

Simplified Parliamentary Procedure

Based on
Robert's Rules
of Order

SIMPLIFIED PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURE

I. ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. The meeting is "called to order" by the chairman.
2. The minutes of the preceding meeting are read by the secretary and:
 - a. May be approved as read.
 - b. May be approved with additions of corrections.
3. Monthly statement of Treasurer is "Received as read and filed for audit." (Chair so states.) No motion of approval is necessary.
4. Reports of standing committees are called for by the chairman.
5. Reports of special committees are called for by the chairman.
6. Unfinished business is next in order at the call of the chair or of the meeting.
7. New business.
8. The program (if an annual or other special meeting). The program is part of the meeting; the chairman "presides" throughout.
9. Adjournment.

II. DUTIES OF A CHAIRMAN

1. To preside at all meetings.
2. Keep calm at all times.
3. Talk no more than necessary while presiding.
4. Have agenda for meeting before him and proceed in a businesslike manner.
5. Have a working knowledge of parliamentary law and a thorough understanding of the constitution and by-laws or other legal charter of the organization.

6. Keep a list of committees on the table while presiding.
7. Refrain from entering the debate of questions before the assembly. If it is essential that this be done, the vice-chairman should be placed in the chair. A chairman is not permitted to resume the chair until after the vote has been taken on the question under discussion.
8. Extend every courtesy to the opponents of a motion, even though the motion is one that the presiding officer favors.
9. Always appear at the rostrum a few minutes before the time the meeting is to be called to order. When the time arrives, note whether a quorum is present; if so, call the meeting to order, and declare "a quorum is present."

III. OTHER OFFICIALS

Vice-Chairman

The vice-chairman of an organization is the one who acts in the place of the chairman, whenever needed. In case of resignation or death of the chairman, the vice-chairman automatically becomes the chairman unless the by-laws provide other methods.

In official meetings, the vice-chairman should preside in the *absence* of the chairman or whenever the chairman temporarily vacates the chair.

If the chairman should be absent for a long period, the vice-chairman may exercise all duties of the chairman except to change or modify rules made by the chairman.

The vice-chairman cannot fill vacancies where the by-laws state that such vacancies shall be filled by the chairman.

In case of resignation or death of the chairman, and the vice-chairman does not care to assume the office of chairman, the *vice-chairman must resign*.

The office of vice-chairman becomes vacant when the vice-chairman assumes the office of chairman. If there are several vice-chairmen, they automatically move up to the higher office leaving the lower office vacant. This office should be filled as instructed by the by-laws or authorized legal authority.

In the absence of the chairman, the vice-chairman is *not* "ex-officio" a member of any committee.

Secretary

The secretary should issue all calls or notices of meetings and should write such letters as the board of directors or executive committee may designate.

The secretary should keep a neat and careful record of all business done in the meetings, with the exact wording of every motion and whether it was lost or carried. Brief extracts from speeches, if important, may be recorded but *no comment of any kind, favorable or unfavorable, should be made*. The minutes should show the names of persons appointed to committees, and it is the duty of the secretary to notify all persons nominated or elected on any committee.

The secretary should be on hand a few minutes before a meeting is called to order. He should have the minute book of the organization with him so that reference can be made to minutes of past meetings.

The secretary should always have a copy of the by-laws; standing rules; book of parliamentary procedure endorsed by the organization; list of members or clubs; and a list of unfinished business, copy of which should be given the presiding officer.

Minutes

The minutes of an organization should contain a record of what is *done* and *not* what is *said*.

Minutes should contain:

1. Date, place and time of meeting.
2. Whether it is a regular or special meeting.
3. Name of person presiding.
4. Name of secretary. (In small boards, the names of those present should be recorded.)
5. All *main* motions, whether adopted or rejected.
6. The names of the persons making the motions; the name of the seconder need not be recorded.
7. Points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost.
8. A motion which was withdrawn should not be recorded.

Treasurer

The treasurer of any organization is the custodian of its funds and receives and disburses them upon authority from the organization, the board, executive committee or the finance or budget committees. A treasurer should be bonded.

The organization should approve the budget or authorize the executive committee or the board of directors to do so. A committee chairman or an officer or member should get permission from the chairman or board to make an expenditure.

No treasurer should accept bills for payment, such as for postage, traveling expenses, etc., from a committee chairman unless receipts are enclosed.

The treasurer should make a monthly statement and a report once a year, or upon the request of board or parent body during the year. The annual report should be audited. An auditor's report should be presented following the treasurer's report. The presiding officer states to the assembly that to adopt the report of the auditor (if carried) has the effect of accepting the treasurer's report.

Committees

Committees have no authority except that which is granted by the constitution or by vote of the organization. Unless otherwise provided, the person first named or the one receiving the largest number of votes is its chairman. *A committee has no right to incur any debt or involve the organization in any way unless given full authority to do so.*

Under no circumstances should one or more members of a committee go ahead with the business without action by a quorum; usually a majority of the committee, being present. Failure to observe these rules renders such action "the action of individuals" and subject to "censure."

IV. PRINCIPAL MOTIONS

General Statement: When a motion has been made, seconded, and stated by the chair, the assembly is not at liberty to consider any other business until this motion has been disposed of. If the motion is long and involved, the chairman asks the mover to hand it in writing to the secretary. The mover cannot withdraw his motion after it has been stated by the chair. In general all important motions should be seconded, which may be done without rising or addressing the chair.

