

Module 14

Practical Parliamentary Procedures



Standard Procedures and Innovations

Parliamentary Procedure and Leadership

“The effective individual functions through groups, many groups. It is the group that gives the individual weight in every field of endeavor” (Jones, 1990:X). Therefore, the effective individual must be effective in the group and serve as a group leader.

Group leadership is an art that anyone can learn. First one must learn the rules for group discussion and action called parliamentary procedure. Second one must learn by practice in the art of leadership. Our sense of democracy emerges from the extraction of discourse through constructive procedures (Jones, 1990:X).

Parliamentary Procedure and Democratic Process

“The history of liberty has largely been the history of observance of procedural safeguards.”

Felix Frankfurter, Supreme Court Justice

Key Points Related to Parliamentary Procedure

- Legal requirements:
- A quorum is necessary for all voting.
- Observation of the organization’s constitution and by-laws always.
- Group action at regular or adequately announced special meetings.
- Member’s rights are protected and individuals right to speak must be safeguarded.
- Parliamentary procedure provides an orderly method for all viewpoints to be heard (De Vries, 1998:99-102; Jones, 1990:X-XI; Robert, 1967:21-22, 88, 130-131).

Traditional Agenda or Order of Business

Most organizations follow the general agenda suggested here. The most important point is to decide on an agenda that is satisfying and acceptable to your group.

- An agenda is simply an orderly sequence of items presented for group consideration. Members of the group should have a copy of the agenda before the meeting (De Vries, 1998:194; Robert, 1967:21, 77-78, 130-131; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:6).
- One of the most overlooked yet most important items on the agenda is “preliminary announcements.” Announcing agenda items and sequence, their time limits and “ground-rules” for discussion can help facilitate productive discussion more than any other item (De Vries, 1998:194; Robert, 1967:86-88).
- It is preferable to complete action on a brief, routine report during the committee report section of the agenda. However, action on involved and time-consuming committee reports may be completed more conveniently under new business. This helps keep the meeting moving. Parliamentary procedure’s only purpose is to provide a flexible method to transact group business in a manner most pleasing to its members (De Vries, 1998:194; Robert, 1967:86; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:6).



Traditional Agenda: Order of Business

1. Meeting called to order.
2. Preliminary announcements (agenda items, time limits, “ground rules,” welcome, introductions).
3. Roll call (usually done silently by secretary)
4. Approval of previous meeting’s minutes (distributed prior to meeting).
5. Officers’ reports:
 - President
 - Vice-president (may not have regular report)
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer — financial, budget, or cash flow reports (distributed prior to meeting with minutes).
6. Standing committee reports
7. Special committee reports
8. Unfinished business
9. Postponed business
10. New business
11. Confirm time of next meeting
12. Adjournment

(De Vries, 1998:194; Robert, 1967:86).

Points to Remember

- Parliamentary procedure began in the English Parliament. To be useful for most groups it must be adapted from the original formal procedure. Most groups function best with an informal procedure.
- “Additions or corrections” to the minutes is redundant; ask only for “corrections.”
- The treasurer, the treasurer’s report should be received and filed with the minutes upon board approval until it is audited, rather than being accepted as read. The treasurer’s reports will be subject to annual audit and approval by board action.



Minutes of Meetings

Minutes do not report all specific discussion points, but do report on actions taken. At standard meetings, the secretary's minutes should be an accurate record of all the organization's actions. At the start of each meeting, the secretary reads the minutes of the previous meeting so the members can recall the actions taken. The secretary keeps a running account of all business matters the organization discusses and all actions it takes. The minutes provide an overview of discussions that take place during the meeting. They state the actions proposed and what the organization decided to do about each one (De Vries, 1998:84-96; Robert, 1967:100; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:115-116, 123-126).

Presiding Officer

- The chair should decide the speaker order. If two or more persons want to speak to an idea or motion, the chair should decide the order of speakers. The chair should also refuse to let persons speak who he or she feels do not have the best interest of the group in mind, but the chair should not refuse speakers for personal reasons only. The chair should enforce the rules of courtesy and conduct the meeting according to the constitution and bylaws (Robert, 1967:77-78; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).
- Other chair "should not's" are a matter of common sense and proper protocol. The chair is not a 'one-person' show. The chair must never lose his or her temper or infringe on members' rights. The agenda is the chair's best tool to stay focused on the subject under discussion (Robert, 1967:77-78; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).
- The chair may appoint committees and ask for volunteers, or appoint a committee chair and let the committee chair select the members. The chair may decide points of order or have someone else decide on these points (Robert, 1967:77-78; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).
- The chair should not influence the vote. This means that the Chair should not get on the phone ahead of time and ask people to vote one way or another, or pressure people just before the business meeting, or speak to an issue from behind the podium. These are ways of influencing the vote for personal gain. A chair, if he or she feels it justified, may speak to an issue. However, this is not a commonly accepted practice. The chair may choose to do so from the floor and not from the podium even under circumstances where there is a high degree of informality and flexibility (Robert, 1967:77-78; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).
- The chair may also vote to make or break a tie, always with the best interests of the group in mind. Everyone seems to be aware of the chair's right to break a tie vote, but few are aware that he or she may also vote to make a tie. The vote to make a tie is simply an informal way of postponing group action on an item. Also, unless stated otherwise in your constitution and bylaws, a chair has the same voting rights as any member. Usually, a chair does not vote because



the vote is necessary for a majority, and because he or she is busy insuring that the majority will be carried out - but he or she does have the right to vote (Robert, 1967:77-79; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

Parliamentary Authority of the Presiding Officer

1. May decide in what order speakers shall be recognized.
2. May restrain speakers within the limits of the rules.
3. May refuse to recognize members offering dilatory, absurd or frivolous motions.
4. May enforce good decorum.
5. May appoint committees.
6. Decides points of order.
7. May vote after the other votes are counted in order to make or break a tie. The chair may refrain from voting and usually does not vote unless his or her vote would change the results (Robert, 1967:77-79; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

These are delegated powers; the membership holds final authority on all matters and uses the Appeal from the Decision of the Chair to reverse any decision of the chair it is unwilling to accept. A majority vote is all that is required to reverse a decision of the chair (Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115). Discussion should be used to achieve consensus and working agreements. Voting to gain power and control on issues has long-term consequences (Sieverdes, 2002).

