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# **Using Basic Parliamentary Procedure**

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# Reference & Disclaimer

This presentation is based on Robert's Rules of Order. (Currently on 12<sup>th</sup> Edition)

Your individual bylaws may say something different than what I say, which is OK, unless it is in violation of MDP or DNC bylaws.

# Parliamentary Procedure

- Rules that limit, guide and protect the individual
- It's not that the decision you make must be correct, but each decision you make must be correctly made.



# Why do we use Parliamentary Procedure?

- To facilitate the transaction of business
- To promote cooperation and harmony
- To ensure that all members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations
- Ensure the majority has the right to decide, but the minority has rights which must be protected as well

# Bylaws

- Rules that govern the organization
- Legally binding
- Can override parliamentary authority



# Basic Principles

- There are some basic principles for the use of Parliamentary Procedure.
- When they are remembered, then meetings will run more smoothly and business will take place.

# Basic Principles

- A quorum must be present for the group to act.
  - As defined by the by-laws
  - If not, then majority of membership
- Only one question should be considered at any given time.
- No member should speak until recognized by the chair.
- The chair should maintain strict impartiality during discussion.
  - Chair can vote if it will affect the outcome

# Quorum

- Quorum is minimum number of members necessary to conduct business (present throughout meeting)
- Chair should determine quorum before meeting
  - Bylaws can determine method to determine, i.e. roll call
- Quorum should be determined by bylaws
  - For all meetings – regular, special, annual, etc
  - Otherwise, it is majority of entire membership
- If quorum ceases to exist during meeting:
  - Only motions in order are:
    - To recess until quorum returns
    - Motion to adjourn



# Chair (Presiding Officer)

- Stands when calling the meeting to order (in larger meetings)
- Says, “ The meeting will come to order.”
- Can approve the minutes without a motion (ask for corrections)
- Can adjourn a meeting without a motion
  - After asking for additional business and not hearing any
  - Adjournment time is reached on an adopted

# Procedure for Handling Main

- Member rises and addresses the Chair.
  - “Mr./Madam President or Chairperson.”
- Chair recognizes the member.
- Member states:
  - “I move that \_\_\_\_\_ (states motion).”
- Second to motion (not necessary to stand or be recognized).
  - “I second the motion.”
  - If the motion comes as a recommendation from two or more members, the motion does not need a second.



# Procedure for Handling Main

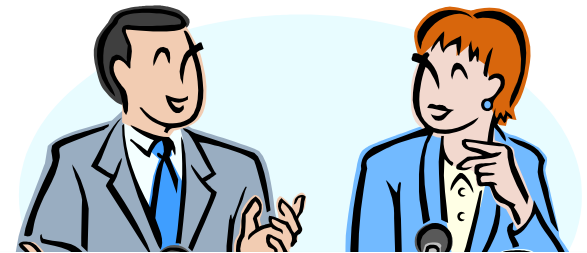
- Chair states motion:
  - “It has been moved by (name) and seconded that \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Discussion:
  - If debatable, every member has right to debate
  - Chair refrains from debate while presiding
  - Proposer of motion has first right of debate
  - Must be related (germane) only to motion
- The Chair says:
  - “If there is no further discussion, the motion is \_\_\_\_\_(restate motion).”

# Procedure for Handling Main Motions

- Vote:
  - The Chair says, “All those in favor of \_\_\_\_\_(the motion is stated) say ‘aye.’ Those opposed say ‘no.’
  - If motion requires 2/3 vote, ask for rising or by show of hands.
  - Should always ask for those opposed.
- Result of the vote is stated by chair.
  - “The motion is carried” or “the motion is lost.”

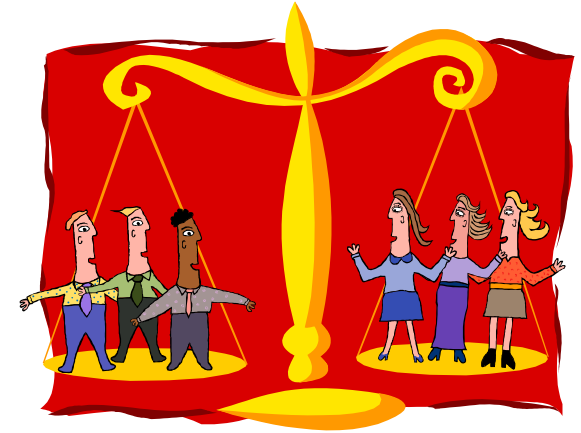
# Debate

- Chair begins debate by asking for discussion
- Maker of motion has right to speak first, if properly recognized
- Can only speak twice on same question during the same day
- Any motion that stops or limits debate requires a 2/3 vote



