



The
MEETING
will come to order

Simplified guidelines for parliamentary procedure

The meeting will come to order

Used properly, parliamentary procedure is one of the most effective means by which individuals can take orderly action as a group. One can give full consideration to any matter of common interest, encourage common-sense minority discussion on each question, then act according to the will of the majority — all with a minimum waste of time. Its purpose is not to inject unnecessary formality into a meeting, nor is it to prevent a free expression of opinion.

There are certainly some sound reasons then why one should acquire a good working knowledge of parliamentary procedure. For many years the Cooperative Extension Service of Michigan State University has provided clinics for organization officers. This bulletin can help both officers and members understand the basic parliamentary rules.

It is intended as a brief and convenient guide, primarily for use in the meetings of your community groups. It does not presume to cover the entire field of parliamentary law. For the more complex parliamentary problems you are referred to such standard handbooks as *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Before the meeting

If you are chairperson, check arrangement of chairs and tables before the meeting starts, striving for informality and friendliness. Have a table for yourself and the secretary, so you can work cooperatively before the group. Whenever possible, arrange the chairs in a semicircle, close enough to your table so the group can hear you easily. Finally, check again on the program for the meeting, and check on the presence of those members who are scheduled to give reports.

Order of business

1. Call the meeting to order
2. Roll call (sometimes omitted)
3. Minutes of the previous meeting
4. Reports of the officers
 - a. president
 - b. vice-president (the vice-president, acting as program chair, will give the report during the standing committee reports)
 - c. treasurer
 - d. secretary (correspondence and bills)
5. Standing committee reports
6. Special committee reports
7. Unfinished business
8. Postponed business
9. New business
10. Adjournment

Let's get started!

Chairperson: (*Rapping desk*) **“The meeting will now come to order. The secretary will call the roll. Mr. (or Ms.) ...”**

Secretary: “Mary A., Tom B., Robert C., Helen D., ... 10 present; 3 absent. A quorum is present.”

(Sometimes it is preferable to take the roll silently and report to the chairperson that a quorum is present.)

Chairperson: **“Thank you. The secretary will read the minutes of the previous meeting. Mr. (or Ms.) ...”**

Secretary: “The regular meeting of the Parliamentary Law Club was held Oct. 5 in the Union Building. The president ... “ (See page 7 for sample minutes).

Chairperson: **“Thank you. ... Are there any corrections to the minutes? Mr. (or Ms.) ...”**

(A member is recognized by rising or raising a hand. Seldom should one call out, “Mr.” or “Ms. Chairperson.”)

Member: “I believe the date should be October 15, not October 5.”

Chairperson: **“If there are no objections, the minutes will be corrected to read October 15. (Pause) Since there are no objections, will you make the correction, Mr. (or Ms.) Secretary?”**

“Any further corrections? (Pause) If not, the minutes stand approved as corrected.”

(If there are no corrections, the minutes “stand approved as read.”)

“We shall now hear the reports from the officers. First, the president's report.”

(This report usually deals with matters of general policy.)

“Are there any questions about the president's report? (Pause) If not, the report stands as read.

Does the vice president wish to make a report?”

(The vice president, when acting as program chair, will give that report during standing committee reports.)

“We will now hear the treasurer's report. Mr. (or Ms.) ...”

Treasurer: “Cash on hand ... \$16; receipts”

(This report is usually a meeting-to-meeting report of the financial condition of the treasury and has not been audited. See page 8 for a sample of this report.)

Note: Boldface type indicates suggested statements of the chairperson.

Chairperson: **“Thank you. Are there any questions about the treasurer’s report? (Pause) If not, the report will be received as read.”**

(The report should be received, not approved, until it is audited. See pages 19 and 21 for differences in “receive,” and “accept,” or “adopt.”)

“We will now hear the secretary’s report. Mr. (or Ms.) ...”

(This report does not refer to the minutes; it is a report of any important letters sent or received and bills that have been approved for payment by the secretary and president or by the executive board.)

“Thank you. Are there any questions about the secretary’s report? If not, it will stand as read.”