Chair's Obligations and Duties

A chair must remember that any action he or she takes is subject to appeal by the assembly; however, there are some things a chair should do, some things he or she may do, and some things that cannot be done (Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:104-114).

Parliamentary Duties and Rights of Board Members

1. To receive all notices.
2. To attend meetings.
3. To present motions, resolutions and other business.
4. To discuss and vote on all questions before the group.
5. To nominate one and only one person for each position to be filled.
6. To be a candidate for office, even to nominate one's self.
7. To inspect all official records.
8. To resign.
9. To have a hearing before being expelled or before penalties are applied.
10. To exercise all rights granted to other members or given in the constitution, the by-laws or the rules.



The Matter of Voting

Voting by Types of Motion

Motions are divided into two classes: debatable and un-debatable. Undebatable motions are put to a vote immediately, after the chairperson states the motion. Some motions require a majority vote, a number greater than half the votes cast; others require a two-thirds vote. One of the fundamental principles of parliamentary law requires a two-thirds vote for every motion that suppresses a main question without free debate. Sometimes a vote is unanimous. A plurality vote: the most votes cast for a candidate is used only in elections when authorized by by-laws (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:83-101).

There are many methods of taking the vote. Those most used are by voice aye and no, raising right hand or rising, ballot, roll call, general consent.

While parliamentary rules permit a chairperson to vote on any question when the chair's vote will change the result, it is wiser that a chairperson should show partisanship on a moot question. The chair should vote when a ballot is used. The chair's name is called last when a roll call is used (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:83-101).

By general consent or unanimous vote: this ruling is used to avoid the formality of taking the vote when there seems to be no objection to the question. It is used when routine business is conducted and on minor matters. Instead of taking a vote, the chairperson says, "If there is no objection," and assumes general consensus unless someone objects, then a vote must be taken (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:83-101).

No motion is required to approve or correct minutes. The chairperson states, "If there is no objection," the minutes stand approved as read [or corrected] (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:83-101).

Affirmative votes that cannot be reconsidered:

- Accept resignation, if member is present or has been notified.
- Adopt, or after adoption, to amend, or repeal, or rescind the constitution, bylaws, or rules of order, or any other rules that require previous notice for their amendment.
- Elect to membership or office if the member or officer is present and does not decline, or if absent has learned of his or her election in the usual way and has not declined.
- Proceed to the orders of the day (Robert, 1967:33-56).

Negative votes that cannot be reconsidered:

- The motion to postpone indefinitely cannot be reconsidered if the negative side prevails
- No question can be twice reconsidered unless it was materially amended after



its first reconsideration. A reconsideration requires only a majority vote regardless of the vote necessary to adopt the motion itself.

- The motion to reconsider cannot be in force after the next day when proposed (Robert, 1967:33-56).

The Voting Process

Debate on a debatable motion usually continues until each member who wants to speak has done so. Voting on motions takes place when there are no more requests to speak on a motion, or after debate has ended. If discussion seems repetitious, a member can stop debate with a call for the **question**. A vote is then taken on whether or not to continue the discussion. After that vote, attention returns to the motion and its amendment. In short, each motion must be disposed of before a new motion can be taken up. If the members want to postpone action on a motion to another meeting, they may vote to “table the motion” (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:83-101).

When preparing to vote, the presiding officer restates the motion or has the secretary read it. Then the president calls for a voice vote. All those in favor of the motion say “aye.” Then all those opposed say “nay.” If the president cannot tell which side has the majority, a re-vote is taken by raising hands. If any member questions the outcome of the voice vote, then a required re-vote is taken by show of hands. The presiding officer usually votes only when his or her vote would change the outcome. A tie vote defeats a motion (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:83-101).

- Since the vote must be taken both favorably and unfavorably, negative voice votes should be so indicated by “nay” or “no,” never by “like sign” or “same sign.”
- A chair generally does not vote, simply because it is unnecessary. However, he or she has the right to vote unless stated otherwise in the constitution and bylaws. A chair may vote to make a tie as well as to break a tie. His or her vote to make a tie is simply an informal method of postponing action on an item. This allows the group more time to reach a decision (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:83-101).

Minority Vote

When a motion has been referred to a committee and one or more members of the committee differ from the majority point of view, the minority report is an accepted as part of the democratic procedure. The procedure is as follows:

- The report of the special committee (it is not called a majority report) is given at the meeting when called upon, and the committee chairperson, after giving the report, moves its adoption. When seconded, the presiding officer states: “It has been moved and seconded that (stating the motion). Is there any discussion” (Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:83-101)?
- Minority member immediately moves to substitute a minority report for that of the committee and states the minority report. Seconded.



- Chairperson: “it has been moved and seconded to substitute the minority report for the report of the committee (restates the minority report)” (Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:83-101).

This is then treated as a substitute motion. Discussion and amendments are permitted first on the committee report, but no vote is taken on the substitute motion.

Discussion and amendments are permitted on the substitute motion. As in treating amendments, the vote is taken first on the minority amendment. If adopted, it replaces the “majority” motion. The vote is taken on the substitute motion. If the “minority” vote is defeated, the main motion (majority report) is put to vote (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:83-101).

Motions: A Major Element of Parliamentary Procedure

A motion is a brief, precise statement of a proposed action. A member can make a motion only when he or she has the floor (has been given permission to speak by the presiding officer). Before any motion can be discussed by the group, another member must second it (state that support is given). This rule prevents the group from spending time on matters that interest only one member. After a motion has been made and seconded, the presiding officer usually restates it or asks the secretary to read it from the minutes. The members debate the motion and possibly amend (change) it in some way (Jones, 1990: XIX-XXIV; Robert, 1967:33-56).

