



Simple Parliamentary Procedure Guidelines for better Business Meetings

Compiled by:
JCI Senator Wayne Cadogan
JCI Barbados

Adapted from:
Martha Nall, Leadership Development Specialist
Cooperative Extension Services
University of Kentucky:

Formatted by: Dionne Dear

Have you ever been to an out-of-control meeting? A meeting where two or three items were discussed at once? A meeting where you never had a chance to express your views? A meeting where a vote was never taken and, in the end, the president made the final decision? Chances are you and several other members left the meeting feeling as if nothing was accomplished.

Meetings don't have to be that way. An orderly, well conducted meeting, on a community, county, area, or state basis, should be the goal of every officer and member. In order for a presiding officer to conduct a good business meeting, the entire membership should be informed of parliamentary procedure.

“Parliamentary procedure helps the officers and members follow a logical order in conducting a meeting.”¹¹

Each member should consider the **five principles** of parliamentary law:

1. Courtesy and justice to all.
2. Consider only one thing at a time.
3. The majority rules.
4. The minority must be heard.
5. The purpose is to facilitate action.

PARLIAMENTARY COURTESIES

Courtesies are expected of **ALL** members.

1. Stand when addressing the president, as in making a motion, discussing a question before the house, or making a committee report.
2. Address the president as “Madam Chairman” or “Madam President.”
3. Sit down promptly when finished talking.
4. **Do not speak** during the business meeting **EXCEPT** when addressing the chair and then only after having been properly recognized.
5. **Never talk or whisper** to another member during the meeting.
6. **NEVER STAND** to get recognition from the president when another member has the floor.
7. Confine discussion to the question before the group.
8. Refer to an officer by her official title, to members by “the member who spoke last” or otherwise designate members, but not by their names.
9. Willingly accept the decision of the majority.
10. Be **punctual** for meetings.

REMINDERS FOR THE PRESIDING OFFICER

- ✓ Correct procedure should always be your goal.
- ✓ If dealing with motions or amendments, **ALWAYS** state the exact wording. Ask the secretary to read it if you forget how it was phrased.
- ✓ Discussion is **not** in order **until** the motion has been stated by the chair.
- ✓ The chair does not enter discussion while presiding. As a member of the assembly, the chair is entitled to his or her vote.
- ✓ **ALWAYS** indicate CLEARLY how a vote is to be taken. Never call for “the usual sign.”
- ✓ Always call for the negative vote, saying, “Those opposed say ‘no.’”
- ✓ **Adoption of an amendment does not mean adoption of the main motion.** Remember to state the main motion as amended.
- ✓ It is better to say: “The motion is out of order” than “The member is out of order.”

ORDER OF BUSINESS

An order of business or agenda is simply a plan for conducting the business of the group in a logical, organized manner. An agenda helps a meeting go smoother and faster, and lessens the possibility of items of business being overlooked or forgotten. Every meeting should have an agenda. A typical Agenda or order of business is discussed below.

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order.** The president calls the meeting to order after he has determined a quorum is present. The president says, “The meeting will come to order.”
- 2. Opening Exercises.** The opening exercises of JCI usually include and follow in this order, Call to order, Invocation, Re-affirmation of JCI Creed – Mission & Vision, Welcome & apologies and Ascertainment of the quorum.
- 3. Reading of the Minutes.** The minutes of the previous meeting or any other minutes not adopted prior to the meeting would be included as the next item of the agenda. In some instances, the chair asks the secretary to read the minutes however if previously circulated they can be taken as read and the chair goes on to ask, “Are there any corrections to the

minutes?" After corrections are recorded a vote is taken which is then proceeded by "matters arising from the minutes".

4. Proposals & Reports. The chair recognizes elected or appointed officers who have reports or chairpersons presenting project proposals. Standing committees (if any) are also included under this section and are called on to present in the order they are listed in the by-laws. Motions arising out of these reports should be handled immediately.

5. Reports of Special Committees. Any special committees who are to report should be called on in the order in which they were appointed.

6. Unfinished Business. When the minutes show that the decision on some item of business was postponed to the present meeting or that a motion from a previous meeting is pending, it should be listed on the agenda under unfinished business. The chair should not ask, "Is there any unfinished business?" but simply proceed through the items listed.

7. JCI & WI Matters. When all reports and unfinished business has been handled the chair proceeds to JCI & JCI WI matters. However, urgent announcements may be made by the chair at any point during the meeting.

8. Any Other Business. All other business (not dealt with under items that preceded this section) is presented or discussed under "Any Other Business". These include items such as announcements, reading of correspondence by the SG etc.

HOW TO PRESENT AND DISPOSE OF A MOTION

A motion is the method by which business is brought before an assembly. Motions may grow out of reports or other communication. Often a committee report, letter, or memorandum will introduce information the assembly wishes to take action on. The procedure used in handling a motion is described by the following series of steps.

Step 1: Obtaining the Floor

Before a motion can be made, the member of the assembly first must obtain the floor; that is, the member must be recognized by the chair as having the exclusive right to be heard. The chair should recognize any member who seeks to obtain the floor and is entitled to it. To be recognized, the member rises when no one else has the floor and addresses the presiding officer by the proper title, such as Mr. President, Madam President, or Madam Chairman. The chair normally recognizes the member by announcing the person's name or title or by saying, "The chair recognizes the member to my right." In a small group or where it is obvious only one person is seeking the floor, the chair may recognize that person by nodding to him. Once the member is recognized and has the floor, no one else may interrupt.

