

How to Use Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary Procedure is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion. It allows the group to conduct business in an orderly fashion and gives every member a chance to be heard regardless of their opinion. It addresses one subject at a time and when it comes to voting, majority rules. Parliamentary procedure also keeps meetings civil during those times of sensitive discussion matters.

Fixed order of business example:

1. Call to order
2. Roll call of members present
3. Reading of minutes of last meeting
4. Officers' reports
5. Committee reports
6. Special orders -- Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting
7. Unfinished business
8. New business
9. Announcements
10. Adjournment

How are motions presented?

1. Obtaining the floor
2. Make your motion. "I move that we ..."
3. Wait for someone to second your motion
4. Another member will second your motion or the Chairman will call for a second.
5. If there is no second to your motion it is lost.
6. The chairman states your motion
7. Expanding on your motion- speak in favor of your motion.
8. Putting the question to the membership

Once a motion is made, it will require a second. A member will second or the Chairman will call for a second. (A second is an indication that there is at least one person besides the person who presented the motion, mover that is interested in seeing the motion come before the meeting. It does not mean the seconder favors the motion.)

- If there is no second to your motion, it is lost.
- If there is a second, the chairman states your motion and calls for discussion. There may or may not be discussion. If there is discussion it may result in an amended motion or even tabling the motion for further discussion at another time.
- Next, the chair will put the motion to a vote "All in favor of...then states the motion", "All opposed?" the chair then announce the results of the vote.

Voting on a Motion:

1. By Voice -- The Chairman asks those in favor to say, "aye", those opposed to say "no". Any member may move for an exact count.
2. By Roll Call -- Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person's vote is required.
3. By General Consent -- When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chairman says, "if there is no objection ..." The membership shows agreement by their silence, however if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.
4. By Division -- This is a slight verification of a voice vote. It does not require a count unless the chairman so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.
5. By Ballot -- Members write their vote on a slip of paper; this method is used when secrecy is desired.