

I Move That!



Parliamentary Procedure Basics

Presented by:

The University of Wisconsin – River Falls

Agricultural Education Society

WHAT IS PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE?

Parliamentary procedure, or parliamentary law, is the code of rules and ethics for working together in groups. Parliamentary law refers to the rules and regulations of an organized society promoting the orderly and efficient transaction of business.

According to Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition), a parliamentary manual, parliamentary law is:

The application of parliamentary law is the best method yet devised to enable assemblies of any size, with due regard for every member's opinion, to arrive at the general will on the maximum number of questions of varying complexity in a minimum amount of time and under all kinds of internal climate ranging from total harmony to hardened or impassioned division of opinion. (*RONR*, p. xlviii.)

Parliamentary procedure is not synonymous with the book *Robert's Rules of Order (10th Edition)* ("*RONR*"). Instead, *RONR* is the most widely used of several major parliamentary manuals. Various versions of Robert's Rules of Order are used by approximately 80% of organizations in the United States. The second most commonly used parliamentary authority is *Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, used by approximately 15% of groups (particularly physicians and dentists). The third most popular parliamentary manual is *Demeter's Manual of Parliamentary Law and Procedure*, used by about 5% of groups (particularly unions).

The Rule of Majority and Protection of Minority

1. Members have the **right** of notice of all meetings
2. Members have the **right** of previous notice
3. In a situation when rights may be taken away, 2/3 of membership must be in favor
4. Members have the **right** to be informed of the organizations work.
5. No one can request a higher vote than majority unless in bylaws or parliamentary authority.

Taking up Business One Item at a Time

1. Meeting follows order of business – agenda
2. Only one main motion pending at a time
3. With main motion pending, secondary motions may be made
4. Only one member assigned to the floor at a time
5. Members take turns speaking - no member speaks twice until all have had the opportunity

Promoting Courtesy, Justice, Impartiality and Equality

1. The chair or presiding officer calls to order
2. Members take seats promptly – all conversations stop
3. Members giving reports sit in front
4. Members rise to be recognized by Presiding officer
5. Refer to officers and others in the third person
6. Members do not cross talk during debate
7. Keep discussions to the issue
8. When correcting a member, presiding officer doesn't use name
9. Speak clearly and loudly
10. Listen

Order of Business

The "order of business" is the established sequence in which business is taken up during a meeting. It is a blueprint for meetings and provides a systematic plan for the orderly conduct of business.

1. Call to order
2. Reading minutes
3. Officers Reports
4. Committee Reports
5. Special Orders
6. Unfinished business
7. New business
8. Adjourn

I. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Following any corrections or additions, the minutes should be approved. Approval is usually handled by unanimous consent.

II. REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND STANDING COMMITTEES – The chair usually calls on only those members who have reports.

III. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES – Special committees do not have continual existence, but exist solely for the purposes of a specific project.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Unfinished business (sometimes incorrectly referred to as "old business") refers to questions that have carried over from the previous meeting as a result of that meeting having adjourned without completing its order of business.

V. NEW BUSINESS – Following any unfinished business, the chair asks, "Is there is any new business?" Members can introduce new items of business.

Optional headings may include **OPENING CEREMONIES**, **ROLL CALL** of members, **CONSENT CALENDAR** for disposing of routine business by unanimous consent, **ANNOUNCEMENTS**, or **PROGRAM**. Any item of business can be taken out of its proper order by adopting a motion to suspend the rules with a two-thirds vote, although this is usually arranged by unanimous consent.

Handling a Motion

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th Edition)*

I. BRINGING A MOTION BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY

1. A member is recognized by the chairman/presiding officer
2. A member moves the motion (*"I move that ..."*)
2. Another member seconds the motion
 Seconders do not need to be recognized
3. The chair states the question
 "It is moved and seconded that (or "to") ..."

II. CONSIDERING THE MOTION

1. Members debate the motion (unless undebatable)

Preference in recognition:

1. Member who made motion
2. Member who has not spoken first time
3. If possible, alternate for and against

III. CHAIR PUTS QUESTION TO A VOTE

"The question is on the adoption of ..."

(Voice vote)

"Those in favor of the motion, say aye."

"Those opposed, say no."

(Rising vote)

"Those in favor of the motion will rise [or "stand"]. Be seated."

"Those opposed will rise [or "stand"]. Be seated."

IV. CHAIR ANNOUNCES RESULT OF VOTE

"The ayes have it and the motion is adopted." (or)

"The noes have it and the motion is lost."

