

# USWT PARLIMENTARIAN MANUAL



*The mission of the United States Women of Today is to  
provide state and local member chapters opportunities in the areas of leadership training,  
personal growth, community service and work in partnerships with established foundations.*

# United States Women of Today Parliamentary Procedure

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## *Section 1- History*

### **I. How the History of Parliamentary Procedure Has Progressed**

#### A. Parliamentary Procedure originated in the English Parliaments.

1. Systematic rules of parliamentary procedure have gradually evolved over centuries.
2. Parliamentary law was the original name given to the rules and customs for carrying on business in the English Parliament. They were developed through a continuing process of decisions and precedent.

#### B. The settlers brought it to America.

1. With the settling of the New World parliamentary rules became the basic substance from which the practice of legislative bodies in the United States evolved.
2. Thomas Jefferson strived to create a practical model that the thirteen colonies would all agree to and accept. This became known as “Jefferson’s Manual.”
3. Decades later - as the country further developed - a need was identified to establish rules for non-legislative bodies. Luther Cushing was the first to attempt to meet the procedural needs of the country’s growing number of voluntary societies. However, “Cushing’s Manual” proved to be insufficient to meet the needs of the groups for which it was intended. The confusion in volunteer meetings that still existed became a concern of Henry M. Robert.

#### C. The writing of Robert’s Rules.

1. Robert M. Henry attended many meetings himself uncomfortable because there were different proceedings across the country. He started keeping track of circumstances that occurred and began formulating his own pocket reference.
2. He identified a need to enable civic-minded people to belong to several organizations or to move to new localities without constantly encountering different parliamentary rules.
3. Parliamentary Procedure became uniform in 1876 when Henry M. Robert published his Parliamentary Procedure Manual.
  - a. The publishers weren’t so sure how the book would sell and Robert Henry had to pay for the first publication out of his own pocket. The book is now in it’s twelfth edition.
  - b. The tenth, current, edition has been brought about through a process of keeping the book up to date with the growth of parliamentary procedure. All editions of the work issued after the death of the original author have been the work of persons who either knew and worked with the original author or knew and worked with persons who did.
  - c. Today “Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised” (RONR) **is used by most organizations** when conducting business.
  - d. It is unique in that it is an **internationally** accepted method of practice.

*“It is difficult to find another branch of knowledge where a small amount of study produces such great results in increased efficiency in a country where the people rule, as in parliamentary procedure.” ~Henry M. Robert*

## Section 2 - Basic Concepts

### I. The Purpose of Parliamentary Procedure/89

- A. Parliamentary law is simple in principle. It is based largely on mere common sense and courtesy. It seems technical because it has been necessary to develop a special vocabulary for discussing it. But if one knows the vocabulary, the rules come easy.
- B. The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to facilitate the business of the group while ensuring an equal opportunity for all members to contribute and participate in the business.
- C. Parliamentary rules of procedure were established to enable an assembly to transact business with speed and efficiency - these rules should assist a meeting, not inhibit it.

### II. The Basic Principles of Parliamentary Law

- A. Parliamentary procedure is constructed on a careful balance of rights. While facilitating business, the rules of parliamentary procedure are designed to protect the rights:
  - Of the majority,
  - Of the minority (especially a strong minority greater than one-third),
  - Of individuals members
  - Of absentees
  - And of all of these together
- B. To protect these rights there are specific measures that can be taken - these actions formulate the systematic rules known as parliamentary procedure.

### III. Five Fundamental Rules of Parliamentary Procedure

- A. ***Only one subject may claim the attention of the assembly at one time.***
  1. Therefore, various kinds of motions have been assigned an order of precedence due to situations that can arise from the discussion.
- B. ***Each idea/motion/proposition presented for consideration is entitled to full and free debate.***
  1. The right of every member to speak on any issue is as important as each member's right to vote. This gives members the opportunity to persuade other voters to change their minds and it enables an open forum for understanding why a motion is denied.
- C. ***All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations equal to every other member.***
  1. One of the chair's main responsibilities is to use the authority of the chair to ensure that all people attending a meeting are treated equally – for example, not to permit a vocal few to dominate in debates. \*\*A new member holds the same right and voice as a seasoned member.
- D. ***The will of the majority must be carried out, and the rights of the minority must be preserved.***
  1. In any group, each member agrees to be governed by the vote of the majority.
  2. The rights of the minority must be protected at all times. Although the ultimate decision rests with a 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 the minority on the next.*
- E. ***Every member has the right to understand the meaning of any question presented to a meeting, and to know what effect a decision will have.***
  1. A member always has the right to request information on any motion he or she does not thoroughly understand. Meetings must be characterized by fairness and in good faith.

### IV. Other

- A. ***The personality and desires of each member should be merged into the larger unit of the organization.***

1. A member doesn't have to vote yes on every motion. Failure to concur on a decision does not constitute withdrawal from the organization.
- B. *If at anytime these rights are infringed upon, a higher (two-thirds) vote is required.*

### **Section 3- What All Members Need to Know About Motions**

#### **I. There are eight steps necessary to properly present and dispose of a motion:**

##### **A. STEP 1 - Member obtains the right to speak** (obtains the floor).

1. When no one else has the floor, members are to rise, or raise hand, or stand at a microphone and await recognition.
2. Address the chair - rise if desired by the chair.
3. **Common Mistake:** *Members do not stand up, do not wait to be recognized, and typically start to discuss their motion before completing the prescribed order.*

##### **B. STEP 2 - Be recognized by the chair.**

1. Chair calls member's name, points or nods to the member, or identifies microphone giving permission to speak, hence chair, "recognizes" member.

##### **C. STEP 3 - State your motion.**

1. Member says, "***I move that...***" or "***I move to...***" NOT "I make the motion that..." or "*I so move.*" "I move" is the key.

##### **D. STEP 4 - Motion needs a second by another member.**

1. Another member seconds the motion;
  - a. Recognition is not required.
  - b. A member calls out "***Second.***" Seconding merely means you want to discuss the topic – it does not mean you are in favor of it – in fact, you may have reasons why not to vote for the subject matter.
2. **Common Mistake:** *The person seconding the motion dives into the merits of the motion, instead of waiting for the question to be placed in front of the group and/or before the person making the motion has spoken (they have first right to speak).*

##### **E. STEP 5 - Chair states motion.**

1. The presiding officer restates the motion to the assembly.
  - a. The chair says "***It is moved and seconded that...is there any discussion.***" (Some motions cannot be discussed. Consult your parliamentary authority.)
2. **Common Mistake:** *Motion is restated differently from the wording of the maker! Beware because the motion that is adopted is the one stated by the presiding officer, not the one stated by the maker of the original motion.*

##### **F. STEP 6 - Debate is held.**

1. The members debate the motion.
2. **Maker of the motion has the first chance to speak.**

- a. Note: Members should not talk against their own motions, even though they may have changed their minds. They may, however, vote against their own motions or withdraw them. RONR (10th ed.), p.31-54.
3. **Debate should alternate the pros and cons to the issue.**
4. **Members wishing to speak must first obtain the floor** (steps 1 and 2 above).
5. **Remarks must be addressed to the chair** and confined to the motion being discussed.
  - a. Members are to talk through the presiding officer and not at each other across the room.
  - b. Refrain from using members names--use title or "the previous speaker" or "the speaker who..."
6. **Observe time limits.** Sometimes these are previously established. If not: Ten minutes per speech. (If RONR, (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) is the Parliamentary Authority)
7. **No more than two speeches per member per motion on the same day.**
8. **No second speech if another is seeking to make a first one.**
9. ***Common Mistake: Debate gets out of control in temper, in duration, in relevance!***

#### **G. STEP 7 - Vote is taken.**

1. **Presiding officer asks for the affirmative votes and the negative votes;**
  - a. When discussion has concluded the chair calls for the vote. ***"Are you ready to vote? The question is on the adoption of the motion that ...(repeat the motion). Those in favor say 'Aye' (pause). Those opposed say 'No'."***
2. ***Common Mistakes:***
  - a. *The presiding officer states 'All in favor' instead of 'Those in favor'*
  - b. *Presiding officer fails to tell the members what to do as a matter of voting (for example, 'say aye', 'stand up', 'raise your hand', etc.)*
  - c. *Presiding officer states those in favor same sign (if ayes and nays are the same sign how do you know which side wins?)*
  - d. *The negative vote is never requested or counted!*

#### **H. STEP 8 - Presiding officer announces result of vote and action to be taken.**

1. The presiding officer announces the result of the voting; instructs the corresponding officer to take action; and introduces the next item of business.
  - a. ***"The ayes (noes) have it, the motion is adopted (lost), and ...(state the outcome-what has been decided)."***
2. ***Common Mistake: Presiding officer fails to pronounce the result of the voting! No one is instructed to take action.***

**Note: Implementing the proper steps of a motion will expedite your meeting!**

***Step 1: Member stands and obtains the right to speak.***

***Step 2: Member gains recognition by the chair.***



***Step 3: Member makes a motion.***

***Step 4: Motion is seconded.***

***Step 5: Presiding officer restates the motion to the audience.***

***Step 6: The assembly debates the motion.***

***Step 7: The vote is taken.***

***Step 8: The chair announces whether the motion was adopted or not; instructs the correct member to take action.***

## **II. Specific Rules to Debate Motions**

- A.** If your meetings seem to drag on and on, then perhaps it's time to teach all your members the proper manner to debate motions according to RONR, (10<sup>th</sup> ed.).
1. A member can speak twice to the motion but only the second time after everyone who wishes to speak the first time has spoken. (Justice and equality)  
*(This could speed up a meeting by not wasting time hearing unnecessary matters.)*
  2. Each member can speak for ten minutes each time he speaks unless the assembly has rules that state differently. (Equality) *(You can also speed up your meeting by adopting a Rule of Order to allow 2-3 minute speeches.)*  
*\*\* (Debate should alter between pros and cons - if there are no further pros or cons end debate - don't allow members to go on and on if you already agree or disagree on a motion)*
  3. Debate must be germane to the motion. (One subject at a time)
  4. Speakers must address all remarks to the chair.
  5. Speakers must be courteous and never attack other members or make illusion to the motives of members.
    - a. In controversial issues keep discussion focused on the ideas (principals) not other people (personalities). However, a member can question the consequences of the motion.
    - b. In debate a member cannot state that another's statement is false or call another member a liar. He/she can say that there is strong evidence that a member is mistaken or that in his/her research he/she has found something else to be true.
  6. Speakers refer to officers by title, and should avoid mentioning other member's names as much as possible. (Impartiality).
  7. When speaking to a motion, the member begins his debate by saying "I speak for the motion" and the reasons why, or "I speak against the motion" and the reasons why. (Courtesy)
  8. When a member has been assigned the floor to speak the presiding officer either sits down, or, if the members can't see him/her when seated, stands back from the lectern when the member is speaking. (One item at time = one person has the floor at a time.)
  9. Members must refrain from speaking adversely on a prior action not pending unless the motions to rescind, reconsider, or amend something previously adopted are pending. Or unless he/she is concluding his remarks by giving notice that he/she will rescind, reconsider or amend it.

10. A member must sit down if debate is interrupted by a point of order, or if the chair is rising to make a ruling.
11. A member must not disturb the assembly during debate -- that means no cross talk between members while another is speaking. That means that they can't address each other or ask questions of each other but must ask the question through the chair by the procedure of a point of information.
12. In debate a member can read from a paper, as long as no one objects or he/she has the permission of the assembly.

RONR, (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) pages 41-42

### ***Section 4 - All About Motions***

#### **I. In Parliamentary Law, a "Motion" is:**

- A. A proposal that the group takes a certain action.
- B. Types of actions may include:
  1. Improve a pending motion
  2. Regulate or cut off debate
  3. Delay a decision
  4. Suppress a proposal
  5. Meet an emergency
  6. Gain information on a pending motion
  7. Enforce rights and privileges
  8. Consider a question again
  9. Change an action already taken
  10. Terminate a meeting
  11. Question the decision of the chair
- C. Methods used to perform each of the above are divided into a five classes, some of which have a higher priority which is called, "order of precedence."

#### **II. The Concept of "The Order of Precedence"**

- A. The priority of motions (or precedence) is based on the fundamental principal of "one question at a time," or essentially, one topic at a time.
- B. Why is precedence important? Knowing how to accomplish a particular act gives you the power to take the action you desire, yet have it done in a diplomatic manner.
- C. Once a motion is placed before a meeting it must be adopted or rejected by a vote, or the meeting must dispose of the question in some "other way" before any other business is introduced.
  1. A meeting can deal with main motions in several ways other than just passing or defeating it.
  2. These "other ways" are the purpose of the various secondary motions, namely, subsidiary, privileged, and incidental motions.
- D. Three of the five classes of motions - main motions, subsidiary motions, and privileged motions - fall into a particular order of precedence, which gives a definite rank to each.
  1. The main motion - which does not take precedence over anything – ranks lowest and main motions yield to all secondary motions.

2. Each of the other motions have a proper position in the rank order, taking precedence over the motions that rank below and yielding to those that rank above it.
  - a. When a motion is on the floor, a motion of higher precedence may be proposed but no motion of lower precedence is in order.
  - b. In voting, a meeting proceeds with the various motions in inverse order – the last one proposed, being of highest precedence, is the first one to be decided.
  - c. At any given time there can be only one pending motion of any given rank.
    - 1) Any additional motion proposed during consideration of a motion can be accepted by the chair only if they are of higher precedence.
  - d. It should be noted that “precedence” and “importance” are not synonyms. The most important motion – the main motion- is the lowest in precedence. E. A secondary motion takes precedence (or priority) over a main motion.
- F. When a secondary motion is placed before a meeting it becomes the immediately pending question. The main motion remains pending - or put on hold - while the secondary motion is dealt with.
- G. Certain secondary motions also take precedence over other secondary motions, **so it is possible for more than one secondary motion to be pending at any one time** (together with the main motion).

