

# PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

## 1. Principles

- A majority rule must prevail.
- The rights of members with a minority opinion must be protected.
- Respect for dignity of members must be assured.
- Logical order of business must be provided.

## 2. Constitution, By-Laws, Standing Rules

A. Constitution : Defines the structure, purpose and organization of the group. Contains:

- Name of organization
- Purpose and aim of group
- Qualification of members
- Officers and method of their election
- Time and place of regular meetings
- Means of amending the constitution

B. By-Laws: The constitution contains the policy; the by-laws specify the means of carrying out this policy. The By-Laws detail (1) term of office and authority of officers, (2) standing (permanent) committees and their functions, (3) dues, fines, bills and other assessments, (4) date and method of nominations and elections, (5) order of business for meetings, (6) number of members needed for a quorum, (7) means of amending the By-Laws.

C. Standing Rules (House Rules): Covers matters pertaining to the orderly process of business not significant enough to be in the by-laws. Majority vote is sufficient for their establishment and they may be amended or rescinded by a 2/3 vote.

3. Types of Meetings A meeting is the assembly of the members for any length of time. "Session" refers to a series of meetings (constituting a session, a session of Congress, etc.)

A. Regular Meeting: Held at specified times and deals with general business of the organization.

B. "Special" Meeting: Convened to treat a special problem. No other business is in order.

#### **4. Types of Procedure**

A. Formal Procedure: Does not permit discussion of a subject until it is offered as a motion, then seconded and restated by the Chair. This procedure results in quick, orderly action.

B. Informal Procedure: The membership is permitted to discuss the subject prior to framing of motions. The informal procedure forms better motions by permitting the group to arrive at a general opinion (the sense of the meeting") before the making of a motion.

#### **C. Conduct of the Meeting:**

- Addressing the Chair. Whether formal or informal procedure is used, the Chairman controls all discussion. Members address the Chairman as Mr. (or Madam) Chairman. The Chairman refers to himself in the third person: "The Chair rules ..." or "The Chair disagrees ..."
- Recognizing members. The Chairman need not rise when recognizing a member who wishes to speak. The Chair must recognize members in the order in which they raise their hands.

#### **5. Agenda: Order of Business**

##### **A. Sequence: Call to Order**

- Minutes of previous meeting
- Reports of officers, boards, standing committees
- Reports of special committees
- Announcements
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Adjournment

B. Purpose: The Order of Business provides a logical system for group considerations and the procedure by which the Chair advances from one matter to another:

- It reviews actions taken at the last meeting
- Reports actions of the elected officers
- Contributes knowledge gained by special committees
- Reminds of actions still pending
- Furnishes knowledge and facts recently attained. The Order of Business can be rearranged at any time by a 2/3 vote. NOTE: Written copies of the agenda should be available at the start of each meeting.

6. **Agenda: Call to Order** The President of an organization usually presides at its meetings as the Chairman. Should he be absent the Vice President presides, and next, the Secretary.

**A. Quorum:**

1. The Chair opens the meeting by inquiring of the Secretary if a quorum is present. A quorum is a simple majority in legislative bodies, but in social and professional organizations, it can be as low as 25% of the membership. The specific number for a quorum is in the by-laws.
2. To open the meeting, the Chairman stands, raps the gavel, and announces: "The meeting will please come to order." When no quorum can be had, he says: "As there is no quorum, a motion to adjourn is in order." The motion is made by a member, seconded, and the Chairman adjourns the meeting.

**B. Call the Roll:** Usually the roll is called only if there is a question as to whether there is a proper quorum or to identify all individuals present and not present.

1. In cases of extreme urgency, the Chair may conduct a meeting without a quorum. Any actions ratified must be approved at the next legal meeting. An action undertaken, however, which breaks the faith or inflicts injury by repealing or rescinding is illegal.
2. Should a meeting start with a quorum and lose it (member leave before adjournment), discussion may continue but no vote can be taken.

7. **Agenda: Minutes of Previous Meeting.** Minutes are the official record of the actions of the group. They are read and approved at the opening of each meeting to establish continuity of action and to check on the group's affairs. Reading the minutes may be postponed by a majority vote but then must be read at the beginning of the next meeting. Chairman: "The Secretary will please read the minutes."

**A. Contents of the Minutes Report:**

- Name of the group
- Kind of meeting, i.e., regular or special
- Place, date, and time of meeting
- Name of presiding officer
- Approval of the minutes of previous meeting
- List of motions introduced, their proposers, and their final disposition
- Time of adjournment of meeting

**B. Sanctioning of the Minutes:** The minutes are read and the Chair announces: "You have listened to the minutes. Are there any corrections? (The Chair waits). If there are none, the minutes stand approved as read." (Approval is given by silent consent). If objection to the correction arise, a vote must be taken. Form: "Shall the proposed correction (state the correction) be made? Those in favor say 'aye' - those opposed say 'nay.'" The Chair announces the results. The process is repeated if other corrections arise. The Chair finally announces: "There being no further corrections, the minutes stand approved as corrected."

**NOTE:** Minutes may be corrected at any time, but if already approved, a two-thirds vote is required to change them. If notice of the desired correction is posted or distributed for the membership to read prior to the consideration, a majority vote is sufficient.