



Parliamentary Procedure

When conducting association meetings, it is important for associations to understand the importance and value of parliamentary procedure. Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules used at meetings to ensure the meeting is run efficiently and justly. Some of the benefits include maintaining order at meetings, ending meetings on time, and focusing on the issue at hand. Parliamentary procedure is based on democratic principles such as majority rules, the minority voice will be heard, and members make decisions while the leaders carry them out. The association size or the issue at hand may dictate how formal the meeting will be and how strictly parliamentary procedure is utilized.

In general, more formal procedures are used when the number of meeting participants is high or a contentious issue is being discussed. For instance, at an eight member board meeting, the culture most likely will not require one to stand when speaking. On the other hand, it may be justifiable for members to stand when speaking at an annual meeting with 100 members in attendance.

The use of parliamentary procedure should enhance association meetings, not frustrate the membership. Although there are many adaptations of parliamentary procedure, the *USBC Bylaws* stipulate that associations use the latest version of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, to govern meetings. However, parliamentary procedure should not interfere with group decision making or stifle group discussion.

Motions

For items of business to be approved, a main motion must be made. As defined in the most recent version of *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, a main motion is a formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, acted on by the voting body. In other words, a motion specifically states an action/stance a member wants the association to take.

There are a few things to consider when making a motion. First, the motion should be precise. For instance, if making a motion to buy a flag, it's important to indicate what kind of flag, the size, price limit, etc.

Bad – “I move we buy a flag.”

Good – “I move we buy a 3 x 5 foot state flag, not to exceed \$25.”

Second, motions should be made in the affirmative.

Bad – “I move we not have the annual meeting in April”

Good – “I move we have the annual meeting the first Saturday in May.”

Finally, it is helpful if the member making the motion writes down the motion before presenting it. This ensures information is not lost if it has to be repeated.

Please reference the Motion Flow Chart at the end of this document, which is a visual account of handling a motion.



Main Motions

1. After recognition of the member by the presiding officer, the member makes the motion, “I move that...”
2. The presiding officer asks for a second. (If not seconded, the motion dies.)
3. Another member seconds the motion, “I second the motion.” (An individual that seconds a motion is agreeing the motion should come before the meeting and not necessarily that he/she agrees with or supports the main motion.)
4. The presiding officer states the motion and calls for any debate on the motion.
 - a. At this time members can provide their input on the motion, whether it be in support of the motion or not. The member making the motion has the option to speak first.
 - b. After debate has been exhausted, a member calls for the question. A second is needed. If two-thirds of the membership approves, the motion is put to vote. (If two-thirds approval is not received, debate continues.)
5. The presiding officer restates the motion, so members are clear on what is being voted on.
6. The presiding officer asks, “All those in favor of the motion?” (Aye) “All those opposed?” (No). If a voice vote cannot be determined, a hand vote can be taken.
7. The presiding officer states the results of the vote – carried or defeated.

Generally, for a motion to carry, more than one-half (majority) of the voting members present must vote in favor of the motion. Refer to *USBC Bylaws* and/or *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised* to determine specific motions that require a two-thirds vote.

Amending a Motion

An amendment to a motion occurs after a motion has been moved and seconded, and debate has ensued, but before the motion has been voted on. Amendments to the motion change or modify the original motion. Amendments must be relevant to the original motion.

Motion – “I move we buy 2 laptop computers, not to exceed \$800 each.”

Relevant Amendment - “I move we amend the motion by striking 2 and replacing it with 1.”

Non-relevant Amendment – “I move we amend the motion by adding ‘and purchase a new podium’ to the end of the motion.”

When dealing with amendments to a motion, the following steps are recommended:

1. A member makes the motion – “I move to amend the motion to buy laptops by adding the word “Dell” (adding, subtracting, and/or substituting) so, if approved, the motion would be **to** buy 2 laptop computers from Dell, not to exceed \$800 each. (State the exact wording)
2. The presiding officer asks for a second. (If not seconded, the amendment dies.)
3. If seconded presiding officer ensures the amendment to the motion is relevant.
4. The presiding officer states the amendment to the motion to add the word “Dell” and calls for debate.
 - a. At this time, members can provide their input on the amendment to the motion- whether for or against it. The member making the amendment has the option to speak first.



- b. After debate has been exhausted or if a member feels there has been enough discussion, a member calls for the question. A second is needed. If two-thirds of the membership approves the call for the question, the amendment to the motion is put to vote. If two-thirds approval is not received, debate continues;
5. The presiding officer restates the amendment to the motion to add the word “Dell.”.
6. After discussion, the presiding officer asks, “All those in favor of the amendment to the motion?” (Aye) “All those opposed?” (No). If a voice vote cannot be determined, a hand vote can be taken.
7. The presiding officer states the results of the vote on the amendment to the motion – carried or defeated.
8. If the vote is defeated, the original motion is restated. The original motion could continue to be debated, voted on, or a motion for a new amendment could be brought forward.
9. If the vote on the amendment to the motion is carried, the original motion is modified to fit the amendment. “I move we buy 2 laptops computers from Dell, not to exceed \$800 each.”
10. The amended motion is restated by the presiding officer and is put on the floor for debate.
 - a. At this time members can provide their input on the amended motion, whether for or against it.
 - b. After debate has been exhausted or if a member feels there has been enough discussion, a member calls for the question. A second is needed. If two-thirds of the membership approves the call for the question, the amended motion is put to vote. (If two-thirds approval is not received, debate continues.
11. The presiding officer restates the amended motion.
12. After discussion, the presiding officer asks, “All those in favor of the amended motion?” (Aye) “All those opposed?” (No). If a voice vote cannot be determined, a hand vote can be taken.
13. The presiding officer states the results of the vote on the amended motion – carried or defeated.
14. If the motion is defeated, it dies.
15. If the motion is carried, it is adopted.

Withdrawing Motions

Through the presiding officer, anyone may ask the mover to withdraw a motion, but the mover does not have to do so.

If a mover wants to withdraw a motion that the presiding officer already has stated to the membership, the following must occur:

1. The mover asks the presiding officer for permission to withdraw the motion.
2. Permission is granted or refused by the presiding officer.

With exception of a withdrawn motion, all motions are recorded in the minutes.

Tabling Motions

If it is necessary to lay aside business to gather more information, a motion can be tabled and be renewed at a later time.



1. If the original motion has been moved and seconded, the presiding officer calls for debate on the motion.
2. Prior to calling for the question a member may say, “I move to table the motion until...”
3. A second is required.
4. Debate is allowed.
5. A vote is taken to table the motion. A majority vote is needed to table a motion.

To reactivate a tabled motion –

1. A member says “I move that we resume discussion on...”
2. The motion needs a second.
3. Debate is allowed.
4. A vote is taken on whether to resume action on the original motion. A majority vote is required.
5. If carried, debate on the original motion is resumed.
6. If defeated, the matter is kept on the table.

Rescinding a Motion

Sometimes the membership may desire to rescind a motion after it has been voted on and carried. In short, to rescind means to amend something that was previously adopted, or cancel a previous decision of the association, provided the matter has yet to be acted on.

1. The member makes the motion, “I move to rescind the motion relating to (previous motion, buying a laptop) adopted at the _____ meeting.”
2. The presiding officer asks for a second. (If not seconded, the motion to rescind dies.)
3. The presiding officer states the motion and calls for any further debate on the motion.
 - a. At this time members can provide their input on the motion, whether for or against it. The member making the motion has the option to speak first.
 - b. After debate has been exhausted, a member calls for the question. A second is needed. If two-thirds of the membership approves, the motion to rescind is put to vote. (If two-thirds approval is not received, debate continues.)
4. The presiding officer restates the motion, so all members are clear on what is being voted on.
5. The presiding officer asks, “All those in favor of the motion?” (Aye) “All those opposed?” (No). If a voice vote cannot be determined, a hand vote can be taken.
6. The presiding officer states the results of the vote – carried or defeated. A two-thirds vote is required to rescind a previously carried motion. However, if previous notice was given that a motion to rescind would be presented, only a majority vote is needed to rescind a motion previously adopted.

Debate

The presiding officer plays an important role in the debate of a motion. In particular, he/she facilitates the debate, making certain the motion on the floor is what is being debated. If not, the presiding officer should interrupt. For example, if there is a motion being debated to purchase a podium, and a member argues the meeting location needs to change. The presiding officer could diffuse the situation by simply stating: “The motion before you is to buy a podium, please



confine your remarks to the purchase of a podium. If you would like to discuss future meeting locations, you may make a motion after we have voted on the current motion.”

The presiding officer cannot end debate on his/her own accord. Debate can only be ended by a two-thirds vote or if no members seek to debate further.

If at all possible, the presiding officer should refrain from partaking in debate at membership meetings. His/her role is to facilitate the meeting.

If compelled to speak in debate at a membership meeting, the presiding officer vacates the chair. The chair is turned over to the vice president, provided the vice president has not spoken on the motion. After vacating the chair, the president does not resume his/her role as presiding officer until the motion/issue is finalized.

Finally, from time-to-time the presiding officer may address questions that arise during debate. For example, if the voting body is debating the purchase of a new computer, someone may inquire how old the current computer is. The presiding officer can answer questions directly, if he/she knows the answer, or direct the question to someone who knows the answer.

Call for the Question

When a member feels that debate on a motion has been exhausted, he/she can call for the question:

1. A member says, “I move we close debate and vote on...”
2. A second is required.
3. A vote is taken to close debate. A two-thirds vote is required to pass the motion to close debate.
4. If debate is closed, the motion is voted on. If the motion to close debate is defeated, debate resumes on the motion.

Points of Order

A point of order is raised when a member feels something has been handled incorrectly in the course of the meeting, and he/she wants to bring it to the attention of the voting body. The point of order must be raised when the infraction occurs, and the presiding officer needs to address it immediately.

A point of order could be raised for any number of things. One example would be if the presiding officer forgets to take nominations from the floor during the election. The member who notices the oversight should bring it to the presiding officer’s attention so it can be rectified.

The presiding officer can handle a point of order two ways. Upon hearing the point of order the presiding officer may:

1. Make a ruling
2. Ask the voting body for a decision

The presiding officer may choose to make a ruling because he/she feels confident the matter was handled correctly. He/she could also make the ruling because he/she acknowledges the error.



The presiding officer's ruling on a point of order can be appealed. For a point of order to be appealed, two or more members need to appeal the ruling because they feel the ruling is incorrect. Once appealed, the ruling is taken from the presiding officer and given to the voting body for a final decision.

On the other hand, if the presiding officer is not comfortable ruling on the point of order, he/she can ask the voting body for a ruling. To ensure the ruling is handled correctly, the point of order can be debated by the voting body. Upon completion of debate, a vote is taken, and the voting body's decision is final; it cannot be appealed.

Additionally, if a point of order is made in regard to a specific USBC procedure, a short recess could be called to reference the proper guidelines. Having a copy of your association's bylaws and the *USBC Association Policy Manual* on hand may serve the association well, if for example, a point of order is raised regarding an election procedure, or who is eligible to vote on a specific topic. A copy of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* is also a useful tool to have on hand in the event a point of order is raised regarding a meeting procedure.