### III. Five Classes of Motions with Brief Descriptions

- A. **Main Motions** - Bring a question/business before the assembly.
- B. **Subsidiary Motions** – Purpose are *to modify or dispose* of the main motion under discussion.
  1. Seven subsidiary motions listed from highest to lowest rank include:
    - a. **Table** – To lay a motion aside temporarily.
    - b. **Previous question** – Used to close debate on a question.
    - c. **Limit or extend limits of debate** – To change the normal rules of debate.
    - d. **Postpone to a certain time** – Allows a main motion to be considered at a later time.
    - e. **Refer to committee** – Used when it seems advisable for a small group to work out further details.
    - f. **Amend** – To change or modify the wording of a motion by striking out, adding, or both. Note: You are not to change the intent of the motion by your amendment, otherwise that should be “considered out of order.”
    - g. **Postpone indefinitely** - To suppress or kill a main motion.
- C. **Privileged Motions** - Have *no connection with the main motion, but* are of such importance as to *demand immediate consideration*.
  1. Five privileged motions listed in highest to lowest rank include:
    - a. **Fix the time to adjourn** – To determine the date/hour/place for another meeting before the next regular meeting.
    - b. **Adjourn** – To close the meeting entirely.

- c. **Recess** – To propose a short intermission.
- d. **Question (point) of privilege** - An interruption that is allowed if a situation is affecting the comfort, rights, or privileges of a meeting or of an individual.
- e. **Orders of the day** – The agenda or order of business.

D. **Incidental Motions - *Miscellaneous motions*** which cannot be placed in any of the groups listed above.

1. Eight most common incidental motions include:

- a. **Point of order** – Permits members to draw attention to an error in procedure.
- b. **Suspension of the rules** – Allows the group to suspend the rules that are preventing the meeting from the action which it wants to take.
- c. **Objection to consideration** – Any member can raise objection to consideration of a question that they believe is harmful to discuss.
- d. **Consideration seriatim** – Allows for section or paragraphs to be reviewed/amended one at a time yet vote on the item as a whole.
- e. **Division of the meeting** (request a standing vote) – If a member doubts the announced result of a vote they can request a counted vote.
- f. **Motions related to methods of voting** – Members can move for a vote to be taken by roll call, ballot, or standing.
- g. **Motions related to nominations** – If bylaws don't prescribe a process for voting then any member can specify a method.
- h. **Requests or inquiries** – Members can request facts, the chairs opinion on parliamentary procedure, ask permission to withdraw a motion, ask to be excused from duty, to name a few.

**Classified Motions** – Only under certain circumstances would a group *revisit business* that they've already dealt with. Because it is often a sensitive issue, there are specific criteria to follow. There are four motions that can bring something already considered (business) back to a meeting.

- 1. **Take from the table** – Resumes debate on a question that was temporarily set aside.
- 2. **Rescind** – A proposal to cancel or annul a earlier decision.
- 3. **Reconsider** – Within a limited time-frame a motion can be brought back for further consideration (if a hasty decision was made, or if new information is now available).
- 4. **Discharge a committee** – If a meeting wishes to take a matter out of a committees hands so they can deal with the issue or even drop the matter completely.

### ***Section 5 Common Questions and Misinterpretations***

- A. The presiding officer must call for “any further discussion” three times before a vote can be taken. Not necessarily, remember – parliamentary procedure is designed to expedite your meetings. If the presiding officer is calling for further discussion it should be based on members participating in discussion when she has asked for it, otherwise, get on with the voting! If it is obvious that a motion is unanimous, perhaps a better method would be to utilize the rule of general consent. On the other hand, if the officer has called for the vote, but you’re not ready then you have the right to move to extend debate, or use other appropriate methods of parliamentary procedure (like move to committee for instance).
- B. Disruptive members – if they continue to be disruptive they can lose their privilege to talk and they can only regain this right upon a vote by the members. D.A member is saying things that make you uncomfortable...

#### **C. Common questions**

#### **Q. What do you do if as a member of the audience you believe that you cannot hear or see the proceedings, but you have a feasible solution?**

- A. You have the right to stop the meeting, and have the problem corrected. You ask for a "*Question of Privilege.*"

#### **Q. What if you notice that the agenda specifies the time for each portion of the agenda? You notice that the part you are interested in is scheduled for 9:15 am, and the time is now 9:16 am. The meeting is stuck with the 9:05 am item.**

- A. You "*Call for the Orders of the Day.*" This automatically forces everyone to abandon the 9:05 item and deal with 9:15 item.

#### **Q. What if during a meeting you notice that someone (even the presiding officer) is disobeying Robert's Rules of Order, or breaking a bylaw?**

- A. You state "*Point of Order*" and explain your point. The Presiding Officer rules on your point and you help to keep everyone in line.

#### **Q. What if you are debating a motion and you become confused on what you are actually going to vote on?**

- A. One right no one can take from you is the right to understand the process and the potential consequences of the next voting. You have the right to stop business and have someone explain the process and consequences of the debate or the voting. The Presiding Officer cannot ignore your request for information. You ask for a "*Point of Information.*"

#### **Q. Can A President Enter Debate?**

- A. The presiding officer must remain impartial and refrain from discussing issues. When it’s essential for the presiding officer to enter debate, that officer must ask the vice president to assume the chair. When this is done, the presiding officer does not reassume the chair until that item of business has been completed.

**Q. What is the Rule of General Consent?**

A. The rule of general consent can be an effective time saver at a meeting. One place this may be appropriate is in the approval of the minutes. If there are no corrections or additions the presiding officer can ask, "If *there is no objection*, we will approve the minutes as printed." *As long as no one objects, the gavel is tapped, and the motion is carried.* If, however, someone objects, then the motion is formally voted on, and debate can occur (unless it is an "undebatable" parliamentary motion). This rule can also be applied to adjourn a meeting as long as the president has asked for any other business, none is brought forth, and there are no objections.

**Q. What if a voice vote is taken and you're not so sure which side had the majority, (or on a close vote the presiding officer determines which side they think they heard as the loudest)?**

A. Whenever you doubt the Presiding Officer's hearing capabilities during a vote by loud ayes/nays, you can have the vote taken by having voters stand instead of yelling. You call for a "*Division of the Assembly*" and the vote has to be retaken in a more accurate manner.

*You do not need to be recognized, or seconded. No one can amend or debate your motion. No vote is necessary. You can get your way without going through the standard steps of a motion.*

**Q. What if a sensitive or embarrassing motion is made?**

A. You can kill it before it is discussed by getting 2/3 of the assembly to agree with you to kill the motion. You call out, "*I Object to Consideration of...*"

**Q. Can A President Vote?**

A. The presiding officer is a member of your group, and is therefore entitled to a vote. In parliamentary practice, however, they refrain from doing so in order to maintain impartiality as much as possible. There are various times when a president can vote.

1. In general a motion requires a majority vote. A motion receiving a tie vote is automatically lost unless:
  - The president cares **to break the tie.**
  - A motion will also be lost if the president cares **to make the tie.**
2. When the vote is by ballot, the president **may vote during the balloting**, but not after the ballots are counted. If the result is a tie, the vote is lost.

**Q. What if I am uncomfortable with the outcome of a vote?**

A. You always have the right to annul or amend something already adopted. Quite often it is obvious that a great deal of preparation and support has been quietly organized before a motion is presented to the members. The motion is adopted before you even understand the true purpose and potential consequences of the motion. Fortunately there are no time limitations to annul or amend any motion.

**Q. What can you do if the meeting is dragging on and on?**

- A. Most organizations are blessed with a member or two who love the sound of their own voices. Suppose the motion before the group is a simple one and everyone seems to be for it, yet a couple of members continue to yak to no purpose. There are several things you might do. First of all you might...

***“Move the previous question”*** - This motion must be seconded, may not be discussed, and since it limits the rights of the minority it requires a two-thirds vote. If carried, the original motion is must be voted upon directly after voting to approve the motion to adopt the previous question.

***Limit Debate*** - The limit set may be one of time or number of speakers; such as "I move to limit the debate to another five minutes," or "I move the limit debate to one or more speaker on each side of the question." A two-thirds vote is required; it is not debatable.

### **Q.What is a quorum?**

- A. A quorum is the minimum number of persons who must be present at a meeting in order that business may be legitimately conducted. It is usually less than the total number of members of the organization and no larger than the number of members that might normally be expected to attend regularly scheduled meetings. It should approximate the largest number of members that can be depended on to attend any meeting (except very bad weather or other extremely unfavorable conditions). RONR (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) page 20

A quorum is necessary to ensure that all decisions, which commit a group to a course of action, are heard, understood and approved by an appropriate part of the group. It is intended to prevent the control of the group by a small minority and guarantees that all individuals and points of view may be heard. Failure to reach quorum is frustrating for those who take the time to attend meetings.

### **Q. What can we do if a quorum is not present?**

- A. If quorum is not reached, the meeting may not take place. Should quorum be lost during the course of the meeting by the departure of members, the meeting should cease to function. In the absence of a quorum any business transacted (except those noted in the next paragraph) is null and void.

The only actions that can legally be taken in the absence of a quorum is to fix the time to which adjourn, adjourn, recess, or take measures to obtain a quorum. RONR (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) pages 336-337. You could establish a bylaw that could stipulate that if a meeting had to be terminated for lack of a quorum, another meeting would be held x days or weeks later, and that the number of members attending that meeting will constitute a quorum.

## ***Section 6– Tips for Presiding Officers***

### **I. Passing the Torch – The Transition of Officers**

- A. After the election it is important that the previous officers meet with the new ones. The more new officers are trained and mentored the easier the transition will be. This will also ensure continuity.
  1. The outgoing officers should give the incoming officers their files and go over the information with them.
  2. If at all possible there should be a separate training session for the new officers.
  3. The new president should be trained in parliamentary procedure, how to conduct a meeting, prepare an agenda, and other necessary information needed to fulfill duties.
  4. The treasurer should be brought up to date with the financial records of the organization. If these are on the computer, then he or she should be made familiar with the program and how to give reports.
  5. The secretary should be trained in how to take the minutes, what to include in them and the correct way of writing the minutes and keeping them in a permanent book.
  6. If the officers comprise the executive committee or board then they should be brought up to date with the activities of the previous one and what is expected of them in this new position.

## II. What is the Presiding Officer's Role in Parliamentary Procedure?

- A. Know the proper "Steps in a Motion"(pages 6 and 7).
- B. Know the "Rules of Debate" (page 8) and enforce them.
- C. Know the Procedure for Taking a Vote.
  1. If it looks like no one wants to speak any more, the chair takes the vote. The chair could state: **"Is there further discussion?"** Look around the room. **"Hearing none, the motion is..."** **"Those in favor say, 'Aye'."** **"Those opposed say 'no'."**
    - a. Keep members informed of pending business – look to see there are no confused expressions on member's faces - make sure they understand what is being voted on.
    - b. If you are sensing tension, it is up to you to be sure that people have had the opportunity to voice their opinion – if you know parliamentary procedure you can offer alternatives in order that members can convey their opinions. You may ask quieter members for their thoughts. Your duty as presiding officer is to be sure all sides have been heard.
  2. The chair announces the vote and what happens.
    - a. If the "ayes" win. The chair states: **"The ayes have it and the motion is carried. We will ...** then state who is in charge of arrangements.
    - b. If the no's have it the chair states: **"The no's have it, and the motion is lost."** **"We won't be..."**
    - c. **"Is there further business?"**
  3. The chair must always ask for the no vote even though it seems unanimous. {Impartiality}
  4. The chair does not ask for abstentions.
  5. The chair does not show partiality in the vote by saying, **"All** those in favor say "aye."
  6. The chair does not say "All those in favor say "aye". Those opposed **same sign.**" (If everyone is saying aye for yes and no which side wins?)
6. The chair must announce the vote and tell the members what is going to be done or not done.
  - A. Know How to Use the Gavel



1. The gavel is a symbol of authority and when used correctly and wisely the gavel can help your meeting. Officers and members should understand the meaning and use of the gavel.
  - A. A series of short taps - Used to call the meeting to order, to call member's attention to the chair and the business at hand, or as a means to restore order during an event.
  - B. One tap of the gavel - Used to adopt a motion, or to close the meeting after adjournment.
  
- B. Other Parli Tips
  1. Insist on accepted parliamentary procedure and accept the responsibility of maintaining order during the meeting.
  2. If the president finds it necessary to leave the chair, she may ask the vice president to preside during her absence, and she remains out of the chair until the vote on this issue is taken. This may have been to participate in the discussion or to take care of an emergency.
  3. The president may present facts not known to other members without leaving the chair, but expressing opinion should be avoided.
  4. Rather than saying, "I think," or "I appoint," try to say, "The Chair thinks," or "The Chair appoints."
  5. Refrain from calling a "member" out of order, when actually the "motion" is out of order.
  6. If a motion requires a two-thirds vote, the president should announce this before asking for the vote. A counted vote must be taken under these circumstances.
  7. The president may at times facilitate business by proceeding with the common consent of the group. "If there are no objections, the motion passes/is withdrawn."
  8. Have your bylaws and Roberts Rules of Order while in the chair.
  
- C. Be familiar with the Nomination and Election process found on page 32 of this guide.

### III. Know the rules of meeting procedures and follow them vigorously. (From "THE PERFECT ONE-HOUR MEETING"- By Robert McConnell Productions)

- A. *First, plan an Agenda* which means "thing to be done" in Latin.
  1. Before the meeting the president and secretary get together and see what needs to be accomplished at the meeting. Begin by reviewing the Standard Order of Business as listed in RONR, (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) page\_\_ :
    - a. The reading of the minutes
    - b. Reports of Officers and Boards
    - c. Reports of Standing Committees
    - d. Reports of Special Committees
    - e. Special Orders
    - f. Unfinished Business and General Orders
    - g. New Business
  2. If your agenda does something different than what is listed in RONR, (such as recite the Women of Today creed), then you should adopt a "Rule of Order." This type of rule helps with the transaction of business, but is different than what the parliamentary authority prescribes. For more information on Rules of Order, see page 28.
  
