**Introduction to Robert’s Rules of Order**

**What is Parliamentary Procedure?**

It is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and to make

decisions without confusion.

**Why is Parliamentary Procedure important?**

Because it’s a time tested method of conducting business at meetings and public

gatherings. It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization. Today, Robert’s Rules

of Order newly revised version is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs,

organizations and other groups. So it’s important that everyone know these basic rules.

**Example of the Order of Business**

Organizations using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed order of business.

Below is a typical example

Summary

1. What is Parliamentary Procedure?

2. Why is Parliamentary Procedure important?

3. Example of the Order of Business.

4. Motions

5. Types of Motions.

6. How are Motions presented?

7.               Voting on a Motion.

              1. Call to order.

              2. Roll call of members present.

              3. Reading of minutes of last meeting.

              4. Officer reports.

              5. Committee reports.

              6. Special orders – Important business previously designated for consideration at this

              meeting.

              7. Unfinished business.

              8. New Business.

              9. Announcements.

              10. Adjournment.

**Motions**

The method used by members to express themselves is in the form of moving motions. A

motion is a proposal that the entire membership take action or a stand on an issue.

Individual members can:

1. Call to order.

2. Second motions.

3. Debate motions.

4. Vote on motions.

**Types of Motions**

There are four Basic Types of Motions.

1. Main Motions: The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the

membership for their consideration. They cannot be make when any other motion

is on the floor, and yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.

2. Subsidiary Motions: Their purpose is to change or affect how a main motion is

handled, and is voted on before a main motion.

3. Privileged Motions: Their purpose is to bring up items that are urgent about

special or important matter unrelated to pending business.

4. Incidental Motions: Their purpose is to provide a means of questioning

procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other

motion.

**How are Motions presented?**

1. Obtaining the Floor

              a. Wait until the last speaker has finished.

              b. Rise and address the Chair by saying, “Mr. Chairman, or Mr. President.”

              c. Wait until the Chair recognizes you.

2. Make your motion

              a. Speak in a clear and concise manner.

              b. Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, “I move that we…” rather than,

              “I move that we do not…”.

              c. Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.

3. Wait for someone to second your motion.

4. Another member will second your motion or the Chair will call for a second.

5. If there is not second to your motion, it is lost.

6. The Chair states your motion.

              a. The Chair will say, “It has been moved and seconded that we…”. Thus

              placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.

              b. The membership then either debates your motion or may move directly to

              a vote.

              c. Once your motion is presented to the membership by the Chair, it becomes

              “assembly property”, and cannot be changed by you without the consent

              of the members.

7. Expanding on your motion.

              a. The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time,

              rather than at the time you present it.

              b. The mover is always allowed to speak first.

              c. All comments and debate must be directed to the Chair.

              d. Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.

              e. The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished, unless

              called upon by the Chair.

8. Putting the Question to the Membership.

              a. The Chair asked, “Are you ready to vote on the question?”

              b. If there is not more discussion, a vote is taken.

              c. On a motion to move, the previous question may be adapted.

**Voting on a Motion**

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the bylaws of policy of

your organization. There are five methods used to vote by most organizations. They are:

1. By Voice – The Chair asks those in favor to say, “aye”, those opposed to say,

“no”. Any member may move for an exact count.

2. By Roll Call – Each member answers “yes” or “no” as his name is called. This

method is used when a record of each person’s vote is required.

3. By General Consent – When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chair says,

“If there is no objection….”. The membership shows agreement by their silence,

however, if one member says, “I object”, the item must be put to a vote.

4. By Division – This is a slight variation of a voice vote. It does not require a count

unless the Chair so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.

5. By Ballot – Members write their vote on a slip of paper. This method is used

when secrecy is desired.

There are two other motions that are commonly used that relate to voting.

1. Motion to Table – This motion is often used in the attempt to “kill” a motion.

The option is always present, however, to “take from the table” for consideration

by the membership.

2. Motion to Postpone Indefinitely – Often used as a means of parliamentary

strategy and allows opponents of motion to test their strength without an actual

vote being taken. Also, debate is once again open on the main motion.

Parliamentary Procedure is the best way to get things done at your meetings. But, it will

only work if you use it properly.

1. Allow motions that are in order.

2. Have members obtain the floor properly.

3. Speak clearly and concisely.

4. Obey the rules of debate.

Most importantly, BE COURTEOUS.

The Rules

\*Point of Privilege: Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc. – may interrupt only if necessary.

\*Parliamentary Inquiry: Inquire as to the correct motion – to accomplish a desired result, or raise

a point of order.

\*Point of Information: Generally applies to information desired from the speaker: “I should like to

ask (the speaker) a question.”

\*Order of the Day (Agenda): A call to adhere to the agenda (a deviation from the agenda requires

Suspending the Rules).

\*Point of Order: Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised

immediately after the error is made.

\*Main Motion: Brings new business (the next item on the agenda) before the assembly.

\*Divide the Question: Divides a motion into two or more separate motions (must be able to stand

on their own).

\*Consider by Paragraph: Adoption of paper is held until all paragraphs are debated and amended

and entire paper is satisfactory; after all paragraphs are considered, the entire paper is then open to

amendment, and paragraphs may be further amended. Any Preamble cannot be considered until the

debate on the body of the paper has ceased.

\*Amend: Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or

resolutions.

\*Withdraw/Modify Motion: Applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment

without obtaining the floor.

\*Commit/Refer/Recommit to Committee: State the committee to receive the question or

resolution; if no committee exists, include size of committee desired and method of selecting the

members (election or appointment).

\*Extend Debate: Applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain time or

for a certain period of time.

\*Limit Debate: Closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time.

\*Object to Consideration: Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated.

\*Lay on the Table: Temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be

made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending.

\*Take from the Table: Resumes consideration of item previously “laid on the table” – state the

motion to take from the table.

\*Reconsider: Can be made only by one on the prevailing side who has changed position or view.

\*Postpone Indefinitely: Kills the question/resolution for this session – exception: the motion to

reconsider can be made this session.

\*Previous Question: Closes debate if successful – may be moved to “Close Debate” if preferred.

\*Informal Consideration: Move that the assembly go into “Committee of the Whole” – informal

debate as if in committee; this committee may limit number or length of speeches or close debate by

other means by a 2/3 vote. All votes, however, are formal.

\*Appeal Decision of the Chair: Appeal for the assembly to decide – must be made before other

business is resumed; NOT debatable if relates to decorum, violation of rules or order of business.

\*Suspend the Rules: Allows a violation of the assembly’s own rules (except Constitution); the

object of the suspension must be specified.