

# Parliamentarian's Report to the DCCW Board

September 16, 2023

Parliamentary procedure is part of best practices for boards at all levels of Council because it helps ensure an efficient and effective board meeting process. It can be any set of rules and guidelines a group formally establishes to govern themselves, with *Robert's Rules of Order* being the most common. *Robert's Rules of Order* for meetings has become the general standard for how established groups, including non-profit organizations, govern discussions and decision-making. Following *Robert's Rules* helps ensure order and creates a positive environment for productivity.

The goal of the parliamentary procedure is to set forth the order of discussions and ultimately get to a place where all group members can agree on what they want to accomplish or how to move forward. By using an established set of rules and guidelines, members of the group can reach a consensus in a respectful, collegial manner. New board members should familiarize themselves with the basics of parliamentary procedure as soon as they are elected to the board.

Many of the elements of parliamentary procedure should be defined in your bylaws, such as how to run elections, voting procedures, writing and amending bylaws, rules for quorums, holding board and committee meetings, and roles and responsibilities of officers. Outside of that, and as a review, here is a general outline of the essential basics of motions from *Robert's Rules of Order*:

- **Motion** – A member makes a motion to propose an action or make a decision by saying, "I move to...". Another member must second the motion by saying, "I second the motion." Once someone seconds the motion, the group votes on the motion. It passes by a majority vote or a quorum, depending on the rules in the bylaws.
- **Amend a motion** – Members use this process to change a motion and can do so by stating, "I move to amend the motion on the floor." Again, this motion must be seconded and voted upon.
- **Commit** – Members use this type of motion to transfer a motion to a committee. As with other types of motions, it must be seconded and voted upon. Once it moves to a committee, the committee presents a report on the committed motion at the next meeting.
- **Question** – Members say, "I call the question" to end a debate or discussion. The motion must be seconded and voted upon without further discussion. A call for the question requires a two-thirds majority vote to pass. At this point, the members must immediately vote on the motion on the floor.
- **Adjourn** – This refers to moving to end the meeting. A member would say, "I move to adjourn," and another member would second the motion. If the majority then votes to adjourn, the meeting is over.

Casey Pond

(Adapted from an article by Toni Hoy for BoardEffect)