1. To Amend: This motion is "to change, add, or omit words" in the *original main motion*, and is debatable; majority vote.

To Amend the Amendment: This is a motion to change, add or omit words in the *first amendment*; debatable, majority vote.

Method: The first vote is on changing words of second amendment, the *second* vote (if first vote adopts change) on first amendment *as* changed; the *third* vote is on adopting main motion as changed.

2. To Commit: When a motion becomes involved through amendments or when it is wise to investigate a question more carefully, it may be moved to commit the motion to a committee for further consideration. Debatable and amendable, but a committee must make report on such question.
 3. To Lay on the Table: The object of this motion is to postpone the subject under discussion in such a way that it can be taken up at some time in the near future when a motion "to take from the table" would be in order. These motions are not debatable or amendable; majority vote.
 4. To Postpone: A motion to postpone the question before the assembly to some future time is in order, except when a speaker has the floor. Debatable, majority vote.
 5. To Adjourn: This motion is always in order except:
 - a. When a speaker has the floor.
 - b. When a vote is being taken.
 - c. After it has just been voted down.
 - d. When the assembly is in the midst of some business which cannot be abruptly stopped.

When meeting the above conditions, the motion is not debatable.

When the motion is made to adjourn to a definite place and time, it is debatable.
 6. To Reconsider: The motion to reconsider a motion that was carried or lost in order if made on the *same* day or the next calendar day, but must be made by one who voted with the prevailing side. No question can be twice reconsidered. Debatable, majority vote.
- Requires Two Votes: First on whether it should be reconsidered, second on original motion after reconsideration.

7. The Previous Question: This motion is to close debate on the pending question. This motion may be made when debate becomes long drawn out. It is not debatable. The form is "Mr. (Madam) Chairman, I move the previous question." The chairman then asks, "Shall debate be closed and the question *now* be put?" If this be adopted by a two-thirds vote, the question before the assembly is immediately voted upon.
8. Point of Order: This motion is always in order, but can be used only to present an objection to a ruling of the chair or some method of parliamentary procedure. The form is "Mr. (Madam) Chairman, I rise to a point of order." The Chairman: "Please state your point of order." After the member has stated his objection, the chair answers:
 - a. "Your point of order is sustained" or
 - b. "Your point of order is denied."

If any member is not satisfied, he may appeal from the decision of the chair. The chairman then addresses the assembly, "Shall the decision of the chair be sustained?" This is debatable and the presiding officer may discuss it without leaving the chair. Voted on like any other motion. Majority or tie vote sustains the decision of chair. Requires a majority of "no" votes to reverse decision of the chair.

V. NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS AND TERM OF OFFICE

General Henry M. Robert, author of *Robert's Rules of Order*, says: "In the election of the officers of a society, it is more usual to have the nominations made by a committee—when the committee makes its report, which consists of a ticket (a ticket is one name for each

office to be filled by ballot), the chair asks, "Are there any other nominations?"—at which time they may be made from the floor. The committee's nominations are treated just as if made by members from the floor, *no vote being taken on accepting them.*"

If nominations are made from the floor, these names are added to those submitted by the nominating committee. Neither nominations by the committee nor nominations from the floor require a second or adoption by vote; but are acted upon in the election ballot. Nominations are never seconded except as a complimentary endorsement of candidates not known to the assembly.

When nominations are completed, the assembly proceeds to the election, voting by the method prescribed in the constitution and by-laws. The usual method in permanent societies is by ballot, the balloting continued until the offices are filled.

A motion may be made to close nominations but this motion is not in order until the assembly has been given reasonable time to add further nominations to those already made. It is an undebatable main motion, incidental to the nominations. It requires a *two-thirds* vote. The motion to reopen nominations is undebatable and requires a *majority* vote.

The chair should remind the members that the nominating committee has endeavored to present as sure a ticket as possible, but it is now their privilege to name a candidate for any or all of the offices to be filled, and that they still have the opportunity of casting a ballot, for any eligible members, whether nominated or not.

A member may withdraw his name if placed in nomination, announcing that if elected he would not be able to serve; but he cannot "withdraw in favor of another member."

KINDS OF VOTING—Majority vote means one over half of the members voting and plurality vote is the largest of two or more numbers. A plurality vote never adopts a motion or elects a member to office except by virtue of a special rule previously adopted in the constitution or by-laws. In an election, a candidate has a plurality when he has a larger vote than any other candidate.

THE CHAIR VOTES—When the vote is by ballot the chairman writes his ballot, and casts it with the rest.

On a tie vote the motion is lost. If a majority of *one* the chair, (if a member of the assembly), may vote with the minority and make it a tie, and declare the motion "lost" *unless the vote is by ballot.*

In the event of a tie vote by ballot, balloting must continue until a candidate receives a majority (unless by-laws provide for plurality).

To move "that an election be made unanimous," is a mistaken courtesy, as it forces those who did not vote for the candidate to submit unwillingly to the transferring of their vote, thus making it appear to be unanimous, when it is not. One negative response causes such a motion to be "lost."

An election takes effect immediately following the completion of the annual business unless the by-laws specify some other date.

This does not mean that officers are to assume office *at this meeting*, for the duties of the outgoing officers are not completed for the year until after the adjournment of the annual session and all business relating to the annual meeting has been perfected.