower in rank is in order until the pending parliamentary motion is disposed of, but any motion higher in rank can be introduced while the motion is pending. For example, if a motion to Postpone to a Set Time has been made but not yet voted on, the motions to Refer to Committee, Amend and Postpone Indefinitely would not be in order but any of the motions above number 5 would be in order. These motions are divided into Privileged motions which have to do with the comfort and convenience of the assembly and Subsidiary motions which offer ways to deal with the main motion.

The motions in the bottom chart are without rank and are incidental to the proceedings in some way, therefore they can interrupt business.

CHART OF MOTIONS

MOTIONS WITH RANK

Privileged:					
13 Fix Time to Which to Adjourn	S		A	M	R
12 Adjourn	S			M	
11 Recess	S		A	M	
10 Raise a Question of Privilege				Ch	IS
9 Call for the Orders of the Day				Ch	IS
Subsidiary:					
8 Lay on the Table	S			M	
7 Previous Question	S			2/3	R*
6 Limit or Extend Debate	S		A	2/3	R
5 Postpone to a Set Time	S	D	A	M	R
4 Refer to Committee	S	D	A	M	R
3 Amend	S	D	A*	M	R
2 Postpone Indefinitely	S	D		M	R(a)
1 Main Motion	S	D	A	M	R
NOTES:					
S = Second required			R = Reconsider		
D = Debatable			IS = Interrupts speaker		
A = Amendable			IP = Interrupts pending business		
M = Majority vote			(a) = In the affirmative		
2/3 = Two-thirds vote			(n) = In the negative		
Ch = Chair decides					
*See explanation on individual motion pages					

MOTIONS WITHOUT RANK

INCIDENTALS:					
Demands					
Point of Order				Ch	IP
Point of Information				Ch	IP
Division of the Assembly				Ch	IP
Objections					
Appeal Decision of Chair	S	D*		M	IP
Object to Consideration				2/3	R(n) IP
Object to General Consent				M	R(n) IP
Expeditors					
Suspend the Rules	S			2/3	IP
Division of the Question	S		A	M	IP
Consider Seriatim	S		A	M	IP
Withdraw a Motion (by motion S M R (n))					Ch IP
Second Chance Motions					
Take from the Table	S			M	
Rescind or Amend Something Previously Adopted	S	D*	A	2/3	R(n)
Discharge a Committee	S	D*	A	2/3	R(n) IP
Reconsider	S	D*		M	IP
NOTES:					
S = Second required			R = Reconsider		
D = Debatable			IS = Interrupts speaker		
A = Amendable			IP = Interrupts pending business		
M = Majority vote			(a) = In the affirmative		
2/3 = Two-thirds vote			(n) = In the negative		
Ch = Chair decides					
* These motions are debatable only if the motion to which they are applied is debatable					

Let's Review

Which Motion Should I Use?



Read each statement and write below it the motion you think would best solve the problem.

1. I have an idea that I think our Club should try.
2. I could go for this motion if we could just make a little change.
3. We're supposed to be talking about sponsoring a soccer tournament and that guy's talking about his son's soccer stats!
4. Oh my gosh! If everyone with his hand up gets to speak his limit, we'll be here all night!
5. I wish we could wait on this vote until John and Chris can be here. I know they're coming to the next meeting. There is no good reason we can't wait until then.
6. This discussion is going nowhere. Sometimes I think some of these people just talk to hear themselves! Let's get this vote taken now.
7. There's just one word in that proposal that is all wrong. I know one that would be better.
8. Why are we arguing about this question now? We don't have enough information. We need to get a group together to look into the matter.
9. This motion is really none of our business. If we took a stand on this issue either way it would positively damage our reputation in the community.
10. What does the Chair mean "the ayes have it"? It didn't sound that way to me!

Typical Glitches

There are certain glitches that come up during meetings quite frequently. Often the same problem occurs over and over again. Members who don't know parliamentary procedure have no idea how to remedy the situation. Below are eight typical problems. Read each one and determine the possible solution. Remember the old saying, "there is more than one way to skin a cat." There is often more than one way to solve a problem using parliamentary rules. Check the motions chart for possible solutions.

1. In the middle of discussion someone says there wasn't a second for the motion being discussed so it dies for lack of a second. Is that true? Why or why not?

2. During discussion members begin to talk directly to each other and heated debate ensues. What can the Chair do? What can a member do?

3. A Committee recommends a course of action during its report. How do you handle a Committee recommendation?

Notes

