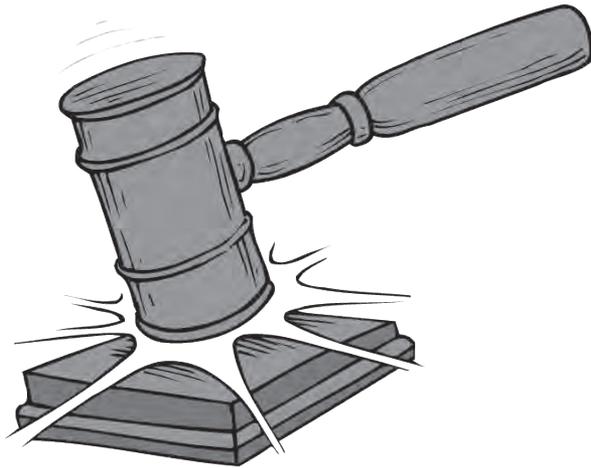




# The Chair Recognizes



**A Booklet of  
Parliamentary Procedure**

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## FOREWORD

This booklet is designed to ease the burden of interpreting and reinterpreting the intricacies of parliamentary procedure. It is not meant to be definitive or complete, but it should answer most of the questions raised on parliamentary procedures.

While parliamentary procedures themselves can be justified on the basis of the effectiveness and uniformity they contribute to meeting procedure, there is little, if any, reason for one person to attempt to learn every rule and its related details. To know where to find the answers is enough.

We would like to clarify three misconceptions about Robert's Rules. These three items are NOT part of Robert's Rules:

1. **Friendly amendments.** There is no such thing as a friendly amendment. For clarity of records, all amendments should be clearly stated, even if it means amending an amendment.
2. **So moved.** This is an incorrect motion. The maker should state the motion to avoid confusion and to make sure that it is correctly recorded in the minutes.
3. **Speaking through the chair.** Speaking through the chair de-personalizes the comments that are being made. For example, "Madam Chair, does the member who proposed this project have information as to the cost of the project?" Better example: "Mr. Smith, how are we going to pay for this project?" All members should speak to each other in a polite way.

## THE “WHY” OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW

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. If one knows the vocabulary, the rules come easily. For this reason, a glossary of common terms has been included in the back of the booklet and should be referred to as often as necessary in considering the fundamental rules.

### **The Purpose of Parliamentary Law:**

1. To enable an assembly to transact business with speed and efficiency.
2. To protect the rights of each individual.
3. To preserve a spirit of harmony within the group.

To achieve these purposes, always consider the five basic principles of parliamentary procedure:

1. Only one subject may claim the attention of the assembly at one time.
2. Each proposition presented for consideration is entitled to full and free debate.
3. Every member has rights equal to every other member.
4. The will of the majority must be carried out, and the rights of the minority must be preserved.
5. The personality and desires of each member should be merged into the larger unity of the organization.

# Agenda or Order of Business

## THE AGENDA OR ORDER OF BUSINESS

It is customary for every group to adopt a standard order of business for meetings.

When no rule has been adopted, the following is the order:

**1. Call to order:**

“Will the meeting please come to order.”

**2. Reading and approval of minutes:**

“Are there any corrections to the minutes?”

“There being no corrections, the minutes will stand approved as read.”

... OR ...

“Are there any further corrections to the minutes?”

“There being no further corrections, the minutes will stand approved as corrected.”

**3. Reports of officers and standing committees:**

Officers, boards, or standing committees should be called upon to report in the order in which they are mentioned in the constitution or by-laws of the organization.

**4. Reports of special committees:**

**5. Unfinished business:**

“We come now to unfinished business. Is there any unfinished business to come before the meeting?”

**6. New business:**

“Is there any new business to come before the meeting?”

**7. Program:**

## What is a Motion?

### 8. Adjournment:

**Unqualified form:** Proposer moves for adjournment; motion is seconded; chairperson calls for a vote; action depends upon majority vote. This motion cannot be discussed.

**Qualified form:** Proposer moves for adjournment within a definite time or adjournment to meet again at a specified time; motion is seconded; chairperson calls for a discussion; a vote is taken; action depends upon majority vote.

## WHAT IS A MOTION?

A motion is a proposal that the group take certain action.

## How Are Motions Classified?

**Main Motions:** The object of motions in this group is to bring up questions, or propositions, before the assembly for consideration. Only one main motion can be considered at a given time by the assembly, and such a motion, when introduced, excludes all other main motions until it has been disposed of.

**Subsidiary Motions:** The object of motions in this group is the modification or disposition of the main motion that is being considered. Their existence as motions depends entirely upon the principal motion to which they are subordinate. Since they relate to the question before the house, it is “in order” to propose them when a main motion is still before the assembly and to vote upon them before voting upon the main motion.

**Privileged Motions:** Motions of this group have no connection whatsoever with the main motion before the assembly, but are motions of such importance that they are entitled to immediate consideration. These motions have the privilege of setting aside temporarily the main business before the house.

## How Should a Motion Progress?

**Incidental Motions:** Motions of this group have few general characteristics in common, but for convenience have been grouped into one class. The name, “incidental,” has been chosen because they arise only incidentally out of the business of the assembly.

*See the “Chart of Precedence of Motions and Summary of Rules Governing Them” on pages 12 and 13 for further reference.*

### HOW SHOULD A MOTION PROGRESS?

- 1. A member rises and addresses the presiding officer.**  
The presiding officer should be addressed by title, as “Mr. or Madame President.” If the specific title is not known, it is always correct to use the term “Mr. or Madame Chairperson.”
- 2. The member is recognized by the presiding officer.**  
The chairperson recognizes a member by name, or by a nod. Having thus received formal recognition from the chairperson, a member is said to “have the floor” and is the only member entitled to present or discuss a motion.
- 3. The member proposes a motion.**  
A motion is always introduced in the form, “I move that ...” followed by a statement of the proposal. This is the only correct phraseology. Aside from very brief explanatory remarks, it is not permissible to discuss the merits of a motion either prior to, or immediately following, the formal proposal of the motion. All discussion must wait until after the chairperson has stated the motion to the assembly and has called for discussion.
- 4. Another member seconds the motion.**  
Another member, without rising or addressing the chairperson, may say, “I second the motion.” Seconding a motion is merely an indication that the member seconding it wishes the matter to come before the assembly for consideration. If no one seconds the motion, the chairperson may ask, “Is there a second to the

## How Should a Motion Progress?

motion?” If there is none, the chairperson may declare, “The motion is lost for want of a second.”

5. **The presiding officer states the motion to the assembly.**

When a motion has been properly proposed and seconded, the chairperson repeats the motion to the assembly, or “states the motion.” After it has been formally stated to the assembly, it may be spoken of as a “question,” a “proposition” or a “measure.”

6. **The assembly discusses or debates the motion.**

After the motion has been formally stated by the chairperson, any member has a right to discuss it. A member must obtain the floor in the same manner as when presenting a motion. Normally, the first person who asks recognition is entitled to speak, but when several members wish to speak or present motions at the same time, certain guiding principles should determine the decision of the chairperson:

- a. The chairperson should always show preference to the proposer of the motion.
- b. A member who has not spoken has prior claim over one who has already discussed the question, or who has proposed another motion.
- c. If the chairperson knows the opinions of the various members regarding the measure before the house, he should alternate between those favoring the measure and those opposing it.
- d. The chairperson should recognize a member who seldom speaks in preference to one who frequently claims the attention of the assembly.

**DISCUSSION MUST BE CONFINED TO THE QUESTION THAT IS “BEFORE THE HOUSE.”**

## How May a Motion Be Amended?

### 7. **The presiding officer takes the vote on the motion.**

When all members who desire to discuss the question have done so, the chairperson “puts the motion to a vote.” Before taking the vote, the chairperson may inquire: “Is there any further discussion?” or “Are you ready for the question?” If no one rises, the chairperson presumes discussion is closed and will proceed to take the vote by announcing: “All in favor of the motion ... (state the motion) ... say ‘Aye.’”

Following response from the assembly, the chairperson then says, “Those opposed say ‘No.’” If the volume of voices cannot determine which way the majority has voted, the chairperson says: “The chair is in doubt. Those in favor of the motion please rise.” After counting, the chairperson says, “Be seated ... Those opposed, rise ... Be seated.” Another alternative is to simply call for a show of hands. Certain motions may be voted on by ballot.

### 8. **The presiding officer announces the result of the vote.**

The chairperson formally announces the result of the vote, saying: “The motion is carried; therefore ... (state the intent of the motion) ... ” If a majority voted in the negative, “The motion is lost.” As soon as the vote has been announced by the chairperson, another motion is in order.

## HOW MAY A MOTION BE AMENDED?

The purpose of the motion to amend is to modify a motion that has already been presented in such a manner that it will be more satisfactory to the members.

### **Methods of Amending:**

1. **By addition of insertion:** To add something to the motion which it did not contain.

## How to Handle Amendments?

2. **By elimination or by striking out:** To subtract or eliminate something from a motion that was originally a part of it.
3. **By substitution:** This method is a combination of the first two methods, since in amending by substitution something is stricken out and something inserted in its place. The substituted portion may consist of a word, a phrase, a clause or an entirely new motion.

The most important principle to understand in connection with any form of the motion **to amend** is that an amendment **may be hostile, but it must be germane.**

“Hostile” means opposed to the spirit and aim of the motion to which it is applied.

“Germane” means having direct bearing upon the subject matter of the motion; that it is relevant, or relating to it.

An amendment may be opposed to the actual intent of the original motion and, in fact, nullify it, but if it relates to the same subject matter, it is germane.

## HOW TO HANDLE AMENDMENTS

### Types of Amendments:

1. **Amendment of the First Rank:** An amendment to a motion.
2. **Amendment of the Second Rank:** An amendment to the amendment. (The amendment is to the amendment and NOT to the main motion, otherwise it is OUT OF ORDER.)

**NO AMENDMENT BEYOND THAT OF  
SECOND RANK IS POSSIBLE**

## How to Handle Amendments?

It is never in order to propose more than one amendment to each rank at one time. If one desires to amend two separate and unrelated parts of a motion, this must be done by two amendments of the first rank, and one must be voted upon before the other is proposed. It is possible, however, to have a motion, one amendment to the motion (amendment of the first rank), and one amendment to the amendment (amendment of the second rank) before the assembly at once. Until the amendment of the second rank has been voted upon, no other amendment of the second rank is in order. Until the amendment of the first rank has been voted upon, no other amendment of the first rank can be proposed.

### Order of Voting:

Amendments are voted upon in inverse order; that is, the one of second rank is disposed of first.

1. Discussion is held and the vote taken upon the amendment to the amendment (amendment of second rank).
2. Discussion is called for and the vote is taken upon the amendment to the motion (amendment of first rank).
3. When the vote on this has been taken, discussion upon the original or main motion **as amended** is opened and when completed a vote is taken upon it.

# Chart of Motions

## CHART OF PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS AND DEBATE

	May interrupt a Speaker	Requires a Second	Debate
<b>Privileged Motions</b>			
1. To fix time to which to adjourn	No	Yes	Li
2. To adjourn (unqualified)	No	Yes	
3. To take a recess	No	Yes	Li
4. To rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	
5. To call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	
<b>Subsidiary Motions</b>			
6. To lay on the table	No	Yes	
7. To call for the previous question	No	Yes	
8. To limit or extend limits of debate	No	Yes	Li
9. To postpone definitely	No	Yes	Li
10. To refer to a committee	No	Yes	Li
11. To amend	No	Yes	
12. To postpone indefinitely	No	Yes	
<b>Main Motions</b>			
13. a. General main motions	No	Yes	
b. Specific main motions			
To take from the table	No	Yes	
To reconsider	Yes	Yes	
To reconsider and enter on the minutes	Yes	Yes	
To rescind	No	Yes	
To expunge	No	Yes	
To adopt a resolution	No	Yes	
To adjourn (qualified)	No	Yes	Li
To create orders of the day (special)	No	Yes	
To amend (constitution, etc.)	No	Yes	
<b>Incidental Motions</b>			
To suspend rules	No	Yes	
To withdraw a motion	No	No	
To read papers	No	Yes	
To object to consideration	Yes	No	
To rise to a point of order	Yes	No	
To rise to parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	
To appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Li
To call for a division of the house	Yes	No	
To call for a division of a question	No	Yes	