- B. *Where do you get the information to put on the Agenda?*
  1. The first place to look is the minutes and the **agenda of the previous meeting**. Find all the "unfinished business," not "old business".

2. The next step is for the president or secretary to **call the committee chairmen, officers, and/or board members** to see if they have anything they want to bring up at the meeting. These items are put under the appropriate headings.
3. Then **list the topics of new business**. Were there items of new business on the previous meeting's agenda that weren't taken up? These would then be the first on the agenda. Next add any other items of business that you know about. Also leave space and time for the members to bring up their own new business.
4. Finally, **check the governing documents for things done at certain times of the year**: such as nominations and elections, annual Christmas Party or fundraising project. These come under special orders because they are set in the bylaws to be discussed at a certain meeting. (Or you can do this first. Just be sure to check your governing documents for certain things that are to be done.)

#### IV. Ways to Expedite Your Meetings

- A. Follow the agenda.
  1. A motion to adopt the agenda should be proposed at the meeting. Once adopted each item of business on the agenda will come before the meeting unless:
    - a. No one moves a motion,
    - b. No one objects to withdrawal suggested by the sponsoring individual or group,
    - c. A motion to delete an item from the agenda is made and passed by two-thirds or more,
    - d. The meeting runs out of time before the item can be discussed
- B. Call the officers and committee chairman beforehand to see what they want to put on the agenda.
- C. Adopt a rule stating that members must submit agenda items in writing or call the president before the meeting to have business included in the agenda. This eliminates time-wasted wording and rewording (or amending) motions if members would think through their motions ahead of time.
- D. Put on the agenda only those items that you know are going to happen. After calling all the committees, if no one has a report, don't ask for committee reports. Take that order of business off the agenda. If there is no unfinished business then don't put it on, and don't ask for it. **If you have done your preparatory work, you will know whether there is any unfinished business.**
- E. Take up business as it is presented. If a committee has a motion to make at the end of its report, take it up at that time and not under new business. Ask the committee chairman to give you a written copy of the motion so that it can be incorporated into your meeting script.
- F. Finally, ask the people who have reports to sit in the front and be prompt in rising and giving the report when the chair calls on them.
- G. Know the Rule of General Consent
  1. The five most helpful words a chair will ever find are, **"If there is no objection..."**
    - a. Use in instances where there seems to be no opposition in routine business; or on questions of little importance. Parliamentary procedure is designed to protect the minority, and generally need not be strictly enforced when there is no minority

(opposition) to protect. In these cases, a motion can be adopted without going through the steps listed on page 6-7, or even the formality of making a motion.

- b. Must have the presence of a quorum.
2. The chair merely states, "**If there is no objection**, (we will do such and such)."  
When no objection is heard, the chair states, "**Since there is no objection**, ... (such and such a motion is adopted)."
3. If someone objects, the chair cheerfully proceeds with the traditional steps of a motion.
4. Examples which clearly urge for the unanimous consent approach are:
  - a. To correct or approve the minutes.
  - b. To withdraw an own motion before the vote is taken. The maker may wish to withdraw a motion; but the motion belongs to the assembly. Only the assembly may allow the withdrawal of a motion.
  - c. To suspend a rule on a matter clearly not controversial (and as long as no bylaw is violated).
  - d. To allow a speaker a few more minutes than the prescribed time.
  - e. To allow a guest speaker to speak in an order contrary to the approved agenda (or Rules of Order).
  - f. To divide a complex motion into logical parts for discussion, amendments, and voting purposes.
  - g. To close polls on a voting process after inquiring if there are any more votes. No motion to close the polls is necessary.

H. *Other Tips - Prepare for the meeting, and ask these questions:*

1. "What do we want to accomplish at this meeting?" Put an emphasis on this. Make it a high priority.
2. "Can certain things be done more efficiently by a committee with final approval by the members?" Don't waste the assembly's time by having it act like a committee.
3. "Can we assign time limits to each agenda item?"
  - a. Yes, give each order of business a time allocation. Write it bold print by each agenda heading. Then have the assembly adopt the agenda. When the time is up, the assembly must decide what to do - vote on it, postpone it to another time, or refer it to a committee. No more spinning your wheels! Go forward.
4. "Can we limit the amount of time each member speaks?" Adopt a rule at the beginning of the meeting that limits a member's debate to **two to three minutes each time he or she speaks**, or whatever works in your meeting setting.
5. "Can we make a motion at the beginning of the meeting that states the time that we adjourn?" Yes, you can!
6. Give the presiding officer the agenda several days before the meeting so that he can practice out loud what he is going to say. Or better yet write a meeting script for the presiding officer to read.
7. Carry out the plan.
  - a. At the meeting, call it to order promptly at the designated time.
  - b. Insist that the members write each motion on a piece of paper and give it to the chair. This saves time in having to reword motions.
  - c. Insist that they follow the rules of debate: Each member must obtain the floor – that is rise and be recognized by the chair before beginning to speak. (In groups under twelve, it may not be necessary for the member to rise, but to raise his hand instead to be recognized by the chair.) Members keep discussion to the topic. Members can only speak twice to each motion unless the members adopt rules that are different.

8. Educate the chair about when to take the vote. Don't let silences drag on, if no one is rising to speak, take the vote.
9. Don't let the members deviate from the agenda or the discussion at hand.
  - Characteristics that contribute to a desirable presiding officer:
    1. A leader – has a positive attitude, accepts responsibility, and assumes the initiative.
    2. Fair – Difficult decisions in recognition, appointing committees, etc. demand them to be fair and retain their position.
    3. Is Tactful – Courteous treatment of all members is always a desirable trait.
    4. Exhibits good judgement – Planning, organizing, and management is her trademark.

## V. Presiding Officer Checklist

You Are The Presiding Officer...It is your obligation to insure the orderly running of your chapter's meetings. Use this checklist to help you prepare for each and every meeting.

### Before the Meeting...

- Keep a list of the business to be brought before your membership during the month.
- Type an agenda listing all business, reports, etc. to be covered at the meeting.
- Make sufficient copies for each member that will attend, and to be distributed to absent members personally or through the mail.
- Contact all members who will be reporting or presenting business as a reminder of the importance of their presence at the meeting.
- Review the chapter bylaws in preparation for your first meeting, and regularly thereafter to be ready to handle issues that may come up at the meeting.
- Arrive early to get meeting room in order and to set out agendas, correspondence, etc.
- Seat your chapter parliamentarian beside you to advise, and have your secretary and treasurer seated near you as well.
- Plan the length of your meeting and stick to your plan.
- You may wish to "plant" motions and seconds to expedite putting things on the floor.

### At the Meeting....

- Call the meeting to order on time. Habitually late members will soon learn to arrive on time, or else know that they will arrive late.
- Be confident and poised in front of your membership; review meeting procedures just prior to your meeting.
- Follow your agenda very closely - this is the business that you want to cover; don't stray from it.
- You may wish to limit reports under unfinished business to a maximum of 2-3 minutes each. If so, please inform chairmen who will be making reports.
- Move swiftly from one item of business to the next without lulls that will lose member's attention.
- Each item under "New Business" should be presented with a motion, a second, and then discussion follows.
- Be attentive to the atmosphere of the meeting – if you are noticing dissatisfaction, deal with it sooner rather than paying for it later.
- After all business and reports have been covered on the agenda, ask for any other business.
- If there is no further business, you may tap the gavel and say, "This meeting is adjourned." No motion necessary!

### After the Meeting...

\_\_\_ Help inform members who were unable to attend about business covered – keep lines of communication open.

\_\_\_ Follow-up and follow through on commitments \_\_\_  
Begin the process again.

## VI. Sample Script for the Women of Today Order of Business

1. Chair - “The meeting will come to order.” (One tap of the gavel)
2. Chair - “The Chair calls on the parliamentarian to establish a quorum.”
3. Chair - “The Chair calls on the chaplain for the invocation.”\*
4. Chair - “Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance to be led by \_\_\_\_.”\*
5. Chair – “Remain standing for the United States Women of Today Creed led by \_\_\_\_.”\*
6. Chair – “(PE LPM/someone you delegated to prior to the meeting) will lead the ice-breaker.”\*
7. Chair – “We will have a report of the officers.” \* Rule of Order for WT practice to hear the chairs report after all other officers.
8. Chair – “The secretary will read the minutes.” Note: Your chapter should adopt a Rule of Order if your chapter prints the minutes and skips the reading of the minutes...
9. Chair – “Are there any corrections to the minutes?” Corrections are suggested without motion or vote.
10. Chair - “ If there are no further corrections, and if there is no objection, the minutes stand approved as \_\_\_\_ (read/corrected/printed).”
11. Chair – “The Chair calls on the treasurer.” (Report is given)
12. Chair – “Are there any questions?” (Answer the questions or ask the treasurer to answer the questions.) “The treasurer’s report is received for the file.”
13. Chair – “The Chair calls on MVP, PVP, COB, (along with any other officers you have) and the presiding officer. “The \_\_\_\_ report is received for the file.”
14. Chair – “May we have the report on the \_\_\_\_ committee?” This is the time on the agenda where Standing Committee and Special Committee reports should be given. If a committee report contains a recommendation for action, the reporting member moves that the recommendation be adopted at the time of their report, not later on the agenda.
15. Chair - “Are there any questions?” if none then, “the report is filed” without action.
16. Chair – “We will now hear programming reports.” Call on members who are prepared to report. If you contacted them ahead of time you will know who has/ and who doesn’t have a report.
17. The next order of business is Special Orders.”
18. Chair – “The next order of business is unfinished business and General Orders.” Unfinished business is action to be completed on any business not settled when last meeting was adjourned. General Orders would be business to be brought forward that the chapter tends to do at a particular time of year.
19. Chair - “First there is...” Take action on any motions that are presented.
20. Chair – “Is there any new business?” Each new motion is discussed and settled before another main motion is proposed.
21. Amendments – After a motion has been made and seconded
22. Member: I move to amend the motion by...(must state how they wish to amend – insert, strike out, or strike out and insert word sentence.)
23. Second Member: I second the motion to amend.

24. Chair – “It has been proposed to amend the motion to read as follows...the chair states the motion and the amendment, so the group will understand how the amendment changes the motion. Amendment is handled in the same way as a main motion with...
25. Chair – “Is there any discussion?” Questions can be asked and points can be made at this time.
26. Chair – If there is no further discussion, the amendment is...chair restates the amendment.
27. Chair – “Those in favor of the amendment say “aye,” those opposed, say, “no.” Members vote.
28. Chair – “The motion to \_\_\_passes/fails.
29. Chair – “We will now vote on the main motion or the main motion plus the amendment.
30. Chair – “Is there any further discussion?” Hearing none we will now vote on (state the motion.)
31. Chair - “Those in favor, say “aye” those oppose say, “no.”
32. Chair – “The motion passes/fails.” The chair states the action that will or will not occur. 33.  
Chair – “Are there any announcements or good and welfare to be shared?”
34. Chair – “Please rise for the (your state) creed.
35. Chair – “If there is no further business, then the meeting is adjourned.” (One tap of the gavel).

## ***Section 7 – Officer and Members***

### ***I. Choosing the Right Officers By Robert McConnell Productions***

#### **A. Orientation Information**

1. Choosing the right officers doesn’t begin when the nominating committee is given the membership list and instructed to find members to serve - it really begins when a member joins the organization.
2. Every member has the possibility of serving in some leadership position if allowed to grow and develop with the organization. But the first thing the other members have to do is recognize the abilities and talents of other members. If a few people are doing all the work in an organization, then there needs to be some soul searching and self-examination.

#### **B. Leaders might ask the following questions:**

1. Are we giving new members an orientation where we explain the purpose and goals of the organization?
2. Do we explain what the officers do?
3. Do we explain what the various committees do?
4. Do we tell the new members what we expect of them?
5. Do we assign a new member a mentor?
6. Do we get to know the member and his talents so that he can be assigned to the right committees?
7. Do we give new members any information about basic parliamentary knowledge so that they can make motions at meetings and follow the business at the meetings?
8. Do we assign them to committee work immediately or do we make them wait awhile?
9. Do the members think that only certain individuals can do things?
10. Is there an inner circle in the organization so that others feel excluded?

11. If someone isn't doing their job well do we criticize or offer to help them?
  12. Do committee chairmen allow the committee members to have input or do they run the entire show and just order the committee members around?
  13. Does the president allow members to present business and participate in discussion or does the president act as a tyrant?
- C. How an organization answers these questions will determine the kind of organization and what happens to new members. The successful organization that retains members is active and growing, is the one that recognizes and uses the talents of all the members.
- D. Organizations must encourage all members to work and develop their skills. The trained members should mentor the untrained members so in time, they are prepared to take over. Continuity is the key factor. The organization is an entity in and of itself. Members come and go. By having mentors, training sessions, and a constant appreciation of everyone's work and talents, the organization will survive the transition from new member to mentor.

## **II. What is the Member's Role in Parliamentary Procedure?**

### **A. General Guide and Rights of Members**

1. To receive notice of meetings and know when meetings are held.
2. To make motions. (Whenever possible, state your ideas in the form of a motion.)
3. To debate motions.
4. To second motions.
5. To vote on motions. One person one vote. Each member has the right to vote.
6. To know the meaning of the question being debated.
7. To object when rules are violated.
8. To appeal the decision of the chair.
9. To nominate people for office.
10. To be nominated to office (may nominate self).
11. To elect officers.
12. To be elected to office.
13. To pay dues and control amount of dues.
14. To have confidence in the use of treasury and how funds are spent.
15. To have access to all minutes of meetings.
16. To possess and understand the organization's bylaws.

### **B. Responsibilities of Members**

1. To attend meetings.
2. To be on time.
3. To actively participate in meetings.
4. To make only positive motions.
5. To be ready to talk knowledgeably and intelligently on a topic.
6. To speak only to motions, not toward others opinions. Attack issues, not people.
7. To stay until the end of the meeting.