(The assembly may desire to vote approval or rejection of the bills. Members of the group may wish to express themselves about any letters that require action; a motion may be made for that purpose at this time. If it seems these motions will require considerable discussion, they might better be received again during new business.)

“We shall now hear the committee reports; first, the standing committees. Mr. (or Ms.) ...”

(Standing committees are those elected to serve for a certain time, say one year. Example: program committee.)

Standing Committee Chairperson: “The program committee wishes to report that Senator Brown will speak at our next meeting. Coffee and sandwiches will be served.”

Chairperson: **“Thank you. Are there any questions about this committee report? (Pause) If not, the report will be received as read.”**

(Generally, committee reports need not be adopted (accepted) unless definite action is required. “Adopt” and “accept” are used interchangeably on committee reports.)

“Since there are no more standing committee reports, we shall proceed to the special committee reports. Are there any special committees prepared to report? Mr. (or Ms.) ...”

Special Committee Chairperson: “The committee to investigate the purchase of a blackboard reports the portable blackboards range in price from \$3 to \$7. The size is 3 feet by 4 feet.”

Chairperson: **“Thank you. Are there any questions about this report? (Pause) If not, what is your pleasure concerning this information? Mr. (or Ms.) ...”**

Member: “Chairperson, I move the committee purchase a blackboard it feels is best suited to our needs.”

(Anyone except the chairperson and the maker of the motion may second it.)

Member: "Seconded."

Chairperson: **"It is moved and seconded the committee purchase a blackboard it feels will meet our needs. Any discussion?"**

(When discussion is over, the chairperson will then put the motion to a vote.)

"Since there are no more committee reports, we shall proceed to unfinished business."

(Now is the time to take up any motions that were not completed at the last meeting and are pending in the secretary's minutes.)

"Mr. (or Ms.) Secretary, do we have any motions pending from the last meeting?"

(In addition to postponed motions, tabled motions may be considered at this time. Secretary reads motions.)

"Since that completes the postponed business, the chairperson will receive any new business. Mr. (or Ms.) ..."

(Members may present new business, if any.)

"Are there any announcements?"

(Announcements of certain additional meeting times, group project dates, places, etc., could be made at this time.) Following announcements, the chairperson can receive a motion to adjourn.

"Since that completes the business for this meeting, the chairperson will receive a motion to adjourn. Mr. (or Ms.) ..."

Member: "Chairperson, I move we adjourn."

Member: "Seconded."

Chairperson: **"It is moved and seconded we adjourn. All those in favor of adjourning, say Aye. (Pause) Opposed, No. The motion is carried."** Usually the chairperson does not have to ask for a vote on this motion and may say, **"If there are no objections, we will stand adjourned. No objections? (Pause) We stand adjourned."** or **"The meeting stands adjourned."**

(It should be noted that any section of the order of business that does not apply to a particular organization may be omitted. However, it should be remembered this order of business is standard procedure and generally most of the contents are used.)

What is included in the minutes?

The minutes should contain the following information:

Whether it is a regular or special meeting

Name of your 4-H club

Date and place of the meeting

Number in attendance — members, parents, visitors

Name of the chairperson and secretary or substitutes

A statement that the minutes were read

Disposition of the minutes of the previous meeting (approved as read or approved as corrected)

Important facts about announcements made

All motions, the name of the persons making them, and the disposition of the motions (carried or lost)

In your notes you should put the number voting for and against each motion when the vote is by showing hands or a standing vote

Persons appointed to committees and assignments

Program presented

The name of the maker of the motion should be stated, but the name of the seconder need not be included unless the organization desires to do so.

The minutes are a record of what is done and not of what is said. Generally, the personal opinions of members should be avoided.

When the motion is very important, include the count of the votes.

Normally, the minutes are signed by the secretary and the president.

Note in the following example the motion on attending the legislature is unfinished business. The motion on delegates to the convention is postponed business. The motion on the book is new business.

Minutes of the last meeting

Secretary: "The 4th regular meeting of the Concord Parliamentary Law Club was on September 5, 1997, in the Union Building, Concord, Michigan. The regular president and secretary were present.

"The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. The president made a report requesting all membership fees be paid up by June 1. The treasurer reported receipts of \$8 and expenditures of \$12, leaving a balance in the treasury of \$42. The secretary reported the annual reports had been sent to the state office; \$11 in bills payable were approved.