"The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted." (or)

"The negative has it and the motion is lost."

RULES OF DEBATE

According to Robert's Rules of Order newly revised (11th Edition), the following rules for debate and selecting a person to debate are as follows:

I. General Rules of Debate

A member may debate each debatable motion twice for ten minutes for each debate on the same day. (p. 43 RONR 11th Ed.)

Debate must be confined to the merits of the pending question.

Speakers address their remarks to the chairperson, maintain a courteous tone, and should avoid injecting a personal note in to debate.

II. Rules for Selecting a Person to Debate

While a motion is open to debate, there are three important cases where the floor should be assigned to a person who may not have been the first to rise and address the chair (but who did so before anyone had actually been recognized).

- 1) Member who moved the motion has the right, but not the obligation, to speak first.

- 2) No one is entitled to the floor a second time in debate on the same motion on the same day as long as other members who have not spoken yet desire to speak.

- 3) In cases where the chair knows that persons seeking the floor have opposite opinions on the question (and the member is not recognized by (1) or (2) above) the chair should let the floor alternate, as much as possible, between those favoring and those opposing the measure.

Presiding Phrases

1. OPEN THE MEETING

"The meeting will come to order." Or "The meeting will be in order."

2. RECOGNIZE A MEMBER

"The chair recognizes"

3. NO SECOND TO A MOTION (following request by chair "Is there a second?")

"Since there is no second, the motion is not before this meeting. The next item of business is . . . " or, "Is there any further business?"

4. STATE THE QUESTION ON A MOTION

"It is moved and seconded that [or "to"] . . ."

5. STATE THE QUESTION ON A RESOLUTION

"It is moved and seconded to adopt the resolution just read."

6. STATEMENT WHEN DEBATE APPEARS TO HAVE ENDED

"Are you ready for the question?"

7. TAKE A VOICE VOTE

"The question is on the adoption of the motion to [or "that"] . . . Those in favor of the motion, say aye. Those opposed, say no."

8. TAKE A RISING VOTE

"Those in favor of the motion to . . . will rise [or, "stand"]. . . Be seated. Those opposed will rise. . . Be seated."

9. TAKE A VOTE BY SHOW OF HANDS

"The question is on the adoption of the motion to [or "that"] . . . All those in favor of the motion will raise the right hand. . . Lower hands. Those opposed will raise the right hand. . . Lower hands."

10. ANNOUNCE THE RESULT OF A VOICE VOTE

"The ayes have it and the motion is adopted [or "carried"]." Or, "The noes have it and the motion is lost."

11. ANNOUNCE THE RESULT OF AN UNCOUNTED RISING VOTE/SHOW OF HANDS

"The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted." Or, "The negative has it and the motion is lost."

12. ANNOUNCE THE RESULT OF A COUNTED RISING VOTE

"There are 8 in the affirmative and 4 in the negative. The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted." (or)

"There are 4 in the affirmative and 8 in the negative. The negative has it and the motion is lost."

13. APPROVE THE MINUTES

"Are there any corrections to the minutes? If there are no corrections [or "no further corrections"], the minutes stand [or "are"] approved [or "approved as read," or "approved as corrected]."

14. ANNOUNCE THE NEXT PIECE OF BUSINESS

"The next item of business is" or "The next business in order is"
(NEVER say "The next order of business.")

15. RULE A MOTION OUT OF ORDER OR A MEMBER OUT OF ORDER

"The chair rules that the motion is out of order [or "not in order"] because"
"The member is out of order and will be seated."

Use of the Gavel

The gavel is utilized by the Chairman to maintain order, direct the members, and to emphasize points.

- **One Gavel Tap:**
 - Used to inform members to be seated.
 - Used to announce the results of a vote or outcome of decision.
 - To adjourn the meeting.

- **Two Gavel Taps:**
 - The presiding officer/chairman taps the gavel twice to call the meeting to order.

- **Three Gavel Taps:**
 - The use/purpose is typically assigned within the organization. In most instances, it is used to instruct members to stand up.

- **Multiple Gavel Taps:**
 - The presiding officer will use a series of sharp taps to maintain or regain order at a meeting.

Classification of Motions

The various motions used in a meeting (such as amend, recess or postpone) are classified in to five distinct categories based upon the purpose/intent of the motions. These classes are:

(1) MAIN MOTIONS -- a main motion brings business before the assembly. It can only be made when no other motion is pending and ranks lowest in the order of *precedence* of motions.