8. To be attentive and open minded.
9. To treat everyone with courtesy.
10. To speak openly, yet, allow everyone to have his/her turn to speak.
11. To follow the rules of debate.
12. To make a point concisely.
13. To insist on law and order at meetings
14. To create an environment of dignity and decorum.
15. To understand and support the organization.
16. To work with others in a cooperative fashion
17. To be familiar with the basics of parliamentary law.
18. To obey the rules of the organization.
19. To respect the rights of others in the organization.
20. To abide by the final decision of the majority.
21. To be familiar with the bylaws.
22. To select quality officers.
23. To participate in committees.
24. To respect the ruling of the chair.
25. To promote the organizations growth influence.
26. To enhance the organizations reputation.
27. To accept that the majority has the will to decide.

### ***III. What is the Secretary's Role in Parliamentary Procedure?***

- A. To record the proceedings of the meeting
  1. In an ordinary chapter, state, etc., unless the minutes are to be published, they should contain mainly a record of what was done at the meeting and not what was said by each of the members.
  2. The minutes should never reflect the secretary's opinion, favorable, or otherwise, on anything said or done.
  3. The minutes should be kept in a substantial book or binder.
    - a. The secretary's records belong to the chapter and when completed for the year and should be filed as part of the permanent records for the chapter. It is a legal requirement that a permanent record be stored on file.
- B. Secretaries should review the previous year's records in order to get ideas that will help them keep better, more accurate records during their term of office.
- C. Content of the minutes
  1. The first paragraph should contain the following information:
    - a. The kind of meeting (regular, special, board, adjourned regular, adjourned special)
    - b. The name of the organization or assembly
    - c. The date and time of the meeting and the place if it's not always the same



- d. The fact that the regular chair and secretary were present, or in their absence, the names of the persons who substituted for them
  - e. Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved – as read or as corrected – and the date of the meeting if it was other than regular business meeting.
    - 1) Any correction is made in the text of the minutes being approved; the minutes of the meeting making the correction merely state that the minutes were approved “as corrected.”
    - 2) Record approval of minutes in this fashion: "Approved as read," or "Approved as corrected." Month \_\_\_ Day \_\_\_ Year \_\_\_ Signature of Secretary\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The body of the minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each subject matter, making note of all important motions, the name of the mover and should show:
    - a. All motions or motions to bring main motions again before the assembly, stating – the wording in which each motion was adopted or otherwise disposed.
    - b. The disposition of the motion, including if it was temporarily disposed.
    - c. Any primary or secondary amendments and all adhering secondary motions that are pending.
    - d. Secondary motions that were lost or withdrawn in cases where it is necessary for them to be recorded for clarity or completeness.
    - e. See that all essential facts are included but in brief form. Make rough notations in a notebook during meeting regarding matters that should appear in the record. Final minutes should be clear enough to be fully understood by anyone reading them whether they were present at the meeting or not.
  3. The last paragraph should state:
    - a. The hour of adjournment
- D. Additional rules and practices relating to the content of the minutes.
1. The name of the seconder of the motion should not be entered into the minutes unless directed by the organization.
  2. When a count has been ordered or the vote is by ballot, the number of votes on each side should be entered.
  3. The proceedings of a committee of the whole or quasi committee of the whole should not be entered into the minutes, but the fact that the assembly went into committee of the whole and the committee report should be recorded.
  4. The name and subject of a guest speaker can be given, but no effort should be made to summarize their remarks.
  5. When a committee report is of great importance or should be recorded to show legislative history of the measure, then the assembly can order it “to be entered in the minutes,” in which case the secretary copies it in full in the minutes.
  6. When a question is considered informally the same information should be recorded as under the regular rules, since the only informality in the proceedings is in the debate.
  7. The minutes should be signed by the secretary.
  8. See RONR (10thed.) page 451
  9. Include a statement as to the number of members present. (A complete attendance record should appear elsewhere in the secretary's book.)
  10. Use ink in writing the copy of minutes to be presented to the organization, if you do not use a typewriter/word-processor.
  11. Write legibly in the third person, using correct grammar and spell all words in full.
  12. Do not use loose sheets of paper for taking notes: these sheets are very easily lost. Use a bound leaf-type of notebook for this purpose.

13. Insist on receiving a written record on the report of any committee.

E. Before Each Meeting

1. Check with the president and arrange the "Orders of Business" (agenda/or items to be taken up in the meeting) if this has not been done in an executive (board) meeting.
2. Have following information or materials on hand for the meeting:
  - a. Lists of committees and any committee reports that should be given.
  - b. Secretary's books and minutes of the previous meeting printed or ready to be read.
  - c. Copy of the local program of activities.
  - d. Copy of other official records/documents.
  - e. Pencil or pen, notebook for notes, letters, announcements, etc.
  - f. Regular calendar and calendar of chapter and school activities.

F. During the Meeting

1. Take roll call and report attendance.
2. Read minutes of previous meeting.
3. Keep minutes of all proceedings. (Doing this in outline form often helps the secretary keep up on all happenings in a fast-moving meeting.)
4. Assist the president wherever needed. (Suggest next order of business, read any letters, reports or records, as needed.)
5. Help keep the meeting running according to correct parliamentary procedure and in line with the bylaws and policies.
6. Count rising, showing of hand, or written ballot votes when taken.

G. Duties Between Meetings

1. Rewrite minutes as soon after meeting as possible.
2. Prepare organization reports, contest forms, etc., and help keep permanent records.
3. Send out and post all notices and attend to all official correspondence immediately.
4. Attend executive committee meetings and keep minutes of the meetings.
5. Inform president of coming events.
6. Cooperate with treasurer in keeping an accurate membership list.
7. Type all letters or have them typed, if possible.
8. Make a copy for future reference. Be sure it is properly filed.
- 9.

#### IV. What is the Treasurer's Role in Parliamentary Procedure?

- A. When the monthly treasurer's report is given, **it should simply be received for the record.**
1. It is helpful if the treasurer will prepare a written report that can be attached to the agenda and the minutes so that all members can refer to it as the report is given. This also eliminates the need for the treasurer to go through each item of income and expense individually, and saves time at the meeting.
    - a. Date of report
    - b. Balance on hand as of date of report
    - c. Receipts since last report
    - d. Disbursements since last report
    - e. Present balance
    - f. Signature

2. After there written report is heard, a motion can be made to "pay all of the outstanding expenses" or any portion of the expenses that can be afforded at the time. This motion shall be seconded, discussion follows and the vote is taken. \*(Insert sample report).
- B. The treasurer's report should never be accepted or approved unless the books have been audited.
1. A treasurer's report is audited when two or more members are requested to check all bills received are paid. All figures are checked. An accountant also could do this. The auditor reports that the books are "in good order and found correct." A motion to approve or accept the auditors report is then made.
- C. Duties
1. Custodian of chapter funds.
  2. Collect local dues
  3. Send assessments and issue receipts for debts to debtors.
  4. Keep records accurate.
  5. Prepare financial statement for chapter.
  6. Chair the budget and loan committee.
  7. Take part in all ceremonies - attend all meetings.
  8. Keep inventory of all organization equipment.
  9. Get a receipt for all money spent for the organization.
  10. Send in national, state and/or local dues.
  11. Encourage thrift and help build up financial standing of the organization and the members.
- D. How to prepare a budget
1. Annual program of work is first adopted. (Calendar of the Year)
    - a. When the annual program of activities has been adopted, an estimate should be made of the total funds necessary to carry it to completion. A written budget consisting of estimated income and estimated expenditures can then be made.
  2. Estimated income is listed.
    - a. Under the estimated expenditures in the budget should be listed the various items in the program of activities, broken down as is necessary to get at the financial picture. Opposite each item, there should be written the estimated expense involved. To this list should be added all other organization expenses which are not derived from the program of activities. The total will reveal the estimated amount of money necessary for the year's work.
  3. Estimated expenditures are listed.
    - a. Under estimated income in the budget should appear the amounts available from local chapter dues and the amounts which must be derived from selected fund-raising activities, along with income from any other sources. The budget should be planned with a margin of safety so that, if possible, an un-spent balance will be left in the treasury at the end of the year.
  4. Approved by budget committee.
    - a. Each standing committee can make up a small budget of their own which can be combined with the chapter budget. For example, the "Membership Committee" would list the activities and possible expenses of the chapter for the year, while other committees may list projected earnings.

- E. Financing chapter activities
  1. "Money is the substance that makes the world go round. It's the jet fuel needed for chapters operating in the nuclear age; it's the grease used to keep the wheels rolling on the more conventional organizations. It's money that enables an organization program - once it has been developed - to be carried out to a successful completion. A haphazardly financed organization is a stumbling and a fumbling organization that runs out of fuel at a critical time. A superior organization will be one that has given careful and considerable thought to its financial program.
  2. The simplest way to be sure that the organization has a sound financial program is to build a budget. In the organization, this is the final step in planning the program of activities. Each committee of the program is required to turn in a list of the activities that requires money, with an estimate of the amount needed. These are in turn, compiled into one list and the total amount of money required determined. The Finance Committee then selects a list of money-making activities to adequately finance the chapter. Usually a margin of several hundred dollars, over the actual amount needed, is planned. This takes care of emergencies and losses on money-making enterprises.

#### V. What is the Parliamentarian's Role?

- A. To have a workable knowledge of your bylaws and standing rules. Be sure to bring a copy of these to each meeting.
- B. To assist with interpreting parliamentary law, using "Roberts' Rules of Order, Newly Revised (RONR, currently the 10<sup>th</sup> ed.) as the official authority. Be sure to have a current edition available at every meeting.
- C. Sit next to the presiding officer during the meetings.
  1. Advise president on parliamentary procedure decisions; presiding officer always makes the final ruling.
  2. To assist the president with interpreting the bylaws and assist them to uphold bylaws, standing rules and parliamentary procedure while decision-making.
- D. To work with the secretary to insure proper recording of motions, and follow up on pending motions.
- E. To teach parliamentary procedure to your membership.
- F. To coordinate the review and revision of the bylaws and standing rules.
  1. To bring recommended changes to board of directors and general membership for consideration and approval.
  2. Use a committee to assist. The important thing is that your bylaws fit your chapter and that you're presiding officer and members are aware of everything in them.
  3. In some instances the parliamentarians type the bylaws for handbook to be distributed to each member.
- G. To serve as ex-officio member of designated committees.
- H. To serve as advisor to members for proper presentation of motion.
- I. To be a non-voting member – you are to remain impartial as you serve the organization as a whole.
- J. Become well versed in parliamentary procedure and/or to know where to refer to your handbooks to find answers to questions that your presiding officer may have. Anticipate...

#### Tips on How to Use Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised

1. Look for your topic in the index.

Almost everything you will need can be found in the index. However, it may not be as obvious as you would like for it to be. When looking in the index look for variations of the words you are searching for, and look for similar topics, or group headings.

2. Utilize the tinted pages.

When you have a question relating to the characteristics or wording of a motion, the tinted pages should be your first stop. For details and purposes of the motion, head to the inside.

3. Skim sections relating to the subject.

The answer will not always be in the most logical place. Skimming allows you to quickly find the answer while also giving you an opportunity to familiarize yourself with things you may not have known.

4. Don't be intimidated by the language.

Once you grasp a concept, put it into your own words. This will make it easier for you to remember.

5. Mark hard-to-find sections.

That way you will know exactly where it is in the future. Post-it notes work great!

## ***Section 8 - Voting***

### **I. Determining the Vote**

A. **Majority** – More than half of the votes cast. The basic requirement for adoption of a motion by any assembly with a quorum is a **Majority Vote**, *except for certain motions as listed below*. A Majority is 'more than half' of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote, excluding blank votes and abstentions. **Majority does not mean 51%**. In a situation with 1000 votes, Majority = 501 votes; but 51% = 510 votes.

B. **Two-thirds** – Used when a compromise between the rights of the individual and the rights of the meeting.

1. A two-thirds vote is generally not taken as a voice vote, but rather as a standing count, or some other easily countable fashion. Robert specifies which motion will require at least a two-thirds vote for adoption. Notice that it is not called a two-thirds majority. Generally speaking, a two-thirds vote is required for adoption of any motion which...

□Suspends or modifies a rule of order already adopted;Such as modify an Adopted Rule of Order or Agenda:

○*Amend or Rescind the Constitutions, Bylaws, or Agenda;*  
○*Amend or Rescind Something Already Adopted;* ○*Suspend the Orders of the Day;* ○*Refuse to Proceed to the Orders of the Day;* ○*Take up a Question Out of its Order.*

- *Prevents the introduction of a question to consideration;*
  - *Affects the time of discussion:* closes, limits, or extends the limits of debate, and or call for the previous question.
  - *Closes nominations or the polls;*
  - *Takes away membership or office* by repeal of an assignment; or discharge of a committee.
  - *Make a Motion a Special Order:*
2. *Previous Notice* - Previous Notice is needed by some motions, which require a two-thirds vote to adopt. A Previous Notice is an announcement of the intent to introduce the motion.

A Previous Notice is typically given at least one meeting before the meeting when the proposal is to be introduced.

- C. **Plurality vote** - The largest number of votes when three or more choices are possible. Unless there are rules to the contrary, a plurality vote does not decide an issue unless it is also a majority vote.
- D. **Division of the Assembly** – When there is reasonable doubt of the outcome of a vote, any member has the right to request that a vote be retaken as a rising vote.

## II. Voting Choices

- A. **Voice** – This is the normal method of voting on a motion, after the instruction of the chair, members call out their preference.
- B. **Rising vote or a show of hands** - Used principally in cases where a voice vote has been taken with an inconclusive result.
- C. **Roll call** - Places on record how each member votes.
- D. **Ballot** – The opposite of roll call and keeps each vote secret. Voting is done on paper.
- E. **Mail** – must have specifics outlined in the bylaws (Regular mail, e-mail, etc.)
- F. **Unanimous (or general) consent** – used in cases where there seems to be no opposition in routine business or on questions of little importance, time can often be saved by the procedure of unanimous consent.