If a motion to amend the original motion is made, it must be discussed and voted on. If the amendment passes, then the original motion with the amendment included comes under discussion once again before voting takes place on the motion (Robert, 1967:33-56).

Making Motions Work

A motion introduces action to the group for its consideration, and allows an agenda to be carried out in an orderly way. There is a correct way to introduce or change motions, and priorities for debate and action on them.

- Introducing a motion. To introduce a motion a member should say, “Mr. Chair, I move...” He should not say, “Mr. Chair, I wish to make a motion,” or “I so move.”
- A main motion, which is always debatable and amendable, may be placed on the floor (considered) when no other motions are pending, and must be seconded before debate is allowed. (Incidentally, most groups find it easier to understand motions when they are stated affirmatively rather than negatively, for example, “I move that our group decline the invitation extended by...” instead of, “I move that our group does not accept the...”).
- Changing a motion. A motion may be amended by inserting, striking, or substituting words in the original motion.
- Acting on a motion. Only one main motion may be on the floor at one time, but higher ranking motions take priority (see below). These higher-ranking



motions must be taken care of before the original motion. Thus, several motions may be on the floor at one time, provided they were made in the correct ascending order, but the last motion made must be disposed of first (Robert, 1967:106-115; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115; Heasley).

Protocols to Be Followed

- When making a motion, one should say, “I move that...” instead of “I make a motion that...”
- A motion must be approved by a second person’s saying, “I second the motion.”
- Recognition from the chair is not required to second a motion. (This rule is true in most cases; however, some larger, more formal groups do require recognition for seconding a motion.)
- A nomination of a person for office does not require a second.
- If there is a motion before the house, no other motion can be made except: (a) to adjourn, (b) to table the motion, (c) to move the previous question, that is, to end the discussion and bring up the motion for vote.
- A member may rise to a point of order; that is, if a member observes the violation of a rule, he or she may rise, secure recognition and state the point that is out of order.
- The will of the majority must be carried out, and the rights of individuals and minorities must be preserved.
- Each member has rights and obligations equal to those of every other member; there are no seniority rights.
- Each question presented for consideration is entitled to full and free debate unless specifically limited by the rules or a 2/3 vote.
- Only one subject may claim the attention of the assembly at one time.
- Members have the right to rise to a point of parliamentary inquiry (to ask for information or instruction in using the procedure).
- Certain facilitating motions take procedure over (may interrupt) other motions; some may even interrupt a speaker.
- Neither rules nor procedures may be employed in violation of our American democratic code. Courtesy, justice and a sense of fair play should characterize every group action.

**Remember, any motion that is made while
no other business is on the floor is a main motion.**

Subsidiary motions can apply to a main motion in the order of their precedence. The higher priority motions, such as privileged, renewal, incidental, and subsidiary motions must always be disposed of in the order of their priority before voting on the main motion. It is advisable to have a complete parliamentary reference, Such as Roberts’ Rules of Order, available for special times. However, most of the time only



a basic knowledge of procedures will be needed. The more commonly used motions and the reasons for using them are listed in charts below (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:83-101). Just remember to consider carefully and dispose of motions as they arise, if given according to proper procedure, and the meeting will run smoothly.

Overview Procedure for Acting on a Motion

1. Member rises and addresses the presiding officer.
2. Presiding officer recognizes the member.
3. Member states his or her motion.
4. Another member seconds the motion if a second is required.
5. Presiding officer states the motion and calls for discussion.
6. Discussion; amendments may be offered. (See next section.)
7. Discussion is closed. (When some members appear unwilling to close the discussion, someone may say, "I move the previous question." This motion may not interrupt a speaker; it requires a 2/3 vote because the effect is to stop debate and take the vote immediately.)
8. The presiding officer states the motion (as amended, if this was done).
9. The vote is taken.
10. The result of the vote is announced (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

One Motion at a Time. All business is brought before the meeting by a motion or resolution, a report of a committee or a communication. The terms "motion" and "question" are synonymous; when first stated it is a motion and when repeated by the chairperson, it is referred to as a question.

Only one such proposal can be considered at a time. It must be made by a member and seconded by another member. The maker of a motion must get the floor by rising, addressing the presiding officer and obtaining recognition. The motion should be worded in the affirmative whenever possible.

Because business requires a motion, it is usually necessary for a member to make a motion, and before a member can make a motion or address the assembly on any motion, it is necessary that the member obtain the floor; that is, the member must obtain the right to speak. To do so, the member must be the first person to rise when no one else has the floor and address the chair by title, preceded by "Mr." or "Madam" as in "Mr. Chairman" or "Madam President." The group may adopt a special rule designating a different form of address or it may designate another form of obtaining the floor such as the raising of one's hand. The chair will then announce the member's name, thereby assigning the member the right to speak (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

After the floor has been assigned to a member, he cannot be interrupted by calls for the question, motions to adjourn, or other devices, either by the chair or by another



member, except by a point of order or other motion listed as being in order when another has the floor or a disciplinary action. See Robert's Rules of Order or related description for more information.

The presiding officer restates the motion and asks, "Are there any comments?" or "Is there discussion?" This opens debate on the question. The maker of the motion is entitled to speak first on the motion. All remarks must be addressed to the chair. No one may speak a second time on the same question if another member desires to speak on the subject, but he or she may speak a second time if one who has not spoken is not seeking recognition. In formal meetings, if anyone objects, he or she may not speak more often without permission from the assembly (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

Motions and resolutions are the same. A resolution usually has a preamble or introduction and is much more descriptive, with several paragraphs, starting with "Whereas", and ending with "Therefore be it resolved." It is subject, with slight variations, to the same rules as a motion. It is presented in writing. When a main motion is before the assembly, it must be accepted or rejected or be disposed of in some way, before another subject can be introduced, except for privileged or other motions. When a group is prepared to accept a motion in its given form, nothing more is required but to take the vote and get the result. Usually this is not the case. The board may prefer some other course to an immediate decision on the motion in the form in which it is presented. Therefore, it is debated, and secondary motions are introduced, which may more clearly meet the wishes of the group (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

These secondary motions must be made after the main motion is stated and before the vote is taken. When stating the motion, the chairperson should make perfectly clear what it is, and after the vote is taken state the result. Motions must not be in violation of local and Federal laws, the organization's constitution and bylaws, or standing rules (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

The business of the meeting cannot be conducted unless a quorum is present; the number should be stated in the bylaws. The chairperson should know the rules when motions can be made, amended, debated, order of precedence, whether they require a majority or two-thirds vote, etc.