(2) SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS -- subsidiary motions assist the assembly in considering or disposing of a main motion (and sometimes other motions). Subsidiary motions fall into the order of *precedence*.

(3) PRIVILEGED MOTIONS -- privileged motions do not relate to the pending business, but have to do with special matters of immediate and overriding importance which, without debate, should be allowed to interrupt the consideration of anything else. Like subsidiary motions, the privileged motions fit into an order of *precedence*.

(4) INCIDENTAL MOTIONS -- incidental motions deal with questions of procedure arising out of other motions or business. They have no order of precedence among themselves. Instead, they arise incidentally and are decided as they arise.

(5) MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY -- these motions do not quite fit in any other category and rarely arise. They do not fit within the order of precedence and can only be made while no business is pending.

What is *Precedence*?

Not every motion is in order at any given time. Instead, motions are proposed, considered, and disposed of in a priority of order known as "*precedence*." The purpose of assigning a rank or order to each commonly used motion is to enable an assembly to consider each motion without confusion. The order of precedence from the highest ranking to the lowest ranking is as follows:

Privileged Motions

1. Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn
2. Adjourn
3. Recess
4. Raise a Question of privilege
5. Call for the Orders of the Day

Subsidiary Motions

1. Lay on the table
2. Previous question (end debate)
3. Limit or extend debate
4. Postpone to a certain time (or "postpone" definitely)
5. Commit or refer (to committee)
6. Amend
7. Postpone indefinitely

Main Motion

"Precedence" can be defined with two basic rules:

(1) When a motion is being considered, any motion higher on the list of precedence may be proposed, but no motion of lower precedence may be proposed.

(2) Motions are considered and voted on in reverse order to their proposal. The motion last proposed (and highest on the list) is considered and disposed of first.

Table of Parliamentary Motions

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th Edition)

You Want To:	You Say:	Second Req'd.	Amendable	Debatable	Vote Req'd.	May Interrupt	May Reconsider
1. Have a legal continuation of the meeting		Y	Y	N	Maj.	N	Y
2. End the Meeting	<i>I Move to adjourn.</i>	Y	N	N	Maj.	N	N
3. Take a Break	<i>I Move to Recess for (Time)</i>	Y	Y	N	Maj.	N	N
4. Correct an Undesirable Condition	<i>I Rise to a Question of Privilege</i>	N	N	N	Chair	Y	N
5. Follow the agenda	<i>I Call for the Orders of the day</i>	N	N	N	Chair	Y	N
6. Submit a Decision to the assembly	<i>I Appeal from the Decision of the Chair</i>	Y	N	N/Y ⁽¹⁾	Maj.	Y	Y
7. Demand a Standing Re-vote	<i>I call for a Division (or state Division)</i>	N	N	N	R.V.	Y	N
8. Call attention to a rule violation	<i>Point of Order</i>	N	N	N	Chair	Y	N
9. Avoid a Main Motion	<i>I Object to the Consideration of the Question</i>	Y	N	N	2/3	Y	Y ⁽²⁾
10. Secure separate consideration of parts of a Main Motion	<i>I move to Divide the question</i>	Y	Y	N	M	N	N
11. Change or Eliminate a Motion	<i>I move to Modify (or Withdraw) the motion</i>	⁽¹⁰⁾					Y ⁽³⁾
12. Suggest Names for Office/Position	<i>I nominate...</i>	N	N	N	N	N	N
13. Permit action not possible under rules	<i>I move to Suspend the Rules which...</i>	Y	N	N	2/3 -M	N	N
14. Finalize a slate of candidates	<i>I move to Close Nominations</i>	Y	Y	N	2/3		N
15. Attain new candidates	<i>I move to Reopen Nominations</i>	Y	Y	N	M		Y ⁽⁴⁾
16. Change the Method of Voting	<i>I move to Change the Method of Voting to</i>	Y	Y	N	M	N	Y
17. Request information on the Motion	<i>I rise to a Request for Information</i>	N	N	N	Chair	Y	N
18. Ask a question about parliamentary rules	<i>I rise to a Parliamentary Inquiry</i>	N	N	N	Chair	Y	N

Table of Parliamentary Motions (cont.)

