
**INTRODUCTION TO
PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**



An Educational Program
for Officers of Organizations Using
Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised

presented by
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August 2021

Parliamentary Procedure Pretest

1. No discussion is permitted until a motion is made and stated by the Chair.

True?

False?

2. Unless an organization has adopted special rules setting other limits, how long may a member speak in debate on any debatable motion?

- a. until someone "calls the question"
- b. three minutes
- c. ten minutes

3. In debate, a member's speech must relate to the motion under discussion; therefore, the remarks must be

- a. germane,
- b. dilatory
- c. confident

4. In debate, the freedom to challenge the honor, intelligence or motive(s) of another member when arguing for or against a motion is protected.

True?

False?

5. To act on routine matters without putting the motion to a vote is called

- a. putting the question
- b. point of order
- c. unanimous consent

6. When a member calls for the question, the main motion pending must be voted on immediately.

- a. if seconded, a two-thirds vote must approve ending debate before an immediate vote is taken on the pending main motion.
- b. the chair must ask the member to state his/her question.

7. After a report is given, a member may

- a. ask any question of the person reporting.
- b. comment on the report.
- c. direct a question to or through the chair for relevant information

8. How does a member ask a question about the rules and how they apply?

- a. Make a request for information.
- b. Make a parliamentary inquiry.
- c. Make a point of order.

9. If a member wants to kill a motion, he or she should move to table it.

True?

False?

10. To approve the minutes, someone must so move, someone else must second, and a majority vote must be obtained.

True?

False?

11. The minutes should contain:

- a. The number of votes for, against and abstentions
- b. The name of each motions' second
- c. A record of what was done, not what was said.

12. Is it permitted to make a motion again if it was defeated during the current meeting?

- a. It can be made again later in the same meeting.
- b. Once defeated, the motion can never be made again.
- c. It can be made again at the next session.

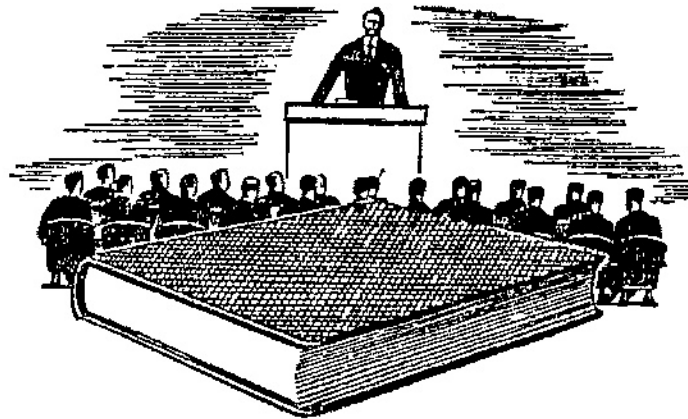
13. Provisions in the Bylaws can be suspended or set-aside by a 2/3rd vote or unanimous consent.

True?

False?

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

- I. The customs and rules usually governing deliberative assemblies in cases not covered by their own specific rules, are commonly known as Parliamentary Law. Parliamentary Law is based upon
- ◆ the will of the majority;
 - ◆ the right of the minority to be heard;
 - ◆ protection of the rights of absentees;
 - ◆ courtesy and justice for all; and
 - ◆ consideration of one subject at a time.



II. A MANUAL OF PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE:

“And whether these forms be in all cases the most rational or not, is really not of so great importance. It is much more material that there should be a rule to go by, than what the rule is; that there may be an uniformity of proceeding in business, not subject to the caprice of the Speaker, or captiousness of the members. It is very material that order, decency and regularity be preserved in a dignified public body.”

- Thomas Jefferson, 1801

“The rules of parliamentary law are designed to expedite business and protect the minority, while at the same time they enable the assembly to express its deliberate sense on the questions before it. Parliamentary law should be the servant, not the master, of the assembly.”

- Henry M. Robert, 1923

- III. "RONR" is the standard abbreviation parliamentarians use to cite Henry M. Robert III and others, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 12th ed. (New York: Public Affairs, 2020). The standard citation to particular pages and lines is "RONR (12th ed.)" with the section number and paragraph number separated by a colon.
- IV. QUORUM: “The minimum number of members who must be present at the meetings of a deliberative assembly for business to be validly transacted is the *quorum* of the assembly.” RONR (12th ed.) 3:3. If not defined in the bylaws, a quorum is a majority of the entire membership.

