

**A Crash Course in  
Parliamentary Procedure**

**Incidental Fee Committee**

## GOALS

1. Achieve insight into rules and procedures involved in transacting business
2. Receive suggestions on how to apply these rules and procedures to expedite business fairly and efficiently.

### What is Parliamentary Law?

1. Rules of the game of democracy.
2. Rules which govern procedures by which civil and criminal laws are made and adopted.
3. Rules and customs which govern deliberative and decision-making assemblies and organizations.

### What are Parliamentary Procedures?

Parliamentary law as it is followed in any given assembly or organization, together with whatever rules of order the body may have adopted.

### Fundamental Principles of Parliamentary Procedure

Courtesy to all	Rights of the minority
One item at a time	Justice for all
Rule of the majority	Partiality for none

### BASIC RULES AND PRINCIPLES

1. The organization is paramount.
2. All members are equal.
3. A quorum must be present for action to be taken legally.
4. Only one main proposition at a time; only one person on the floor at a time.
5. Full debate unless...
6. The issue, not the person, is under discussion.
7. A main question once settled may not be considered in the same form in the same session...except...
8. A majority\* vote decides...except...
9. A two-thirds\*\* vote is necessary...
10. Silence gives consent.

\*A majority vote is anything more than ½.

\*\* A two-thirds vote (when only two choices are possible) is at least twice as many on one side as on the other.

## **Business is introduced by “making a motion.”**

Classes of Motions:

1. **Main** – those that bring business before the assembly when no other motion is pending.
2. **Subsidiary** – which affect the main motion being considered.
3. **Privileged** – which are urgent matters that must be dealt with immediately, even if they interrupt pending business.
4. **Incidental** – which affect rules and procedures that are not specifically tied to a particular main motion.
5. **Motions which bring a question again before the assembly.**

### **Eight Steps in Processing a Motion**

Obtaining the floor

1. Addressing the Chair  
Mr. (Madam) President
2. Assigning the floor  
Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_  
Handling the motion
3. Making the motion  
I move that...
4. Seconding the motion  
I second. OR Second.
5. Stating the motion  
It is moved and seconded that...
6. Debating the motion  
Is there discussion? OR Are you ready for questions?
7. Putting the question  
Those in favor, say AYE. Those opposed, say NO.
8. Announcing the vote  
The ‘ayes’ have it, the motion is carried (or adopted), and... OR  
The ‘noes’ have it, the motion is lost, and...not...

Chair: The next business in order is...

### **Rules of Debate**

1. Number of times for each speaker on each debate motion = two (2).
2. Length of speech = ten (10) minutes per speech.
3. Limitation = limited to subject of pending motion.
4. Procedure controlled by:
  - a. Presiding officer
  - b. Assembly (members)
  - c. General rules (RONR)
  - d. Modification of rules

## Forms of Voting

1. Voice vote  
AYE NO
2. Show of hands  
(in favor) Raise-lower (chair nods)  
(opposed) Raise-lover (chair nods)
3. Rising (standing) vote  
(in favor) Rise-be seated  
(opposed) Rise-be seated
4. Unanimous or general consent  
If there is no objection... OR Is there objection to...?
5. Ballot
6. Roll call: YEA NAY Present
7. Mail (check bylaws)\*
8. Proxy (check bylaws)\*
9. Cumulative (check bylaws)\*

## Ranking Motions

1. Main Motion

### Subsidiary

2. Postpone indefinitely
3. Amend
4. Commit
5. Postpone definitely
6. Modify debate
7. Previous question
8. Lay on the Table

### Privileged

9. Call for Orders of the day
10. Question of Privilege
11. Recess
12. Adjourn
13. Fix time to which adjourn

## 1. The Main Motion

Object: Bring business before the assembly

Form: I move that... OR I move to...

- ❖ Can be made only while no other motion is pending.
- ❖ Can be written in the form of a resolution

Two kinds of Main Motions:

- a. Original Main Motion
- b. Incidental Main Motion

- ❖ Is not in order when another has the floor.
- ❖ Requires a second.
- ❖ Is debatable.
- ❖ Can be amended.
- ❖ Requires a majority vote – (with some exceptions).
- ❖ Can be reconsidered.

