

# Parliamentary Procedure Cheat Sheet

Each officer should be familiar with the fundamental rules of parliamentary procedure. The business of any meeting is conducted more efficiently and quickly with parliamentary procedure and gives members a sense of security in knowing what course of action may be taken.

As stated in “Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised,” the rules of parliamentary law are built on a careful balance of the rights of persons and subgroups within an organization.

The rules are based on regard for the rights of:

- The majority – defined as more than half
- The minority
- Individual members
- Absentees
- All these together

## Order of Business

### Call to order

The president must first determine if a quorum is present. A quorum is defined as the number of voting members who must be present in order for business to be legally transacted. The bylaws should stipulate the number for quorum. If your bylaws do not stipulate a number for quorum, then it is a majority (more than half) of your voting members. No business may be conducted if the meeting lacks a quorum. The president stands, waits or signals for quiet, and says, “The meeting will come to order.”

### Roll call

The president says, “The secretary will call the roll.”

### Reading and approval of minutes

The president says, “The secretary will read the minutes.” Note: The secretary stands to read the minutes. The president sits down. This should only happen if the minutes are not distributed before the meeting.

Or the president says “The minutes were distributed before the meeting.”

The president says, “Are there any corrections to the minutes?” (Pause) [Choose one of the following statements:]

[“If there are no corrections, the minutes are approved as read/distributed.”]

[“If there is no objection, the secretary will make the correction(s) [insert proposed corrections]. If there are no further corrections, the minutes are approved as corrected.”]

## **Reports of officers**

The president says, “The next business in order is hearing reports of the officers.” Note: Officers are called on in the order they are listed in the bylaws. The president should only call on those who have reports to make. An officer should not move the implementation of a recommendation in her report; another member can make such a motion following the officer’s report.

The treasurer reports at every meeting. In calling on the treasurer the president says, “May we have the treasurer’s report.” Note: A treasurer’s report is never adopted. An audit report, usually presented annually, is the only financial report that is adopted. This language is used to adopt the audit report: “The question is on the adoption of the audit report. Those in favor of adopting the audit report say ‘aye’. Those opposed say ‘no’. The ‘ayes’ have it and the audit report is adopted.”

## **Reports of standing committees**

The president says, “The next business in order is hearing reports of the standing committees.” Note: Standing committees are called on in the order they are listed in the bylaws. The president should only call on those who have reports to make.

The chairman or other reporting member of a committee says, “On behalf of the committee, I move the adoption of [insert motion needed to implement any recommendations the committee makes].” Note: A motion arising out of a standing committee’s report is taken up immediately.

## **Reports of special committees**

Note: Announced only if there are such committees prepared or instructed to report.

The president says, “The next business in order is hearing reports of special committees. The committee appointed to [insert special committee name] will now report.” Note: Special committees are called on in the order in which they were appointed.

The chairman or other reporting member of a committee says, “On behalf of the committee, I move the adoption of [insert motion needed to implement any recommendations the committee makes].” Note: A motion arising out of a special committee’s report is taken up immediately.

## **Special orders**

Note: Announced only if there are such items.

Matters set by the bylaws for a particular meeting, such as elections, are taken up at this time.

## **Unfinished business and general orders**

Note: Announced only if there are such items.

Unfinished business — sometimes incorrectly referred to as old business — refers to questions that have carried over from the previous meeting as a result of that meeting

having adjourned without completing its order of business. General orders refer to business that has been postponed to the present meeting.

The president says, “The next item of business is the motion relating to [insert motion] that was postponed to this meeting. The question is on the adoption of the motion that [insert motion]. Is there any discussion?”

### **New Business**

The president says, “Is there any new business?”  
“Is there any further new business?”

### **Announcements**

The president says, “The chair has the following announcements [insert announcements]. Are there other announcements?”

### **Program**

The president does not “turn the meeting over” but announces, “[Insert name of speaker] will now present the program” or “[insert name of person giving introduction] will introduce our speaker.”

### **Adjournment**

The president says, “Is there any further business? (Pause) Since there is no further business, the meeting is adjourned.” Or they may say, “A motion to adjourn is in order.” In announcing the affirmative vote: “The ‘ayes’ have it and the meeting is adjourned.”  
Note: A single rap of the gavel may be used.

### **How is Business Brought Before the Board?**

To get business before the board someone must make a motion. A main motion is a formal proposal for consideration and action. Since only one subject can be considered at a time, no main motion can be made while another motion is before the board.

