



Parliamentary Procedure Guide

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WHAT IS PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE?

Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules of conduct at meetings allowing everyone an opportunity to be heard and to make decisions with minimum confusion.

Parliamentary procedure means democratic rule, flexibility, protection of rights and a fair hearing for everyone. So, it is important that everyone knows the basic rules.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 10th Edition, the parliamentary authority for local and state associations, governs the proceedings of all association meetings when it does not conflict with state or corporate law or any of the provisions in the USBC bylaws. The bylaws take precedence over *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

ORDER OF BUSINESS AT ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

The normal order of business of a deliberative assembly outlined in the state and local association bylaws should be followed by the respective organizations.

The presiding officer, also known as the chair, cannot depart from the prescribed order of business; only the assembly can do so by at least a two-thirds vote. This is an important protection in cases where some of the members principally involved in a particular question may be unable to be present through an entire meeting. When a change of order is justified, the chair can obtain the necessary authorization from the assembly by stating, "The chair will entertain a motion to suspend the rules and take up...."

The normal order of business is:

- I. **Call to order.** The presiding officer says, "The meeting of the (name) Association will please come to order."
- II. **Roll Call of Officers and Directors.** The presiding officer calls the names of the officers and directors and those present respond. Names of board members present and absent are recorded in the minutes.
- III. **Action on Minutes.** The minutes may be acted on in any one of the following methods:
 - A. The Association Manager reads the minutes and a motion is made and seconded that the minutes are approved as read or approved as corrected.
 - B. If everyone receives a copy, the presiding officer asks for additions or corrections and then pauses. If none, the minutes stand approved as read (general consent). If additions or corrections are made, the presiding officer states, "Minutes stand as corrected," again by general consent. A motion is not necessary for either instance.
 - C. If everyone receives a copy of the minutes and has an opportunity to read them, a motion may be made, seconded and approved, to dispense with the reading of the minutes.

When the next regular meeting will not be held within a quarterly time interval and the session does not last longer than a day, or in an organization in which there will be a change or replacement of a portion of the membership:

- D. The members may give the board of directors the authority to approve the minutes of membership meetings. At the next membership meeting, the Association Manager reports the action taken by the board.
 - E. A Minutes Review committee may be appointed by the president to review the minutes of the membership meetings. At the next membership meeting, the committee's recommendation is presented to the membership for approval.
- IV. **Reports of Officers.** The bylaws require the Association Manager to keep a *written* financial report on file and provide it at all meetings (board and membership). Other officers and directors give reports (other than committee reports) only when they have something of significance to report to the members.
- V. **Acts of the Board.** The Association Manager reports any action the board has taken since the last membership meeting. The Association Manager does not read the board meeting minutes verbatim; just the important actions taken.
- VI. **Reports of Standing and Optional Committees.**
- A. Standing committees are: nominating, finance and (if merged) youth. (See mandatory bylaws.)
 - B. Optional committees include, but are not limited to: hall of fame, audit, legislative, ways and means, BVL Fund, tournament, banquet and membership/publicity.
- VII. **Unfinished (or Old) Business.** Business carried over from the previous meeting because (1) it was pending (not yet decided) or (2) had not yet been addressed when that meeting was adjourned.
- VIII. **New Business.** New topics are introduced, such as adoption of the bylaws amendments, to purchase a new computer or to start a hall of fame.
- IX. **Election of Officers and Directors.** Election of officers and directors may only be conducted at the annual meeting. (See mandatory bylaws.)
Election of Delegates and Alternates. For local associations, the elections may be conducted at **any** membership meeting. For state associations, the elections take place at the annual meeting.
- X. **Adjournment.** The meeting ends by approval of a motion to adjourn by a vote or by general consent.

QUORUM

The quorum, as specified in the bylaws, is the minimum number of eligible individuals who must be present at properly noticed meetings for business to be legally transacted.

The only action that may be taken in the absence of a quorum is to fix the time for which to adjourn, recess or take measures to obtain a quorum.

The quorum for a meeting should never be a percentage or a majority of the membership because it is rarely possible to obtain that attendance to conduct a legal meeting. Instead, the quorum should be as large a number of members as can reasonably be depended on to be present at any meeting.

HOW DO MEMBERS GET THEIR SAY?