"A report was received from the social committee that the cost of the dinner would be \$4.75 per person. A report was received from the committee on the exchange meeting with the Hillsdale Club that they had obtained the high school auditorium for our meeting on November 8.

“The motion to attend a session of the state legislature was not taken care of at the previous meeting. The motion carried.

“The motion to send two delegates to the state convention was postponed until this meeting. Motion was carried. Four members were nominated with Mr. and Ms. ... being elected; Mr. ... and Ms. ... will serve as alternates.

“... moved the club contribute \$10 to the Red Cross. Motion was carried.

“... moved to purchase a Parliamentary Law reference book. ... moved to refer the motion to a committee of two, appointed by the chairperson to obtain information on the matter and report at the next meeting with recommendations. ... moved to lay the motions on the table. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned.

“..., secretary”

Do we have any money?

Treasurer’s report:

“Cash on hand \$44.00

“Receipts:

Dues	\$12.00	
Gifts	3.00	
Paper drive	9.00	
Dance	22.00	
Total		\$46.00

“Disbursements:

Books	\$3.00	
Postage	1.00	
President’s expense	4.00	
Decorations	7.00	
Tickets	6.00	
Total		21.00

Net cash balance for month (or week) 25.00

Balance on hand \$69.00”

When a treasurer’s report is made from meeting to meeting, it should be *received*. This means the report was heard; it does not give official approval by the group. The treasurer’s report should never be *accepted* or *approved* unless the books have been audited. A treasurer’s report is audited when two or more members are requested to check all bills received and paid. All figures are checked. The auditors report the books “are in good order and found correct.” The auditors’ report then is *approved* or *accepted* by the group.

Vote as you please ... but please vote!

The following are types of votes that are used in meetings:

MAJORITY — more than half the votes *cast*; used in elections and on most motions. A majority does not mean more than half of the members present; but of the votes *cast*, since some may not care to vote.

TWO-THIRDS — $\frac{2}{3}$ of the votes cast; used with motions only.

PLURALITY — more than any other candidate; used only in elections when the assembly desires to save time. In electing a committee of three, the three nominees with the greatest number of votes will be considered elected.

GENERAL CONSENT — This is a shortcut in voting. It permits the assembly to take action without going through the process of a regular vote.

This method should be used with all motions on which there seems to be a general agreement among the members. It is an excellent timesaver and should be used at every opportunity. For example, “If there are no objections, we will vote by ballot; (*pause*) No objections? We will vote by ballot.” In this way a group may quickly express their opinion. If someone objects, the chairperson must put the motion to a regular vote. “All those in favor of voting by ballot say ‘Aye’ ...”

The following are the methods of voting.

Acclamation or voice — “Aye” — “No”

Show of hands

Rising

Secret ballot (*used mostly for elections*)

Secret roll call ballot (sign names)

Roll-call vote (members respond when name is called)

When the word “Division” is stated by a member, he or she is requesting another vote be taken on a motion. Generally this is done whenever a vote by acclamation fails to show clearly whether the vote was affirmative or negative. The method of voting used after division is called should be one that can be observed by all, such as raising the hand or rising.

The chairperson should strive to be as impartial as possible, voting only if it will change the result. The chairperson may vote to *break a tie* and cause the motion to carry, or vote to *make a tie* and cause the motion to lose.

When the vote is public (by acclamation, rising, etc.) the chairperson should vote, if the chairperson chooses to do so, *after* the assembly has voted and after the results have been made known to the chairperson.

When the vote is secret (by ballot) the chairperson should vote at the time the assembly votes, and then cannot vote again to change the result.

The secretary has the right to vote at any and all times. The performance of secretarial duties shall not prevent the exercise of this right.

How do we take action?

A motion is a **REQUEST** that something be done or that something is the opinion or wish of the assembly. There are various types of motions. (See table, page 18.)

A **MAIN MOTION** introduces an action to the assembly for its consideration. Only one main motion should be placed before the assembly at one time. It is always debatable and amendable, and it ranks below all other motions.

