



Guide to Parliamentary Procedure

Guide to Parliamentary Procedure is part of a series of HOA Guidance booklets prepared by Association Management Group (AMG) for clients of the firm and friends. It is intended to provide general information and does not constitute legal, accounting, tax or insurance advice. Specific questions should be directed to your association lawyer, accountant or insurance professional.

Guide to Parliamentary Procedure is provided by Association Management Group as a community service and resource to its member communities. Other titles in the series include: *Guide to a Safer Home*, *Guidance for Financial Management*, *Guide to Collecting HOA Fees*, *Guide to NC Covenant Enforcement & Adjudicatory Hearings*, *Minute Taking Made Easy*, and *Selecting an Association Management Company*. For a copy, please contact your account representative or visit www.AMGWorld.com.



www.AMGWorld.com

© 2011 Association Management Group



www.AMGWorld.com

Parliamentary Procedure is a set of rules for conducting business at meetings and public gatherings.

HISTORY

- Origin traced to 750 BC in Greece during an era of self-government.
- Used by the Romans circa 450 BC.
- 13th and 14th centuries used in English Parliament.
- Became Uniform in 1876, when Henry M. Robert published his manual on Parliamentary Law.
- Came to America with the first European settlers.



Today, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR), 10th Edition, is the most widely used form of Parliamentary Procedure for clubs, not for profit organizations and other groups.

HOW ROBERT'S RULES WORK FOR HOA'S

SPECIAL RULES FOR SMALLER GROUPS

In large boards (and at annual meetings) business is transacted the same as society meetings, as provided in RONR; but in small boards the same formality is not necessary, or usual.

In a board meeting where there are not more than about a dozen present, for instance, it is not necessary to rise in order to make a motion, nor to wait for recognition by the chair before speaking or making a motion, nor for a motion to have a second; nor is there any limit to the number of speeches, nor does the chairman need to leave the chair when making a motion or discussing a question. The chair also votes.

The formalities necessary in order to transact business in a large assembly would hinder business in so small a body. Nevertheless, fairness and the rights of all members should be carefully protected.

For additional information, refer to RONR 10th ed. pp. 470-471.

Parliamentary Procedure is important because it allows everyone to be heard and to make fair decisions in an orderly manner.

WHAT IS PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE?

"According to the National Association of Parliamentarians..."

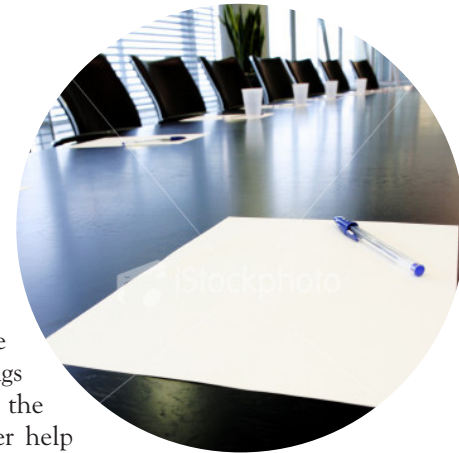
DEFINITION

Parliamentary procedure, often used interchangeably with "parliamentary law," is more correctly defined as parliamentary law in combination with the *rules of order* that a given assembly or organization has adopted.

Objectives and principles of parliamentary law:

- rules of the game for democracy.
- rules that govern procedures by which decisions are made and adopted.
- rules and customs that govern deliberative and decision-making assemblies and organizations.
- 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.

The term *rules of order* refers to written rules of parliamentary procedure formally adopted by a group of people or by an organization. These rules relate to the orderly transaction of business in meetings and to the duties or officers in facilitating the conduct of business. Written rules of order help ensure that the organization functions smoothly and the questions about procedure can be resolved quickly and fairly. An organization's rules of order may include bylaws, standing rules, policy manuals and other rules.



An Agenda (or order of business) is generally followed by organizations using parliamentary procedure. For example:

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

If quorum, the number or percentage of members that must be present for business to be conducted legally (the actual number is usually stated in the bylaws) the Chair or person conducting the meeting will call it to order.