In many cases in the ordinary routine of business, however, it is not usual to make a motion. Instead, the chair specifies an action and announces that, if there is no objection, the action will be considered adopted. If no member says "Objection!" or "I object!" the chair announces, "There being no objection the action is adopted." If a member objects, a motion to take such action becomes necessary. The procedure for deciding on an action without a motion processed all the way through a vote is called general or unanimous consent (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).



Kinds of Motions

1. Main Motions

A motion that brings before the assembly, for its consideration, any particular subject independent of any other pending motion or parliamentary situation is a main motion. It can be made only when no other motion is pending, and it must be capable of standing by itself. A main motion is almost always the first step in any parliamentary activity. It is the lowest in rank of the ranked motions; that is it is at the bottom of the order of precedence. A main motion requires a second, is debatable, and is amendable (Robert, 1967:33-56).

Purpose of Main Motions	Second Required	Vote Required	Can be Amended	Can be Debated	Interrupt Speaker
To introduce a new item of business	Yes	Majority	Yes	Yes	No

(Robert, 1967:33-56)

Kinds of Motions

1. A **Main Motion** introduces an action to the assembly for its consideration. It is always debatable and amendable, and it ranks lowest in priority.
2. A **Subsidiary Motion** is applied to other motions, usually main motions, to alter, postpone, or temporarily dispose of such motions. Subsidiary motions can be called the middle motions, since they rank in priority between the main and privileged motions.
3. An **Incidental Motion** is used when conducting business. Such a motion must be disposed of before action can be taken on the motion from which the incidental motion originated. Incidental motions have no order of precedence among themselves, an aspect peculiar to these motions that makes them different from all others. However, an incidental motion must be disposed of before another incidental motion may be made. Incidental motions could include those to close nominations, to rise to a point of order, or to establish a method of voting.
4. A **Renewal Motion** lets the assembly bring a previous motion back to the floor for reconsideration. Examples: to take from the table, to reconsider.
5. A **Privileged Motion** refers to action of the entire assembly such as taking a recess, raising a question of privilege, calling for order of the day, or adjournment. These motions outrank all other motions; however, motions for fixing a time to adjourn and taking a recess are privileged only when other motions are pending (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).



2. Subsidiary Motions

Subsidiary motions are the most frequently used motions in parliamentary procedure. They are made while a main motion is pending, for the purpose of assisting or modifying it or to delay action or otherwise dispose of the main motion. The subsidiary motion supersedes the main motion for the time being and must be dealt with before action can be taken on the main motion. However, all subsidiary motions must yield to privileged or incidental motions (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:30-31).

Subsidiary motions never stand alone. A subsidiary motion is always applied to another motion. It changes the status of another motion by modifying it in some way. Subsidiary motions can be applied to any main motion and to some other subsidiary motions (Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:30-31).

There are only seven subsidiary motions, and they rank in the following order:

1. Lay on the table
2. Consider previous question to close debate
3. Limit or extend debate
4. Postpone to a definite time
5. Commit or refer to committee
6. Amend the amendment or the motion
7. Postpone indefinitely

The first, as listed, is of higher rank than every motion listed below it. This means that a motion of higher rank can always be entertained while a motion of lower rank is pending before the body. A motion of lower rank cannot be entertained if a motion of higher rank is before the body (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

Purpose of Subsidiary Motions	Second Required	Vote Required	Can be Amended	Can be Debated	Interrupt Speaker
Lay on the table	Yes	Majority	No	No	No
End debate, move the previous question	Yes	Two-thirds	No	No	No
Limit or extend debate	Yes	Two-thirds	Yes	No	No
Postpone to definite time	Yes	Majority	Yes	Yes	No
Refer or commit to committee	Yes	Majority	Yes	Yes	No
Amend the amendment	Yes	Majority	Yes	Yes	No
Amend the motion	Yes	Majority	Yes	Yes	No
Postpone indefinitely	Yes	Majority	No	Yes	No

(Robert, 1967:33-56)



Example: If a secondary motion has been made “to commit,” which means to “refer to a committee,” and another member moves “the previous question” (close debate) which is of a higher rank, the chairperson should state, “The motion just proposed is not in order because it is of lower rank than the pending question” (Robert, 1967:33- 56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

How to State Subsidiary Motions

2. Subsidiary Motions	Purpose	Opening Statement
Postpone definitely (to a certain time)	To delay action for further consideration, to secure	“I move to postpone to (state time).”
Postpone indefinitely	To suppress motion, to prevent a vote	“I move to postpone indefinitely.”
Previous question, to call for	To end debate, to vote immediately	“I move the previous question.”
Amend	To improve the motion	“I move to amend by...”
Commit or refer to a committee	To delay action, to consider more carefully	“I move to refer the motion a committee.”
Limit of extend debate	To establish time limits or change	“I move to limit the discussion to _minutes.”
To lay on the table	To delay action, clear the floor for urgent business. To set aside an item of business temporarily.	Postpone definitely (to a certain time)

(Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115)

* To be stated without addressing the chair or securing recognition. These motions may interrupt a speaker, but the chair should not recognize the person unless he knows the purpose of the interruption (knows whether the interruption is permissible). All other motions listed above are to be presented after addressing the chair and securing recognition.