**III. Changing one’s vote** – A member has the right to change his/her vote up to the time the result is announced; after that he/she can make the change only by unanimous consent of the assembly granted without debate RONR (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) page 395

**IV. Challenging the Ruling of the Chair** – Any ruling of the chair can be challenged, but such appeals must be made immediately after the ruling. If debate has progressed, a challenge is not in order. RONR allows debate under certain circumstances. When a member wishes to appeal from the decision of the chair, the member rises as soon as the decision is made, even if another has the floor, and without waiting to be recognized by the chair says, “I appeal from the decision of the chair.” The chair should state clearly the question at issue, and if necessary the reasons for the decision, and then state the question in this way: “The question is, shall the decision of the chair be sustained?” If two members (mover and seconder) appeal a decision of the chair the effect is to take the final decision on the matter from the chair and vest it in the meeting.

- A. Such a motion is in order when another speaker has the floor, but it must be made at the time of the chair’s ruling. It must be seconded, is not amendable, but can be reconsidered.
- B. A majority or tie vote sustains the decision of the chair, on the principal that the chair’s decision stands until reversed by a majority of the meeting. (A chair can vote to make or break a tie).
  - C. Members have no right to criticize a ruling of the chair unless they appeal it.

**V. Voting rights of the chair** - The chair has the same voting rights as any other member. The chair protects impartiality by exercising voting right only when his/her vote would affect the outcome. In such cases the chair can either vote and thereby change the results, or can abstain. The chair cannot vote twice, once as a member, then again in his/her capacity as presiding officer. In a ballot vote, the presiding officer is to vote at the same time that ballots are cast.

## ***Section 9 - Important Documents***

## I. THE CORPORATE CHARTER

- A. The reason for an organization to incorporate with the state, and have a corporate charter, is:
1. It can hold property.
  2. It can make legally binding contracts.
  3. It can sue or be sued as a society in its name.
  4. It can have a legacy left it.
  5. It protects its members from personal liabilities incurred while performing duties for the organization.
  6. The charter becomes the "person" rather than the member.
  7. It provides for a legally recognized status and allows it to own a corporate seal.
  8. It provides for perpetual succession.

In short, to be able to do any of the above-mentioned items, as a non-profit organization does, they would need to get permission from the state in which they reside. Hence, a Corporate Charter establishes the legal name, address, and object of the organization. That's why it's such a big deal when we "charter" a new extension!

- B. Corporation papers should only include that which is required by law. Details should be left to the bylaws. Corporation papers are usually much harder to change and changes are submitted to the Secretary of State. It usually costs a fee every time they are amended. Corporate papers should be drawn up with careful consideration for the organization and its future growth. States have different requirements for incorporating. Working with an attorney who understands the requirements of that state is helpful.
- C. In some states the Secretary of State also wants the organization's bylaws and other rules on file with the incorporation papers. The final papers may be referred to as Articles of Incorporation, Certificate of Incorporation, or Articles of Association. *This is now a legal document and takes priority over the other documents of the organization. This means that bylaws or other governing documents can't adopt anything that is in conflict with the corporate charter.* It is imperative that once incorporated that the members don't just put it away in a file or vault somewhere and forget that it exists. It should be included with other documents so that all members know what it states. It is suggested that all the documents are in one binder. The articles of incorporation are first, then the bylaws, then rules of order, then standing rules. A copy is given to each member.
- D. **Important Points.**
1. Members must remember that the Corporate Charter is the organization's highest-ranking document. The assembly can't adopt anything that is in conflict with the corporate charter. No main motion can be considered that is outside the organization's object.
  2. After an organization incorporates, it will have to file yearly reports with the Secretary of State. A form will be sent to give the names of the current officers. A

small registration fee is charged for filing the form. The secretary of the organization should return it promptly. There could be a penalty for not filing it.

3. Another point that incorporated societies need to consider is to keep all minutes bound. The secretary must sign the minutes. After they are approved by the assembly, the secretary writes at the bottom "approved as read or as corrected". She then initials them and puts the date they are approved.
4. If an organization gets lazy about filing documents on time and correctly, then the State might have a reason to pierce the corporate veil and look carefully at what is going on in an organization. It could possibly revoke the charter and hold officers accountable for not filling reports with the state. In volunteer organizations, members and officers should be educated in the responsibilities that go with selfgovernment.

## II. Why Do We Need Bylaws?

Bylaws enable members to determine what rules they all agree with and abide by. These rules ensure stability, continuity, and structure, especially during times of rapid growth or when there are not many seasoned members to teach the new members what to do. They also serve as a reference when a discrepancy arises and can help direct a group in decision-making.

- A. The best advice anyone can give you is to become familiar with the Bylaws and Constitution of your organization. You will never win if you do not even know which parliamentary authority (= rule book) was adopted as part of your bylaws. **Parliamentary Procedure is useless to you, unless you are familiar with your organization's bylaws.**
  1. Your bylaws state which one Parliamentary Authority will rule your organization. Some examples are, "Robert's Rules, Newly Revised," "Riddick," "Sturgis," or "Demeter."
    - a. Be forewarned – there are many different imitations, such as "The New Robert's Rules, or "Rules of Order," to name a few.
- B. Typical Basic Bylaw Articles
  1. **Name.** *There must be no ambiguity as to the identity of the group.*
  2. **Object and Reason for the group's existence.** *This alone will help you combat abuse of power, and will help you keep the organization focused.*
  3. **Members.** *This explains the members' rights, limitations, and qualifications. It clarifies issues such as fees, attendance, resignations, and honorary membership.*
  4. **Officers.** *Explains methods for nominations, voting, elections, and filling vacancies, as well as term of office and duties.*
  5. **Meetings.** *Details quorum, regular meetings, special meetings, and conventions. Often, the remaining Articles are referred to as the Constitution. In many cases, organizations refer to all the 9 Articles as the Constitution and the Bylaws as if they were one document.*
  6. **Executive Board or Board of Directors.** *The board's composition, power, and quorum are clearly stated in this article.*
  7. **Committees.** *Standing committees must be described as to name, composition, manner of selection, attendance, and duties.*



8. **Parliamentary Authority.** *The rules of order must be clearly established. It could be Robert, Sturgis, Cannon, Demeter, Riddick, etc. The important thing is to have a document which assures order under fire. Regardless of the rule book, an organization is ruled first by local, state, and federal laws; and then by its parent organization; followed by any adopted special rules of order; and finally by its adopted parliamentary authority.*
9. **Amendment of Bylaws.** *Typically, a Bylaw can be amended with 2/3 of the collected votes, if a prior notice has been given during the prior meeting. Otherwise, it takes a majority of the entire registered membership to amend any Bylaw.*

Some organizations have additional Articles for matters of Finances, Policies, or Discipline. Nevertheless, once you read the Bylaws, you will be more powerful than any club officer. Try it. After all, you do know what is best for your organization. Right?

## Bylaw Checklist

The following suggestions are from RONR. Share this checklist with your bylaw review committee to see how many items are evident in your bylaws:

- The name of the organization.
- How the organization is governed – who has the authority to make changes is identified.
- Your purpose or objective (creed/mission statement) is declared.
- How someone can become a member is outlined.
- Information about dues is included.
- Duties or obligations of members are described.
- How officers are elected are identified (a fair way to nominate and elect officers and board members – is it impartial, and are nominations from the floor accepted?)
- Each officer’s duties are detailed.
- The process to fill a vacancy is provided.
- Provisions for removing someone from office or committee appointment if they are not performing the assigned duties are explained.
- How many business meetings there are in a year is stated.
- A reasonable quorum requirement is identified so meetings can be held.

- ❑ The names of standing committees and their objectives are stated.
- ❑ Do you allow appointment of special committees? If so, who has the authority to appoint?
- ❑ Provide for special meetings and who may call them.
- ❑ Include a clause to cancel or reschedule a meeting – at the end of the clause put a statement telling how members are notified of the rescheduled meeting.
- ❑ The name of parliamentary authority. (RONR, 10<sup>th</sup> ed., or RONR, current ed.)
- ❑ Propose a method for amendment of the bylaws.

### III. RULES OF ORDER

- A. These **rules relate to the orderly transaction of business** and to the duties of officers in connection with conducting the business, **however, they are different than what the parliamentary authority recommends.**
1. One example of a Rule of Order for the Women of Today would be for officer reports.
    - a. “Robert’s Rules” states they should be done in the order of rank as listed in the bylaws, however, it is common practice for the president to report after the rest of the officers. This is a change in the order of business that the parliamentary authority recommends and should be listed as a Rule of Order.
    - b. Another example is that Robert’s Rules states members are allowed 10 minutes to speak on a matter of debate. Just imagine if everyone in your chapter spoke ten minutes on a subject, you’d never get anything done, so a common Rule of Order seen, is to limit our motions speeches to one or two minutes.
  2. However, an organization should not include in this document such things as how to make a motion, how to preside, or other common parliamentary rules that can be found in a parliamentary authority.
    - a. For example we should not be saying, “any member can make a motion,” or “any member can second a motion - seconding means ...etc.” These are common parliamentary practices.
- B. By adopting a parliamentary authority, the members are adopting sufficient rules of meeting procedures to help them solve their meeting problems. Rules of order are adopted **when an organization wants to do something different than the parliamentary authority.** However, whatever the organization adopts should conform to common parliamentary law.
- C. Rules of Order are mistakenly included in bylaws. The proper way to handle rules of order is to have them as a separate document, with its own heading but included in the same booklet as the bylaws.
- D. Rules of order usually provide for their suspension at a meeting. However, according to parliamentary practice they can be suspended by a two thirds vote "except in the case of a rule protecting a minority of less than one third of those voting." RORN (10<sup>th</sup> ed.) p. 17) The book

also states on page 262, under the motion "to suspend the rules," that any rule protecting the right of absent members or a basic right of an individual member can't be suspended. The book then gives the examples of:

1. Previous notice can't be suspended because it protects the absent members.
  2. If the bylaws provide for a secret ballot for officers or other actions – in this instance, if one member were to object, it would have him/her exposing his vote.
- E. If an organization puts any rules of order in the bylaws, then the members need to know that any parliamentary rules in the bylaws can be suspended. However, the other bylaws having to do with the structure of the organization can't be suspended unless this is provided for in the bylaws.
- F. AMENDING RULES OF ORDER.
1. Rules of order that are separate from the bylaws are adopted and amended by previous notice and a two thirds vote. If no notice is given, then they can be adopted by the vote of the majority of the entire membership of the organization.
  2. To adopt rules of order that are placed within the bylaws, the organization must follow its rules for amending the bylaws.

#### IV. STANDING RULES

- A. These are **rules concerning the administration of the organization.**
1. These rules are considered main motions.
  2. They do not need previous notice to be adopted by a majority vote.
  3. They can be suspended for the duration of a meeting and can be rescinded without previous notice by a two-thirds vote, and majority vote with previous notice.
  4. These rules remain in effect until the assembly rescinds them.
- B. When an organization adopts motions that are for a lasting duration, the secretary should add them to a book entitled "Standing Rules." Many Women of Today know these as policies.
1. **Each motion should be recorded in its final version as adopted and the date it took effect.**
  2. **If the rule is later rescinded, the secretary should strike it out and make a notation when it was rescinded.**
  3. By keeping a record of these motions, each new administration will know what they are required to do. It will keep continuity in the organization instead of new members perpetually having to ask long time members what to do and when.
- C. If an organization does things "because that is always the way it has been done", then these customs should be written down so that everyone knows what to do. A custom becomes a force of law and needs a formal motion to rescind it just as if the assembly had enacted it. Perhaps the assembly enacted it many years ago, but members have forgotten this fact.
1. Some examples of standing rules might be:
    - Having a guest register at the meeting.
    - A particular donation given to an organization at a certain time of year.
    - Wearing name- tags or special pins at meetings and proper placement.
    - Who is responsible for introducing guests.
    - A specific month for the annual picnic.

- The time for the meeting.
- The place for the meeting.
- Who should take the minutes in the absence of the secretary.
- Motions of long term affect.
- Who is responsible for opening up, setting up the meeting, etc.

D. Suspending Standing Rules

1. When members can't do something without violating the rules of the organization, Robert's Rules has provided the incidental motion "suspend the rules" to allow them to set aside the rule so that they can go forward with the desire action. Both "rules of order" and "standing rules" can be suspended. Bylaws can not be suspended unless they provided in the bylaws for their suspension. However, any rules of order in the bylaws can be suspended.
2. Rules of order are suspended by a two-thirds vote. However, standing rules can be suspended by a majority vote because they do not involve the protection of a minority.

***Section 10 – Nominations and Elections***

**I. Nominating Committee**

**A. Determine the make up of the committee including who decides committee members.**

1. Who is selected for this committee will determine who is nominated for office and ultimately what direction the organization will take during the term of office of those elected. In a democracy, the talents of all members are cultivated, encouraged, with the idea that the best, just like cream, rises to the top. These are who should be considered for office. Here are some questions to consider:
  - Will the membership determine who will be on this committee?
  - Do you want balance of a variety of members – ones with position experience in addition to newer members?
  - What is the purpose of the nominating committee? Is it to find the best candidates to serve?
  - Who serves on your nominating committee?
2. To protect the democratic process in nominations the organization might consider having the membership elect the members of this committee or have part of the nominating committee selected by the membership and perhaps the rest by the executive board.
  - a. It is never a good policy or practice to have the president select the nominating committee or serve on it.
  - b. The people who serve on this committee should be objective and impartial – not letting their own opinions or personal biases sway their decision.
3. Is the procedure for selecting the nominating committee in the bylaws?

