

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE GUIDELINES

Parliamentary Procedure will either be your friend or your foe. The choice is entirely up to you. If you have a working knowledge of it and use it, along with common sense, you'll have a friend for life.

One of the simplest and most comprehensive books on parliamentary procedure is "Mister Chairman – A Handbook on Parliamentary Procedures". It was compiled by the Activities Center, Associated Students of Washington State University. Excerpts from this handbook follow. It is suggested that this or a similar book be obtained from the student of parliamentary procedure. It is reprinted by permission.

THE "WHY" OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW

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

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

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

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

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

1. Call to Order
2. Reading and approval of minutes
3. Reports of Officers and Standing Committees
4. Reports of Special Committees
5. Unfinished (old) business
6. New business
7. Program
8. Adjournment

WHAT IS A MOTION?

A motion is a proposal that the group take certain action. There are four types of motions:

MAIN MOTIONS

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

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

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

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

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

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

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

PROGRESS OF MOTIONS

1. A member rises and addresses the presiding officer by title.
2. The member is recognized by the presiding officer. After receiving formal recognition by the chairman, a member is said to “have the floor” and is the only member entitled to present or discuss a motion.
3. The member proposes a motion. He may not discuss the motion either prior to or immediately following the proposal of the motion.
4. Another member seconds the motion. If no one seconds, the chair may ask if there is a second but need not. If there is none he may declare the motion lost for want of a second.
5. When a motion has been properly proposed and seconded, the chairman repeats the motion to the assembly. It now may be spoken of as a question or measure.
6. The assembly may now discuss the motion. Any member, after recognition from the chair has a right to discuss it. When several members wish to speak, it is customary for the chairman to show preference to the proposer of the motion, then members who have not spoken on the measure. The chairman may ask for speakers alternating between those favoring and those opposing the measure. The chairman should show preference to a member who seldom speaks over one who frequently does. **DISCUSSION MUST BE CONFINED TO THE QUESTION THAT IS “ BEFORE THE HOUSE”.**
7. The presiding officer takes the vote on the motion when all members who desire to discuss the question have done so.
8. The presiding officer announces the result of the vote.

HOW MAY A MOTION BE AMENDED?

A motion may be amended by:

1. Addition or insertion.
2. Eliminating or striking out.
3. Substitution.

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

By “hostile” is meant opposed to the spirit and aim of the motion and by “germane” is meant having a direct bearing upon the subject matter of the motion.

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

TYPES OF AMENDMENTS

1. Amendment of the First Rank which is an amendment to a motion.
2. Amendment of the Second Ranks, which is an amendment to the amendment which must modify and relate directly to the amendment and **NOT** to the main motion, other wise it is **OUT OF ORDER.**
3. **NO AMENDMENT BEYOND THAT OF THE SECOND RANK IS POSSIBLE.**

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

Amendments are voted upon in inverse order:

1. Discussion is held and then the vote taken on the amendment to the amendment.
2. Discussion is held and then the vote is taken on the amendment to the motion.
3. After that vote, discussion on the main motion as amended, if amended, is open and after discussion, the vote is taken.
4. After each vote it is possible that there maybe be more amendments, and if so, the order reverts to that step above.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

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

Nominations by Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee may be appointed, elected, or as stated in the By-Laws. The Committee report presents to the organization the name of one member as a candidate for each office. This report is not adopted, but the names are treated as if the persons had been nominated from the floor. Further nominations may be made from the floor.

Nominations from The Floor

Nominations do not require a second and are in order as soon as the presiding officer calls for them; however, no member may nominate more than one candidate for each office. As a nomination is made, the presiding officer repeats it and the Secretary records it. If there are no further nominations, the presiding officer may declare the nominations closed. However, a motion from the floor to close the nominations requires a two-thirds vote. Prior to voting, but following the formal closing of nominations, nominations may be reopened by a motion which only requires a majority to carry.

Nominations by Ballot

The presiding officer directs tellers to pass out ballots and the members writes after each office the name of one person whom he desires to nominate. If a candidate receives a majority in this manner it is usual to declare him elected. If no majority is received, a second ballot is then taken with the candidates being those named in the previous ballot. If a candidate receives a majority on this ballot, he is elected. If no one is elected on this or a following ballot, a motion that only the two highest candidates on the previous ballot be considered on the next ballot, is in order.

Most organizations make specific and detailed provisions for nominating, electing, and installing new officers. Some general rules do exist, however, the specific provisions take precedence when they conflict with the general rules. Some of the general rules are:

1. There shall be no voting on any candidate not properly nominated.
2. To move a unanimous ballot be cast by the Secretary is out of order if the office is uncontested.
3. An election becomes effective immediately if the candidate is present and does not decline or is absent but has consented to his candidacy. If he is absent and has not consented to his nomination, the election becomes effective as soon as he is notified if he does not decline immediately.