A **PRIVILEGED MOTION** refers to the action of the assembly as a whole; e.g., take a recess, adjourn, etc. There are five privileged motions, and they outrank all other motions.

A **SUBSIDIARY MOTION** is a motion applied to other motions, usually the main motion; to alter, postpone, to temporarily dispose of them. There are seven of these motions; they rank right below the privileged motions and above the main motion.

An **INCIDENTAL MOTION** is used in conducting business and must be disposed of before action is taken on the motion out of which it arises. Example: motion to close nominations, point of order, method of voting.

RENEWAL MOTION is one that brings back to the floor a motion that once has been considered, but which the assembly wishes to consider again. Example: to reconsider, to take from table, to discharge a committee.

If a motion is **PENDING**, it means the motion is on the floor but, as yet, not disposed of. Several motions may be on the floor at one time provided they were made in order of ascending rank. When several motions are pending, the one *made last* is always disposed of *first*.

Can more than one motion be on the floor?

Motions have “rank” among themselves; some motions have “right-of-way” over others. Referring to the table on page 18, you will note that the privileged and subsidiary motions are numbered from one to 12. These motions have numerical rank, with number one being the highest ranking motion. A main motion is the lowest ranking motion listed at the bottom of the page.

Incidental motions have no rank among themselves but take precedence or right-of-way over the motion out of which they arise.

Renewal motions are somewhat similar to main motions since they cannot be acted upon until the floor is clear.

The following example demonstrates what is meant by “precedence.”

Main motion — *to buy a new car*

Refer to committee — *of three, to investigate cars* (outranks main motion)

Lay on table — *table all pending motions* (outranks the above motion)

Consulting page 18, you will note the main motion yields to the other two, the committee motion yields to the table motion. To state it differently, the table motion takes precedence over the committee motion and the main motion. The table motion and committee motion may be received while the main motion is on the floor.

Since the table motion was made *last*, it is voted on *first*. The chair will put the table motion. If it carries, the other two will be postponed until the next meeting. If it loses, the chairperson considers the committee motion; if there is no further discussion, it will be put. If it carries, the floor is clear; if it loses, discussion will continue on the main motion. Note that subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions may be made while the main motion is pending. They must be considered in order.

Do we have any business to consider?

A main motion is any motion that brings an item of business before the assembly. It requires the *action* of the assembly.

Examples:

- a. “I move we give \$20 to the Community Chest.”
- b. “I move this organization go on record as favoring the income tax reduction.”

A main motion is always debatable and amendable.

Chairperson: “**Mr. (or Ms.) A** (who has risen or has raised a hand).”

Mr. A: “I move we send two delegates to the district convention.”

Mr. (or Ms.) B, C and D: “Seconded (*several may second a motion*).”

Chair: “**It is moved and seconded we send two delegates to the district convention. Is there any discussion?**”

Debate, amendments, or making subsidiary motions are in order now.

Member: “Question.” (*Question does not stop, but speeds up discussion*).

Chairperson: “**The question has been called. Are you ready for the question?**” (*or*) “**Are you ready for the vote?**”

“All those in favor of the motion to send two delegates to district convention, raise your right hand; (*pause*) opposed, raise your right hand. The motion is carried (*or lost*). Is there any further business?”

May I change the motion?

The motion to amend is a subsidiary motion and is always applied to another motion, usually the main motion. The motion to amend may be applied in several ways:

1. to add
2. to insert
3. to strike out
4. to strike out and insert

Example: Main motion — to purchase blackboard. While this motion is being discussed, an amendment is made to add the words, “costing \$6 or less.”

Whenever possible, the chairperson should ask the maker of the main motion to change it to include the amendment. It is done this way: “Mr. (or Ms.) . . ., would you agree to include this amendment in your motion, to add the words, “costing \$6 or less?” If they agree, and the assembly does not object, the motion is amended. If any member objects, the amendment must be seconded, be opened to discussion or amendment, and be voted on the same as any motion.

Always vote on the amendment *before* you vote on the motion to which the amendment is applied. The discussion of an amendment should always be about the amendment itself and not about the main motion. An amendment should never insert the word “not” in a motion to which it is applied, since that would be the same as a negative vote.