# Tie Vote

- A tie vote is a failed vote
- President/chair does not have to break a tie unless specified in bylaws
- President/chair can vote to make or break a tie vote



# Classes of Motions

- Main Motions
- Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly
- Incidental Motions
- Subsidiary Motions
- Privileged Motions

# Order of Pending Motions

- Privileged Motions
- Subsidiary Motions
- Incidental Motions (non-ranked)
- Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly
- Main Motions



# Privileged Motions

- Do not relate to pending business
- Related to the rights and privileges to the assembly or to its members
- Not Debatable



# Privileged Motions

- To fix the time to which to adjourn
- To adjourn
- To Recess
- To rise to a question of privilege
- To call for the order of the day



# Subsidiary Motions

- Assisting in treating or disposing of a main motion
- All require second
- Debatable: Depends
- Requires majority vote unless involving rights of others
  - Call the question (2/3)
  - Limit or extend of debate (2/3)
- Most widely used is “Amend”

# Subsidiary Motions

- To table
- To call the question
- To limit or extend debate
- To postpone to a definite time
- To refer to a committee
- To amend
- To postpone indefinitely



# Incidental Motions

- Incidental to pending motions or business at hand
- Not debatable

# Incidental Motions

- To suspend the rules
- To withdraw a motion
- To rise to a point of order
- To call for a division of the question

# REQUESTING POINTS OF SOMETHING

- Certain situations need attention during the meeting, but they don't require a motion, second, debate or voting. It's permissible to state a point during a meeting where the chairperson needs to handle a situation right away. Board members can declare a Point of Order, Point of Information, Point of Inquiry, or Point of Personal Privilege.

# REQUESTING POINTS OF SOMETHING

- Point of Order: Draws attention to a breach of rules, improper procedure, breaching of established practices, etc.
- Point of Information: A member may need to bring up an additional point or additional information (in the form of a nondebatable statement) so that the other members can make fully informed votes.



# REQUESTING POINTS OF SOMETHING

- Point of Inquiry: A member may use point of inquiry to ask for clarification in a report to make better voting decisions.
- Point of Personal Privilege: A member may use point of personal privilege to address the physical comfort of the setting such as temperature or noise. Members may also use it to address the accuracy of published reports or the accuracy of a member's conduct.

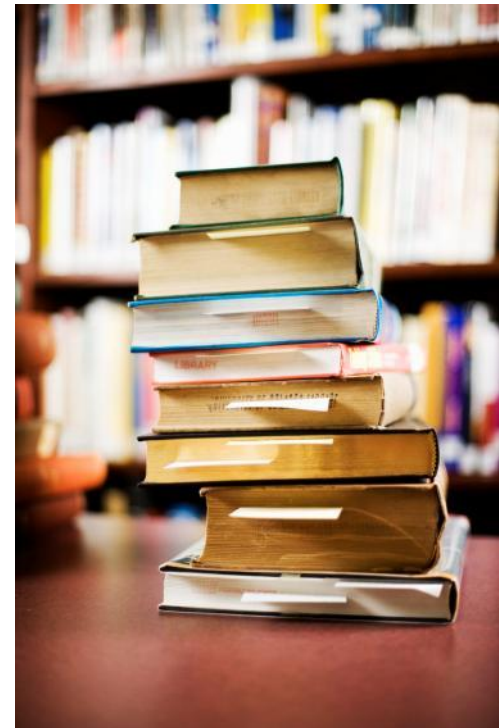
# Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the House

- Brings back to the assembly a question that has already been considered
- Requires a second
- May or may not be debatable
  - Take from table, non-debatable



# Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the House

- To reconsider
- To rescind
- To take from the table



# Main Motion

## (Class of Motions)

- Brings before the assembly a question or business consideration
- In order only when no other motion is pending
- Only one main motion on the floor at any time
- Requires second, debatable, usually approved by majority vote, unless some provision in bylaws require different vote