### Subsidiary Motions

Aid an assembly in handling or disposing of a Main Motion

## 2. To Postpone Indefinitely

Object: To reject or kill the Main Motion without a direct vote on it.

Form: I move that the motion...be postponed indefinitely.

- ❖ Is not in order when another has the floor.
- ❖ Requires a second.
- ❖ Is debatable and debate can go into main motion.
- ❖ Cannot be amended.
- ❖ Requires a majority vote.
- ❖ Only affirmative vote can be reconsidered.

## 3. To Amend

Object: To modify, change. Improve, perfect.

Form: I move to amend...by...

- a. Striking out words
- b. Inserting words
- c. Adding words

Striking out and inserting words (OR) substituting a complete main motion, resolution, paragraph, section or article.

- ❖ Is not in order when another has the floor.

- ❖ Requires a second.
- ❖ Is debatable if motion to be amended is debatable and debate is limited to its merits.
- ❖ Is amendable (unless its intent is to amend a pending amendment).
- ❖ Requires a majority vote.
- ❖ Can be reconsidered.

### To Amend –Example

Main Motion: I move *that a guard dog for Headquarters be purchase by the treasurer.*

Amendment: I move to amend by striking out “by the treasurer.”

Main Motion: ...*that a guard dog for Headquarters be purchased.*

Amendment: I move to amend by inserting “German Shepherd” before the word “guard.”

Main Motion: ... that a German Shepherd guard dog for Headquarters be purchased.

Primary Amendment: I move to amend by adding “at a cost not to exceed \$750.”

Secondary Amendment: I move to amend the proposed amendment by striking out “\$750” and inserting “\$1000.”

Amendment is amended: ...to amend the proposed amendment by adding “at a cost not to exceed \$1000.”

Main motion:... *that a German Shepherd guard dog for Headquarters be purchased at a cost not to exceed \$1000.*

Substitute: I move to amend by substituting the following: “that a Watch-N-Protec-U electronic system be installed at Headquarters at a cost not to exceed \$2500.”

Original Motion: ...

Substitute: ...

That a German Shepherd guard dog for Headquarters be Purchased at a cost not To exceed \$1000.

that a Watch-N-Protec-U electronic system be installed at Headquarters at a cost Not to exceed \$2500.

## 4. To Commit or to Refer

Object: To refer to pending question to a relatively small group so that the question may be investigated or put into better condition for the assembly.

Form: I move to refer the pending question (or the motion) to a committee...

- ❖ Is not in order when another has the floor.
- ❖ Requires a second.
- ❖ Is debateable, and debate is limited to ots merits only.
- ❖ May be amended.
- ❖ Requires a majority vote.
- ❖ Can be reconsidered if the committee has not begun consideration of the questions.

A motion to *Refer* to a committee may specify, or may be amended to include:

- a. How many members
- b. How the members are to be selected
- c. What the committee is to do
- d. When the committee is to report
- e. That the committee is to have power to act

## 5. To Postpone to a Certain Time

Object: to defer action on a pending question to a definite hour, day, meeting, or until after a certain event.

Form: *I move to postpone further consideration of this questions until \_\_\_\_\_.*

- ❖ Is not in order when another has the floor.
- ❖ Requires a second.
- ❖ Is debatable, and debate is limited to its merits.
- ❖ Can be amended.
- ❖ Requires a majority vote unless it makes a questions a special order.
- ❖ Can be reconsidered.

## 6. To Limit or Extend Limits of Debate

Object: To reduce or to increase the number or length of speeches permitted on the immediately pending question or on a series of pending questions . May set time when debate will cease.