A motion may be amended several times in succession; however, only two amendments can be applied to a motion at one time: a primary amendment and a secondary amendment. The secondary amendment must always apply directly to the primary and not skip back to the main motion. Note the following example:

Example: Main motion — *to purchase a table*

Primary amendment — to insert “*oak*” before table

Secondary amendment — to insert “*blond*” before oak

So you are on a committee!

The motion to refer to a committee is a subsidiary motion: It is generally applied to the main motion, but may also be applied to a suggestion not stated as a specific motion.

It is debatable and amendable. The motion consists of four important elements. They are:

1. Number of members
2. Method of selection
 - a. volunteers
 - b. appointed by chairperson
 - c. nominated by chairperson
 - d. nominated from floor and elected, if necessary
 - e. named by the maker of motion
3. Type of report
 - a. information
 - b. recommendations
 - c. motion for action
 - d. perform a task
4. Time to report

The motion, properly stated, should be as follows: “I move a committee of *three* be appointed by the chairperson to obtain *information* on the cost of a blackboard and to report at the next *meeting*.”

If the maker does not include this information, the chairperson should ask him or her to state the various elements to avoid the necessity for considerable amending.

Let’s talk it over right now!

Informal discussion is not new in parliamentary law, but the method explained below is unique in dealing with groups greater than 15 in number. To obtain total participation of all members in discussing a problem, Don Phillips, formerly president of Hillsdale College — while on the faculty at Michigan State College — devised a simple, effective plan known as “DISCUSSION 6-6.” (Six persons discussing a problem for 6 minutes or any variation of number and time.)

Someone states, “I move we discuss this problem informally by dividing the assembly in groups of six (five or four).” Seconded and discussed. The chairperson then quickly gives specific instructions to the members to turn to their immediate neighbors, and in groups of five or six, talk over the problem. Each group selects a secretary-spokesperson who later reports the ideas of the group.

At the end of a specified time, the discussion is concluded by saying, “I move we rise and report.” This motion is seconded and voted upon.

Then each secretary reports the conclusions his or her group has reached. In this manner every member receives an ideal opportunity to submit ideas and feel part of the total group. Many members who never address the chairperson or speak to the group as a whole will participate confidently in the discussion under these circumstances.

“Discussion 6-6” is an excellent means for obtaining ideas from the group for discussion purposes; it is also an excellent way to find out the specific needs of the assembly. It is an efficient way to obtain immediate action on a motion and avoids the necessity of turning it over to a committee. It encourages everyone to participate, which is a much overlooked objective of parliamentary discussion.

Sometimes it is desirable to have the entire group discuss a motion informally. Then the motion, “I move we resolve into a committee of the whole to discuss the matter of changing our name” is in order. It is seconded and debated. If carried, the group discusses the matter informally. No motions are received. When the discussion is completed, any member states, “I move that we rise and report.” If carried, the assembly resumes its former status and takes action on the motion.

Let’s discuss this motion at the next meeting

One method of postponing action on a main motion is to postpone it indefinitely. The effect of passing this motion is to “kill” the main motion since it will have to be introduced again as a new motion at some future meeting.

A second method is to postpone the motion to a definite time – such as the next meeting. This motion is debatable and amendable; it ranks above the motion to postpone indefinitely.

A third method of postponing action is to lay the main motion on the table. This motion is the highest ranking subsidiary motion and is not debatable or amendable. A statement may be made by the maker, however, indicating the reason for laying the motion on the table. It outranks the above motion.

It should be noted under no circumstances can a motion be postponed or laid on the table beyond the next regular meeting. (It is assumed here the meetings are held weekly or monthly.) This rule is used in order to inform the assembly in the reading of the minutes at the next meeting of those motions that were postponed or laid on the table at the previous meeting.

A main motion may be postponed to another time at the same meeting in which it was made; likewise a motion may be taken from the table at the same meeting in which it was laid on the table. In both instances, new information or the presence of additional members may be the cause for discussing the original motion again.

The motion to reconsider: Can we discuss it again?

