

Why Have a Business Meeting?

The simple answer is to get things done!

The longer answer relates to a reason to meet. Parliamentary Procedures, as defined in Robert's Rules of Order, are rules that allow business to be discussed, one item at a time, in a respectful manner and then voted on. This is done while respecting the views of everyone but accomplishing the goals of the majority. In fact, General Henry M. Robert, a U.S. Army engineer wrote these rules in 1876 after traversing the US, while in the military and recognizing that every town, city, and state seemed to have their own way of conducting (or not conducting) business. These rules have since become the generally accepted way of conducting business.

Methods for Success

1. Use the rules to accomplish a goal, not obstruct it.
2. Use the rules to ensure that the will of the members are correctly expressed.
3. Make sure each member is treated fairly.
4. Maintain order. Otherwise, the rules are not going to help.

Used correctly, parliamentary procedure can be used to help a large group of people accomplish a large amount of work in as short a time as possible.

Administration

The **Chairman** controls the meeting and acts as a referee for the meeting. The chairman may still be a member of the group, but should refrain from taking sides in a discussion. Impartiality is crucial.

Standard Order of Business

1. Chairman calls meeting to order and ensures there is quorum (greater than 50% members in attendance)
2. The Chairman will give a chosen member an opportunity to speak, and illustrate a tip on parliamentary procedures
3. Chairman asks Secretary to read minutes of previously conducted meeting, which are corrected and amended, if necessary, and adopted. (The **Secretary** keeps a record of the progress of the meeting. This function is needed to keep track of the motions passed so that at future meetings, the members of the group can determine past business transacted by the group)
4. Reports are requested from standing committee heads and members.
5. Unfinished business is disposed of.
6. New business is addressed, discussed and resolved in an orderly fashion.
7. Meeting is adjourned.

Procedure for Handling a Main Motion

A Main Motion brings a question before the group to be discussed. This is the only way that an issue can be brought before the group.

MOTION	MEMBER	ACTION	EXAMPLE
Obtaining and Assigning the Floor			
	Member	rises when no one else has the floor and addresses the chair (It is advised to notify Chair of your motion prior to the meeting)	
	Chair	recognizes the member by announcing his name or title, or in a small assembly, by nodding to him.	
How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly			
Main Motion	Member	makes the motion: "I move that (or 'to')..." and resumes his seat.	Bill MOVES that we have beer at our meetings.
	Another Member	without rising, seconds the motion: "I second the motion" or "I second it" or even "second."	George SECONDS the motion.
	Chair	states the motion: It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the discussion?"	
	Members	can debate the motion. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor as stated above. 2. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly. 3. All remarks must be addressed to the chair. 4. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion. 5. Debate can only be closed by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate, or if the assembly is ready to vote (i.e. all discussion agrees with the motion). 	Bill tells the group why his motion is a good idea. Members can speak for or against the motion.
	Chair	puts the motion to a vote. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The chair asks: "Are you ready to vote?" OR 	
	Member	rises when no one else has the floor and addresses the chair	
Primary Amendment	Member	makes the motion: "I move a primary amendment to..." and resumes his seat.	Sue MOVES that we have beer AND wine at our meetings.
	Another Member	without rising, seconds the amended motion: "I second the amended motion" or "I second it" or even "second."	Mary SECONDS the amendment.
	Chair	states the amended motion: It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the debate?"	

A main motion can be amended by deleting a portion, by addition of a portion or by substitution. Sue's amendment above is an amendment by addition. Also the amendment cannot change the intent of the motion.

MOTION	MEMBER	ACTION	EXAMPLE
	Members	<p>can debate the motion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor as stated above. 2. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly. 3. All remarks must be addressed to the chair. 4. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion. 5. Debate can only be closed by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate. 	<p>Sue tells the group why her motion is a good idea.</p> <p>Members can speak for or against the motion.</p>
	Chair	<p>puts the motion to a vote.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The chair asks: "Are you ready to vote?" OR 	
	Member	<p>rises when no one else has the floor and addresses the chair</p>	
Secondary Amendment	Member	<p>makes the motion: "I move a secondary amendment to the primary amendment ..." and resumes his seat.</p>	<p>Annette MOVES (and begs) that we have beer AND wine at our meetings AND get naked.</p>
		<p>No one SECONDS Annette's (embarrassing) amendment. The Secondary Amendment dies.</p>	
	Chair	<p>states the secondary amended motion: "It is moved and NOT seconded therefore it dies".</p> <p>NOTE: A member can AMEND the MOTION again</p>	
	Chair	<p>puts the Primary Amendment to the Motion to a vote.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. states the primary amendment to motion. 2. asks: "Are you ready for the question?" If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote. 3. says: "The question is on the adoption of the primary amendment to motion that... As many as are in favour, say 'Aye'. (Pause for response.) Those opposed, say 'No'. (Pause for response.) 	
	Chair	<p>announces the result of the vote.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "The ayes have it, the motion is adopted, and ... (indicating the effect of the vote)" OR 2. "The nays have it, and the motion is lost." 	
	Chair	<p>puts the Main Motion to vote and</p> <p>announces the result of the vote</p>	

Chart of Motions

Class	Motion	May Apply To	May Interrupt a Member On the Floor	Mover Must Be Recognized	Requires a Secunder	Debatable	Vote Needed
Privileged	Fix Time of Next Meeting	None	No	Yes	Yes	Not When Privileged	Majority
	To Adjourn	None	No	Yes	Yes	Not When Privileged	Majority
	Question of Privilege	None	Yes, If Necessary	No	No	No, but resulting motion is	Decided By Chair
	Call for Orders of the Day	Any special or general order	Yes, is a call for a special order.	No	No	No	None, 2/3 vote required to postpone a special order.
	Rise to a Point of Order	Any Motion or Act of Order	Yes	No	No	No	None
Incidental	Appeal	Any decision of the Chairman	Yes	No	Yes	Usually No	Majority
	Suspend the Rules	Any motion where needed	No	Yes	Yes	No	Usually 2/3
	Withdraw (or Renew) a Motion	Any Motion	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	Objection to Consideration	Main Motion or Privileged Motions	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 in negative
Subsidiary	Lay on the Table	Main Motion, Appeals, Reconsideration	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	Take from Table	Only to previously "tabled" motions	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	Close or Limit Debate	Any debatable matter	No	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 Majority
	Postpone to Certain Time	Main Motion, Privileged Motion, Reconsideration	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Refer	Main Motion, Privileged Motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Amend	Main Motion, limit debate, refer, postpone indefinitely, fix time of next meeting	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Postpone Indefinitely	Main Motion, Privileged Motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Main Motion	Motion	No Other	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Reconsider	Any Motion except adjourn, suspend rules or lay on table	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Rescind	Main Motions, Privileged Motions	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority