



- GUIDE TO -

PARLIAMMENTARY

PROCEDURE

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The Basics

- What is parliamentary procedure?

- Parliamentary procedure is defined as the system of rules that dictate how a particular situation is to be handled, or a particular outcome achieved, in a legislative or deliberative body. FBLA-PBL has adopted *Roberts Rules of Order; Newly Revised* as its official parliamentary authority.

- Why is it important?

- Parliamentary procedure not only ensures that all meetings remain structured and consistent, but it maintains a sense of order. It allows everyone an opportunity to speak their opinions as equals. In addition, it is democratic in that the majority rules, while the voice of the minority is also heard.

- What needs to be done before the meeting?

- An agenda should be created and distributed. This outlines the discussion points of the meeting and will act as a guide

throughout it. Typically, the President and/or Vice President set the agenda, though it can also be a collaborative effort.

- Before any legitimate business can be acted upon, a quorum must be present. A quorum is defined as the minimum number of members of a body that must be present at a particular meeting in order for its proceedings to be considered valid. A percentage is typically used to calculate whether or not enough members are present. Upon the completion of roll call, the Secretary should notify those present whether or not a quorum has been achieved.

Order of Business

- **How should the meeting be structured?**

- While the specifics vary from institution to institution, the following order of business is generally acceptable:
 - Call to order
 - Roll call
 - Approval of minutes
 - Reports
 - Old business
 - New business
 - Adjournment

- **What exactly do these terms mean?**

- Call to order: this is the very beginning of the meeting. It is seen as the presiding officer's signal for everyone to pay attention and be ready to conduct business.
- Roll call: this is where the Secretary (or other assigned officer) will take attendance. They will then determine whether or not a quorum has been achieved.
- Approval of minutes: this is an opportunity for officers to bring up any issues they have found with the minutes from the previous meeting. The minutes may only be approved after each issue is appropriately addressed.
- Reports: this is where particular individuals or groups of individuals will report on specific projects. Often, individual officers, committees, or planned guests will speak here.
- Old business: this is the time for old or unfinished business from previous meetings to be acted upon.
- New business: this is the time for business that has not yet been brought up in previous meetings to be discussed.
- Adjournment: this signals the official end of the meeting.

Obtaining the Floor

- **When am I able to speak?**

- In order to keep things fair and orderly, no one should speak without prior recognition from the presiding officer. Typically, this recognition is gained by standing or raising a hand.

- A person looks to obtain recognition for a variety of reasons:
 - To make a motion
 - To ask a question
 - To add a comment

Making a Motion

- What is a motion?

- A motion is a statement that officially brings business to floor for discussion. There are five parts to a motion:
 - Motioning
 - Seconding
 - Discussing
 - Restating
 - Voting

- How do I make a motion?

- You don't "make a motion," you "move." This is a common error in wording.

- If there is a motion on the table, can I make another?

- Typically, no. The business on the floor must be tended to first. However, there are some exceptions. These are called secondary motions.

Secondary Motions

- **When can I make a secondary motion?**
 - o To make things a tad more complicated, there are three types of secondary motions:
 - Privileged motions
 - Subsidiary motions
 - Incidental motions
 - o Privileged motions do not pertain to the main motion currently on the floor. These would include motions to recess, adjourn, and fix the time to adjourn.
 - o Subsidiary motions do pertain to the main motion. These would include motions to table, limit debate, commit, amend, and indefinitely postpone.
 - o Incidental motions relate to the meeting itself. A point of order would fall under this category.

Amending the Motion

- **What if I want to alter the main motion?**
 - o To do this, it would be necessary to amend the motion. Amendment is typically done in three ways:
 - Inserting words
 - Striking out words

- Both of the above
- Amendment requires a motion, second, discussion, and vote. Note that the vote is not on the actual motion itself, but whether or not to approve the amendment to the motion. A separate vote must be held on the main motion, regardless of the passage or failure of the motion to amend.

Tabling the Motion

- **What does it mean to table a motion?**
 - Tabling refers to the suspension of consideration of a motion. Generally speaking, there are two ways to do this. To lay something on the table, a motion and second would be necessary. To postpone something, it should be specified whether it is definite or indefinite suspension; this requires a motion, second, and vote.

Voting

- **What are my options when voting on a motion?**
 - A member will vote in one of the following ways:
 - “Aye” meaning yes
 - “Nay” or “no” meaning no
 - Remaining silent, meaning an abstention

- **How does the body as a whole vote?**

- There are several accepted methods of voting. Various factors play into which methods are most commonly used; it often depends on the situation or the bylaws of the organization.
 - **Voice:** the presiding officer will ask everyone in favor to say *aye* and those opposed to say *nay/no* (separately), and will then rule on which side seems to have it.
 - **Roll call:** the presiding officer will call out the name of each member, recording their votes individually.
 - **General consent:** in cases where the motion is not likely to be opposed, the presiding officer will say “if there is no objection...” to initiate this method. If all members remain silent, the vote is said to have passed via unanimous consent (“*U.C.*”). This cannot occur if a member objects to the motion.
 - **Division:** in cases of a voice vote or other means in which it is unclear whether the ayes or nays have it, a member may call for this. Doing so would then initiate a vote count by standing up, raising hands, or roll call voting.
 - **Ballot:** in cases where secrecy is desired, members will write their votes on a piece of paper and pass them on to the presiding officer.