They make motions! A motion is a proposal that the assembly take certain action.

Members can:

- A. Present motions — make proposals.
- B. Second motions — express support **for discussion** of other member's motions.
- C. Debate motions — give opinions on the motions.
- D. Vote on motions — make decisions.

(Life members may **not** make motions or vote at board meetings unless they are also members of the board.)

FOUR TYPES OF MOTIONS THAT ARE GENERALLY MADE DURING A MEETING

- A. **Main Motion** — It introduces subjects to the assembly for consideration. This motion cannot be made when another motion is before the assembly and it yields to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions. Example: "I move that we purchase. . ."
- B. **Subsidiary Motion** — It serves two possible functions, (1) may change or modify the main motion, and/or (2) may dispose of the main motion temporarily (postpone, table) or permanently. It changes or affects how a main motion is handled and is voted on before the main motion. Example: "I move that we amend Jane Jones' motion by striking out. . ." or "I move that. . .be referred to the finance committee." However, subsidiary motions must relate to the subject as presented in the main motion.
- C. **Privileged Motion** — This motion is an urgent one because it is about a special or important matter that does not relate to pending business. Example: A motion to recess the meeting to secure information or to allow informal consultation.
- D. **Incidental Motion** — An incidental motion is used when a question of procedure arises and must be considered. Example: When a member thinks that the rules of the assembly are being violated, they can make a "Point of Order," thereby calling upon the chair for a ruling and an enforcement of the rules or bylaws.

STEPS NECESSARY TO TAKE ACTION ON A MAIN MOTION

- A. **Obtaining the Floor.** A member rises and addresses the presiding officer saying, "Madame/Mr. President or Chairman," giving their name.
- B. **Assigning the Floor.** The presiding officer recognizes the member and assigns the floor to them by saying their name.
- C. **Making the Motion.** Stating the motion in the affirmative, the member introduces or proposes the motion by saying, "I move that we buy a flag. . . ." instead of "I move that we do not. . . ."
- D. **Seconding the Motion.** Another member, without rising, says, "I second the motion." NOTE: When a member seconds a motion, it does not necessarily imply approval or agreement. It means simply that the member seconding thinks it is worthwhile for the matter to come before the assembly for discussion. If there is no second, the motion is lost.
- E. **Stating the Motion.** The presiding officer states, "It has been moved and seconded that we buy a flag. . . ." The motion then becomes the property of the assembly and it cannot be changed without the consent of the members.
- F. **Opening Discussion.** The presiding officer opens discussion by saying, "Are there any remarks?" or "Is there any discussion?" The member making the motion has the right to speak first. When discussion of the motion has been completed and all who wish to speak have had an opportunity to do so, the chair may ask, "Is there any further discussion? If not, are you ready for the question?"
- G. **Subsidiary Motion to Amend.** This can be applied only to the main motion; must be seconded; and adopted by majority vote prior to voting on the main motion. i.e. "I move we insert the word blue between the words 'a' and 'flag'." (Seconded) Its adoption does not adopt the original main motion. That motion is now pending in its modified form.
- H. **Putting the Question.** The presiding officer then puts the question on the subsidiary motion to amend: "The question is on the motion to insert the word blue between the words 'a' and 'flag.'" It has been moved and seconded. Is there any discussion? If not, all those in favor say aye, opposed say no." The chair should pause after each vote to evaluate it.
- I. **Announcing the Vote.** A majority vote on the subsidiary motion is required for adoption. A motion is lost on a tie vote. The chair announces the result of the vote, saying, "The ayes have it, the amendment is carried. . . ." (here the chair repeats the content of the amendment passed)." Or, "The no's have it, the amendment is lost and . . . (here repeats the amendment in the negative)."
- J. **Voting on the main motion.** The presiding officer then puts either the main motion or the amended (if approved) main motion before the assembly using the same procedures as Step H: "The question is on the motion to purchase a blue flag. It has been moved and seconded. Is there any discussion? If not, all those in favor say aye, (pause) opposed say no." The presiding officer announces the vote as stated in Step I. "The ayes have it, the motion is carried."