3. Incidental Motions

Incidental motions are those which arise out of a pending question and must be decided before any other business is taken up; or are something connected with the business of the assembly that must be attended to and which requires a temporary interruption. They have no special rank among themselves, but they yield to privileged questions. They are dealt with individually as they arise, but they take precedence over the subsidiary motions. Most of them are not debatable (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).



Points of order, parliamentary inquiries, and requests for information do not require action by the assembly. The presiding officer takes care of these unless they need to be referred to the group for consideration.

The incidental motions are as follows:

1. Point of order
2. Appeal from decision of chair
3. Objection to consideration of question
4. Request to read papers
5. Division of a question
6. To withdraw a motion
7. To suspend the rules
8. Methods of voting
9. Division of assembly
10. Close nominations or polls
11. Consideration by paragraph
12. Requests for information
13. Parliamentary inquiry
14. Question of quorum present

Purpose of Incidental Motions	Second Required	Vote Required	Can be Amended	Can be Debated	Interrupt Speaker
Appeal from decision of chair	Yes	Majority	No	Yes	Yes
Division of assembly	No	Chair decides	No	No	No
Division of question	No	Majority	Yes	No	No
Withdraw a motion	No	Majority	No	No	No
Point of order	No	Chair decides	No	No	No
Suspend rules	Yes	Two-thirds	No	No	No
Object to consideration of the question	No	Two-thirds	No	No	Yes
Parliamentary inquiry	No	Chair decides	No	No	Yes

(Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115)



3. Incidental Motions	Purpose	Opening Statement
Appeal from the decision of the chair	To secure ruling by the group	"I appeal from the decision of the chair."*
Division of the assembly	To determine accuracy of a voice vote and/or record individual votes	"I call for a division."*
Division of the question	To provide for consideration of the parts separately	"I move to divide the question into parts."
Parliamentary inquiry	To secure advice or information	"I rise to a point of parliamentary inquiry."*
Object to consideration of a question	To prevent wasting time on unimportant items	"I object to consideration."*
Point of order on content	To secure adherence to organize the work	"I move we take up..."*
Point of order on procedure	To secure adherence to parliamentary procedure	"I rise to a point of order."*
Rescind or repeal an action	To repeal action taken previously	"I move to rescind the motion to..."
Suspend the rules	To set aside the rules for a specific	"I move to suspend the rules for consideration of..."
Withdraw a motion	To enable the proposer to remove his motion	"I withdraw the motion."

* To be stated without addressing the chair or securing recognition. These motions may interrupt a speaker, but the chair should not recognize the person unless he knows the purpose of the interruption (knows whether the interruption is permissible). All other motions listed above are to be presented after addressing the chair and securing recognition.



4. Renewal Motions

Purpose of Renewal Motions	Second Required	Vote Required	Can be Amended	Can be Debated	Interrupt Speaker
Take motion from the table	Yes	Majority	No	No	No
Reconsider motion	Yes	Majority	No	Yes	Yes
Rescind or repeal motion	Yes	Two-Thirds	Yes	Yes	No

(Robert, 1967:33-56)

How to State Renewal Motions

4. Renewal Motions*	Purpose	Opening Statement
Take from the table	To resume consideration of the question	“I move to take from the table the motion to...”
Reconsider (any member may move)	To reconsider a question and vote on it again	“I move to reconsider the motion to...”*
Rescind a motion	To rescind or repeal an action	“I move to rescind the motion to...”

(Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115)

* To be stated without addressing the chair or securing recognition. These motions may interrupt a speaker, but the chair should not recognize the person unless he knows the purpose of the interruption (knows whether the interruption is permissible). All other motions listed above are to be presented after addressing the chair and securing recognition.

5. Privileged Motions

Privileged motions have nothing to do with the pending question or motion. However, they are of such urgency and importance that they are allowed to interrupt the consideration of other questions and take precedence over them. They are undebatable because of their high rank. When privileged motions do not interrupt other business, they are main motions and are without privileges (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

There are only five privileged motions that appear below in order of precedence:

1. Fix time at which to adjourn
2. Adjourn
3. Recess



4. Raise questions of privilege
5. Call for orders of the day
(Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

Purpose of Privileged Motions	Second Required	Vote Required	Can be Amended	Can be Debated	Interrupt Speaker
Fix time to adjourn	Yes	Majority	Yes	No	No
Adjourn	Yes	Majority	No	No	No
Take a recess	Yes	Majority	Yes	No	No
Raise a question of privilege	No	Chair decides	No	No	Yes
Call for orders of the day	No	Chair decides	No	No	Yes

(Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115)

How to State Privileged Motions

5. Privileged Motions	Purpose	Opening Statement
Adjourn	To end the meeting	“I move we adjourn?”
Call for orders of the day	To secure adherence to the agenda	“I move the order of the day.”*
Call for orders to create	To establish agenda, organize the work	“I move we take up...”
To raise a question of privilege	To correct undesirable conditions or an emergency	“I rise to a point of privilege.”*
To take a recess	To secure an intermission	“I move to recess until...”

(Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115)

*To be stated without addressing the chair or securing recognition. These motions may interrupt a speaker, but the chair should not recognize the person unless he knows the purpose of the interruption (knows whether the interruption is permissible). All other motions listed above are to be presented after addressing the chair and securing recognition.

The Most Commonly Used Motions

The following motions have been selected for inclusion in this brief description of Robert’s Rules of Order because of their frequent use (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

Lay on the Table: To lay on the table is a tricky motion and is used to suppress a



question. It has the highest rank among the subsidiary motions, cannot be debated or amended, and if seconded, must immediately be put to a vote. Its real intent is to move aside a pending question temporarily when consideration must be given to some business of an urgent nature (Robert, 1967:33-56).