2. CALL TO ORDER

If a quorum is present, the chair says, "The meeting will come to order."

3. MINUTES

The secretary reads a record of the previous meeting and the assembly approves.

4. OFFICERS' REPORTS

Officers give pertinent reports at this time.

5. COMMITTEE AND MANAGERS REPORTS

Reports from standing (permanent) committees, then from special (temporary or adoc) are given committees. It is advisable to have written reports available.

6. SPECIAL ORDERS

Is Important business designated for consideration at this meeting.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Is business that has come over from the previous meeting. Sometimes wrongly called "Old Business."

8. NEW BUSINESS

New topics are introduced.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Informed announcements to the assembly (the people at the meeting) of other subjects and events.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ends by a vote or by general consent (or by chair's decision if time of adjournment was prearranged by vote).



HOW MEMBERS GET THEIR SAY?

They make motions. A motion is a proposal that the assembly adopts, rejects or tables (delays) action. Members have a right to:

1. **PRESENT MOTION** (make a proposal)
2. **SECOND MOTIONS** (express support for discussion of another member's motion)
3. **DEBATE MOTIONS** (give opinions on the motion)
4. **VOTE ON MOTIONS** (make a decision).

GENERAL MOTIONS

TYPE OF MOTION

HOW TO SAY...

WHEN...

1. MAIN MOTIONS

Introduce subjects for consideration.

I move that we adopt the budget...

No other motion is on the floor. Must yield to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions.

2. SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

Change or affect how the main motion is handled and voted on before the main motion.

I move to amend the budget by...

After a motion is made, must yield to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions.

3. PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

Concern special or important matters not related to pending business.

I move we adjourn...

In general, considered before other types of motions.

4. INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

Questions of procedure that arise out of other motions. For example:

I move to suspend the rules for the purpose of...

Before the other motion.

5. MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY

These enable certain items to be reconsidered. For example:

I move to reconsider...

In general, they are when no business is pending.

Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)*

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2 ND ?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§21 Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§20 Take break	I move to recess for	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19 Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18 Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17 Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§16 Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§15 Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
§14 Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§13 Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§12 Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§11 Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
§10 Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that [or "to"] ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Jim Slaughter, Certified Professional Parliamentarian-Teacher & Professional Registered Parliamentarian
336-378-1899(W) 336-378-1850(F) P.O. Box 41027, Greensboro 27404

web site: www.jimslaughter.com

Side 1

Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)*

Incidental Motions - no order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decided immediately.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2 ND ?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§23 Enforce rules	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	None
§24 Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
§25 Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules which ...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§26 Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
§27 Divide motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§29 Demand rising vote	I call for a division	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33 Parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None
§33 Request for information	Point of information	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None

Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly - no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.

§34 Take matter from table	I move to take from the table ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§35 Cancel or change previous action	I move to rescind/amend something previously adopted...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or maj. w/ notice
§37 Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider the vote ...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

Jim Slaughter, Certified Professional Parliamentarian-Teacher & Professional Registered Parliamentarian
336-378-1899(W) 336-378-1850(F) P.O. Box 41027, Greensboro 27404

web site: www.jimslaughter.com

7/2010

Side 2

UNDERSTANDING MOTIONS:

IN ORDER?

Motion must relate to the business at hand and be presented at the right time. It must not be obstructive, frivolous or conflict with the legal documents.

INTERRUPT THE SPEAKER?

Some motions are so important that the speaker may be interrupted. The original speaker regains the floor after the interruption has been attended to.

DO I NEED A SECOND?

Usually, yes. A second indicates that another member would like to consider your motion. It prevents spending time on a question that interests only one person.

DEBATABLE?

Parliamentary procedure guards the right to free and full debate on most motions. However, some subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions are not debatable.

CAN IT BE AMENDED?

Some motions can be changed by striking out or inserting wording, or both. Amendments must relate to the subject as presented in the main motion.

WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED?

Most require only a majority vote (more than half the members present and voting). But, motions concerning the rights of assembly or its members need a 2/3 vote to be adopted.

CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED?