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th Edition)

You Want To:	You Say:	Second Req'd.	Amendable	Debatable	Vote Req'd.	May Interrupt	May Reconsider
19. Clear the floor for urgent business	<i>I move to Lay on the Table the motion to...</i>	Y	N	N	M	N	Y ⁽⁵⁾
20. Close debate	<i>I move the Previous Question</i>	Y	N	N	2/3	N	Y
21. Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	<i>I move to that debate be limited/extended to...</i>	Y	Y	N	2/3	N	N
22. Postpone a decision on a Main Motion	<i>I move to Postpone to ... the Main Motion to</i>	Y	Y	Y	M	N	Y ⁽⁶⁾
23. Refer a Main Motion to a committee	<i>I move to Refer to the () Committee the Motion to...</i>	Y	Y	Y	M	N	Y ⁽⁷⁾
24. To improve an amendment	<i>I move to amend the amendment by...</i>	Y	N	Y	M	N	Y
25. To improve the motion	<i>I move to amend the motion by...</i>	Y	Y	Y	M	N	Y
26. To eliminate a Main Motion	<i>I move to Postpone Indefinitely the Motion to...</i>	Y	N	Y	M	N	Y ⁽⁸⁾
27. Introduce an Item of Business	<i>I Move that (or to)...</i>	Y	Y	Y	M	N	Y
28. Take a Motion from the table	<i>I move to Take from the Table the Motion...</i>	Y	N	N	M	N	N
29. Reconsider a motion	<i>I move to Reconsider the vote on...</i>	Y	N	Y	M	N	N
30. Cancel or change previous action	<i>I move to Rescind/Amend the Previously Adopted motion to...</i>	Y	Y	Y	2/3 or M	N	Y ⁽⁹⁾
31. Approve action taken by less than a quorum	<i>I move to Ratify the decision to</i>	Y	Y	Y	M	N	Y

See notes on next page

Note: pertaining to specific treatment of motion:

1. *Appeal:* The appeal is debatable if the question being appealed is debatable. In this instance, the debatable appeal would allow two debates by the chair, and one debate per member. If the question being appealed is not debatable, then the appeal is considered to be undebatable. An undebatable appeal may be debated once by the chair.
2. *Object to Consideration:* Can only be reconsidered if the prevailing vote was negative, thus sustaining the objection.
3. *Withdraw or Modify:* If the motion is to withdraw, reconsider can only be applied to a negative vote. If the motion is to modify, then reconsider is in order.
4. *Reopen Nominations:* May only be reconsidered on a negative vote.
5. *Lay on the Table:* May only be reconsidered on a negative vote.
6. *Postpone to Time:* A negative vote on the motion to Postpone may only be reconsidered only after such time and progress in business and debate has essentially made it a new question.
7. *Refer to a Committee:* May be reconsidered if the committee has not begun consideration of the question.
8. *Postpone Indefinitely:* May be reconsidered on an affirmative vote only.
9. *Rescind/Amend Previously Adopted:* May be reconsidered on a negative vote only.
10. *Withdraw or Modify:* Typically a request by the maker of the motion. Can be dealt with by Unanimous consent. If it is a formal motion, then it requires a second, is not debatable nor amendable, and requires a majority vote.

MOTIONS	NEED A SECOND	AMENDABLE	DEBATABLE	VOTE REQUIRED	INTERRUPT SPEAKER	RECONSIDER
A. Privileged						
1. To fix the time to which to adjourn (1)	Yes	(4a)	No	Majority	No	Yes
2. Adjourn (2)	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
3. Take a recess (3)	Yes	(4)	No	Majority	No	No
4. Raise a question of privilege	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair (5)	Yes	No
5. Call for the orders of the day	No	No	No	Handled by the Chair (6)	Yes	No
B. Incidental Motions						
1. To appeal to decision of the chair	Yes	No	Yes (9)	Majority	Yes (25)	Yes
2. Call for a division of the assembly	No	No	No	Standing Vote (11)	Yes	No
3. To raise a point of order	No	No	No	Decision of the Chair	Yes	No
4. To object to consideration of a question	No	No	No	2/3	No (26)	(15)
5. To divide a motion or call for consideration by parts (10)	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No (23)	No
6. To modify or withdraw a motion	No (21)	No	No	Unanimous Consent (22)	No	No
7. To nominate	No	(12)	(12)	(12)	No	No
8. To suspend the rules (14)	Yes	No	No	2/3 (20)	No	No
9. Close nominations	Yes	Yes	No	2/3	No	No
10. Reopen nominations	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No	(15)
11. Method of voting	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No	No
12. Request for information	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
13. Parliamentary inquiry	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
C. Subsidiary Motions						
1. To lay on the table	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
2. To call for the previous question	Yes	No	No	2/3	No	(19)
3. To limit or extend time for debate	Yes	Yes	No	2/3	No	Yes
4. To postpone to a certain time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Yes
5. To refer to a committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Yes
6. To amend an amendment (Secondary)	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No	Yes
7. To amend or substitute (Primary)	Yes	Yes	Yes (7)	Majority	No	Yes
8. To postpone indefinitely	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No	(18)
D. Principal Motion						
1. A main motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	Yes
E. Brings Item Before the Assembly Again						
1. Take from the table	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
2. Reconsider	Yes	No	(13)	Majority	No	No
3. Reconsider and enter on the minutes	Yes		Must be called up at the next meeting		(16)	
4. Rescind	Yes	Yes	Yes	(17)	No (24)	(15)
5. Ratify	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	No	(15)