When a member wishes to reconsider the vote on a motion that has been carried or lost, he or she moves to reconsider that motion. Imagine the group voted to purchase a movie projector. A little later in the meeting it is learned that the treasury does not have enough funds to pay for such an item. A member may then say, "I move to reconsider the vote on the motion to purchase a movie projector." It is seconded and discussed. If it carries, the original motion, "to purchase a projector," comes back to the floor for reconsideration.

It should be noted that only a member who voted on the winning side of a main motion may make the motion to reconsider. That means only those members who voted for the purchase of a projector may move to reconsider that motion. It indicates a member has had an honest change of mind. If anyone could make a motion to reconsider, it could be made on every motion voted upon, and could be used just to hinder the progress of the meeting. The motion to reconsider must be made on the same day or at the same meeting the motion that is being reconsidered was acted upon. If at some later time the group desires to change a motion or reverse its action, the motion to repeal should be used.

Point of order: That is not correct!

This motion is used to correct any errors in parliamentary rules. Let us suppose a motion to buy a new chair is on the floor. While it is being discussed, a member moves to "send two delegates to the state convention." The chairperson received the second motion. Since there should be only one main motion on the floor at one time, a member may rise to a point of order as follows:

Member: "Chairperson, I rise to a point of order."

Chairperson: "**State your point of order.**"

Member: "The chairperson has received a second main motion while another main motion was on the floor; the second motion is out of order at this time."

Chairperson: "**Your point is well taken; the second motion is out of order.**"

(This motion may be made by rising and addressing the chairperson. A member need not be recognized before speaking; he or she may interrupt a speaker who has the floor. The motion needs no second and no vote; it is not debatable or amendable. It may be used to correct a member as well as the chairperson.)

Nominations and elections

Nominations for an office may be made in three ways:

1. Nominations from the floor
2. Nominations by petition
3. Nominations by nominating committee

Officers should always be chosen by ballot even if the constitution does not so state. Such voting makes for independence of choice as well as secrecy of choice.

Generally, the “slate” should permit the voter to write in the name of a candidate if he or she does not approve of the selected nominees. This prevents a nominating committee from having restrictive control of candidates.

Balloting should continue until a majority vote has been received by one candidate. No name should be removed from the list – even though one or two should obviously be out of the running – unless the nominee chooses to withdraw. Nominations do not need to be seconded. Nominations may be closed by a motion requiring a two-thirds vote, or if there are no further nominations, the chair may declare them closed.

Some do's and don'ts

Chairperson

1. The chairperson should restate the motion clearly after it has been made and seconded, "It is moved and seconded that ..."
2. When a motion requires a second, the chairperson should be sure it is seconded; a motion with no second should be ignored.
3. The chairperson should entertain only one main motion at one time.
4. Whenever possible, the chairperson should have the member state the motion before the latter launches into a long discussion of it.
5. The chairperson should give the maker of the motion the first chance to discuss it.
6. The chairperson should not permit anyone to speak twice on a motion until all have had a chance to speak once.
7. When voting publicly, the chairperson should vote only when his or her vote will change the result. When voting secretly, the chairperson may vote when the assembly votes.
8. The chairperson should give up the chair only when his or her comments are vigorously for or against the motion; in this case the vice-president or any other member may serve until the motion is disposed of.

Member

1. Except in small groups (fewer than 15), the members should be recognized by the chairperson before speaking.
2. Whenever possible, the member should try to state his or her ideas in the form of a motion.
3. The member should say, "I move" rather than "I make a motion."
4. The member may second a motion, make a nomination, call "question," or call "division" (recount vote), without rising or being recognized by the chairperson.
5. The member should never be compelled to vote, nor compelled to serve when nominated or appointed to an office.
6. Making or seconding a motion does not necessarily mean the member favors the motion but only wishes to place the motion on the floor to discuss it.