After the business has been taken care of, it should be moved “to take from the table” the motion that was laid aside, and seconded. This must be done during the same session or at the very next meeting; otherwise it lapses and the motion is dead (Robert, 1967:33-56). If a majority vote cannot be secured “to take it from the table”, to “lay it on the table” was a deliberate attempt to suppress the motion (Robert, 1967:33-56). If one wants to “kill” a motion, the legitimate motions to use are “to postpone indefinitely” or “to object to the consideration of the question” (Robert, 1967:33-56).

Substitute Motion: A substitute motion should be introduced if amendments become involved or a paragraph requires considerable changes. It cannot be made when an amendment is pending. The Chair states the substitute motion when proposed and then returns to the pending main motion for debate and one amendment only, but the original main motion is not put to a vote at that time. The substitute motion is then open to debate and one amendment. The vote is then taken on the substitute motion first (same as with the regular amendment); if the substitute is adopted, the main motion as substituted is put to a vote. If substitute amendment is not adopted, the main motion is voted on (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

Filling Blanks: Filling Blanks is an informal motion that provides for amendments to be made differently. It is not limited to two amendments but permits any number of suggestions or amendments to be made. After that voting on each in turn takes place until a majority vote is secured. It saves time in making formal amendments. It requires no second and it permits members to call out numbers, dates, nominations, etc. Sometimes the lowest number is voted on first and voted on in turn until a majority vote is reached (Robert, 1967:33-56). When no further suggestions are made, the chair proceeds to take a vote.

Reconsider: The motion to reconsider is made only by one who voted on the prevailing side. If a member considers the action taken not in the best interests of the organization and would wish the group to reconsider it, the member is advised to change his or her minority vote to that of the majority before the vote is taken, to be on the prevailing side. Anyone can second the motion to reconsider (Robert, 1967:33-56). This motion can be made only on the day the vote was taken. If the motion is carried, the original motion is again open to discussion and vote. No question can be twice reconsidered unless it was materially amended after its first reconsideration (Robert, 1967:33-56).

Reconsider and Enter on the Minutes: The motion to reconsider and enter on the minutes is a protective measure to stop any action from being taken if there is no possibility of a change in the vote. It serves notice that the action should be taken up at the next meeting. This motion outranks the motion to reconsider and can be made



immediately after the other, providing a vote has not yet been taken on it. It should be then be taken up at the very next meeting, subject to same rules of reconsideration. This requires a second (Robert, 1967:33-56).

Rescind: The motion to rescind requires a two-thirds vote if notice of the motion to be proposed has not been given at the preceding meeting or in the call of the meeting. A motion to rescind is not in order if action has already been taken which cannot be undone (Robert, 1967:33-56).

Ratify: An emergency measure may sometimes be taken by an officer or officers or at a meeting without a quorum, which requires ratification or approval at a duly constituted meeting (Robert, 1967:33-56).

Managing Amendments

Amendments

Purpose:

The purpose of an amendment is to modify a motion that has already been presented so that it will more satisfactorily represent the desires of the members.

Options available to change wording or concepts of a motion by amendment:

1. **Addition:** This provides one with the opportunity to add or insert something that was not originally contained in the motion under discussion.
2. **Elimination:** This provides one with the opportunity to subtract or strike out a portion of the original motion.
3. **Substitution:** This provides one with the opportunity to change a motion by striking out a part of the original wording and inserting new wording. The substitution may consist of a word, phrase, clause, sentence, or an entirely new motion.

Types of Amendments:

- 1st Rank applies directly to the original main motion.
- 2nd Rank applies to a first rank amendment.

Special Notes regarding amendments:

- The second rank amendment must apply directly to the first rank amendment to which it is applied and not to the main motion. Only one amendment of each rank may be on the floor at any one time. All other amendments must wait for the disposition of those previously under consideration.
- All amendments must be “germane.” That is, they must have a direct bearing upon the motion being discussed.
- An amendment may be “hostile,” in that it may be directly opposed to the intent of the original motion (Robert, 1967:33-56).



Amendments: Amendments are introduced to assist in changing, modifying, or helping to complete a motion in such a way as to make it more acceptable to the assembly. Main motions when first presented are not usually made complete enough in their most essential particulars. Through amendments adding, striking out, inserting, or substituting words, these changes make the motion more complete and desirable (Robert, 1967:33-56).

An amendment must be germane to the subject of the motion directly relating to it, even if taking an opposite point of view. Amendments are seconded, debated, amended, and require a majority vote. They can be reconsidered. Amendments to main motions can be proposed only when nothing of higher rank than the motion “to postpone indefinitely” is pending.

Not more than two amendments to a motion are permitted it would otherwise become too complicated. The first amendment is called the primary amendment the second, the secondary amendment. When the first amendment is made, the vote must be taken on the amendment first, and if adopted, the original motion, as amended, must be stated and discussed, then put to vote. If there are two amendments, the latter amendment (secondary) is voted on first. It must apply to the first amendment and not to the first motion. If adopted, the first or primary amendment as amended must then be voted on (adopted) and finally the main motion as amended. Until the Main Motion has been voted on or disposed of, there is no decision and no other main motion may be introduced (Robert, 1967:33-56; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:105-115).

While there cannot be more than two amendments pending at a time, if they are voted down, other amendments may be presented.

An amendment may be hostile, but it must be germane. It may be hostile to the extent of reversing the intent of the motion (Robert, 1967:33-56).

Sequence of Events When Amending a Motion

1. Member is recognized by the chair and proposes the amendment.
2. Another member seconds the proposed amendment.
3. The chair repeats the amendment to the group.
4. Discussion on the amendment takes place.
5. Discussion is closed. The question may be called.
6. The assembly votes on the amendment.
7. The majority vote is announced on the amendment that affects the main motion.
8. The chair states the main amended motion (if amendment was approved).
9. The chair reopens discussion on the main amended motion.
10. Discussion is closed when discussion has ceased or question was called.



11. The assembly votes on the main motion.
12. The majority vote is announced on the main motion and recorded in the minutes (Robert, 1967:33-56).

Additional Clarifying Points About Amending a Motion

The order of the voting on a motion and the amendments applied to it is the reverse of the order in which they were presented.