Some motions can be debated again and revoted to give members a chance to change their minds. The motion to reconsider must generally be made by a person on the prevailing side of the previous vote.

HOW TO MAKE A MOTION:

1. OBTAIN THE FLOOR

- After the previous speaker is finished;
- Rise and address the chair. "Mr. (or Madam) Chairperson" or "Mr. (or Madam) President."
- Give your name. The chair responds by saying "The Chair will recognize Mr. *Your Name*."

2. MAKE YOUR MOTION

- Speak clearly and concisely.
- State your motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we do..."
- Best to have motions prewritten before speaking.
- Stay on the subject and avoid personal attacks.

3. WAIT FOR A SECOND

- Another member will say, "I second the motion."
- Or, the chair will call for a second.
- If there is no second, the motion will not be considered.

4. THE CHAIR RESTATES YOUR MOTION

- The chair will say, "It is moved and seconded that we..."
- After this happens, debate or voting can occur.
- Your motion is now "assembly property," and you can't change it without consent of the members.
- Generally debate begins with a speaker in favor of the motion then alternates between affirmative and negative speakers.

5. EXPAND A MOTION

- The person who made the motion is allowed to speak first.
- Direct all comments to the chair.
- Keep to the time limit for speaking.
- You may speak again after all other speakers are finished.
- You may speak a third time by a motion to suspend the rules with a 2/3 vote.

6. THE CHAIR PUTS THE QUESTION

- The chair asks, "Are you ready for the question?"
- If there is no more debate, or if a motion to stop debate is adopted, a vote is taken.
- The chair announces the results.

METHODS OF VOTING

VOICE

The chair asks those in favor to say “aye” and those opposed to say “no” (for majority votes only). A member may move for an exact count.

ROLL CALL

If a record of each person’s vote is needed, each member answers “yes,” “no” or “present” (indicating the choice not to vote) as his or her name is called.

GENERAL CONSENT

When a motion isn’t likely to be opposed, the chair says, “If there is no objection...” Members show consent by their silence.

If someone says, “I object,” the matter must be put to a vote.

SHOW OF HANDS

Members raise their hands to verify a voice vote, or as an alternative to it. This does not require a count. A member may move for an exact count.

BALLOT

Members write their vote on a slip of paper. This is done when secrecy is desired.

A question (motion) is pending when it has been stated by the chair but not voted on.

The last motion stated by the chair is the first pending.

The main motion is always the last voted on.

A MOTION TO POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

This is parliamentary strategy. It allows members to dispose of a motion without making a decision for or against. This is useful in case of a badly chosen main motion for which either a “yes” or “no” vote would have undesirable consequences.

A MOTION TO LAY ON THE TABLE

This motion is used to lay something aside temporarily to take care of a more urgent matter. I should not be used to prevent debate or to kill a question.

Members can “take from the table” a motion for reconsideration. This must happen by the end of the current or next session (depending on how soon the next session is scheduled).

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE HELPS YOU GET THINGS DONE

- ✓ **MAKE MOTIONS**
that are in order.
- ✓ **OBTAIN THE FLOOR**
properly.
- ✓ **SPEAK**
clear and consistently.
- ✓ **OBEY**
the rules of debate.

And, most of all be courteous.



Compiled by:



PAUL K. MENGERT, CMCA, PCAM

President and CEO Association Management Group. Faculty, Harvard Business School Alumni Program, McColl’s School of Business, Queens University; National Senior Faculty Community Associations Institute.

Reviewers:



JIM SLAUGHTER

Attorney. Partner, Forman Rossabi Black, PA. Member, College of Community Association Lawyers. Certified Professional Parliamentarian and Professional Registered Parliamentarian. President, American College of Parliamentary Lawyers.

AMG offers consistently higher quality service because of unique and proprietary systems it has developed. AMG companies manage over 250 condominiums, townhomes and planned unit developments throughout the Carolinas.

Each AMG office is an independently owned and operated company. Please consult www.AMGWorld.com or your community’s Management Agreement for the name of the AMG corporation servicing your community.