Form: *I move that—*

- a. each speech be limited to one minute.
- b. Each member be limited to one speech on the pending question.
- c. Each member be limited to one speech of one minute on the pending question.
- d. debate be limited to one-half hour
- e. debate to be continued for five more minutes
- f. the speaker be allowed two minutes

- ❖ Is not in order when another has the floor.
- ❖ Requires a second, is not debatable but can be amended.
- ❖ Requires a two-third vote.
- ❖ Can be reconsidered (exception on executed part)

## 7. Previous Question

Object: To stop debate and take the vote.

Form: *I move the Previous Question. OR I move the Previous Question on all pending questions. OR I move the Previous Question on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. OR I call for the Previous Question.*

- ❖ Is not in order when another has the floor.
- ❖ Requires a second
- ❖ Is not debatable
- ❖ Cannot be amended
- ❖ Requires two-thirds vote
- ❖ Can be reconsidered only before any vote has been taken on it.

## **8. To Lay on the Table**

Object: To lay a question aside temporarily in order to take care of a more urgent matter.

Form: I move to lay the question on the table. OR I move to lay on the table the motion...

- ❖ Is not in order when another has the floor
- ❖ Requires a second
- ❖ Is not debatable
- ❖ Cannot be amended
- ❖ Required a majority vote
- ❖ Cannot be reconsidered

### **Privileged Motions**

Do not relate to pending business—but have to do with special matters of immediate and overriding importance which should be allowed to interrupt the consideration of anything else.

## **9. To Call for Orders of the Day**

Object: To demand that the assembly adhere to the proper schedule for business.

Form: *I call for the orders of the day.*

Is in order when another has the floor

Does not require a second

Is not debatable

Cannot be amended

Must be enforced on call of one member unless set aside by a two-thirds vote

Cannot be reconsidered.

## **10. To Raise a Question of Privilege**

Object: To protect the rights, privileges, and comfort of the assembly and the individual members.

Form: *I rise to a Question of Privilege.* (Examples: ventilation, hearing, disturbances, right to vote).

Chair's response: State your point.

- ❖ Is in order when another has the floor but should not interrupt a person who has begun speaking.
- ❖ Does not require a second.



- ❖ Cannot be debated and cannot be amended.
- ❖ Chair rules as to whether it is a Question of privilege (may become a main motion)
- ❖ Cannot be reconsidered.

### **11.To Recess**

Object: To provide for a recess to begin immediately while another question is pending.

Form: I move to recess for 10 minutes. I move to recess until 2:45. I move to recess until called to order by the chair.

- ❖ Is not in order when another has the floor
- ❖ Requires a second
- ❖ Is not debatable
- ❖ Is amendable
- ❖ Requires a majority vote
- ❖ Cannot be reconsidered

### **12.To Adjourn**

Object: To close the meeting

Form: I move to adjourn.

- ❖ Is not in order when another has the floor
- ❖ Requires a second
- ❖ Is not debatable
- ❖ Cannot be amended
- ❖ Requires a majority vote
- ❖ Cannot be reconsidered.

Is often handled by “Unanimous consent” or “general consent.”

*If there is no further business this meeting will adjourn. (Pause) This meeting is adjourned. (Rap gavel once)*

### **13.To Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn**

Object: To set up an adjourned meeting to continue the business of the current meeting.

Form: I move that when this meeting adjourns it adjourn to meet again at 7:00p.m. next Tuesday.

*I move that when this meeting adjourns it adjourn to meet again at the call of the Chair.*

- ❖ Is in order when no meeting is scheduled for the same or the next day.
- ❖ Is not in order when another has the floor
- ❖ Requires a second
- ❖ Is not debatable
- ❖ Can be amended
- ❖ Requires a majority vote
- ❖ Can be reconsidered

## **Other Frequently Used Motions**

**Point of Order** – to enforce the rules.

**Appeal** – to reverse a decision of the Chair.

**Division of Assembly** – to confirm or determine the results of a vote.

**Division of the Question** – to consider a part or parts of a motion separately.

**Parliamentary Inquiry** – to secure information of a parliamentary nature.

**Point of Information** – to secure information of a non-parliamentary nature.

**Reconsider** – to bring back for Further consideration a motion already voted on.

**Rescind** – to change an action previously taken or ordered.