

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Every member should be familiar with the following simple rules and customs:

1. All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations; rules must be administered impartially.
2. The minority has rights that must be protected.
3. Full and free discussion of all motions, reports, and other items of business is a right of all members.
4. In doing business the simplest and most direct procedure should be used.
5. Logical precedence governs introduction and disposition of motions.
6. Only one question can be considered at a time.
7. Members may not make a motion or speak in debate until they have risen and been recognized by the chair and thus have obtained the floor.
8. No one may speak more than twice on the same question on the same day without permission of the assembly. No member may speak a second time on the same question if anyone who has not spoken on that question wishes to do so.
9. Members must not attack or question the motives of other members. All remarks must be addressed to the presiding officer.
10. In voting, members have the right to know at all times what motion is before the assembly and what affirmative and negative votes mean.

## PARLIAMENTARY TERMS

**Addressing the Chair:** Getting the chair's attention by saying, e.g., "Madam Chairwoman," "Mr. Chairman," "Madam President," or "Mr. Moderator."

**Agenda:** Order of business; program of a business meeting.

**Adjourn:** To end a meeting.

**Announcing the Vote:** In announcing the vote on a motion, the chair should:

- (1) Report on the voting itself, stating which side has prevailed;
- (2) Declare that the motion is adopted or lost; and
- (3) State the effect of the vote or order its execution.

**Ballots:** Slips of paper for voting.

**Carried:** Passed or adopted; used in referring to affirmative action on a motion.

**Chair:** the Chair, Chairman, Chairwoman: To preside over; the presiding officer.

**Chairman/Chairwoman Pro Tem:** Presiding officer for the time being.

**Convene:** To open a session.

**Division of the Assembly; a Division:** A vote retaken for the purpose of verifying a voice vote or show of hands; a division may be ordered by the chair or by a single member.

**Division of the Question:** A motion to divide a pending motion into two or more separate questions in order that they may be considered separately.

**Election by Acclamation:** Election by unanimous consent; used when only one person has been nominated for an office.

**Expunge:** To eliminate part of a motion by crossing out or drawing a line around words; one never erases, since the original text may be needed for the minutes.

**Germane:** Closely related, relevant; amendments and debate must be germane to the question at hand.

**Having the Floor:** Having been recognized by the chair to speak.

**Immediately Pending Question:** The last motion stated by the chair.

**In Order:** Correct according to rules of parliamentary procedure.

**Main Motion:** A motion which brings before the assembly some new subject upon which action of the assembly is desired.

**Majority:** More than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote, excluding abstentions.

**Minutes:** Written records of business transacted.

**Motion:** A proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the assembly take a particular action.

**Nominate:** To propose an individual for office.

**Obtaining the Floor:** Securing permission to speak.

**Orders of the Day:** Agenda for a meeting.

**Parliamentarian:** Parliamentary adviser to the presiding officer.

**Pending Question:** A motion awaiting decision.

**Plurality:** In an election, the largest number of votes given a candidate when three or more candidates are running; a plurality that is not a majority never elects anyone to office except by virtue of a special rule previously adopted.

**Point of Information:** Request for information concerning a motion.

**Precedence:** Take Precedence: Priority in rank; to outrank.

**Previous Question:** Motion which, if adopted, orders an immediate vote.

**Proxy:** A person authorized to vote for another.

**Question of Privilege:** A device that permits a request or main motion relating to the rights and privileges of the assembly or any of its members to be brought up for immediate consideration because of its urgency, e.g., a motion to turn the air conditioner up or a motion to close the windows so that people can hear.

**Quorum:** The minimum number of members who must be present at a meeting for business to be legally transacted.

**Recess:** A short intermission.

**Recognize:** To allow someone to obtain the floor in order to speak.

**Rescind:** To repeal, annul, cancel, or revoke formally.

**Resolution:** Motion used to express the sentiment of a group, usually beginning with the words "resolved that...."

**Rising Vote:** A vote taken by having members stand.

**Roll Call Vote:** A procedure by which the vote of each member is formally recorded in the minutes.

**Second:** To indicate support for consideration of a motion by saying: "I second the motion."

**Slate:** List of candidates.

**Unanimous (or General) Consent:** A means of taking action on a motion without a formal vote.

When a presiding officer perceives that there is little or no opposition to a motion before the assembly, business can often be expedited by the chair's simply calling for objections, if any. If no objection is heard, the motion is adopted; if even one member objects, the motion is brought to a formal vote by the usual procedure.

**Voice Vote:** A vote taken by having members call out "aye" or "no" at the chair's direction.

**Yield:** To give the floor to the chair, to another speaker, or to a motion taking precedence over that being considered.

## **SUMMARY OF STEPS IN HANDLING A MOTION**

1. A member raises their hand or stands.
2. The presiding officer recognizes the member.
3. The member states their name and motion.
4. Another member seconds the motion.
5. The presiding officer restates the motion, thus placing it before the assembly for consideration.
6. The assembly may discuss the motion if it is debatable and amend the motion if it is amendable.
7. The presiding officer takes the vote.
8. The presiding officer announces the result.