V. ON THE DISPOSITION OF MAIN MOTIONS

RONR (12th ed.) 5:4

"Only one question can be considered at a time; once a motion is before the assembly, it must be adopted or rejected by a vote, or the assembly must take action disposing of the question in some other way, before any other business (except certain matters called "privileged questions") can be brought up."

RONR (12th ed.) 6:25

- a) *During the meeting or series of connected meetings (called a "session" 8) in which the assembly has decided a question, the same or substantially the same question cannot be brought up again, except through special procedures which imply an unusual circumstance.*
- b) *While a question is temporarily disposed of ... but is not finally settled, no similar or conflicting motion whose adoption would restrict the assembly in acting on the first question can be introduced.*
- c) *To change what the assembly has adopted requires something more (in the way of vote or previous notice to the members) than was necessary to adopt it in the first place.*

A motion violating principles (a), (b), or (c) is not in order.

VI. ORDER OF AUTHORITIES -RONR (12th ed.) 2:1-25

1. Law of the Land
2. Organizational Charter
3. Constitution
4. Bylaws
5. Special Rules of Order
6. Adopted Parliamentary Authority: Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised
7. Standing Rules
8. Custom

VII. ORDER OF BUSINESS -RONR (12th ed.) 3:16

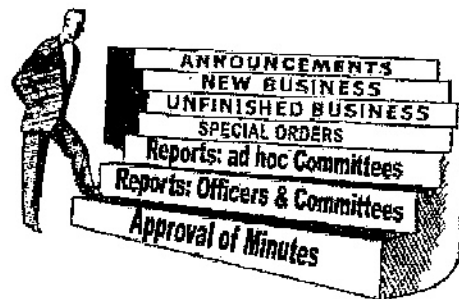
To keep the meeting moving at a good pace keep the meeting in order and yet see that each member has a fair chance to participate. Follow the announced order of business.

A standard agenda runs as follows:

call to Order

- M reading and approval of minutes of
- R reports - officers, boards, committees
- S special (ad hoc) committees reports
- S special orders
- U unfinished business & general orders
- N new business

announcements: good and welfare
adjournment



VIII. HANDLING OF A MOTION: RONR (12th ed.) 4:1-56

Whenever there is any action to be taken, it is done by means of a motion or resolution. A motion is a formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the assembly take certain action.

A Main Motion - is a motion whose introduction brings business before the assembly and is only in order when no other motion is on the floor (pending).

Steps in processing a main motion:

- (1) The Chair recognizes a member = gives him/her the floor.
- (2) The member makes a motion.
- (3) Another member seconds the motion.
- (4) The Chair states the question (motion).
- (5) Members (not the chair) debate the question. (alternating pro & con)
- (6) The Chair puts the question to a vote.
- (7) Members vote -affirmative & negative.
- (8) The Chair announces the result & effect of the vote.

IX. DEBATE & DECORUM:

RONR (12th ed.) 4:7

NO DISCUSSION WITHOUT A MOTION: ... "discussion of any subject is permitted only with reference to a pending motion." ... "The general rule against discussion without a motion is one of parliamentary procedure's powerful tools for keeping business "on track," and an observance of its spirit can be an important factor in making even a very small meeting rapidly moving and interesting."

RONR (12th ed.) 4:25-32, 43:19-28:

- The Chair must first recognize a member before the member may debate.
- The Chair should first recognize the maker of the motion.
- Unless the assembly by 2/3rds vote adopts a rule otherwise, a member may speak only twice and no more than 10 minutes on a pending question.
- A speaker's remarks must be confined to the merits of the pending question.
- The speaker may not attack or question the motives of another member.
- The speaker must address all remarks through the chair.
- The use of names of members in debate must be avoided.
- The speaker may not reflect adversely on any prior action of the society not pending.
- The speaker may not speak against his/her own motion.
- In any member objects, the speaker may not read from any paper or book, without permission of the assembly.
- A speaker must be seated during an interruption by the chair.
- No member may disturb the assembly during voting or debate or remarks by the chair.