**B. How the Nominating Committee should select the nominees.**

1. When the nominating committee is selected, they should be given a list of all the eligible members and what the specific needs of the organization are at that time. Officers should be selected to fill those needs. For example if the organization needs to set up a new computerized system for keeping track of dues, expenditures and that would give detailed reports, then the nominee should possess the skills to do that. If the organization wants to start working with other clubs, and they want the president to be the emissary, then the

committee should select someone that is outgoing and knows how to work well with others.

2. It is important for the committee members to be unbiased and select the best people for office and not just their friends.
3. They should also consider how the new slate would work together. If they know that two people have personality conflicts, then it might not be wise to have them on the same slate.

#### C. Duties of the Nominating Committee

Alice Sturgis says this about the duty of the Nominating Committee in her book, *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, "A carefully chosen nominating committee should be permitted to use its judgment in selecting the candidates who will give the best service to the organization. It should choose the candidates on the basis of what is good for all the members and not on the basis that an office is a reward to be given to a deserving member. The committee may invite suggestions but should not be limited by them." Then the organization should adopt some standing rules concerning how the committee is to go about selecting candidates:

1. Check to see that candidates selected meet the eligibility requirements.
2. Call the candidates to see if they are willing to serve if elected.
3. If committee members have more than one suggestion for an office, the committee should vote on which candidate to nominate.
4. Members of the nominating committee should not act independent of the committee.
5. Individual members should not go around asking people if they want to serve. It should be discussed in the committee, voted upon, and then one person should be designated to call that person to see if he or she would serve if elected.
6. Standing rules should be adopted to let the committee to know how it is to work in finding the best candidates.
7. The committee should understand what its function is—to find the best people to serve and not favorites or friends of the committee members.
8. The committee should know how to prepare and give the nominating committee report to the members.

## II. How to Handle Nominations at the Meeting.

A. The presiding officer should be thoroughly familiar with the nominating process.

1. After the chairman of the Nominating Committee gives the report of the committee – the nominations for each office, the chair then *repeats the nominations and asks for nominations from the floor.*
2. Any member can give a nomination from the floor. He does not have to rise and address the chair, but can call out from where seated the name of a nominee.
3. A nomination does not need a second.
4. The chair repeats the nomination and asks for further nominations.
5. The chair first gives the name of the nominee of the committee and then asks for nominations from the floor for that office. This is done for each office until all have been completed.
6. The chair can take the vote after each office. Or take all the nominations for all offices first, and then take the vote on each office. This should be established by a rule.

## III. ELECTIONS

A. After nominations, the members get to decide whom they want for each office by voting. **The way the vote is taken should be established by some rule.**

- If the bylaws say the election is to be taken by ballot, even if only one person is nominated for an office the vote must be by ballot.
  - Or the bylaws can state, "Elections shall be taken by ballot. If there is only one nominee for each office, the members by a two-thirds vote, or unanimous consent, can waive the vote by ballot and take the vote by voice."
  - However, members must realize that in a ballot vote they can always write in a name. By waiving this right by a two-thirds vote, the members are giving up the ability to write-in a name.
  - It is also important to understand that a person can be elected without first being nominated.
  - The ballot vote always gives members the opportunity to write in a name of someone who hasn't been nominated.
- B.** There are several ways the vote can be taken – by voice, by show of hands, by roll call, by ballot. The rest of this page will be devoted to taking and counting a ballot vote.

#### **IV. THE BALLOT**

- A.** An organization should have an election committee that oversees the design, the handing out of the ballot, and the counting of the ballot. This committee can be called an "Elections Committee" or perhaps the "Tellers Committee." Or there could be an "Elections Committee" with a sub-committee entitled "Teller's Committee" which is responsible for passing out the ballots and counting them. Each organization should decide which is best for it. In small organizations a Teller's Committee is sufficient.
- B.** After the ballot is designed, it should be thoroughly explained to the members including how to mark the ballot. The organization should adopt specific rules concerning the marking of a ballot and what is considered an illegal ballot. This way there will be no question how ballots will be counted or not counted.
- C.** The assembly should adopt any rules concerning the conducting of the election, the counting of the ballots, and how the vote will be taken. This prevents a faction from developing within the organization and controlling the election process. It also ensures fairness in counting and recording the votes.

#### **V. ILLEGAL BALLOTS**

- A.** First, a legal ballot is one that is properly marked. Second, if a blank ballot and a marked ballot are folded together this is a legal ballot because blanks never count. **B.** Illegal ballots are:
1. One that is not marked correctly.
  2. One that has marked two candidates for the same office. How can the teller's committee tell which one is the preferred vote?
- C.** One that has two marked ballots folded together. It could be a case of double voting.
- D.** One that has a written name that is not readable or a name of someone that is not eligible to serve in that office. Sometimes people will not like any candidate and write in "Roy Rogers" or "Mickey Mouse." It could also be the name of someone in the organization that is not eligible to serve because they don't meet the bylaw requirements for that office.

#### **Let's see an example:**

- The chair instructed the members, at a meeting with a quorum, to vote by writing 'Yes' or 'No' on a piece of paper.

- Of the members present, 100 were entitled to vote, but 15 did not cast a ballot. Of the 85 votes cast: 75 were legal; 10 were illegal (the members wrote '**Maybe**'); and 4 were turned in blank (abstained).
- The Majority is any number larger than one half of the total of ...  
(legal votes cast) - (blank votes cast) + (illegal votes cast).
- Of the 85 Votes Cast by members entitled to vote ...  
(75 were valid) - (4 were blank) + (10 were illegal) = 81 Votes Cast.
- One half of 81 Votes Cast is 40 1/2. Majority was 41 votes.

In our national elections if someone wrote in "Bill Clinton", it could not be a legal vote because he has already served two consecutive terms in office. If some one else wrote in "Queen Elizabeth", this too would be an illegal ballot because she is not a citizen of our country.

In elections in organizations, illegal ballots count in determining the majority, but they are not credited to a person. If there were enough illegal ballots, this could affect an election and if no one received a majority vote then the members would have to vote again. If members aren't that happy with their candidates then they either should abstain or find someone to nominate that they like.

If the members vote for a slate of candidates, let's say the president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, board members, if the ballot contains an illegal vote for one of the offices, only that part of the ballot is considered illegal and not the rest of the ballot. Or if a person only votes for the office of president and doesn't vote for any other candidates, then the vote is counted only for president. The rest of the ballot is considered an abstention.

In counting votes, tellers need to use some common sense. If the members are instructed to put an "x" by the person they want and a member instead puts a "v" or circles the name, then the tellers should count the vote. As long as the person has made his vote understandable, it should be counted. However, if a person writes in a name, and does not designate it by some mark then it may not count. Tellers need to use judgment when deciding how dubious ballots should be counted. For example, if every office is marked with "x" and the write-in isn't, it probably means that the voter wants the write-in, but just forgot to put an "x" in front of the name. The best policy is for the chair to thoroughly instruct the members that when they write in a name they also have to put a check by it, or designate it in some way that the write-in is whom they want.

## **VI. ELECTION IRREGULARITIES**

- A. The most important thing that an organization can do is adopt rules that handle the "what ifs" that sometimes come up. These rules should include what to do if an election is challenged and if someone is illegally elected to office and has begun to serve. Rules might include how long ballots are saved, and how long members can wait to challenge an election.
- B. Teller's should be well trained in counting and recording the votes. There should be enough tellers for the size the organization and the number of votes cast.
- C. Sometimes it happens that more votes are cast than people eligible to vote or present to vote. If this happens the first thing to determine is if someone has arrived at the meeting and not signed in, but voted. The second thing is if some one has put an extra ballot in the box, if the vote does not or cannot affect the election, then the election stands.

## **VII. CHALLENGING AN ELECTION**

- A. The question that we need to ask is: Do we have the rules in place to solve and guide us if an election were challenged? If the organization is relying on the parliamentary authority to solve this, the members better look again.

- B. In RONR, it takes a majority vote to have a recount of a ballot vote. The book states, "After an election has become final as stated in this paragraph, it is too late to reconsider the vote on the election." (After the member accepts the office, it's too late to reconsider the vote). The best thing is to decide what is the best procedure for your organization. Write the procedures in the bylaws or rules of order. Then you won't have to worry about what do when those "what ifs" happen.

## ***Section 11 - Meetings***

### **I. Meeting vs. a Session**

- A. The words 'Meeting' and 'Session' are typically misused. Robert's Rules of Order clearly indicates that a regular weekly, monthly, or quarterly meeting for an established order of business in a single afternoon or evening, constitutes a separate session. (RONR(10th ed.),p.79) A meeting is actually a subset of a session, (for instance, the separate gatherings during an annual or biennial convention). The convention is a session, but its gatherings are meetings. B. The significance of a session lies in the freedom of each session.
1. One session cannot tie the hands of the majority at any later session, or place a question beyond the reach of a later session.
  2. The rights of the majority of one session cannot adversely affect the rights of a majority of a later session.
- C. One of Robert's fundamental rules is that the same or substantially the same question cannot be brought up a second time during the same session. So, if a session lasts longer than one gathering, a question may not be revisited for several gatherings.
- D. Another fundamental rule is that a question that is being *Postponed to a Certain Time* must be postponed no further than the next session. But, if a session lasts longer than one gathering, the question would be postponed for a very long time.

### **II. The term 'Meeting' does has its own special meanings:**

- A. **Regular (or Stated) Meeting** - Refers to the periodic business meeting held weekly, monthly, or quarterly, as prescribed by the bylaws. Each regular meeting normally completes a separate session. If an issue was never reached on the agenda of one session, the issue could be carried forward as described in Unfinished Business.
1. If an issue was reached in the agenda but not finally disposed of, it could be reached by the next session if the issue had been postponed (or made a special order), laid on the table, moved for reconsideration at the correct time, or referred to a committee.
  2. Characteristics of a meeting:
    - a. Carefully planned in advance
    - b. Start and close on time
    - c. Proceed according to an established order of business
    - d. Conducted according to an accepted parliamentary procedure
    - e. Officer check committee reports and see that chairs are prepared to give report before the meeting begins
- B. **Special (or Called) Meeting** - Is held at a time different from a regular meeting, and convened only to consider one or more items of business specified in the call of the meeting. It does not follow outline procedure and is set up to handle urgent matters. Each special meeting normally completes a separate session.
- C. **Adjourned Meeting** - Is a continuation of the immediately preceding regular or special meeting. An adjourned meeting takes up its work at the point where the preceding meeting was interrupted in the order of business. Each adjourned meeting normally completes the preceding session.



- D. **Annual Meeting** - The only difference between a regular meeting and an annual meeting is that at an annual meeting, Annual Reports from Officers and Standing Committees, and Election of Officers are in order. Each annual meeting with its numerous separate meetings normally completes a separate session.
- E. **Executive Session** - any meeting in which the proceedings are secret constitutes an executive session. Boards, committees, and disciplinary sessions are normally held in executive session. Some organizations operate under the lodge system where every meeting is a secret meeting and held in executive session. Each executive session normally completes a separate session.

## ***Section 12 - Committees***

### **I. Making Committees Work**

- A. A committee, as understood in parliamentary law, is a body of one or more persons, elected or appointed by an assembly to consider, investigate, or take action on certain matters or subjects, or to do all these.
- B. To function effectively, a committee, and especially its chair, needs to have:
  1. A list of committee members.
  2. A copy of the motion or problem referred to the committee.
  3. Special instructions to the committee, if any. These instructions should include a statement of what the committee is expected to do, and whether the question is referred to for discussion, study, hearings, investigations, recommendations, or action.
  4. A statement of the powers and duties of the committee.
  5. Copies of all papers or correspondence relating to the subject assigned to the committee.
  6. Copies of any rules, policies, or decisions of the organization relating to the subject.
  7. Information on the type of report desired and the date set for its presentation.
- C. Reports from committees should minimally contain
  1. A statement of the charge to the committee - why was it established?
  2. A statement of the methods employed by the committee in accomplishing its charge.
  3. A summary of information gathered or work done.
  4. A statement of conclusions or findings.
  5. A specific recommendation, together with a rationale for that recommendation.
  6. The names of the members on the committee.
  7. A summary (often called an "executive summary" at the beginning of the report is helpful for long reports.

### **II. The Committee Report**

- A. *By whom should the report be prepared?*
  1. Usually a member of the committee (often the chair or a recorder, but it could be anyone) prepares a draft of the report.
  2. All members of the committee should be given opportunity to review and revise the draft before it is submitted. It is not the drafter's work product, but the product of the entire committee.
- B. *To whom should the report be made?*
  1. In most cases the committee is addressed to the appointing or supervising authority. Occasionally, particularly at the direction of the authority, a report may go to other individuals or organizations.
- C. *What form should the report take?*
  1. There is no universally mandatory form, but some principles help guide us. Reports should go forward with a written and an oral report; both should be planned carefully to be effective. Exactly what goes into each depends on a large number of factors: the audience,

the nature of the problem and the solution, time available, how much information is needed by the higher authority for decision making, and so forth.

- a. The report should be prepared and organized to accomplish two ends: to persuade the higher authority to adopt the report and its recommendations and to facilitate the decision-making of the higher authority.
- b. A reports need not necessarily be long (being too long may discourage anyone from reading it), but needs to be long enough to competently and persuasively present the plan and justify it to the higher authority.
- c. Whatever format is decided upon, the report should meet high professional standards: typed, spell and grammar checked, etc.; a computer and printer makes this easier.