- When an amendment to an amendment is pending, the previous question may be stated in any one of the following forms:
- “I move the previous question” to close debate on just the amendment to the amendment.
- “ move the previous question on the amendment” to close debate and vote on both the amendment to the amendment and the amendment to the main motion, or
- “I move the previous question on the main motion,” to end all discussion and vote immediately on the amendment to the amendment, the amendment to the motion, and the main motion. The maker of a motion has no control over what amendments may be applied to it. The presiding officer does not ask whether the maker accepts the amendment. He may, however, reject an amendment as not germane, not relevant to the question (Robert, 1967:33-56).



Parliamentary Procedures Questionnaire

In the table below observe a number of statements related to maximizing your Board's effectiveness. Register your reaction to each statement by circling one of the numbers to the right of the statement.

1= Strongly Agree (SA) 2=Disagree (D) 3=Undecided (U) 4=Agree (A) 5=Strongly Disagree (SD)

Observations About Parliamentary Procedures and Protocols

	SD	D	U	A	SA
1. Each member of the board is always given a notice of the time, place, and purpose of each board meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
2. This board never holds an official meeting unless a quorum is present.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Each time this board makes a decision, the question being discussed is always stated clearly for all to hear.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Members of this board never vote on an issue until they know and understand the question being discussed and the likely impact of the decision.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Each member of the board is encouraged to speak up on each question being discussed during the board meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
6. This board never makes a decision without putting it to a vote of the board members present at the meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
7. No member of the board is ever forced to vote.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Decision by this board are always decided by the vote of the majority of the members voting.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Any vote taken by this board in conflict with federal, state, and local laws or corporate by-laws is recognized by the members of the board as null and void.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Any member of the board in the minority (on a particular question) is always given the right to speak and be heard by the other members of the board.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Once a vote has been taken during a board meeting, the question under discussion is not raised again in the same form during the meeting.	1	2	3	4	5



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Appendix A —Glossary of Terms

Chair — Presiding officer of an assembly.

Quorum — Number of persons that must be present at a meeting to take legal action on business matters. Usually, this number is specified in an organization’s bylaws.

Plurality — More votes than cast for any other alternative but less than the number necessary for a majority.

Suspension of the rules — The organization can set aside one or more of its own rules to take a particular action. This can be done only when the suspension does not conflict with the organization’s constitution and bylaws.

Table — “To lay on the table” or “table” means to delay action on the motion in question. Originally, it referred literally to the speaker’s table.

Division, or division of the house — The chair or a member usually calls this for if a voice vote has been close. To get an accurate count, first the “aye” or “yes” voters stand to be counted. This is followed by the “nay” or “no” voters standing to be counted while the others are seated.

Floor — This gives a speaker the right to address the chair and the assembly. It also refers literally to “the floor,” where a speaker stands to be recognized.

Convene — The meeting is called to order by the chair.

On the floor — The assembly is considering a motion.

Orders of the day — This is the agreed upon agenda. These orders include priority of items, time limits, and sometimes the order in which speakers are to talk.

Standing rules — The rules or regulations for time and place of the meeting.

Withdraw a motion — There are three ways to withdraw a motion. Before the chair states a motion, the maker of the motion may withdraw his motion with or without consent of the second or the chair may change the motion without asking the consent of anyone. The seconder may withdraw his or her second if he or she does not agree with the change. The person who made the motion (and only if consent is given) may withdraw a motion if the chair has stated the motion. Any member may move to withdraw a motion. If consent is given by both the originator of the motion and the seconder, it is withdrawn. If the chair has stated the motion for assembly consideration, the originator, the person seconding the original motion (not the motion for withdrawal) and a majority of the entire assembly must agree to withdraw the motion.

Yield the floor — Any member may yield the floor (or give up his right to speak) to any other member, but in doing so he or she forfeits the right to the floor (De Vries, 1998:258-59; Rozakis and Lichtenstein, 1995:203-210).



Appendix B – Types and Conditions of Motions

Motions that Can Interrupt a Speaker:

- A call for the orders of the day
- A point of order
- A question of privilege
- A question of quorum

Motions that Cannot Interrupt a Speaker Without His Consent But May Interrupt the Proceedings:

- Appeal from decision of chair
- Giving notice of reconsideration or repeal
- Objection to consideration of a question
- Parliamentary inquiry
- Point of information
- Request that the question be divided

Motions that Do Not Require a Second:

- Call for the recount of vote
- Call for the division of the question under certain circumstances
- Call up motion to reconsider
- Call for the orders of the day
- Committee and board recommendations-motions
- Filling blanks
- Inquiries of any kind
- Leave to withdraw a motion (if not stated by the Chair)
- Nominations
- Objection to the consideration of the question
- Parliamentary inquiry
- Point of information
- Point of order
- Question or privilege

Motions that Cannot Be Amended:

- Adjourn (except when qualified or when made with no provision for future meeting)
- Amend an amendment
- Appeal
- Call for the orders of the day
- Call for the division of the assembly (voting)
- Filling a blank
- Grant leave to withdraw a motion
- Lay on the table
- Leave to read papers
- Nomination
- Object to consideration of a question



- Postpone indefinitely
- Previous question
- Question of order
- Question of privilege
- Reconsider and call up question to reconsider
- Request of any kind
- Take from the table
- Take up a question out of its proper order

Motions that Cannot Be Debated:

- Adjourn
- Amend a non-debatable motion
- Appeal
- Call for the orders of the day
- Call up motion to reconsider
- Dispense with the reading of the minutes
- Fix the time to which to adjourn (when privileged)
- Lay on the table
- Limit or extend debate
- Objection to the consideration of a question

Other Incidental Motions that Include the Following:

- Close or reopen nomination
- Division of an assembly
- Division of a question
- Filling a blank
- Point of order, information, inquiry
- Question of quorum present
- Voting, motions relating to methods of
- Withdraw a motion
- Previous question
- Raise a question of privilege
- Reconsider an un-debatable motion
- Suspension of the rules
- Take a recess (when privileged)
- Take from the table

Motions Requiring a Two-thirds Vote:

(Used in all situations when a change of constitution and bylaws is adopted or where some right of the membership is curtailed.)