X. ORDER OF PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS -RONR (12th ed.) 5:10-13

Though only one main motion may be considered at a time, it is in order to entertain various *secondary motions* that are related to the main motion, or are of a procedural character, or urgency. Secondary motions fall into three categories: subsidiary, privileged, and incidental. They take precedence over a pending main motion and sometimes over each other according to the rules of order, which also provide that some are not debatable, and some require more or less than a majority vote.

Refer to the attached chart.

XI. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The minimum essential officers for the conduct of business in a deliberative assembly are a presiding officer, who conducts the meeting and sees that the rules are observed, and a secretary, or clerk, who makes a written record of what is done—usually called "the minutes." RONR (12th ed.) 3:6

The governing documents of an organization (i.e. constitution and or bylaws), prescribe the regular presiding officer's title that of president being most common, but The terms "chair", "chairperson", "chairman", etc. refer to the person in a meeting who is actually presiding at the time, whether that person is the regular presiding officer or not. RONR (12th ed.) 47:5

Section 47, paragraph 7 of the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* lists these principal duties of the presiding officer of an assembly under parliamentary law:

- 1) To open the meeting at the appointed time by taking the chair and calling the meeting to order (3:15), having ascertained that a quorum is present (3:3-4; 40).
- 2) To announce in proper sequence the business that comes before the assembly or becomes in order in accordance with the prescribed order of business, agenda, or program, and with existing orders of the day (41).
- 3) To recognize members who are entitled to the floor (3:30-35; 42).
- 4) To state and to put to vote all questions that legitimately come before the assembly as motions or that otherwise arise in the course of proceedings (except questions that relate to the presiding officer himself in the manner noted below), and to announce the result of each vote (4); or, if a motion that is not in order is made, to rule it out of order. (Although this may be avoided if the chair can suggest an alternative that is in order which the maker agrees to offer instead; see 4:16-18), (For a discussion of the circumstances under which the chair votes, see 44:12-13. See also the discussion of unanimous consent, 4:58-63.)
- 5) To protect the assembly from obviously dilatory motions by refusing to recognize them (39).
- 6) To enforce the rules relating to debate and those relating to order and decorum within the assembly (3:9-13, 4:27-32; 43).
- 7) To expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of members.
- 8) To decide all questions of order (23), subject to appeal (24)—unless, when in doubt, the presiding officer prefers initially to submit such a question to the assembly for decision.
- 9) To respond to inquiries of members relating to parliamentary procedure (*Parliamentary Inquiry*, 33:3-5) or factual information (*Request for Information*, 33:6-10) bearing on the business of the assembly.
- 10) To authenticate by his or her signature, when necessary, all acts, orders, and proceedings of the assembly.
- 11) To declare the meeting adjourned when the assembly so votes or—where applicable—at the time prescribed in the program, or at any time in the event of a sudden emergency affecting the safety of those present (8, 21).

Basic Motion Handling

(A member rises to be recognized)

"The Chair recognizes _____"

(The member should immediately say "I move that")

(another member, without being recognized may say "Second")

(If seconded, The Chair states the question/motion)

"It is moved and seconded that"

The Chair looks toward member who made the motion to speak first.

If the maker is ready or someone else claims the floor, the Chair states,

"The Chair recognizes ..."

Otherwise, the Chair asks,

"Are you ready for the question?"

or

"Is there any debate?"

(Continue to recognize members rising to debate -alternate pro & con)

(After debate has concluded, the Chair puts the question)

"The question is on the adoption of the motion that"

"Those in favor of the motion, say aye. (pause) Those opposed, say no. (pause)"

(The Chair announces the result of the vote)

"The ayes have it and the motion is adopted."

(The chair should make a short statement indicating the effect of the motion.)

or

"The noes have it and the motion is lost."

Is there further new business?"

- RONR (12th ed.) 4:1-63, 10:38-43

Motion Handling: Amendment

"The Chair recognizes _____"

*(The member should immediately say "I move to amend the motion by....")
(another member, without being recognized may say "Second")*

(If seconded, The Chair states the amendment)

"It is moved and seconded to:

- to add the word(s)**
- to insert the word(s) ...**
- to strike out the word(s) ...**
- to strike out the word(s) ...**
- And to insert the word(s) ...**

"If the amendment is adopted, the main motion will read

"The question is on
adding the word(s) ...
inserting the word(s) ...
striking out the word(s) ...
striking out the word(s) ...
And inserting the word(s) ..."

