



Using parliamentary procedure to run an efficient and inclusive meeting

Adapted from information in "[Simplified Parliamentary Procedure](#)" by Iowa State University Extension.

What is Parliamentary Procedure?

Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules that helps move business along in a meeting, while maintaining order and allowing all voices to be heard.

"Parliamentary procedure is not intended to inhibit a meeting with unnecessary rules or to prevent people from expressing their opinions. It is intended to facilitate the smooth functioning of the meeting and promote cooperation and harmony among members. The rules of parliamentary procedure are guidelines, not hard and fast laws."

Basic principles of parliamentary procedure include:

- Only one issue is discussed at a time
- All members have equal rights to vote, be heard, and oppose
- A majority vote decides an issue
- The chairperson leads the meeting and makes sure all sides of the issue are heard

Common Components of an Agenda

Order of an agenda can vary, but the typical components are:

- Call to Order by chairperson - "The meeting will now come to order."
- Approval of the Agenda - Chair calls for a motion to adopt the agenda – members may suggest revisions before voting to approve.
- Approval of the Minutes from Previous Meeting
 - Minutes do not need to be read out loud
 - Chair asks for corrections to the minutes. If there are no corrections, a vote is not needed. The chairperson can declare them approved.
- Reports from Officers and/or Subcommittees
 - Includes Treasurer/Financial report
 - The chair should check with subcommittees in advance to see if they have a report
- Unfinished/Old Business - Items pending from the previous meeting
- New Business – New items for discussion
- Adjournment (Requires a motion)

Making a Motion

A motion is required when a member of the committee wants to propose a course of action, such as pursuing a new project, forming a subcommittee, approving a budget, amending bylaws, etc. Any member of the committee/board can make a motion. Steps in making a motion are:

- Chairperson calls for a motion
- A member states the motion – “I move that...”
- A second member “seconds” the motion
- The chairperson restates the motion and opens discussion:
 - Chairperson ensures that everyone has an opportunity to speak
 - Members should stick to the topic at hand during the discussion period
- After discussion, the committee can decide to:
 - Amend the motion before voting
 - “Table” the motion to set it aside temporarily for later in the meeting or a later meeting
 - Refer the motion to a subcommittee for further study
 - Vote on the motion – see below.
- Vote – Chairperson calls for a vote: “All in favor, say aye...” / “All opposed...”
- Chairperson announces results of the vote: “Motion passes”

When a motion is not needed:

- For committee reports and officer reports, approval/vote is not necessary. This includes monthly treasurer reports (However, adoption/changes to the annual budget must be voted on)
- Approving minor decisions that have been delegated to a subcommittee.
 - For example, if the committee has voted to allow a subcommittee to design a parade float at a certain budget, a motion/vote is not required to approve the colors of the float or the type of candy distributed. However, if the subcommittee wanted to make a significant change, such as doubling their budget, that would require a motion and vote.

Quorum

Quorum refers to the number of members that must be present at the meeting in order to conduct official business, such as making motions.

A quorum is typically half the total membership plus one person.

- Quorum for a group of 12 would be 7; quorum for a group of 9 would be 5

Note: If quorum is established at the start of the meeting, but members leave early and there is no longer a quorum, the committee is no longer able to conduct official business at that point.