

What is Parliamentary Procedure?

It is the set of rules designed to maintain order and control in meetings where group decisions and actions are necessary.

Advantages of Parliamentary Procedure

- 1) Business is carried out quickly and with ease.
- 2) The views and rights of each member are recognized.
- 3) Decisions are democratic and efficient.

Chairperson's Role in Parliamentary Procedure

The purpose of the Chair is to preserve order and decorum during deliberations, to restrain the members engaged in debate, and to sub-serve the will of the majority of the meeting participants, while permitting the minority (viewpoints) a reasonable opportunity to be heard.

Parliamentary Rules of Order:

Motions

Business is conducted by acting on motions. A motion is a formal statement of a proposal for members to consider and vote upon. A motion proposes that the group take certain actions. There can be only one main motion (idea) before the group at any one time. Once a motion has been made and seconded, the mover may not withdraw it without consent of the members.

Making Motions

- 1) A member must obtain the floor by being recognized by the Chairperson (Chair). The motion is then stated as "I move that ..."
- 2) Every motion must be seconded. Any member may second it by saying "I second the motion". By seconding the motion, members indicate their approval of dealing with the issue, but not necessarily they favor adopting it. A motion may not be discussed or voted upon unless it is seconded by another member. A motion that is not seconded is lost and cannot be discussed.
- 3) Once a motion is made and seconded, the Chairperson restates the motion.

Considering a Motion

- 1) Once the Chair person has stated the motion, it is open for discussion by the members. Members obtain the floor by first addressing the Chair.
- 2) Following discussion, the Chair puts the motion to a vote.
- 3) Based on the results of the vote, the Chair indicates whether the motion is carried or defeated.

Amending a Motion

An amendment is a motion to make a change in the motion being discussed. There are three ways to amend a motion:

- 1) Insert or add a word phrase or sentence.
- 2) Strike out a word phrase or sentence.
- 3) Strike out and insert the newly desired word, phrase or sentence.

The procedure for amending a motion is similar to presenting the main motion. The mover of the amendment says, "I move to amend the motion by..." The seconder says, "I second the motion". The Chair then restates the amended motion, calls for discussion, and takes a vote. If the amendment is defeated, the originally stated motion is restated and continues.

For Example – Sample Motion:

That the Intergroup purchase ten stacking chairs (moved).

Sample Amendment:

"I move the motion be amended by adding the words 'costing less than \$18.00 each'."

Tabling a Motion

To table a motion is to temporarily put aside an item of business so as to consider business of an urgent nature. A tabled motion may be brought back at a later point during the same meeting or at the next regular meeting.

Withdrawing a Motion

Before the motion has been stated by the Chair, the maker may withdraw it without consent of the seconder. The procedure is to obtain recognition from the Chair and request permission to withdraw the motion. A withdrawn motion is not recorded in the minutes.

Rescinding a Motion

The purpose of this motion is to cancel a decision made at a previous meeting. It may be amended and debated, and if passed, the previous decision will be cancelled.

Voting

To determine the opinion of the group on a motion, it is necessary to have the members indicate whether they are in favor of or opposed to the issue. There are many accepted methods of voting: Voice, Show-of-Hands, Ballot, Standing, and General Consent. Generally, a Chair may vote only to break a tie.

Minority Opinion

The rights of the minority must be protected at all times, and the minority must be allowed to "have their say". Although the ultimate decision rests with the majority, all members have such basic rights as the right to be heard, and the right to oppose. The rights of all members – majority and minority – should be the concern of every member, for a person may be in a majority on one question, but in a minority on the next.

Motion to Reconsider

The purpose of this motion is to permit correction of hasty, ill-conceived or erroneous actions, or to take into account all information, or a changed situation, that has developed since the taking of the vote. Motion to reconsider can be introduced only at the same meeting the vote to be reconsidered was taken. Another unique characteristic of the motion to reconsider is that it can only be made by a member who voted with the prevailing side of the motion that is to be reconsidered. The intent of this prevent those in the minority from thwarting majority opinion by bringing back for further consideration a motion that has been disposed of.