"Are you ready for the question on the amendment?"

or

"Is there any debate?" *(Chair looks first to the maker of the amendment.)*

(The Chair puts the question)

"The question is on [adding, inserting, striking out] the word(s)....."

**"Those in favor of [adding, inserting, striking out] the word(s), say aye.
(pause) Those opposed, say no. (pause)"**

(The Chair announces the result of the vote)

"The ayes have it, and the amendment is adopted.

The question is now on the main motion as amended,

(State main motion as amended)"

(Handle debate on the main motion as amended & put the question to a vote)

or

"The noes have it, and the amendment is lost.

The question is now on the main motion, (Restate main motion)"

(Handle debate on the main motion and put the question to a vote)

- RONR (12th ed.) 12:32-67

THIRTEEN RANKING MOTIONS

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS relate to the rights or privileges of the organization or individual members rather than to particular items of business. They are of such urgency that they are entitled to immediate consideration.

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS may be applied to another motion for the purpose of modifying it, delaying action on it, handling its consideration, or disposing of it.

MAIN MOTIONS, the basis of all parliamentary procedure, bring business before the assembly for consideration and action. They can be introduced only when no other business is pending.

NAME OF MOTION		May it interrupt when another has the floor?	Does it require a second?	Is it debatable?	Is it amendable?	What vote is required for adoption?	May it be reconsidered?
Privileged	Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn	No	Yes	No	Yes	M	Yes
	Adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	M	No
	Recess	No	Yes	No	Yes	M	No
	Raise a Question of Privilege	Yes	No	No	No	C	No
	Call for the Orders of the Day	Yes	No	No	No	C	No
Subsidiary	Lay on the Table	No	Yes	No	No	M	Neg Only
	Previous Question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes
	Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3	Yes
	Postpone to a Certain Time (Definitely)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	M	Yes
	Commit (Refer to a Committee)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	M	Yes
	Amend	No	Yes	Yes*	Yes	M	Yes
Postpone Indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	M	Aff Only	
MAIN MOTION		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	M	Yes

* Is debatable if applied to a debatable motion M = Majority C=Chair handles

The privileged and subsidiary motions have precedence in the order listed, from highest to lowest, when a main motion is pending. Several of the privileged and subsidiary motions may also be made when no business is pending, in which case they are main motions. The unqualified motion to adjourn is generally privileged whether or not a main motion is pending. Further details about all of these motions may be found in RONR.

(Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) 11th edition)

Parliamentary Motions – Quick Reference Incidental and "Bring Back" Motions

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS are made in response to a variety of situations that may arise during the consideration of a pending question. They must be resolved before business can continue. They have no rank.

MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY, sometimes called "**Bring Back**" Motions, return a question to the assembly for further consideration and action.

Listed below are the motions of these classes that are used most often.

NAME OF MOTION		May it interrupt when another has the floor?	Does it require a second?	Is it debatable?	Is it amendable?	What vote is required for adoption?	May it be reconsidered?
Incidental	Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	C	No
	Appeal from a Decision of the Chair	Yes	Yes	Yes**	No	M-	Yes
	Suspend the Rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
	Objection to Consideration of a Question	±	No	No	No	2/3-	Neg. only
	Division of a Question	No	Yes	No	Yes	M	No
	Consideration by Paragraph or Seriatim	No	Yes	No	Yes	M	No
	Division of the Assembly	Yes	No	No	No	C	No
	Parliamentary Inquiry – Requests Parliamentary Advice	Yes	No	No	No	C	No
	Request for Information – Requests Factual Information	Yes	No	No	No	C	No
Bring Back	Take from the Table	No	Yes	No	No	M	No
	Rescind/Amend Something Previously Adopted	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 M	Neg. only
	Reconsider	±	Yes	Yes*	No	M	No

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M- Majority in the negative is required to reverse the decision of the chair
 2/3- 2/3 in the negative is required to sustain the objection
 2/3 M 2/3 or majority of the membership without notice or majority with notice
 M Majority
 C Chair handles

± Is in order if another has been assigned the floor but has not begun to speak
 * Is debatable if applied to a debatable motion