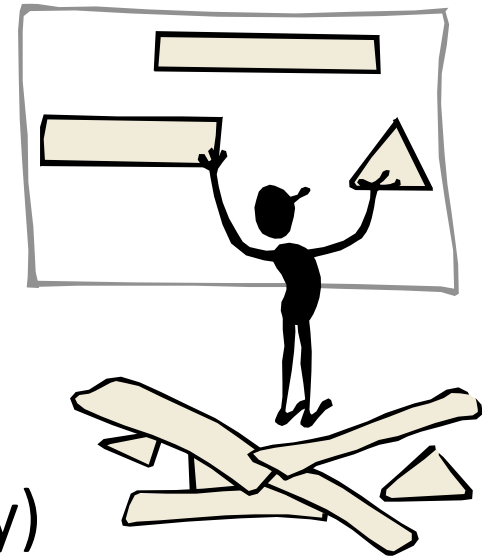
# Amendments

- Only two amendments can be pending at any one time
  - Primary
    - Applied to Main Motion
  - Secondary
    - Applied to primary amendment
      - Can have infinite number of secondary amendments as long as only two total amendments pending at any one time
- Vote on amendments in reverse order
  - Secondary then primary



# Amending a Motion

- Most used Subsidiary Motion
- Methods of Amending
  - Insert (inside the motion)
  - Add (at the end)
  - Strike out
  - Strike out and insert (words only)
  - Substitute (a paragraph)
- Must be germane to main motion

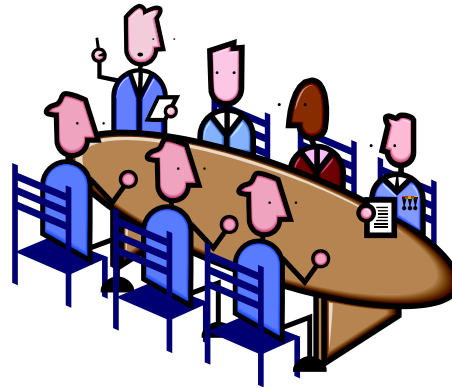


# “Question or Call for the Question”

- Actual motion is “Call the Previous Question”
  - Must be recognized by chair to make motion
- Requires a 2/3 vote to pass
  - 2/3 votes are taken by rising vote
- If receives 2/3 vote, motion passes and debate is stopped and a vote is taken immediately on pending question/motion
- Is a vote to stop debate and not to vote on pending motion
- If does not receive 2/3 vote, motion fails and debate continues

# Refer to Committee

- Allows for additional information or study of issue before voting
- Motion to Refer should include details of who the committee will be and who will appoint
- Usually defines time for committee to report





# Tabling a Motion

- Proper form of motion is to “Lay on Table”
- Misuse of “Postpone Indefinitely” or “Postpone to a Definite Time”
- Intention sometimes is “Refer” or “Commit” which sends to committee for further review
- Definite time to “Take From the Table”

# Withdraw a Motion

- Motion can be withdrawn at any time prior to voting
- Before restated by chair belongs to maker
  - Can be withdrawn, changed or modified in any way with only approval of maker
- After restating, belongs to assembly
  - Maker asks permission to withdraw
  - Chair treats first as unanimous-consent request
  - If objection, treated as a subsidiary motion

# Adjourn

- Next to highest ranking motion
- Fix the time to which to adjourn is highest
- Can not interrupt a speaker
- Requires a second
- Not debatable
- Majority rules
- Chair can adjourn without motion
  - If no other business is pending
  - If time is reached on an adopted agenda



# Motions Requiring 2/3 Vote

- Suspends or modifies Rules of Order
- Prevents introduction of a motion
- Closes, limits or extends debate
- Limits freedom of nominations or voting
- Takes away membership or office

# Out of Order Motions

- Motion to suspend bylaws
- Motion in conflict with bylaws Any motion outside the scope of the organization
  - “The purpose of this organization is ....”
- Any motion to conduct business if quorum is not present, except motion to recess or adjourn

# Minutes

- Only record what was done, not everything that was said
- Secorder of motion need not be recorded
- Corrected at any time mistake is discovered, even years later
- Good minutes are first line of defense in lawsuit or appeal



# Order of Business vs. Agenda

- Order of Business
  - Basic outline of business proceedings
- Agenda
  - Schedule of the order of business, with details
  - Should never be included in bylaws
  - Could not vote to immediately suspend the rules if in bylaws
  - Should not be confused with Rules of Order



# Order of Business

- Call to order
- Reading and approval of the minutes
- Reports of Special Committees
- Unfinished Business (not old business)
- New Business



# Agenda

- Call to Order
- Opening Ceremonies
- Roll Call
- Reading and Approval of the Minutes
- Report of Officers, Boards and Committees
- Unfinished Business
- New Business
- Program
- Announcements
- Adjournment

# Robert's RULES 101

Steps to keep meetings on track.