Step 2: Making a Motion

A member makes a motion by simply stating, **"I MOVE THAT"** As soon as the member has stated the motion he is seated. The member will have the right to speak first in debate, if he wishes, after the chair has stated the question. If the motion has not been heard it can be repeated by the maker, the chair, or the secretary.

Step 3: Seconding a Motion

After a motion has been made another member seconds the motion by saying "I second the motion," or "Second." The member seconding a motion does not have to rise or obtain the floor. **A second to a motion indicates that another member wishes the question to be considered by the assembly;** it does not necessarily mean that he is in favor of the motion. If no one seconds a motion immediately upon its being made, the chair normally asks, "Is there a second to the motion?" Once the motion is seconded the chair understands that there are at least two members of the assembly who wish to consider this question and he states the question, thus placing it before the assembly. The motion now belongs to the group and the maker may no longer withdraw the motion without the assembly's consent. If there is no second, the motion is not before the assembly and the chair moves on to the next item of business.

Step 4: Debating the Motion

Immediately after the chair states the motion he should ask, "Is there any discussion?" or "Are you ready for the question?" The person making the motion has the right to speak first and should be allowed to do so. The maker of the motion is not required to speak. However, if he chooses to do so he must speak in favor of the motion. **DURING THE DISCUSSION EACH MEMBER HAS THE RIGHT TO SPEAK TWICE ON THE SAME QUESTION.** No members may speak the second time as long as another member who has not spoken on the question desires the floor. 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. The presiding officer cannot close debate as long as any member wishes to discuss the question.

Step 5: Putting the Question (calling for a vote)

When it appears that debate has ended, the presiding officer asks, "Are you ready for the question?" or "Is there further discussion?" If no one rises to obtain the floor the chair again states the motion and calls for the vote. "Those in favor, say 'aye.' Those opposed, 'no.'" The vote is usually taken by voice vote, but may be a standing vote or by show of hands. The chair always asks for the negative vote, even when the affirmative appears unanimous. The maker of the motion is not allowed to speak against the motion but may vote against it.

Voting Methods

- Acclamation Show of hands
- Standing vote
- Secret roll call ballot (members sign ballot)
- Roll call (members verbally respond)

Voting Types

- Majority (more than half of the number of votes cast)
- Two-thirds Tie vote (chair casts tie-breaking vote)
- Four-fifth vote (required for certain decisions as per constitution)
- Unanimous (no dissenting vote)
- General consent (chair assumes consent of members)

Step 6: Announcing the Results

The chair announces the result of the vote immediately, including:

- 1) Which side has won. Example: "The ayes have it."
- 2) The result of the voting. Example: "The motion carries."
- 3) The action that must result. Example: "The club will"

CLASSIFICATION OF MOTIONS

Motions are classified into four main types depending upon their purpose.

1. Main motions are used to introduce a main item or question of business to the group. Only one main motion may be before the group at a time. It must be disposed of before another item may be considered. There are other procedural motions which may be considered, but only one main motion may be considered at a time.
2. Subsidiary motions will modify, defer, remove, or dispose of the main motion. Subsidiary motions take precedence over main motions; they must be handled first. They include motions to:
 - lay an item of business on the table,
 - close debate,
 - limit or extend debate,
 - postpone to a fixed time,
 - refer to committee, and
 - amend or postpone indefinitely.
3. Privilege motions relate to order and the rights and welfare of the members. They rank higher than subsidiary motions or main motions. They include motions to:
 - Call for the orders of the day
 - Adjourn
 - Recess
 - Raise a question of privilege (members leaving meeting and not returning should state this to allow adjustments to quorum)
 - Set the time to adjourn
4. Incidental motions relate to procedures. Incidental motions have no rank and are considered before the motions from which they stem. Incidental motions include those that:
 - Appeal a ruling of the chair,
 - Suspend the rules,
 - Rise to a point of order,

- Withdraw motions,
 - Reconsider,
 - Rescind
- Rake from the table

CONCLUSIONS

Every member of the organization should know the basic rules of parliamentary procedure. The presiding officer will find it helpful to learn more rules than are used. Practice will ensure smooth meetings and fairness to all. The use of parliamentary procedure in all meetings will help the group transact business efficiently, protect the group from leaders who dictate policies, and **PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL IN THE GROUP**.

Remember, if you are overly strict with rules and procedures, members may be afraid to speak up. Parliamentary rules, like all other rules, should be applied with common sense.

PARLIAMENTARY TERMS TO KNOW

Before parliamentary procedure can be effective, members must be familiar with frequently used terms.

Adjourn - to end a meeting.

Amend - changing a main motion by striking out, inserting, adding to, or substituting.

Chair - the presiding officer; "addressing the chair" means speaking to the president or chairman.

Debate - the parliamentary name given to the discussion of a motion.

Division of the House - voting by standing and counting.

Ex Officio - by virtue of the office. A member of the committee by virtue of being president may vote unless specified otherwise in bylaws.

Floor - the privilege of speaking before the assembly.

Majority - one more than half of the number voting. If 10 ballots are counted, six would be a majority.

Minutes - official record of business transacted in a meeting.

Motion - a formal proposal for action by the group.

Question - the item of business before the assembly for vote.

Quorum - the number or proportion of members required to be present for business to be transacted.

Resolution - a form of main motion which may or may not have a preamble describing the reasons for the proposal.

Second - motions are seconded by a member of the assembly; an action which indicates interest of at least a second member in bringing the question before the group.

Table - a motion "to table" allows the assembly to put aside the pending question temporarily when something more urgent has arisen.

Viva Voce - (v§-va-vÇ-c.) by word of mouth, spoken, oral