D. *What content should the reports contain?*

1. The report should be written to have an impact on those who read it. After reading the content, the reader must be convinced:
  - The conditions the proposal seeks to remedy are serious enough to justify action.
  - Able to understand the details of the proposal and how it will remedy the problem conditions.
  - That the proposal is practical, reasonable, and will bring no undesirable side outcomes.
    - The proposal is the best alternative.
2. **Executive Summary** - Especially in longer reports (probably over 8 pages), it is a good idea to have an Executive Summary in which the whole report (including purpose, problem, solution, rationale, and recommendations) is summarized in a few paragraphs, not to exceed one page in length. Explain the purposes of the report. Is it an interim or final report? Is it to outline factual findings, conclusions, or recommendations? Is it to summarize actions of the committee or does it propose a project or program in solution to a problem?
3. **Preamble** - A preamble or introduction contains boilerplate information (such as the name of the committee and the names of the members), a statement of the charge or mission given to the committee (making the organizational context of the report clear), and a review of the procedures used in the problem solving process.
4. **Background.** The report should give needed background on the nature of the problem indicating a need for a solution. Succinctly and objectively, the committee's factual findings and conclusions about the nature of the problem, its causes, its effects, and related matters should be presented. Appropriate documentation should be given. If there is a large amount of material as a result of the committee's work, often this material is best summarized briefly in the report with supporting documents placed in an appendix.
5. **Proposed solution.** The report should give a detailed presentation of the solution to the problem, including an implementation plan, organizational chart, and budget. An implementation plan can include such things as
  - a. *Goals and objectives.* Goals point to the qualitative ideals or values the solution supports; they inspire motive and enable unity of action. Objectives are the statement of particular activities which, if achieved, result in the accomplishment of the goals.
  - b. *Statement of personnel.* From goals and objectives, we derive particular tasks that can be done by particular individuals. Reports should make clear what people will be assigned to which tasks and task roles.
  - c. *Space, materials, and logistics.* The proposal must make clear what resources are needed, including facilities, communications, computers, telephone, mailing, etc.

- d. *Finances and budget.* Linked to the above, the costs of the program (personnel, materials, mailing, gasoline, etc.) should be clearly and accurately projected. If possible, the plan should also indicate the source of funds.
- e. *Time.* The report should project a timetable for the accomplishment of the various objectives and tasks to facilitate the operation of the plan. Who is to do what by when?
- f. *Evaluation and impact.* Proposals are more likely to be approved if the higher authority has a clear idea of how to tell if the investment of time and money was worth it. Explain how to evaluate the success of the program. Specify who will be affected or inconvenienced by the new program.
- g. *Rationale.* The report should make an argued defense of the proposed solution, generally including (1) how the plan will meet the need; (2) why the plan is desirable in light of relevant absolute and/or relative criteria; and (3) why the plan has advantages and fewer disadvantages compared to alternative responses to the problem, including doing nothing.
- h. *Recommendation.* The report should clearly present a request for the higher authority to take some action on the work of the committee; sometimes this function is done in the Preamble. For example, if the committee's function is largely advisory, then the report should request that the committee be informed of actions or decisions on the matters covered in the report. If the committee's role was to provide information, then the request might be that the receipt of the information be acknowledged. If the committee's role was decision-making or action-taking, then the request should be for feedback to guide future work.

### **Women of Today Meeting Report Form**

Project/Event Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date held \_\_\_\_\_

Name of chair/person giving report \_\_\_\_\_

Number of members attending \_\_\_\_\_

Number of guests \_\_\_\_\_

Money raised \_\_\_\_\_ Proceeds go to \_\_\_\_\_

Other details \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**The Order of Precedence**

A. Motions are listed in their order of precedence from highest to lowest. All members should make every effort to learn these and their order of priority.

B. The Rank of Motions

1. Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn
2. Adjourn
3. Recess
4. Raise a Question of Privilege
5. Call for the Orders of the Day
6. Lay on the Table
7. Previous Question
8. Limit/Extend Limits of Debate
9. Postpone to a certain Time
10. Commit or Refer
11. Amend
12. Division of a Question
13. Consideration by Paragraph
14. Postpone Indefinitely
15. Objection to the Consideration of a Question
16. Main Motion / Discharge a Committee / Rescind; Amend Something
17. Previously Adopted / Take from the Table

C. Motions that have a variable rank

- Point of Order
- Appeal
- Suspend the Rules
- Division of the Assembly
- Motions Relating to Voting
- Motions Relating to Nominations
- Requests and Inquiries
- Parliamentary Inquiry
- Request to Withdraw or Modify a Motion
- Reconsider

D. See also - Motion Charts

Here are some motions you might make, how to make them, and what to expect of the rules.

To Do This...	You Say This...	May You Interrupt the Speaker?	Do You Need a Second?	Is it Debatable?	Can it be Amended?	What Vote is Needed?	Can it be Reconsidered?
ADJOURN MEETING	"I move that we adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
CALL AN INTERMISSION	"I move that we recess for..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No

COMPLAIN ABOUT NOISE, HEAT, ETC.	"I rise to a question of privilege..."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No (usually)
TEMPORARILY SUSPEND CONSIDERATION OF AN ISSUE	"I move to table the motion."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
END DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No *1
POSTPONE DISCUSSION FOR A CERTAIN TIME	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
GIVE CLOSER STUDY OF SOMETHING	"I move to refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes *2
AMEND A MOTION	"I move to amend the motion by..."	No	Yes	Yes *3	Yes	Majority	Yes
INTRODUCE BUSINESS	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes

The motions listed above are in order of precedence...In the table below, there is no order...

PROTEST BREACH OF RULES OR CONDUCT	"I rise to a point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote *4	No
VOTE ON A RULING OF THE CHAIR	"I appeal from the chair's decision."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority *5	Yes
SUSPEND RULES TEMPORARILY	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
AVOID CONSIDERING AN IMPROPER MATTER	"I object to consideration of this motion."	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 *6	- *7
VERIFY A VOICE VOTE BY HAVING MEMBERS STAND	"I call for a division" or "Division!"	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
REQUEST INFORMATION	"Point of information."	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
TAKE UP A MATTER PREVIOUSLY TABLED	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
RECONSIDER A HASTY ACTION	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	Yes	Yes	- *8	No	Majority	No

**Notes:**

\*1 = Unless vote on question is not yet taken

\*2 = Unless the committee has already taken up the subject

\*3 = Only if the motion to be amended is debatable

\*4 = Except in doubtful cases.

\*5 = A majority vote in negative needed to revert ruling of chair

\*6 = A 2/3 vote in negative needed to prevent consideration of main motion.

\*7 = Only if the main question or motion was not, in fact, considered

\*8 = Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable.

# ~Parliamentary Procedure~~ The Basics...

(In order of precedence)

## Adjourn Meeting

"I move that we adjourn."

- The speaker may not be interrupted.
- A second is required.
- It is not debatable.
- It cannot be amended.
- A **majority** is required.
- It cannot be reconsidered.

## Call an Intermission

"I move that we recess for..."

- The speaker may not be interrupted.
- It is not debatable.
- It can be amended.
- A **majority** is required.
- It cannot be reconsidered.

## Complain of heat, noise, etc.

"I rise to a question of privilege."

- The speaker may be interrupted.
- A second is not required.
- It is not debatable.
- It cannot be amended.
- **No vote** is required.
- It usually cannot be reconsidered.

## Temporarily Suspend Consideration of an Issue

"I move to table the motion."

- The speaker may not be interrupted.
- A second is required.
- It is not debatable.
- It cannot be amended.
- A **majority** is required.
- It cannot be reconsidered.

## End Debate and Amendments

"I move the previous question." □ The speaker may not be interrupted.

- A second is required.
- It is not debatable.
- It cannot be amended.
- A **2/3 vote** is required.
- It cannot be reconsidered unless the vote on question is not yet taken.

## Postpone Discussion for a Certain Time

"I move to postpone the discussion until . . . ." □

The speaker may not be interrupted.

- A second is required.
- It is debatable.
- It can be amended.
- A **majority** is required.
- It can be reconsidered.

## Give Closer Study of Something "I

move to refer the matter to committee." □

The speaker may not be interrupted.

- A second is required.
- It is debatable.
- It can be amended.
- A **majority** is required.
- It can be reconsidered unless the committee has already taken up the subject.

## Amend a Motion

"I move to amend the motion by . . . ." □

The speaker may not be interrupted.

- A second is required.
- It is debatable if the motion being amended is debatable.
- It can be amended.
- A **majority** is required.
- It can be reconsidered.

## Introduce Business

"I move that . . . ."

- The speaker may not be interrupted.
- A second is required.
- It is debatable.
- It can be amended.
- A **majority** is required.
- It can be reconsidered.

# ~Parliamentary Procedure~

## *In No Particular Order*

### **Protest Breach of Rules or Conduct**

"I rise to a point of order."

- The speaker may be interrupted.
- A second is not required.
- It is not debatable.
- It cannot be amended.
- **No vote** is required except in doubtful cases. It cannot be reconsidered.

### **Vote on a Ruling of The Chair**

"I appeal from the chair's decision." □ The speaker may be interrupted.

- A second is required.
- It is debatable.
- It cannot be amended.
- A **majority** is required (A majority vote in negative is needed to reverse the ruling of the chair.) □ It can be reconsidered.

### **Suspend Rules Temporarily**

"I move to suspend the rules so that . . ." □ The speaker may not be interrupted.

- A second is required.
- It is not debatable.
- It cannot be amended.
- A **2/3 vote** is required.
- It cannot be reconsidered.

### **Avoid Considering an Improper Matter**

"I object to consideration of this motion." □ The speaker may be interrupted.

- A second is not required.
- It is not debatable.

- It cannot be amended.
- A **2/3 vote** is required.
- A 2/3 vote in negative is required to prevent the consideration of the main motion.
- It may only be reconsidered if the main question or motion was not, in fact, considered.

### **Verify a Voice Vote by Having Members Stand**

"I call for a division."

- The speaker may not be interrupted.
- A second is required.
- It is not debatable.
- It cannot be amended. □ A **2/3 vote** is required.
- It cannot be reconsidered.

### **Request Information**

"Point of information." □ The speaker may be interrupted.

- A second is not required.
- It is not debatable.
- It cannot be amended.
- **No vote** is required.
- It cannot be reconsidered.

### **Take up a Matter Previously Tabled**

"I move to take from the table. . . ." □ The speaker may not be interrupted.

- A second is required.
- It is not debatable.
- It cannot be amended.
- A **majority** vote is required.
- It cannot be reconsidered.

### **Reconsider a Hasty Action**

"I move to reconsider the vote on . . . ."

- The speaker may be interrupted. □ A second is required.
- It is debatable only if the motion being reconsidered is debatable.
- It cannot be amended.
- A **majority** vote is required.
- It cannot be reconsidered.

## *Helpful Parliamentary Hints*

### *A. Questions to ask Relating to Motions*

#### **Is it in order?**

Your motion must relate to the business at hand and be presented at the right time. It must not be obstructive, frivolous or against the bylaws.

#### **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 which interests only one person.

#### **Can it be amended?**

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

#### **Can it be reconsidered?**

Some motions can be re-debated and re-voted to give members a chance to change their minds. The move to reconsider must come from the winning side.

#### **May I interrupt the speaker?**

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

#### **Is it debatable?**

Parliamentary procedure guards the right to free and full debate on most motions. Some privileged and incidental motions are not debatable.

#### **What vote is needed?**

Most require only a majority vote but motions concerning the rights of the assembly of its members need a 2/3 vote to be adopted.

### *B. Four Motions that are always Out of Order*

**The Main Motion reflects the will of the members of the organization. However, the following 4 motions are never in order, even if adopted by a unanimous vote:**

1. Motions which **conflict with laws** (federal, state, or local), or with bylaws, constitution, or rules of the organization.
2. Motions which present something **already rejected** during the same session, or conflict with a motion already adopted. (See Robert's sections on *Rescind*, *Reconsider*, and *Amend Something Already Adopted*);
3. Motions which conflict with or present substantially the **same question** as one which has been temporarily disposed of (meaning, *Postponed*, *Laid on Table*, *Referred to Committee*, or *Being Reconsidered*);
4. Motions which propose actions **beyond the scope** of the organization's bylaws. (However, a 2/3 vote may allow this kind of motion). But, what if the motion is in order, and you still do not agree with all or parts of it? You can always protect your interests by amending the motion!



### C. *Five Ways to Modify a Motion*

Motions are rarely perfect for everyone. Modifications are inevitable. Here are five accepted methods for making improvements.

1. **Between the time that a motion is made and before the chair states the motion**, any member may informally offer modifying suggestions to the maker of the motion. The maker may accept or reject that member's recommendations.
2. **After the chair has stated the motion**, the maker of the motion may *request unanimous consent* from the members to modify the motion. Remember that at this time, the motion belongs to the assembly and not the original maker.
3. **By means of the subsidiary motion to Amend**, any member may propose changes to the motion, before the motion is voted upon. These proposed changes must be seconded and may be amended and/or debated.
4. If a motion requires further study, the members may vote to **Refer the Main Motion to a Committee**. When the committee returns the motion to the assembly, the committee normally *proposes amendments* for the assembly to vote upon.
5. Sometimes the motion is so complex that the only way to do it justice is for a member to **urge its rejection and offer to propose a simpler version** as a *Substitute Motion*. Upon defeat of the complex motion, anyone may propose the *Substitute Motion*.

Once a member learns which motions are out of order, how to make a motion, and how to amend a motion, the member becomes a productive member of the organization. Until then, the member is just another victim of the organization!

### D. *A Motion Can Be Adopted; Yet Still Not Be Final*

**For every means of disposing of a motion, there is a means of returning the motion to the assembly**, (with certain slight limitations). You would think that once a motion is adopted (or is voted down), the question of the motion would be settled. To someone armed with Parliamentary Procedure knowledge, it does not mean any such thing! **For example ...**

1. **Move To Lay on the Table:** Anyone can Take from the Table, once the immediate urgency has been dealt with.
2. **Move To Refer to a Committee:** Anyone can move to discharge the committee with previous notice. The motion could again return to the assembly.
3. **Move to Rescind (annul or repeal):** Anyone regardless of how he voted and without time limitations (but with previous notice) may move to annul a motion already adopted.
4. **Move to Amend Something Previously Adopted:** Even after the assembly long debated and heatedly amended a controversial motion, anyone with previous notice can later move to amend it some more. This is the strange case of amending a motion that is not pending.
5. **Move to Postpone Indefinitely:** Any motion which is killed may be reintroduced (as a new motion) in a subsequent session of the assembly.
6. **Move to Reconsider the Vote on... :** If a member votes on the prevailing side, he may Move to Reconsider the Vote at that same meeting. The result is that he will paralyze the majority's will by suspending all action which could have resulted from the adopted motion.

