Basic Rules and Principles of Parliamentary Procedure

1. The organization is first. Decisions of the organization supersede those of individuals. The power of any meeting is in the hands of the voting members.

2. All members have equal rights. Full participation in business meetings by making motions, debating, and voting is among those rights.

3. A minimum number of voting members (known as a quorum) must be present in order to transact business legally. The general rule is a majority of the entire membership, if the bylaws don't define the quorum.

4. Only one main proposal may be before the assembly at a time. Only one member may have the floor at a time.

5. There must be full debate before voting on any proposal unless this is suspended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote.

6. A proposal is the item under discussion, never the person who introduced it. Personal remarks are always out of order.

7. A proposal once decided may not be presented in that same form in the same session. This is to avoid wasting time.

8. A majority vote decides a question except in cases where basic right of members is involved. Then a larger vote is required. A majority vote is generally defined as more than half of the votes cast.

9. A two-thirds (2/3) vote is necessary for any motion that deprives a member of rights—such as changing the rules of debate, closing debate, closing nominations, or changing previous decisions without notice.

10. Silence gives consent. Those who do not vote agree, by their silence, to allow those who do vote to make the decisions.

From THE BASICS
NAP Student Leadership Notebook
National Association of Parliamentarians

Approval of minutes can be done quickly if the secretary has sent them to the members prior to the meeting. If this is done there is no need to read the minutes. The chair simply asks, "Are there any corrections to the minutes as printed?" If a correction is suggested, it can be handled by general consent.

Reports – Not every officer and committee will have a report at each meeting. Reports are divided into 4 different groups: officers, boards, standing committees, special committees. The order of reports within the 4 groups should be given in the order in which they are listed in the bylaws, or in the case of special committees, in the order they were created.

Printed Reports –If everyone gets into the habit of putting the reports in writing & distributing them before the meeting, this part of the agenda could move along quickly. If copies of the printed report are received in advance, the presiding officer can ask thee specific officer or chairman, "Do you have any additions to the printed report?" Most of the time the answer is no and the meeting can move on.

Special Orders – This category allows a group to specify a certain time for considering a specific subject and gives it priority for that time. A two-thirds vote is required to make something a special order. In most organizations the only time you will see special orders on the agenda is when the bylaws require a particular item be handled at a specific meeting. An example is the election of officers, when the bylaws indicate at which meeting the election of officers is to be considered.

Unfinished Business – The most misunderstood and abused section of the agenda is unfinished business. It is frequently referred to as old business, which is incorrect. Unfinished business is just that – business that was started but hasn't been finished.

New Business – It's easy to determine what fits into this category. Basically, it is anything that the group can properly take up and doesn't fit anywhere else. The presiding officer cannot refuse to allow business to come up under new business as long as the business is within the purpose of the group.

From "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Robert's Rules by Nancy Sylvester
P. Bolinder

THE RANKING ORDER OF RULES

There are a number of laws and documents that govern an organization. Your organization cannot be in violation of federal or state laws, and the governing documents of a parent organization ranks higher than any branch.
Generally, the ranking order looks like this:

- Federal laws
- State statues
- Articles of incorporation
- Governing documents of the parent organization
- The organization's constitution
- Bylaws
- Special rules of order
- Parliamentary authority
- Standing rules
- Policies and procedures

Federal Laws and State Statutes - Federal tax laws govern many of the procedures of tax exempt organizations. In addition, each state has laws that apply to organizations.
Parent Organization - Bylaws of the local organization can't conflict with the bylaws of the parent organization.
Articles of Incorporation - The articles are the legal instrument required to incorporate the organization. They must be filed with the state of incorporation. Articles of Incorporation are the highest legal document of an organization.
Constitution - Parliamentary authorities have recommended combining constitution and bylaws. It's easier for members to look up information if there is only one document.
Bylaws - Bylaws are rules that, for the most part, cannot be suspended (unless the bylaws themselves provide for a method of suspending them, which is self-defeating). They should include the rules the group considers so important they cannot be changed at the whim of members present at a single meeting.
Special Rules of Order - Sometimes organizations need additional rules of order, called special rules of order that differ from the parliamentary authority. Most groups do not find a need to have special rules of order.