### **Main Motions that are not in Order**

- Conflicts with the governing documents of the Board.
- Presents substantially the same question as previously rejected during the same meeting.
- Presents essentially the same question as one that was temporarily disposed of but is still in the control of the Board (such as referred to a committee).
- Proposes action outside the scope of the Board’s objects (unless by a 2/3 vote the members authorizes its introduction).

### **The Eight Steps in Processing Main Motions**

1. A member rises and addresses the chair when nothing is pending, “Madame president.”
2. The president recognizes the member by nodding at her or saying, “The chair recognizes Amy.”
3. The member states her motion, “I move that we have a canned food drive.”
4. Another member, without recognition, seconds the motion, “Second.”

5. Chair states the motion and places it before the members for discussion. "It is moved and seconded that we have a canned food drive. Is there any discussion?"
6. Members have the right to get recognition and debate the motion. During debate subsidiary motions (e.g. amendments or postponement) may be introduced to help the board perfect the motion and make a final decision.
7. When discussion is finished the president puts the question to a vote. "The question is on the adoption of the motion that we have a canned food drive. Those in favor, say 'aye'." (Pause.) "Those opposed, say 'no'." (Pause.)
8. The president announces the results of the vote. "The 'ayes' ('noes') have it; the motion is adopted (lost); we will (not) have a canned food drive; the next business in order is ..."

### The Process of Amending

1. To insert or to add (a word, consecutive words or a paragraph).
  - a. Phrasing:
    - i. "I move to amend the motion by inserting the word 'consecutive' before the word 'terms.'"
    - ii. "I move to amend by adding the words 'at a cost not to exceed \$100.'"
    - iii. "I move to amend by adding the following paragraph ..."
2. To strike out (a word, consecutive words or a paragraph).
  - a. Phrasing:
    - i. "I move to amend by striking out the word 'every.'"
    - ii. "I move to amend by striking out the third paragraph."
3. To strike out and insert (words) or to substitute (paragraph or entire main motion).
  - a. Phrasing:
    - i. "I move to amend by striking out the word 'monthly' and insert the word 'annually.'"
    - ii. "I move to amend by substituting for the pending main motion the following ..."

### Forms of Voting

A majority is usually required to pass a motion. It is a fundamental principle of parliamentary law that the right to vote is limited to the members of an organization who are actually present at the time the vote is taken in a legal meeting.

Voting may be done by:

- General (unanimous) consent: The president asks if there is any objection, and if none, the motion passes. "If there is no objection, we will adjourn. (Pause.) There being no objection, the meeting is adjourned."
- Voice vote: Regular method of voting on any motion that does not require more than a majority vote; most common form of voting. "The question is on the adoption of the motion that \_\_\_\_\_. Those in favor, say 'aye'." (Pause.) "Those opposed, say 'no'." (Pause.)

- Rising vote: Method used when a two-thirds vote is required for adoption; is also used when a member calls for a division of the assembly. “The question is on the adoption of the motion that \_\_\_\_\_. Those in favor, please stand.” (Pause.) “Thank you, please be seated. Those opposed, please stand.” (Pause.) “Thank you, please be seated.”
- Show of hands: An alternative method for a voice vote; used in small boards, committees or very small meetings. “The question is on the adoption of the motion that \_\_\_\_\_. Those in favor please raise your hand.” (Pause.) “Thank you. Those opposed please raise your hand.” (Pause.) “Thank you.”
- Voting cards: An alternative method for a voice vote; cards must be issued during the credentialing process. “The question is on the adoption of the motion that \_\_\_\_\_. Those in favor please raise your voting card.” (Pause.) “Thank you. Those opposed please raise your voting card.” (Pause.) “Thank you.”
- Counted vote: Can be ordered by the president when it appears a voice vote is unclear, and it can be ordered by a majority vote of the members.
- Ballot or roll call vote: Can be ordered by a majority vote of the members and is required if specified in the bylaws.

### **Nominations**

- Nominations do not need a second
- Closing nominations requires 2/3 vote. To reopen requires a majority vote.

### **Parliamentary Rules for a Committee**

The formality necessary in a large group would hinder business in the smaller group. Therefore, in a committee:

- Members are not required to obtain the floor before making motions or speaking.
- Motions need not be seconded.
- There is no limit to the number of times a member may speak to a question.
- Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while there is no motion about it pending.
- All proposed actions must be approved by vote.
- Voting may be by voice or show of hands; minutes may be taken.
- The chairman may make and debate motions. They is usually an active participant in the discussions and work of the committee. They may vote on all questions.