- To amend any part of constitution, bylaws, etc. previously adopted; also requires previous notice
- To amend or rescind a standing rule, order of business, or a resolution, previously adopted, if previous notice was given
- Close nominations limiting the names to be voted for at an election



- Correction of adopted minutes if proposed at a later meeting than the one at which it was originally adopted, unless previous notice of the proposed amendment (correction) has been given
- Depose from office (also requires previous notice)
- Discharge a committee when previous notice has not been given
- Extend the time set for adjournment or for taking a recess
- To limit or extend debate
- To make a special order of business
- The previous question (close debate)
- Refuse to take up an order of the day
- To repeal or rescind that which has been adopted unless previous notice has been given
- To suspend the rules
- Sustain an objection to the consideration of a question
- To take up a question out of its proper order

Motions that Cannot Be Reconsidered:

- Adjourn
- Call for the orders of the day
- Division of the assembly
- Division of the question
- Lay on the table
- Main motions executed in whole or partially
- Nominations, to make or to close
- Parliamentary or other inquiry
- Raise question of order or privilege
- Reconsider
- Suspend the rules of order of business
- Take a recess
- Take from the table



Appendix C – Parliamentary Procedure Quiz

Mark the following statements True (T) or False (F). (Incidentally, since you are testing yourself, only you need see your answers.)

- _____ 1. Normally, traffic rules for groups in our society take the form of parliamentary procedure.
- _____ 2. Parliamentary procedure began in the English Parliament.
- _____ 3. Parliamentary procedure should provide a flexible plan for fairly, efficiently and harmoniously transacting the business at hand.
- _____ 4. Group size and formality of parliamentary procedure should increase together.
- _____ 5. Group knowledge and formality of parliamentary procedure should increase together.
- _____ 6. Formality of parliamentary procedure should generally decrease as group agreement increases.
- _____ 7. Our small, rather informal, special interest groups generally have NOT adapted parliamentary procedure in an effective manner.
- _____ 8. A group should err on the side of informality rather than on the side of formality.
- _____ 9. A chair should decide the speaker order.
- _____ 10. A chair may appoint committees.
- _____ 11. A chair may vote to break a tie.
- _____ 12. A chair has the same voting rights as members unless stated other-wise in the group's constitution and bylaws.
- _____ 13. A chair should not influence the vote.
- _____ 14. A secretary's duties generally are to record and/or to correspond.
- _____ 15. If one person handles both the recording and corresponding secretarial duties, these should be reported separately.
- _____ 16. A chair should refuse to let persons speak who are only "axe grinders."
- _____ 17. A chair generally does not vote simply because it is unnecessary.
- _____ 18. A chair may vote to make a tie unless restricted by the constitution and bylaws.
- _____ 19. An agenda is an orderly sequence of items for the group's consideration.
- _____ 20. It is helpful to arrange the items contained in the agenda from routine to more involved to help stimulate discussion.



- _____ 21. Equally important, yet too often overlooked, is the task of announcing the agenda to the group.
- _____ 22. Committee reports are of three kinds: Unanimous, majority, and minority.
- _____ 23. A majority report should always be accompanied by a minority report.
- _____ 24. A committee report that has been received or filed by the parent group does not bind the group to the contents of that report.
- _____ 25. A committee report that has been accepted or adopted binds the parent group to the contents of that report.
- _____ 26. Committee reports that have been postponed, returned, or referred imply delay final action on these reports until a later date.
- _____ 27. It is generally preferable to complete action on a routine, non-time-consuming report during the committee report section of the agenda.
- _____ 28. Often involved and time-consuming committee reports may be given and acted upon during new business for convenience and better continuity of the agenda.
- _____ 29. Always introduce a main motion by “I move.”
- _____ 30. “I make,” “I so move,” or “So moved” are all formally incorrect introductions of a main motion.
- _____ 31. A main motion may have only an amendment to the motion and an amendment to the amendment. Further amendments for that motion are out of order.
- _____ 32. Amendments may be made by inserting, by striking out, or by substituting.
- _____ 33. Introduction of an involved idea can best be made via discussion first and a motion second.
- _____ 34. There are five kinds of motions: main motions, subsidiary motions incidental motions, renewal motions, and privileged motions.
- _____ 35. Generally, non-involved ideas or ideas already considered by a committee can be introduced by a motion immediately without fear of amendments being necessary.
- _____ 36. Any motion made while no other business is on the floor is a main motion.
- _____ 37. Incidental motions have no order of precedence among themselves.
- _____ 38. Subsidiary, renewal, and privileged motions all have an order of precedence among themselves.



- _____ 39. Only “corrections” to the minutes should be asked for rather than “additions or corrections.”
- _____ 40. The treasurer’s report should only be received or filed until audited, never accepted as read.
- _____ 41. The vote must be taken both favorably and unfavorably.
- _____ 42. Negative voice votes should be so indicated by “nay” or “no,” never by “like sign” or “same sign.”
- _____ 43. Preparation of your agenda is largely wasted effort, unless you also announce the agenda to your group, as BOTH are important for a successful meeting.
- _____ 44. Only one item of business as a time can be introduced for the group’s consideration.
- _____ 45. It takes more than parliamentary procedure for a successful meeting.
- _____ 46. A plurality is simply more votes for one than for any other alternative, but less than a majority.
- _____ 47. “Orders of the day” simply refer to adherence to the announced agenda.
- _____ 48. A quorum is the number of persons that your group has agreed must be present in order to transact business.
- _____ 49. A good meeting is run, always, according to acceptable parliamentary procedure.

Now that you have finished testing yourself, check your answers against those that are considered acceptable. Numbers 1 through 48 are True; number 49 is False.