

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE:
PRESCRIBED ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER**

History

The most commonly used parliamentary procedure is Robert's Rules of Order. These procedures were written by General Henry M. Robert, a U.S. Army engineer, and published in 1876. His work is still regarded as the basic authority on the subject of parliamentary law. Robert's Rules of Order, 11th edition, October 2013, is the accepted authority for almost all organizations today. This sheet should not be a substitute for Robert's Rules of Order. It should support the effectiveness of council and committee operation.

Basic Rules

- All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.
- The minority has rights that must be protected.
- Full and free discussion of all motions, reports, and other business items is a right of all members.
- In doing business, the simplest and most direct procedure should be used. *For example, when voting on a motion, one can raise a hand, use a ballot, and consensus.*
- Logical precedence governs the introduction and disposition of motions.
- Only one question (motion) can be considered at a time.
- Members may not make a motion or speak in debate until they have been recognized by the Chairperson or the presiding officer and subsequently obtained the floor.
- A member may speak a second time on the same question (motion) if all other members have been given an opportunity to speak at least once on the same question (motion).
- Members must not question the motives of other members. Customarily, all remarks are addressed to the presiding officer.
- In voting, members have the right to know at all times what motion is before the assembly and what affirmative and negative votes mean. (In other words, when voting, restate the motion to the committee/council and clarify what a positive or negative vote means.)

Terms and Process for Transacting Business

Quorum

A quorum, 51% of the entire membership, is the minimum number of members who must be present at a meeting for business to be legally transacted.

Obtaining the Floor

Before a member in an assembly can make a motion or speak in debate, he or she must obtain the floor; that is, the member must be recognized by the Chairperson or presiding officer as having the exclusive right to be heard at that time. If two or more members wish to speak at the same time, the Chairperson or presiding officer will recognize them in an orderly manner.

Introducing Business (Making Motions)

Business may be introduced by an individual member in the form of a motion.

Seconding a Motion

After a motion has been made by one member, another member, without obtaining the floor, may second the motion. To second the motion merely implies that the seconder agrees that the motion should come before the assembly and not that he or she necessarily favors the motion.

Placing a Motion Before the Assembly

After a motion has been made and seconded, the Chairperson repeats the motion verbatim, thus placing it before the assembly for debate and then for action. After the motion has been restated by the Chairperson, it is officially before the assembly and must be dealt with appropriately (*e.g.*, adopted, rejected, postponed).

Debate

Every member of the assembly has the right to speak on every debatable motion before it is finally acted upon. This right cannot be interfered with except by a motion to limit debate. While debate is in progress, amendments or other secondary motions can be introduced and disposed of accordingly. No member may speak twice on the same motion at the same meeting as long as any other member who has not spoken on the motion desires to do so. Unless the rules are suspended, a member who has spoken twice on a particular question on the same day has exhausted his or her right to debate that question for that day. During debate, no member can attack or question the motives of another member. The maker of a motion, although allowed to vote against it, is not allowed to speak against it.

Amendments

Once the Chairperson or presiding officer has restated a motion, any member may recommend an amendment; however, the maker has the right to modify his or her motion or to withdraw it entirely.

There are four ways to amend a motion, as follows:

1. Add words, phrases, or sentences
2. Strike words, phrases, or sentences
3. Strike and add words, phrases, or sentences
4. Substitute whole paragraphs or an entire text

Only two amendments may be pending on a main motion at any time. Discussion of an amendment must relate only to the amendment unless the whole motion is involved by substitution. An amendment must be relevant to the question under consideration.

Voting

The Parliamentarian may vote on the SSC and on the ELAC since both school groups have a small number of members. The Chairperson, or presiding officer of the assembly, may vote as any other member does. The Chairperson or presiding officer may, but is not obligated to, vote after all other members have voted, especially whenever his or her vote will affect the result

since he or she can either break or create a tie. Any member may request a roll call vote to ensure clarity of the vote. The majority of votes decide a matter. A majority is more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote.

Announcing a Vote

In announcing the vote on a motion, the Chairperson or presiding officer should:

- a. Report on the voting itself, stating which side has prevailed.
- b. Declare that the motion is adopted or lost.
- c. State the effect of the vote or order its execution.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn may be made by any member. It may be made during the consideration of other business, although it may not interrupt a speaker or the assembly when engaged in voting or verifying a vote. When it appears that there is no further business to be brought before the assembly, the Chairperson or presiding officer, instead of waiting for a motion, may simply adjourn the meeting.

Summary of Steps to Handle a Motion

1. A member addresses the Chairperson or presiding officer.
2. The Chairperson or presiding officer recognizes the member.
3. The member states the motion.
4. Another member seconds the motion.
5. The Chairperson or presiding officer restates the motion, thus placing it before the assembly for consideration.
6. The assembly may discuss the motion if it is debatable and amend the motion if it is amendable.
7. The Chairperson or presiding officer calls the vote.
8. The Chairperson or presiding officer announces the result.

Basic Parliamentary Terms

- **Addressing the Chairperson:** Getting the Chairperson's attention by saying, "Madam Chairwoman," or "Mr. Chairman."
- **Agenda:** Order of business; program of a business meeting.
- **Ad Hoc Committee:** Committee established for a specific purpose for a particular case.
- **Ballots:** Official paper for voting.
- **Carried:** Passed or adopted; used in referring to affirmative action on a motion.
- **Chairperson:** The chair, chairman, chairwoman. Called the presiding officer, when presides.
- **Convene:** To open a session or meeting.
- **Division of the Question:** A motion to divide a pending motion into two or more separate questions in order that they may be considered separately.
- **Election by Acclamation:** Election by unanimous consent; used when only one person has been nominated for office.

- **Having the Floor:** Having been recognized by the Chairperson or presiding officer to speak.
- **Main Motion:** A motion which brings before the assembly some new subject upon which action of the assembly is desired.
- **Majority:** More than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote.
- **Minutes:** Written records of business transacted.
- **Motion:** A proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the assembly take a particular action.
- **Nominate:** To propose an individual for office.
- **Obtaining the Floor:** Securing permission to speak.
- **Orders of the Day:** Agenda for a meeting.
- **Parliamentarian:** Parliamentary adviser to the Chairperson or presiding officer and is a voting member.
- **Pending Question:** A motion awaiting a decision.
- **Point of Information:** Request for information concerning a motion.
- **Point of Order:** A query in a formal debate or meeting as to whether the correct procedure is being followed.
- **Previous Question/Call for a Question:** Motion which, if adopted, orders an immediate vote.
- **Recess:** A short intermission.
- **Recognize:** To allow someone to obtain the floor in order to speak.
- **Roll Call Vote:** A procedure by which the vote of each member is formally recorded in the minutes.
- **Unanimous (or General) Consent:** A means of taking action on a motion without a formal vote. When a chairperson or presiding officer perceives that there is little or no opposition to a motion before the assembly, business can often be expedited by the Chairperson or presiding officer simply calling for objections, if any. If no objection is heard, the motion is adopted; if one member objects, the motion is brought to a formal vote by the usual procedure.
- **Voice Vote:** A vote taken by having members call out “aye” or “no” at the Chairperson’s or presiding officer’s direction.