See next page for Notes

NOTES PERTAINING TO SPECIFIC TREATMENT OF MOTIONS

1. Is a privileged motion only if made while another motion is pending, and in an assembly that made no provision for meeting on the same or next day; otherwise it is a main motion. The answers apply to the privileged motion.
2. When unqualified, is always a privileged motion except when effect would be to disband the group permanently. The answers apply to the privileged motion, not to a main motion to adjourn.
3. Is a privileged motion if made when other business is pending, otherwise is a main motion. Answers apply to the privileged motion.
- 4a. Amendable to hour, date, and place.
4. Can be amended as to time.
5. Is usually disposed by chair, without vote.
6. Chair should proceed to order of the day or put a question as to whether the group wishes to proceed with the order. A motion not to proceed to order requires a 2/3 vote, the same as suspending the rules.
7. Can be debated only when the question being amended is debatable.
8. Is usually decided by chair, without calling for a vote.
9. Cannot be debatable if made during a division of the assembly, or when the pending question is not debatable. Cannot be debated when it applies to indecorum, transgression of the rules of speaking, or to priority of business.
10. The question must be divided at the request of a single member, (this request can be made when another has the floor), provided the resolutions relate to different subjects and are independent of each other.
11. When a division is called for, the chair proceeds to take the vote again by rising. No vote is taken on whether a division shall be made, i.e., on whether a standing vote shall be taken.
12. To nominate, one simply rises, addresses the presiding officer, and states, "I nominate _____" and is again seated.
13. Debatable when the question to be considered is debatable.
14. Applies only to standing rules or to rules of order; it may not be in conflict with the constitution or by-laws.
15. The motion can be reconsidered only if the prevailing vote was a negative one.
16. Outranks the motion to reconsider and can be made immediately after the other, providing a vote has not yet been taken on it.
17. The motion requires a 2/3's majority if notice of the motion to be proposed has not been given at the preceding meeting or in the call of the meeting.
18. Can be reconsidered only if vote was affirmative.
19. Must be moved before any vote had been taken on the motions upon which the previous question was moved.
20. Generally only applied to rules of parliamentary procedure. Simple standing rules require only a simple majority for their suggestions.
21. If a formal motion to withdraw or modify is made by the proposer of the original motion, it requires a second.
22. If a formal motion is made, a majority vote is needed.
23. If a motion must be divided on the demand of one member, he/she can do so when another member has the floor.
24. Motion to rescind can be made when another person has the floor, but cannot interrupt the speaker.
25. At the time of appealed ruling.
26. Objection to consideration of question can be made after another person has been assigned the floor and before he has spoken.

Minutes

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th Edition)*

Minutes are a record of what was done at the meeting; NOT what was said by members or guests.

INCLUDE:

- First Paragraph:

Kind of meeting (regular, special, adjourned)

Name of board

Date and time of meeting

Place of meeting, if varies

Fact that Chairman and Clerk were present or name of substitute

Whether minutes of previous meeting were read and approved

- Separate paragraph for each subject matter with name of mover:
All main motions or motions to bring a main question again before the assembly (except any withdrawn, *see below*) stating

The wording in which adopted or disposed of

The disposition of motion (including amendments or motions)

Secondary motions that were not lost or withdrawn

All notices of motion

All points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost

Last Paragraph:

Hour of adjournment

Number of votes if count ordered or ballot vote

Names and votes if roll call vote

Signature of Clerk ("Respectfully submitted" unnecessary)

DO NOT INCLUDE:

Secunder's name (Unless required in Bylaws)

Remarks of guest speakers

Motions that were withdrawn

Personal opinion on anything said or done

Notes