METHODS OF VOTING ON MOTIONS

- A. General Consent.** When a motion isn't likely to be opposed, the chair says, "If there is no objection. . ." Members show their agreement by their silence. However, if someone objects, the matter must be put to a vote.
- B. Voice Vote.** The chair asks those in favor to say "aye" and those opposed to say "no."
- C. Show of Hands.** Members raise their hands to indicate their vote. (This can be used to verify a voice vote in very small assemblies.)
- D. Rising Vote.** Members stand to indicate their vote. This kind of voting method is used where the vote must be counted. (It is also used in cases where a member has requested a "Division [of the Assembly]" which means that the member wishes to have a rising vote to verify a voice vote or a show of hands vote).
- E. Ballot Vote.** A ballot vote is taken when secrecy is desired or when the bylaws or law require a ballot vote to be taken.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What is a majority vote?

A simple majority vote is more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote, excluding blanks or abstentions, at a regularly or properly called meeting at which a quorum is present. For example, if 19 votes are cast, a majority (more than 9 1/2) is 10.

2. What is a plurality vote?

A plurality vote is the largest number of votes cast for a given candidate. In such a case, the candidate that receives the most votes (even though less than a majority) is elected by a plurality vote. For example, if there are 4 candidates for a directorship and one receives 10 votes, one receives 8 votes, one receives 7 votes and one receives 6 votes, the candidate receiving 10 votes is declared the winner even though they did not receive a majority of the 31 votes cast.

3. When are decisions made by majority vote and when are they made by plurality vote?

According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, the basic requirement for approval of an action or choice by a deliberative assembly, except where a rule provides otherwise, is a majority vote. Since there is no specific rule in the bylaws with regard to a basis for determining a vote other than for election of officers, directors, delegates/alternates; adopting bylaws; dues approval or removal of a board member, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* takes precedence and decisions are made by a majority vote of those present and voting.

(Note: There may be circumstances where a different percentage is required by *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, the bylaws or corporate laws.)

With regard to elections of officers, the bylaws require officers to be elected by majority vote. However, some associations have an "option" to elect directors by plurality or majority vote, in which case the provision adopted by the association applies. Delegates and alternates are elected by plurality vote.

4. What is the proper procedure to elect delegates/alternates by plurality vote?

There are two methods to elect delegates and alternates by plurality vote:

- a. Nominate and elect the delegates on a separate ballot - those receiving the most number of votes for the positions to be filled are the elected delegates. The same procedure would be followed for the election of alternates.
- b. Elect delegates and alternates all on one ballot. The candidates who receive the most number of votes for the number of delegate positions to be filled are the elected delegates; the remaining candidates are the alternates, listed in the order of number of votes received, highest to lowest.

In case of a tie, drop the candidate with the lowest number of votes and re-vote again on one ballot. This should also be done for alternates.

5. When required, how do you determine a two-thirds vote?

According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, "A two-thirds vote... means at least two-thirds of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote, excluding blanks and abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting at which a quorum is present." For example, if 7 votes are cast, a two-thirds vote is 5. If 8 votes are cast, a two-thirds vote is 6. If 9 votes are cast, a two-thirds vote is 6. If 10 votes are cast, a two-thirds vote is 7.

6. If a member believes that the meeting is not being conducted properly, what should be done?

The member should voice their opinion/objection by raising a point of order at the time the infraction occurs, because many times it is too late to do so after a meeting has adjourned.

7. Under what circumstances may an election be protested to USBC Headquarters (local only)?

The reasons may be, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. The vote count is announced and a candidate is declared elected although they did not receive a majority vote.
- b. A member met the candidate eligibility requirements but was denied the right to seek election even though objection was raised during the meeting.

- c. A member was elected who did not meet the candidate eligibility requirements.
8. What should be done if the presiding officer (the chair) does not know how to handle a parliamentary situation?

It is not unusual for a presiding officer not to be an expert on proper parliamentary procedure. The presiding officer should not hesitate to state this fact during a meeting. In the event the presiding officer runs into a situation and does not know how to handle it, he/she should “consult the assembly for a decision.” By doing so, the presiding officer places the issue in question before the assembled members who decide, by majority vote, what the procedure will be. Whether the assembly is right or wrong, it assumes responsibility for its decision. The presiding officer abides by and follows the assembly decision accordingly. Rules protecting basic rights of the individual member cannot be suspended, even by unanimous consent or an actual unanimous vote.