Robert's Rules of Order base Parliamentary Procedure on the potential of the majority to change its mind; to need to correct a hasty, and ill-advised action; or to need to take into account a changed situation since a voting. How thorough!

## ***E. Totally Wrong Phrases***

1. **SO MOVED!** This is a common statement which means nothing. One must state the actual motion so as to avoid confusion in the audience. Everyone has the right to know exactly what is being moved and discussed. "So moved!" is vague and pointless. Do not allow your club members to be vague and pointless.
2. **I MOVE TO TABLE!** First of all, the motion is "*Move to Lay on the Table.*" According to Robert's Rules of Order, this motion is in order only as a temporary interruption of the agenda, so as to allow something special and urgent out of turn. It is not intended to kill a motion. If your members wish to kill a motion, let them use the correct motion, "*Move to Postpone Indefinitely.*"
3. **CALL FOR THE QUESTION!** This is not a motion. The person calling "Question! Question!" is being disorderly, if another person has the floor. At best, it is a nagging hint to the chair to stop the discussion and get on with the voting. The chair should make sure that everyone has had an opportunity to speak and still please the nagging "call for the question" hint. The chair should state that after one or two more speakers' comments, the vote shall be taken.

It is critical that the chair not automatically stop the discussion when someone says "Call for the question." The disorderly member who wishes to stop the discussion does not have more rights than the members who wish to discuss the issue. Actually, a motion to stop the discussion ("*I Call for*" or "*I Move the Main Question*") would require a 2/3 vote to be adopted.

## ***F. Unamendable Motions***

- A. The power to amend any motion leads to a quick compromise which pleases most of the members. Notice that amending the following motion makes no sense.

In all of the motions listed in this section, the members either allow something to occur or they do not allow it. A member is either granted a request or is not. Normally, there is no half way position; there is no modification. (Notice that among the common motions, if you cannot debate them, then you probably cannot amend them either!).

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Adjourn.  | 8. Previous Question (Close Debate).       |
| 2. Call for the Orders of the Day.                 | 9. Parliamentary Inquiry.                  |
| 3. Call for the Division of the Assembly.          | 10. Point of Information.                  |
| 4. Lay on the Table/Take from the Table.           | 11. Point of Order.                        |
| 5. Dispense with Reading of the Minutes.           | 12. Raise a Question of Privilege.         |
| 6. Objection to the Consideration of the Question. | 13. Suspend the Rules.                     |
| 7. Postpone Indefinitely.                          | 14. Appeal from the Decision of the Chair. |
|  | 15. Reconsider a Motion.                   |

Once you realize which motions you can make without the obstacle of an opposing debate or modification, you can then assure the victory of your plans

## ***G. Undeatable Motions***

- A. A member can make some motions which no one can speak against, mostly because sometimes the right to debate does not make sense. Notice that among the common motions, if you cannot debate them, you probably cannot amend them either!

### **1. Some motions perform a time sensitive task where a discussion would be counter productive.**

- a. Call for the Orders of the Day.
- b. Call for the Division of the Assembly.
- c. Lay on the Table/Take from the Table.
- d. Division of a Question.
- e. Suspend the Rules.
- f. Reconsider a Motion (most).
- g. Dispense with Reading of the Minutes.

**2. Some motions intend to prevent further debate. Discussing the motion defeats the purpose of the motion.**

- a. Adjourn.
- b. Objection to the Consideration of the Question.
- c. Previous Question (Close Debate).
- d. Limit or Extend Limits of Debate.
- e. Recess.

**3. Some motions intend to perform simple tasks which require immediate attention.**

- a. Parliamentary Inquiry.
- b. Point of Information.
- c. Point of Order.
- d. Raise a Question of Privilege.
- e. Appeal from the Decision of the Chair (most).

# Appendix

## Commonly Used Parliamentary Terms

Parliamentary procedure is a specific set of rules adopted for easy and orderly conduct of meetings - once you learn the terminology and basic rules, you will know when to apply it make your meeting run smoothly. It is used world wide so once you learn it here, you can apply the lessons to other organizations. It allows every member to be treated fairly and equitably while lending them an opportunity to express their opinions.

**Adjourn** - close or end the meeting

**Adjourned meeting** - a meeting which is a continuation of a previous meeting

**Affirmative vote** - a vote in favor, usually "Aye"

**Agenda** - outline of the order of business for a meeting

**Amendment** - a motion which alters or changes another motion-this is used to add paragraphs, words, phrases, to strike out paragraphs or words, or to substitute works or phrases.

**Assembly** - the members of the group who are gathered together to conduct business

**Business** - matters brought before an assembly for action

**Bylaws** - the document which contains the basic rules of the organization

**Close debate** - This motion ends debate on a pending motion and puts it to an immediate vote.

**Commit (or refer)** - to send to a committee for further study

**Committee** - small group of people chosen to study an issue and report back to the larger group

**Debate** - the discussion that follows the introduction of a motion before the vote is taken

**Decorum** - proper behavior, especially in debate

**Dispose (of a motion)** - make a decision that allows the assembly to move on to other business (approve, defeat, postpone, or send to a committee)

**Division (of the assembly)** - a motion that calls for a rising vote, used to verify a voice vote

**Division of the question** - separating a motion into two or more independent parts, so they can be debated and voted on separately

**Ex-officio** - by virtue of office; often the president is ex-officio a member of most committees (entitled to be present)

**Floor (to obtain)** - to receive recognition by the presiding officer and get permission to speak

**General consent** - used instead of taking a formal vote when there is no real opposition; also called unanimous consent

**Germane** - closely related or having a direct bearing on the subject being discussed

**In order** - correct parliamentary procedure

**Introduce new business** -Any motion not on the agenda requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote to be brought before the Assembly. Any member of the Assembly may bring forth a motion during new business and provided the necessary two-thirds (2/3) vote is obtained, the motion will be brought forward for consideration.

**Lay on the table** - to set aside temporarily to attend to something more urgent; used in legislative bodies to kill motions, but not in *RONR*

**Limit debate** – In RONR the minimum time allowed for debate is five (5) minutes. This motion limits the time for which a motion will be debated, and when this time has expired, requires that the motion be put to a vote. The only exception is if a motion to extend debate is passed.

**Main motion** - motion introducing a new subject for discussion and action

**Majority vote** - more than half of the votes cast

NOTE: votes cast is unrelated to number present or quorum needed

**Minutes** - the official written record of the business conducted at a meeting

**Motion** - a proposal that something be done

**Negative vote** - a vote against, usually "Nay"

**Order of business** - the schedule of business to be considered

**Out of order** - a motion or behavior which cannot be permitted at that time; something that violates the rules of the organization

**Parliamentary authority** - the book of rules adopted by an organization to govern their procedure, i.e.

*RONR*

**Pending** - a motion which has been stated by the presiding officer but not yet disposed of by the assembly

**Plurality vote** - the largest number of votes when there are 3 or more choices

**Point of information**- This is used for questions related to matters other than those related to parliamentary procedure.

**Point of order:** - This is used when a member wishes to protest a breach of rules or conduct. This motion should not be used for minor irregularities, but when used, must be used promptly at the time the breach occurs. If unsure if a rule is being broken, a member may make a parliamentary inquiry of the chair.

**Postpone** - to put off until a later time or the next meeting

**Postpone indefinitely** - the proper motion in *RONR* to kill a motion

**Precedence** - rank; certain motions have priority over others

**Prevailing side** - the winning side; if a motion is approved, those who voted Aye are on the prevailing side; if a motion loses, those who voted No are on the prevailing side

**Previous question** - a motion to stop debate and vote at once

**Primary amendment** - a motion to amend a main motion

**Putting the question** - putting the motion to a vote

**Question of privilege** - This is used when a member wishes to complain about heat, cold, lighting, noise, conduct of another member, etc. The request is ruled upon by the chair. The request may also be given in the form of a main motion, in which case, it would be treated as any other motion (needs seconded, amendable, debatable, etc.).

**Quorum** - the minimum number of members who must be present to legally conduct business at a meeting

**Recognize a member** - how the presiding officer indicates who has permission to speak

**Reconsider** - a motion to retake a previous vote; must be moved by someone who voted on the prevailing side

**Refer to committee** - This motion is used to send a pending motion to a committee so the question can be carefully investigated and reworked for future consideration. **Rescind** - a motion to annul, or undo, a previous action

**Resolution** - a formal, usually long, motion presented in writing

*Roberts, RONR*: shorthand for *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised*

**Rules of order** - written rules of parliamentary procedure, such as *Roberts*

**Ruling** - a decision made by the presiding officer; can be appealed

**Second** - an indication that a person is willing to have the motion discussed

**Secondary amendment** - a motion to amend a primary amendment

**Special meeting** - a meeting called for a specific purpose, which must be stated in the meeting notice

**Standing committees** - permanent committees, usually listed in the bylaws

**Standing rules** - rules relating to details of administration; called Policies by some groups

**Take from the table** - a motion to resume consideration of a motion which was laid on the table

**Undebatable motion** - a motion that does not allow discussion before the vote

**Unfinished business** - matters which were not completed at the previous meeting; are placed near the top of the agenda for the current meeting

**Withdraw a motion** - This is used when a motion is pending, and the sponsor wishes to withdraw his/her motion. Unless there is an objection, the chair may treat this as a unanimous consent request. If there is an objection, then the motion must be put to a vote. **Vote** - a formal expression of opinion or choice

## ***Orientation to the United States Women of Today***

*Welcome to the Women of Today.*

*You now belong to a local, district, state, and national organization!*

### I. The United States Women of Today (USWT) [www.uswomenoftoday.org](http://www.uswomenoftoday.org)

- A. The United States Women of Today is comprised of chapters from 18 other states.
1. Our national organization structure.
    - a. The organization is governed by a **Board of Directors**, in which each state's president serves alongside the National Staff and Executive Committee.
    - b. The **National Staff** is made up of all the programming directors (Extensions, Public Relations} Program Managers (Domestic Violence Awareness and Health and Personal Development) and the Executive Committee. They provide each state information on their respective area.
    - c. The **Executive Committee** consists of five elected officers (President, Membership Vice President, Programming Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) of the organization plus the chairman of the board and the parliamentarian. They too are available to provide training to individuals, chapters, and states.
  2. There are two national meetings a year – mid-year convention in October and Annual Convention in June. States bid for hosting a convention so locations vary. Family trips and sight seeing of national monuments are available to members.
  3. The USWT newsletter, “The Today’s Leader” is published six times a year. Each chapter is given a subscription.
  4. National dues are \$5.00 per member per year and are paid at the same time our state dues are collected. Members must be at least 18 years of age to join.
- B. The United States Women of Today Mission:

The mission of the United States Women of Today is to provide state and local member chapters opportunities in the areas of leadership training, personal growth, community service, and work in partnerships with established foundations.

C. The United States Women of Today Creed:

We, The United States Women of Today are dedicated to serving our community and nation, are committed to strengthening our individual talents, and stand united by our friendship and belief in the future.



So You Have a New Idea...  
Outline for Reporting at a Meeting

1. Stand while presenting your idea or when giving your report.
2. To begin discussion on a new idea, be prepared to make a motion beginning with the words, "I move to...". This may surprise some members, but the proper procedure is to first have a motion and then discuss what's involved.
  - a. Motion slips are available from the secretary.
  - b. Writing out the motion to begin with helps you formulate the proper wording.
3. All motions and/or reports should be written and a copy given to the secretary once it has been read.
  - a. It helps keep meetings running efficiently.
  - b. It helps you to be clear, specific, and to the point.
  - c. See the Meeting Report Form for all of the basics.
4. Give the particulars of the project.
  - a. Who, what, where, when, why, and how.
  - b. Ask for any sub-committee members if needed.
  - c. Give date, place, and time of next committee meeting.
  - d. Ask for any questions.
5. Report at subsequent meetings.
  - a. Tell of any plans made thus far (generalize).
  - b. Share any decisions that have been made by the committee since the last report.
  - c. Ask for any questions.
6. A final report should be given after the project has been completed.

- a. Include: how many people attended, how much money was raised, etc.
  - b. See also, Meeting Report Form.
7. After the final report, a verbal thank you should be given to those who helped with the project. Thank you notes should be sent to all others involved. It may even be a nice touch to send thank you notes to the Women of Today members who worked on the project.



### **Orders of the Day (in person)**

- Please have all cellular phones and pagers turned off or in silent mode during the business meeting.
- As a matter of courtesy, please do not enter or leave the room when a speaker has the floor.
- A motion slip must be prepared and given to the secretary.
- Any member in good standing may present a motion, enter into discussion and vote. Please keep all motions in the positive.
- If you disagree with a motion, do not hesitate to vote no or abstain.
- Please be ready to second a motion to help expedite the business. Seconding simply means you would like to discuss the motion.
- We have \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ states in attendance. A quorum has (not) been established.

### **Online Orders of the Day (Zoom, Go To Meetings etc)**

- Please mute yourself to help minimize background noise.
- Please have radios, televisions etc turned off to keep background noise to a minimum
- Where possible, be in a quiet location with minimal distractions
- To ask a question, please state your name, chapter and state in the chat; the moderator will make sure the questions are taken in order.
- To ask your question when you are “called” on, please unmute yourself, state your question and then mute yourself again
- The moderator will share all documents, video’s etc on the screen for all to see
- Please have all cellular phones turned off or in silent mode during the meeting
- A motion must be prepared and stated in the chat to be documented
- Any member in good standing may present a motion, enter into discussion and vote. Please keep all motions in the positive.
- If you disagree with a motion, do not hesitate to vote no or abstain
- Please be ready to second a motion to help expedite the business. Seconding simply means you would like to discuss the motion.
- We have \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ states in attendance. A quorum has/has not been established.