Table of motions

Motion	In order when another speaker has the floor	Requires a second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote required
PRIVILEGED					
1. Fix time for next meeting	No	Yes	No	Yes	Maj.
2. Adjourn Maj.		No	Yes	No	No
3. Take a recess	No	Yes	No	Yes	Maj.
4. Point of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
5. Call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
SUBSIDIARY					
6. Lay on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Maj.
7. Previous question (close debate)	No	Yes	No	No	$\frac{2}{3}$
8. Limit-extend debate	No	Yes	No	Yes	$\frac{2}{3}$
9. Postpone to a definite time (Special order)	No No	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Maj. $\frac{2}{3}$
10. Refer to a committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.
11. Amendment to the main motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.
12. Postpone indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Maj.
INCIDENTAL					
A. Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	None
B. Appeal to the chairperson	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Maj.
C. Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
D. Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	None
E. Division of assembly	Yes	No	No	No	None
F. Close nominations	No	Yes	No	Yes	$\frac{2}{3}$
G. Reopen nominations	No	Yes	No	Yes	Maj.
H. Method of voting	No	Yes	No	Yes	Maj.
I. Request to withdraw a motion	No	No	No	No	Maj.
J. Suspension of rules	No	Yes	No	No	$\frac{2}{3}$
K. Objection to consideration of a question	Yes	No	No	No	$\frac{2}{3}$
RENEWAL					
L. Reconsider	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Maj.
M. Take from table	No	Yes	No	No	Maj.
N. Repeal	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	$\frac{2}{3}$
O. Discharge a committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	$\frac{2}{3}$
MAIN MOTION	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.

Definitions of some important words ...

ACCEPTING A COMMITTEE REPORT — To accept a committee report means a motion is made as follows: “I move we accept the committee’s report.” By this motion, the assembly supports the action of the committee. Most committee reports need not be accepted because they require no action; they should be received. A report is received as follows: “I move the report be received as read.” Sometimes “adopt” is used in place of “accept.”

ACCLAMATION — A voice vote made by stating “Aye” or “No.”

ADOPT — To pass or carry a motion; to approve a committee report.

APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIRPERSON

— An incidental motion. Any member disagreeing with the chairperson’s decision may thus put the matter to a vote by the assembly. It is in order, even when another member has the floor, and often arises out of a point of order. The member rises saying, “I appeal from the decision of the chairperson.” If it is seconded, the chairperson states his or her decision and allows limited debate; one statement from each member. He or she then says, “All those in favor of the chairperson’s decision, say Aye.” A tie vote sustains the chairperson.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE QUESTION? — “Are you ready to vote on the motion?”

BYLAWS — Generally the bylaws comprise all the rules by which a society is governed. The rules may be divided into three classes: constitution, bylaws and standing rules. The constitution and bylaws are usually considered one and the same in most organizations. They are of such importance they should not be changed, except after suitable notice is given to the members, and then by a vote larger than the majority of those voting.

CONVENE — To call the meeting to order.

DEBATE AND DISCUSSION — Debating or talking about a motion or question.

DIVISION — Count the vote again. It may be requested by any member after the chairperson has announced the outcome of a vote when the count is not definite, generally after a voice vote. The member need not be recognized nor need to rise when calling “division.”

FILIBUSTERING — The act of speaking for the purpose of keeping the floor and preventing the opposition from getting a chance to speak. It consumes the allotted time for consideration of the motion.

FIX THE TIME FOR THE NEXT MEETING — The highest privileged motion. It is in order at any time and usually sets the time for the next meeting at an earlier time than the next regular meeting.

HAS THE FLOOR — When a member has been recognized by the chairperson, he or she has the floor. A member should, in only rare instances, be interrupted; he or she may yield the floor to someone else if he or she so desires.

MAJORITY — More than half the votes cast.

MEETING — A meeting of a society is an assembly of its members for a time during which they do not separate longer than for a recess of a few minutes or do not separate at all. A series of meetings such as a convention, is called a session.

METHOD OF VOTING — An incidental motion. It provides for the type of vote desired on a motion, such as a vote by rising, roll-call vote or vote by secret ballot.

PREVIOUS QUESTION — A subsidiary motion that means “to close debate.” If passed, it stops discussion and puts the pending motion to a vote. It is not debatable or amendable and requires a two-thirds vote.

OBJECTION TO THE CONSIDERATION OF A MOTION — An incidental motion. The purpose of this motion is to avoid the consideration of a motion that is undesirable or impractical. It is usually applied to a main motion and must be made immediately after the main motion is opened for discussion and before any amendments are made to it.

It can be made when another has the floor, does not require a second, no debate, no amendments. The chairperson says, “An objection has been made to the motion; shall we consider the motion?” The vote must be two-thirds in the negative to dismiss the main motion and sustain the objection.

ON THE FLOOR — A motion is on the floor when it is being considered by the assembly.

ORDERS OF THE DAY — The scheduled program of business, used most often in conventions and sometimes called the agenda of business.

PENDING MOTION — Any motion on the floor, being discussed but not yet disposed of. Several motions may be pending at one time.

PROXY — This is a power of attorney by which Mr. A authorizes Ms. B to act in Mr. A’s absence. Proxy voting is not recommended for ordinary societies of volunteer memberships. It is designed for representative assemblies and stock corporations.

PUTTING THE MOTION — To vote on the motion.

QUESTION — When a member calls, “Question,” he or she means “I am ready to vote on the motion.” It does not close discussion, but expedites it.

QUESTIONS OF PRIVILEGE — A privileged motion, more accurately called a point of privilege and concerned with the welfare of the assembly. A member states, “Chairperson, I rise to a question of privilege.” The chairperson asks the member to state his point. The member states, “I should like to have the windows opened,” or “I should like to introduce my guest,” or “I should like to have the gentleman withdraw his comments about Mr. A.” The chairperson then makes a decision about the point. It requires no second, is in order when another has the floor, is not debatable or amendable and requires no vote. An appeal may be applied to it.

QUORUM — The number of members required to be present to transact business legally. The number is usually a majority of the membership, unless otherwise specified in the constitution.

RECEIVE A REPORT — To receive a report means to hear it or listen to it; it does not mean the assembly approves the report or takes any official action on it. Since most reports are reports of information, it is reasonable “to receive the report as read,” instead of adopting or accepting the report. Receiving the report also recognizes work done.

RECOGNITION — A member is recognized by the chairperson when the latter announces the member’s name, or, in small groups, simply nods. A member obtains recognition by raising a hand, rising, and in some cases calling, “Mr. Chairperson.” No member should speak or make a motion until recognized by the presiding officer.

REPEAL — When the group desires to change a former action, the motion to repeal is in order. It must be made when the floor is clear, is debatable, amendable and requires a two-thirds vote. If sentiment is strong, the motion may include the words, “and strike from the records.” If carried, the secretary writes across the motion repealed these words, “Stricken from the records by order of assembly (date).”

SESSION — A series of meetings, such as a convention.

STANDING RULES — The regulations as to time and place of meetings.

SUSPEND THE RULES — An incidental motion used in urgent cases to save time. This motion is not debatable or amendable and requires a two-thirds vote.

UNANIMOUS BALLOT — A ballot cast by the secretary for a candidate who is the only person nominated for an office, and no objection is made. This method should not be used when the constitution requires an office to be filled by ballot, since it does not permit any negative votes to be cast. The constitution should be amended to permit the unanimous ballot to be used. The usual form is to have the chairperson instruct the secretary to cast a unanimous ballot for the candidate, if there are no objections. If objections are made, the ballot must be used.

WITHDRAW A MOTION — An incidental motion permitting a previous motion to be withdrawn. If the maker of a motion refuses to withdraw the motion, that motion cannot be withdrawn. Any member may move to withdraw a motion. The maker of the motion must agree to the withdrawal of his or her motion. If the motion to withdraw is made before the chairperson states the motion for the assembly, only the maker and seconder need to agree upon the withdrawal. If the motion to withdraw is made after the chairperson states the motion for the assembly, the maker and the entire assembly must be consulted for its withdrawal.

YIELD THE FLOOR — A member who has the floor may yield the floor to another member; in so doing, the former surrenders his or her right to continue speaking at that time.

This publication has been reviewed to ensure that the contents reflect current research and practice.

Reviewer: **Diane Mack, 4-H Youth Development Specialist**

Review Date: **January 2019**

Harold Sponberg
Extension Specialist
Michigan State University

This publication has been adapted for use in Kansas from the material published
by
the Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University

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The Meeting Will Come to Order, Kansas State University, June 2005.

**Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station
and Cooperative Extension Service**

4-H 440 rev.

June 2005

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