Point of...

- **What is a point of information?**
 - A point of information is a request for information relevant to the business at hand. It is directed at the presiding officer, or sometimes to someone else (but through the presiding officer). It is also known as a “request for information” in the latest edition of *Robert’s Rules*.

- **What is a point of order?**
 - A point of order is raised when someone believes that parliamentary rules have been broken. It is one of only a few instances in parliamentary procedure where it is acceptable to interrupt the current speaker. The presiding officer rules one way or the other before business continues. It is comparable to a judge ruling on an objection in a courtroom.

- **What is a point of parliamentary inquiry?**
 - A point of parliamentary inquiry is a question directed at the presiding officer to obtain information on a particular rule of parliamentary procedure. It differs from a point of information in that the information requested pertains to procedure rather than the business at hand.

- **What is a point of personal privilege?**
 - A point of personal privilege is a request related to the rights and privileges of an assembly or its members. It is often used to excuse oneself from a meeting, though it also includes matters of comfort, amplification, and safety.

Samples

- A generic motion

- Member A: *“I move to approve the state budget as proposed for the 2015 fiscal year.”*
- Member B: *“I second.”*
- President: *“Is there any discussion?”*
- [Discussion, one at a time]
- President: *“If there is no further discussion [silence = consent], the motion is ‘to approve the state budget as proposed for the 2015 fiscal year.’ All in favor say aye.”*
- Members A, B, C: *“Aye.”*
- President: *“All opposed say no.”*
- Member D: *“No.”*
- President: *“The ayes have it. The motion is carried.”*
[Alternatively this would be “the nos have it; the motion is defeated.]

- Amending a motion

- Member A: *“I move to donate \$80 of our budget to March of Dimes.”*
- Member B: *“I second.”*
- President: *“Is there any discussion?”*
- Member C: *“I move to amend the motion by striking out ‘\$80’ and inserting ‘\$100.’”*
- Member D: *“I second.”*

- President: *“Is there any discussion on the amendment?”*
- [Discussion, one at a time]
- President: *“If there is no further discussion, the motion is ‘to amend the main motion by striking out ‘\$80’ and inserting ‘\$100.’ All in favor of the amendment say aye.”*
- Members B, C, D: *“Aye.”*
- President: *“All opposed to the amendment say no.”*
- Member A: *“No.”*
- President: *“The ayes have it. The motion is carried. The motion at hand is now ‘to donate \$100 to March of Dimes.’”*
- [Note that the vote that just occurred only approved the *amendment* of the motion, not the motion itself. Now the members have to vote on the newly-approved motion.]
- [Discussion of motion, followed by vote]

- **Tabling a motion**

- [Motion is currently being discussed]
- Member A: *“I move to lay the motion on the table.”*
- President: *“For what purpose?”*
- Member A: *“This is not the right time to be discussing this. We need to be sure that we have enough money before we make decisions like these.”*
- [President would then choose whether or not the reasoning is legitimate or if it should be called out of order. Assuming he/she accepts the reasoning...]
- President: *“Is there a second?”*
- Member B: *“I second.”*

- President: *“It has been moved and seconded to lay the main motion on the table. This is not debatable. All in favor of tabling the motion, say aye.”*
- Members A, B, C, D: *“Aye.”*
- President: *“All opposed to tabling the motion, say no.”*
[Pause.] *“The ayes have it. The motion is carried. Therefore the main motion has been laid on the table for future consideration.”*

Reference Tables

Main Motions

(listed in order of precedence)

PURPOSE	SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND ?	VOTE?
End meeting	“I move to adjourn”	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Take a break	“I move to recess for...”	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Register complaint	“I rise to a question of privilege”	Yes	No	No	No	No
Make to	“I call for the	Yes	No	No	No	No

follow agenda	orders of the day”					
Lay aside temporarily	“I move to lay the question on the table”	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	“I move the previous question”	No	Yes	No	No	2/3rds
Limit or extend debate	“I move that debate be limited to...”	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3rds
Postpone to specific time	“I move to postpone the motion to...”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to committee	“I move to refer the motion to...”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Modify wording	“I move to amend the motion by...”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Kill motion	“I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely”	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Main motion	“I move that [or to]...”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Incidental Motions

PURPOSE	SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
Enforce rules	“Point of order”	Yes	No	No	No	No
Submit matter to	“I appeal from the decision of	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

assembly	the chair”					
Suspend rules	“I move to suspend the rules”	No	Yes	No	No	2/3rds
Avoid main motion altogether	“I object to the consideration of the question”	Yes	No	No	No	2/3rds
Divide motion	“I move to divide the question”	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Demand a rising vote	“I move for a rising vote”	Yes	No	No	No	No
Parliamentary law question	“Parliamentary inquiry”	Yes	No	No	No	No
Request for information	“Point of information”	Yes	No	No	No	No

Motions That Bring Back a Question

PURPOSE	SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
Take matter from the table	“I move to take from the table...”	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Cancel previous action	“I move to rescind...”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3rds or Majority
Reconsider motion	“I move to reconsider...”	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority