

## **SIMPLIFIED PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURE**

At all meetings it is up to the Presiding officer to use the rules of parliamentary procedure appropriately so that good order and reasonable decorum are maintained and the business of the meeting goes forward. At times the rules of parliamentary procedure may be relaxed as long as the meeting accomplishes its purpose and the rights of absentees and minorities are protected.

### **ROLE OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER:**

- 1) Be ready to call the meeting to order at the time set.
- 2) Follow the agenda and clarify what is happening and what is being voted on at all times.
- 3) Deal firmly with whispering, commotion and frivolous or delaying debate and motions.
- 4) See that debate is confined to the merits of the question and that personal comment is avoided. No one should speak more than twice on a subject, and no one should speak a second time until all who wish to speak have had a chance.
- 5) Talk no more than necessary. Except in small boards or committees, the presiding officer should not enter the debate without giving up the chair to a substitute until the motion under debate has been voted on.
- 6) Remain calm and deal firmly with all sides regardless of personal opinion. To preserve this impartiality the presiding officer abstains from voting except by ballot or to cast the deciding vote on an issue.

### **MOTIONS:**

Business is conducted by acting on motions. A subject is introduced by a main motion. Once this has been seconded and stated by the presiding officer nothing else should be taken up until the motion is disposed of. Long and involved motions should be submitted in writing. Once a motion has been stated, the mover may not withdraw it without the consent of the meeting. Most motions must be seconded.

While a main motion is being considered other parliamentary motions which affect either the main motion or the general conduct of the meeting may be made. The ones most frequently used are described in general below but it should be noted that there are exceptions and modifications that cannot be included in this brief text.

### **AMEND:**

Debatable: majority vote. Used when the intention is to change, add or omit words in the main motion.

### **AMEND THE AMENDMENT:**

Used to change, add or omit words in the first amendment. The motion itself cannot be amended.

Method: The first vote is on the amendment to the amendment. The second vote is on the amendment either as changed or as originally proposed depending on the first vote. The third vote is on the main motion either as introduced or as amended.

**REFER:**

Debatable: Majority vote. If a motion becomes too complicated through amendments or if more information is needed a motion may be made to refer it to a committee for study or redrafting. This committee must report back or act as instructed.

**POSTPONE:**

Debatable: majority vote. Consideration of a motion can be delayed until a more suitable time, until other decisions have been made or until more information is available. A motion to postpone to a stated future time accomplishes this.

**LAY ON THE TABLE:**

Not debatable: 2/3 vote. "I move that we table this motion." This postpones consideration in such a way that the motion can be taken up again in the near future if a majority decides to "take it from the table."

**THE PREVIOUS QUESTION:**

Not debatable: 2/3 vote. "I move the previous question." This motion is used to end debate that has become lengthy and repetitious. When it is seconded the presiding officer immediately puts the question on closing debate. If this receives a 2/3 vote, the pending motion is voted on at once without further discussion.

**RECONSIDER:**

Usually debatable: majority vote. A vote may be reconsidered through this motion, which must be made on the same day. Someone who voted on the prevailing side must make this motion. A motion can be reconsidered only once. The first vote is on whether the motion should be reconsidered. If this passes, the second vote is on the motion.

**POINT OF ORDER AND APPEAL:**

A member who feels the rules are not being followed may call attention to the breach by rising and saying, "Point of order". The chair says, "State your point of order". Upon hearing it, the chair may say, "Your point is well taken" or "Your point is not well taken".

**QUESTIONS AND INQUIRIES:**

Whenever necessary advice may be asked as to correct procedures (parliamentary inquiry), facts may be requested (point of information, or a change may be sought for comfort or convenience (question of privilege) The presiding officer responds to the question or refers it to the proper person.

**ADJOURN:**

Usually not debatable: majority vote. If the time set for adjournment has arrived or there is no further business, the presiding officer declares the meeting adjourned without waiting for a formal motion. A member may move to adjourn at any time except when a speaker has the floor or a vote is in process. If the motion carries the meeting is immediately adjourned.

TO DO THIS	YOU SAY THIS	May you interrupt the speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	Vote needed?	Can it be reconsidered?
ADJOURN MEETING	"I move that we adjourne"	NO	YES	NO	NO	Majority	NO
CALL AN INTERMISSION	"I move that we recess for ..."	NO	YES	NO	YES	Majority	NO
COMPLAIN ABOUT HEAT, NOISE ETC.	"I rise to a question of priveledge"	YES	NO	NO	NO	No vote	NO
SUSPEND CONSIDERATION OF AN ISSUE	"I move to table the motion"	NO	YES	NO	NO	Majority	NO (usually)
END DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS POSTPONE	"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. The ones below are not in 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 chairs 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 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 ..."	YES	YES	[8]	NO	Majority	NO

Notes: ①Unless vote on question is not yet taken. ②Unless the committee has already taken up the subject. ③Only if the motion to be amended is debatable. ④Except in doubtful cases. ⑤A majority vote in negative needed to reverse ruling of chair. ⑥A 2/3 vote in the negative needed to prevent consideration of main motion. ⑦Only if the main question or motion was not in fact considered. ⑧Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable.