

Parliamentary Procedure

Four principles of parliamentary procedure:

- Order; to facilitate action, there must be orderly procedure.
- Equality; all members have the same voice.
- The majority rules.
- The minority must be heard

Courtesies expected of all members

- Be punctual for meetings.
- Address the meeting only when recognized by the Chair.
- Seek recognition by the Chair by raised hand.
- Limit discussion to the issue that is currently before the group.
- Keep side conversations to a minimum.
- Graciously accept the decision of the majority.

Motions

- In order to discuss something that requires a vote of the Council, someone must make a motion.
- Typically, someone has to “second” the motion, but motions made by a committee do not require a second.

Subsidiary motions

- Aid in handling main motions.
- Must be handled first.
- Examples:
 - **Amendment to the original motion** - Modifies the wording of a pending motion. The motion to amend requires a second and must pass by a simple majority vote. Adoption of an amendment does not mean adoption of the main motion. The Chair will state the main motion as amended if the amendment passes or will re-state the motion with its original language if the amendment fails and proceed with discussion of the main motion.
 - **Call the question** – Closes debate and prevents any further amendments. The motion to call the question requires a second and must pass by a 2/3 majority vote. If it passes, all discussion by council members must end, but by law, public comment on the original motion still must be heard.
 - **Table a motion** – Sets a motion aside temporarily for more urgent business. A motion to table the motion currently under discussion requires a second, is not debatable, and must pass by a 2/3 majority vote.

Presenting and Disposing of Motions

Discussion

- Discussion is not in order until the motion has been displayed on the screen using the exact wording and has been verbally re-stated by the Chair.
- The Chair or body may limit, in minutes, time for consideration of a motion and may ask speakers to:

- wrap up their point soon and/or
 - only speak if they have new thoughts on the topic.
- The Chair should do substantially more facilitation of conversation than talking him/herself.
- Speakers must limit their remarks to the pending question. They should address the chair, speak in a courteous tone, avoid personalities, and under no circumstances attack or question the motives of another person. The question, not the person, is the subject of debate.

Voting

- The Chair will call for the negative vote by asking, “is there any opposition to the motion?”
- If none, the motion is passed and the Chair will say, “Seeing no opposition, the motion passes.”
- If there is opposition, a voice vote, alphabetically by last name, will occur.
- By tradition, the Chair will vote only to break a tie, but the Chair has a right to vote if they so choose.

Reminders for the Chairperson

- Correct procedure should always be the goal. Use procedure in all meetings to help the group transact business efficiently, protect the group from those who might dictate to others, and protect the rights of each individual in the group.
- Apply parliamentary rules, like all others, with common sense. If you are overly strict, members may be afraid to speak up.