# Chart of Motions

## CONDENSED SUMMARY OF RULES GOVERNING THEM

Vote Required	Motions that May Apply
Majority	Amend, Reconsider
Majority	None
Majority	Amend
Chairperson Rules	All
None	None
Majority	None
2/3	Reconsider
2/3	Amend, Reconsider
Majority	Amend, Reconsider, Previous Question
Majority	Amend, Reconsider, Previous Question
Majority	Amend, Reconsider, Previous Question
Majority	Limit Debate, Prev. Ques., Reconsider
Majority	All
Majority	None
Majority	Limit Debate, Previous Question, Table, Postpone Definitely
None until called for	None
2/3	All
2/3	All
Majority	All
Majority	All
General, Majority; Special, 2/3	All
2/3	All
2/3	None
Majority	Reconsider
Majority	Reconsider
2/3	Reconsider
Chairperson Rules or Majority	None
None	None
Majority	All except amend
Majority	None
Majority	Amend

## NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

A nomination is the formal presentation to the assembly of the name of a candidate for the office to be filled.

### 1. **Nomination From the Floor:**

- a. Nominations do not require a second.
- b. Nominations are in order as soon as the chairperson calls for them.
- c. As a nomination is made, the chairperson repeats it and the secretary records it.
- d. No member may nominate more than one candidate for each office.
- e. If there are no further nominations, the chairperson may declare the nominations closed.
- f. A motion to close the nominations requires a two-thirds vote.
- g. Prior to voting but following the formal closing of nominations, nominations may be reopened by a motion, which requires only a majority to carry.

### 2. **Nominations by Nominating Committee:**

- a. Committee may be appointed or elected as assembly may choose or as stated in the by-laws.
- b. Nominating committee report presents to the organization the names of one or more members as candidates for each office.
- c. The report of the nominating committee is not adopted, but the names are posted and treated as if the persons named had been nominated from the floor.
- d. Further nominations may be made from the floor.

## Nominations and Elections

### 3. **Nominations by Ballot:**

- a. Chairperson directs tellers to pass out ballots and the member writes after each office the name of one person whom he/she desires to nominate.
- b. If a candidate receives a majority in this manner, it is usual to declare that candidate elected.
- c. If no majority is received, a second ballot is then taken, in which candidates nominated by previous ballot are voted upon. The candidate who receives a majority on this ballot is elected.
- d. If no one is elected on the second ballot, a motion that only the two highest candidates on the previous ballot be considered on the next ballot is in order before this third ballot. The third ballot then becomes the decisive vote, or the electing ballot.

### 4. **Voting for Candidates Not Nominated:**

Voters may vote for anyone who is eligible, regardless of whether or not they have been nominated, and anyone receiving the necessary majority is elected. This is commonly called a “sticker ballot.”

### 5. **Voting on Nominations:**

- a. After the nominations are closed, the assembly proceeds to vote upon the names by the method prescribed in the constitution.
- b. An election becomes effective immediately if the candidate is present and does not decline, or is absent but has consented to candidacy. If the candidate is absent and has not consented to candidacy, the election becomes effective as soon as the candidate is notified, if the nomination is not immediately declined.

*(Continued on page 18)*

# Actions for Special Purposes

## ACTIONS FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

Kind of Motion	Object	Effect
To lay on the table	Clear the floor for more urgent business	Delays action
To call for the previous question	Secure immediate vote on pending question	Ends debate
To limit or extend time for debate	Provides more or less time for discussion	Shortens or lengthens discussion period
To postpone definitely (to a certain time)	Often gives more time for informal discussion and for securing followers	Delays action
To commit or refer	To enable more careful consideration to be given	Delays action
To amend	To improve the motion	To change the original motion
To postpone indefinitely	To prevent a vote on the question	To suppress the question
To raise a point of order	To call attention to violation of rules	Keeps group functioning according to parliamentary procedures
To appeal from the decision of the chair	To determine the attitude of the group on the ruling made by the chair	Secures ruling of the group rather than by the chair
To suspend the rules	To permit action not possible under the rules	Secure action which would otherwise be prevented by the rules
To object to the consideration of a question	Prevent wasting time on unimportant business	Suppress the motion
To divide the question	Secure more careful consideration of parts	Secures action by parts
To call for a division of a viva voce vote	(a) To determine the accuracy on vote (b) To secure expression of individual member's vote	Secures an accurate check

# Actions for Special Purposes

## ACTIONS FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES (Cont.)

Kind of Motion	Object	Effect
To nominate	Suggest names for office	Places before the group names for consideration
To make a request growing out of pending business	To secure information or ask to be excused from a duty	Provide information
To fix the time to which to adjourn	To have legal continuation of the meeting	Sets definite continuation time
To adjourn	End the meeting	Adjourns the meeting
To take a recess	To secure an intermission	Delays action
To raise a question of privilege	To correct undesirable conditions	Corrects undesirable condition
To call for the order of the day	To secure adherence to the order of business	Same as object
To take from the table	Continue the consideration of the question	Continue consideration of the question
To reconsider (Only member of the prevailing side may make this motion)	To reconsider the question	Secures further consideration and another vote on the question
To reconsider and have entered on the minutes (Only a member of the prevailing side may make this motion)	To reconsider the question at the next meeting	Secures further consideration and another vote on the question
To rescind	Repeal action previously taken	Same as object
To ratify	Approves previous action taken	Same as object

# Glossary

*(Voting on Nominations, continued from page 15)*

- c. Unless some other time is specified in the by-laws, an officer assumes the duties of office as soon as elected.

**Most organizations make specific and detailed provisions for nominating and electing new officers in their constitution and by-laws. The provisions ordinarily include such details as time of nomination, time of elections, method of nominating and electing, and time of installation.**

## GLOSSARY

**Amend:** To change a motion either by adding to it, taking from it, or by altering it in some other way. (See section on Amendments.)

**Chair:** The chairperson: “Addressing the chair” means speaking to the chairperson or president. This is done by rising to one’s feet when no one else is speaking (with some exceptions) and saying, “Mr. or Madam Chairperson.” Being “recognized by the chair” means being given permission to speak further. (See section on Progress of Motions.)

**Power of chair:** The chairperson has the authority to:

- a. Decide in what order speakers shall be recognized.
- b. Refuse to recognize members offering dilatory, absurd or frivolous motions or motions intended to obstruct business.
- c. Restrain speakers within the limits of the rules.
- d. Enforce good decorum.
- e. Appoint committees.
- f. Decide points of order.
- g. Vote in cases where his/her vote would change the result; e.g., to make or break a tie.

**The chair should** avoid influencing a vote by commenting on a motion under consideration.

## Glossary

Actions of the chairperson are, of course, subject to appeal. (See section on Incidental Motion, “to appeal from the decision of the chair.”)

**Commit:** To refer to a committee.

**Committee of the Whole:** Sometimes certain matters come up which can be properly studied and digested only as a committee would go into them, but which, because of their importance, should be considered by all members, and therefore should not be referred to a small committee. Then the meeting, on motion duly made, may “resolve itself into a committee of the whole.” This means that the meeting officially is discontinued while everyone remains and becomes a member of a large special committee including everyone present. The chairperson of the regular meeting does not preside over a committee of the whole; a special chairperson is appointed.

**Debate:** Discussion or argument over a motion.

**Division:** “Division” in parliamentary law means simply a vote whereby all who are in favor and all who are opposed to a motion stand separately in groups as the chairperson calls for “ayes” and “nays.”

**Division of Question:** To separate a motion so that different parts of it may be considered individually.

**Filling Blanks:** A term used to indicate a method of decision regarding a matter where several different courses of action are possible. The term “blank” is used because usually this method is applied in motions where an exact amount, a name, a date or some other essential specific information is left blank.

**Floor:** The privilege of speaking before the assembly. Thus, when one “obtains the floor,” he/she is granted an opportunity to speak.

## Glossary

**General Order:** “Making a general order” is setting a future time for the discussion of a special matter. Making a general order differs from making a special order in that the former does not involve the breaking of any rules.

**Indefinite Postponement:** This term is clear in the ordinary meaning of the words included in it except that the object of indefinite postponement is not merely to postpone, but, in effect, to reject.

**Informal Consideration:** When a member moves “informal consideration,” and the motion is adopted, the meeting lays aside formal rules, allowing each person present to speak once on the subject under consideration.

**Incidental Motion:** An incidental motion is one growing out of another already under consideration; this secondary motion must be disposed of before the original motion may be proceeded with. (See section on Motions.)

**Motion:** A formal proposal to a meeting that it take certain action. A motion is a “motion” when stated by its proponent and until repeated by the chairperson who presents it for acceptance or rejection, at which time it becomes a “question,” a “proposition” or a “measure.” (See section on Progress of Motions.)

**Order of Business:** The regular program of procedure of a society. (See section on Agenda.)

**Order:** When this term is applied to an act of an assembly it means an expression of the will of the assembly in the form of a command. An “order” differs from a “resolution” in that the latter is not a command, but a declaration of fact or an expression of opinion or purpose.

## Glossary

**Order of the Day:** Regular order or program of business. A motion “calling for the orders of the day” is a motion demanding that the present discussion be dropped and that the chairperson announce the next matter to be taken up in accordance with the organization’s customary and established business routine. The term “orders of the day” has more specific meaning when a certain time has been set aside for the consideration of a given matter. Then a demand for the “orders of the day” is a request that this specific thing be taken up at the time set for it.

**Parliamentary Inquiry:** An investigation or checking to determine the proper course of procedure.

**Privilege:** The term “privilege” in parliamentary law has a restricted meaning and refers specifically to the privileges or rights of the meeting or those attending, chiefly in connection with matters of physical comfort, such as inability to hear a speaker, the heating, lighting and ventilation of the meeting room, noises and other disturbances, etc., and the ineligibility or misconduct of a member in a meeting at the time. These “questions of privilege” should not be confused with “privileged motions.” Questions of privilege may be involved in motions, but privileged motions include other matters.

**Privileged Motion:** A privileged motion is one which is so vital in character that it takes precedence over all others. (See section on Motions.)

**Question:** The question in parliamentary law is the proposition or motion after it has been placed before the meeting for action by the chairperson. To “move the previous question” is to demand that the chairperson take a vote on a motion that is being discussed. A “question,” when adopted becomes an “order,” “resolution” or a “vote.” (See section on Motions.)

## Glossary

**Refer:** To refer to a committee.

**Resolution:** The act of an assembly, the purpose of which is to declare facts or express opinions or purposes, and not to command. (See section on Order.)

**Suspension of Rules:** “When the assembly wishes to do something that cannot be done without violating its own rules, and yet is not in conflict with its constitution or by-laws, or with the fundamental principles of parliamentary law, it ‘suspends the rules that interfere with’ the proposed action.” — *Robert's Rules of Order*.

**Second:** A motion, in order to be considered by the meeting, must have a “second,” i.e., a sponsor in the form of a second member who indicates support of the motion by saying, “I second the motion.” (See section on Motions.)

**Sine die:** Latin meaning “without day.” Meetings frequently adjourn “sine die.” This means that no date is set for a future meeting.

**Special Order:** “Making a special order” is setting aside all rules for the consideration of some important question at a future time.

**Subsidiary Motion:** A subsidiary motion is one growing out of and applied to another already under consideration which is made use of “to enable the assembly to dispose of it in the most appropriate manner,” but which need not necessarily be decided before the question out of which it has arisen. (See section on Motions.)

**Table:** The “table” in parliamentary law is literally the speaker’s table, but to “lay on the table” or “to table” a motion means to delay action on it.

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