Parliamentary Authority - Most organizations use Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised as their parliamentary authority.

Standing Rules - Standing rules govern the administration of the organization as opposed to rules regarding parliamentary procedure. At the beginning of a convention, rules are adopted specific to that convention.

Policies and Procedures - Some groups have additional detailed policies and procedures regarding administration of the organization. Sometimes policies and procedures are combined into one document.

*This information is from **The Complete Idiot's Guide to Robert's Rules**, 2nd edition, by Nancy Sylvester.*

Parliamentary Presentation

Convention 2023

QUORUM & AGENDA

QUORUM: Minimum number of members who must be present to conduct business.

AGENDA: Order of business to be conducted

SAMPLE AGENDA

Opening Ceremonies

A. Invocation
B. Pledge of Allegiance

Adoption of Agenda

Reading and Approval of minutes

Financial Reports

Officers Reports

Reports of Committees

Unfinished Business

New Business

Adjourn

PROCESSING A MAIN MOTION

1. SEEKING RECOGNITION (Member) "Madam President....
2. ASSIGNING THE FLOOR (President) "Mary"
3. MAKING THE MOTION (Member) "I move that...."
4. SECOND (Another Member) "Second" *The member wants to talk about it.*
5. STATING THE MOTION (President) "It is moved and seconded that.... " *The motion now belongs to the assembly and the maker has little or no control over the motion.*
6. DEBATE (By the president and then by the members) "Is there any discussion?" *Discussion is heard using a pro/con basis for recognition of speakers. Amendments are made during this time.*
7. PUTTING THE QUESTION/TAKING THE VOTE (President) "The question is on the motion that... Those in favor please say 'aye'. Those opposed please say 'no'
8. ANNOUNCING THE RESULTS (President) "The motion is carried OR the motion is lost (defeated). The next business in order is....."

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Jurassic Parliament

Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

CHEAT SHEET

WAIT! WAIT! WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

BIG MISTAKES

	If you are the chair, say...	If you are a member speaking about another member, say...	If you are a member speaking about the chair, say...
speaking twice in a row	Members are reminded that no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.	Point of order...The member has spoken twice while others are waiting to speak.	Point of order...The chair does not have the right to dominate the discussion, but must speak in turn.
not seeking recognition	Members will kindly seek recognition before speaking.	Point of order...Members must seek recognition before speaking.	[not applicable]
speaking directly to another member	Members will kindly address all remarks to the chair.	Point of order...Members are supposed to speak to the chair.	[not applicable]
interrupting another person	Members will kindly refrain from interrupting one another.	Point of order...Interrupting is not allowed.	Point of order...The chair does not have the right to interrupt a member.

INAPPROPRIATE REMARKS

personal remarks	Members will refrain from making personal remarks.	Point of order...Personal remarks are not allowed.	Point of order...Personal remarks are not allowed.
insulting language, vulgarity, attacks	Insulting or vulgar language is not allowed at our meetings.	Point of order...The language used by the member is insulting/vulgar.	Point of order...The chair is using insulting/ vulgar language.
inflammatory language	Inflammatory language is not allowed.	Point of order...That remark is inflammatory.	Point of order...That remark is inflammatory.
criticizing past actions	Members may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.*	Point of order...Members may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.*	Point of order...The chair may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.*
remarks that are not germane (relevant)	Members will keep all remarks strictly to the topic under discussion.	Point of order...In my view that topic is not germane to our discussion.	Point of order...In my view that topic is not germane to our discussion.

* Exceptions: if group as a whole is discussing past action, or if member intends to introduce motion to amend or rescind it at end of speech.

Cheat Sheet for Local Government
P.O. Box 77553 · Seattle, WA 98177
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