

Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that originated in the early English Parliaments. The following is a presentation of only the basic rules. For more information on parliamentary procedure, refer to "Robert's Rules of Order," Newly Revised Edition.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

It is a time-tested method of conducting business that allows everyone to be heard and decisions to be made in an orderly fashion.

THE BASICS

Agenda:

It is customary for organizations using parliamentary procedure to follow a fixed agenda. Here's a typical example:

1. Call to order
2. Roll call
3. Approval of the minutes
4. Officer's reports
5. Committee reports
6. Unfinished business
7. New Business
8. Announcements
9. Adjournment

Motions:

Members get opportunities to speak through motions. A motion is a proposal to the group that it take a stand or action on some issue. There are four (4) general types of motions:

1. **MAIN motion:** A main motion presents a subject to the group. For example, "I move that we purchase T-shirts".
2. **SUBSIDIARY motion:** A subsidiary motion changes or has an effect on how the main motion is handled. For example, "I move that the question before the group be amended, by stating that the T-shirts we purchase must cost under \$7.00 each".
3. **ROLL CALL:** if a record of each person's vote is needed, each member answers "yes", "no" or "present" (indicating a choice not to vote) as his or her name is called.
4. **BALLOT:** A ballot vote is on a piece of paper and turned in for counting.

5. **GENERAL CONSENT:** When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the chairperson might say, “If there is no objection...” Members show agreement by remaining silent. If someone disagrees, they should voice their objections, after which, the matter must be put to a vote.

IN CONCLUSION

Using parliamentary procedure can be a successful way to get things done at a meeting, but it only works if you use it right. Also, parliamentary procedure is not for everyone. Depending upon the nature of your organization, you may prefer, and it may be more appropriate, for you to conduct business on a more informal basis.