9. Can the presiding officer vote?

The presiding officer, if a member of the assembly, can vote as any other member but is not required to do so. However, the presiding officer is supposed to maintain impartiality at all times, and customarily votes only when the vote affects the outcome; i.e., to break or cause a tie vote.

When a vote is by a show of hands or a standing vote, the presiding officer can vote if they have not already done so to either break or cause a tie vote. These two methods of voting are not “secret,” so they are revealing their vote just like all the others who voted.

The presiding officer can only vote once, as a member or as the presiding officer.

10. What is the difference between abstentions, blank ballots and illegal ballots?

- a. Abstentions and blank ballots are similar. Abstentions are usually associated with a voice vote. However, when voting by ballot, a member may abstain from voting by: 1) not turning in a ballot or, 2) turning in a ballot without writing on it (blank ballot). The latter method is used if the member does not wish to reveal intent to abstain from voting. Blank ballots and abstentions are not counted in determining the number of votes cast.
- b. Illegal Ballots. When it is not possible for the tellers to determine for whom a member wishes to vote, the ballot is determined “illegal.” According to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, “If the meaning of one or more ballots is doubtful, they can be treated as illegal if it is impossible for them to affect the result; but if they may affect the result, the tellers should report them to the chair, who will immediately submit to the assembly the question of how these ballots should be recorded.”

Examples of illegal ballots - using the wrong ballot; voting for too many candidates; writing down the first name of one candidate and the last name of another.

However, voting for less than the number of positions to be filled would not make a ballot illegal. In addition, a misspelled name would not make a ballot illegal if the meaning of the ballot is clear. For example, misspelling “Smith” by writing down “Smyth”).

Unlike blank ballots and abstentions, illegal ballots are counted in determining the number of votes cast.

11. When must/should a vote be by “ballot?”

A ballot vote must be taken when the bylaws/corporate law require it. This law or bylaws requirement cannot be suspended even by a unanimous vote of the membership. In addition, a ballot vote should be taken when secrecy of the members’ vote is desired, and it is believed that the members may be more likely to vote their true sentiments.

Some recommendations that a ballot vote be taken are:

- a. Approving vacancies in office.
- b. Selection of a bowling center for the association tournament.
- c. Motions on issues of a controversial nature.
- d. Removal of board member.

NOTE: A vote by ballot can be ordered by proposing a motion to vote by ballot. Such a motion requires a second, is not debatable and is adopted by a simple majority vote.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

There is no order of precedence for incidental motions. Each motion is decided immediately.

PARLIAMENTARY TERM	May Interrupt Speaker	Requires a Second	Debatable	Amend-able	Vote Required	May be Re-considered
Appeal	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Tie or Maj.	Yes
Point of Order	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
Parliamentary Inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	Yes
Withdraw a Motion	No	No	No	No	Majority	Neg./Yes
Suspend Rules	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Object to Consideration	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 Neg.	Neg./Yes
Division of a Question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Division of Assembly	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No

13 RANKING MOTIONS LISTED FROM THE LOWEST RANKING (1) TO THE HIGHEST RANKING (13)

NOTE: Parliamentary procedure provides a rank ordering of certain motions to insure an orderly process in conducting business meetings. The chart below has the lowest ranking motion listed first. Each subsequent motion is ranked in order with the highest ranking motion, #13, listed last. A motion of higher ranking, when made, takes precedence over lower ranking motions and must be considered before any lower ranking motion.

PARLIAMENTARY TERM MAIN MOTION	Rank from Lowest to Highest	Recognition by Chair Required	In Order When Another has the Floor	Requires a Second	Debatable	Amendable	Requires only a Majority Vote	Can be Reconsidered
Main Motion	1 (Low)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS								
Postpone Indefinitely	2	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Neg. No
Amend	3	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Commit or Refer	4	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Postpone to a Certain Time	5	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	6	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3	Yes
Previous Question	7	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes
Table	8	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Aff. No
PRIVILEGED MOTIONS								
Call for Orders of the Day	9	No	Yes	No	No	No	*	No
Question of Privilege	10	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Recess	11	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Adjourn	12	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn	13 (High)	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Must be enforced on demand of one member unless set aside by 2/3 vote.