

Short Outline of Basic Parliamentary Procedure

The following is an outline of the procedures that make meetings run in an orderly and efficient manner. The person in charge of making these rules work is the Moderator. The Moderator always sets the Council agenda with input from all officers and board/committee chairpersons.

NOTE: It is the responsibility of the Moderator to create the Council meeting agenda. Council members submit items for consideration to the Moderator for inclusion in the agenda. ONLY items requiring full Council consideration and vote should be submitted. In the same way, it is the responsibility of the Board Chair to create board meeting agenda, and board members submit agenda items to the Chair for consideration.

1. **Recognized:** a member must be called on first by the presiding officer before they may speak or make a motion.
2. **Make a MOTION:** State clearly and concisely the idea that you would like the group to accept. Format, “*I move...*”
3. **A SECOND** is needed for any motion to be considered for discussion. If no one “seconds” the motion, it is dead. You do NOT have to fully support the motion to SECOND.
4. **The chair calls for DISCUSSION.** The group may limit how long each person who wants to speak “to the motion” may “have the floor,” but does not have to. A person who wishes to speak indicates that by raising his/her hand; the chair calls on each person in their proper turn.
5. When the discussion seems to be complete, the chair or any member of the group can ask that the motion be put to a **VOTE**. Most motions are **PASSED** (the group agrees to do whatever the motion directs) by a simple majority (one more than ½ the number of voting members present -- there being a quorum present to do business); some by-laws (the basic rules an organization runs on) require a 2/3 vote. Check if your organization has such rules.
6. Sometimes the discussion leads someone to ask for a change in the original motion. This is called **AMENDING THE MOTION**. An amended motion also needs a second and a favorable vote. (Sometimes groups also have rules about how many votes—like 2/3rds or just a majority-- are needed to change the original motion - be sure you know if your group has such rules.) **NOTE:** A Friendly Amendment is one that is perceived by all parties as an enhancement to the original **motion**, often only as clarification of intent. The original person to make the motion to be amended may or may not accept the friendly amendment. The person who seconded the original motion must also accept this amendment. – i.e., *Beatrice moves to have a party at Mrs. K’s house at 6pm. Megan moves to change to 5pm as a friendly amendment – Beatrice accepts the change as does David who seconded the motion. The motion now reads to have the party at Mrs. K’s house at 5pm.*

7. Sometimes a group wants to discuss the motion at a later time. Someone will make a motion to **“TABLE THE MOTION.”** This also needs a second and a favorable vote. It is important to say when the group wants to bring up the motion again, e.g. “to table the motion until the next meeting.” ***A motion that is tabled indefinitely is in fact dead.***

8. There are times when discussion on a motion becomes “circular,” meaning that members are simply making the same arguments to and for only using different words. At this point, someone may say, **“I call the question or I call the previous question.”** This motion requires a second. There have to be at least two people in the room who want to cut off debate before it can be considered. This motion cannot be discussed or debated. The Moderator immediately stops all discussion and states, “The question has been called to stop all debate on the main motion and move to voting on the main motion on the table” and moves directly to the voting on the previous question motion. This vote requires a simple majority – whether for or against. Everyone should understand that, if the motion passes, all debate ends and the group immediately moves to vote on the main motion.

9. **Motions brought to the group by a board or committee of the whole:** motions brought to the main group by a committee or board (unless a board or committee only has one member), **do not need a second** since the motion has already been vetted by the members of the board or committee.. They are usually taken up as noted in the agenda the Moderator has created.

PROPER PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MOTION

- A. Member rises or signifies they would like to speak and addresses chairperson
- B. Chairperson recognizes member by saying name or nodding
- C. Member states motion
- D. Chairperson asks for a second if one is not offered voluntarily
- E. Chairperson states the motion.
- F. Chairperson asks for discussion if it a debatable motion.
- G. When discussion ceases, chair/secretary restates motion and chair asks for a vote.
- H. Chairperson gives results of vote and declares the motion passed or failed.