

The Center for Labor Education and Research

University of Hawai‘i - West O‘ahu



presents

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

A Leadership Program
for Unions Using
Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th ed.)

July 2018

Introduction to Parliamentary Procedure Pretest

1. If a member makes a motion that is not in order
 - a. he or she should be ruled out of order by the chair.
 - b. the chair should rule the motion out of order.
 - c. the sergeant at arms should remove the member from the assembly.

2. When a question of parliamentary procedure affecting the assembly's proceedings is raised, a ruling must be made by.
 - a. the chair
 - b. the secretary.
 - c. the parliamentarian.

3. Any member has the right to
 - a. require that a voice vote be retaken as a rising vote when there is some doubt as to which side prevailed.
 - b. question the voice vote under any circumstances.
 - c. demand a counted vote.

4. The chair exercises his right to vote
 - a. at all times.
 - b. only when the vote is by secret ballot or when the vote would affect the outcome.
 - c. only when the chair feels strongly about a question.

5. When a member calls for the question,
 - a. the main motion pending must be voted on immediately.
 - b. if seconded, a two-thirds vote must approve ending debate before an immediate vote is taken on the pending main motion .
 - c. the chair must ask the member to state his/her question.

6. No discussion is permitted until a motion is made and stated by the Chair.

True? False?

7. In debate, the freedom to challenge the honor, intelligence or motive(s) of another member when arguing for or against a motion is protected.

True? False?

8. The presiding officer may enter into debate on all debatable questions.

True? False?

9. If a member wants to kill a motion, he or she should move to table it.

True? False?

10. To approve the minutes, someone must so move, someone else must second, and a majority vote must be obtained.

True? False?

11. If there is only one nominee and there is no objection, the assembly may elect by voice vote even if the bylaws require a secret ballot.

True? False?

12. A rejected main motion can be brought up a second time later in the meeting.

True? False?

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

- I. The customs and rules usually governing deliberative assemblies in cases not covered by their own specific rules, are commonly known as Parliamentary Law. Parliamentary Law is based upon these basic principles
- ◆ the will of the majority shall rule;
 - ◆ the rights of the minority (greater than one third) must be protected;
 - ◆ protection of the rights of absentees;
 - ◆ courtesy and justice (decorum) shall prevail; and
 - ◆ consideration of one subject at a time.

II. A MANUAL OF PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE:

“And whether these forms be in all cases the most rational or not, is really not of so great importance. It is much more material that there should be a rule to go by, than what the rule is; that there may be an uniformity of proceeding in business, not subject to the caprice of the Speaker, or captiousness of the members. It is very material that order, decency and regularity be preserved in a dignified public body.”

- Thomas Jefferson, 1801

“The rules of parliamentary law are designed to expedite business and protect the minority, while at the same time they enable the assembly to express its deliberate sense on the questions before it. Parliamentary law should be the servant, not the master, of the assembly.”

- Henry M. Robert, 1923

- III. "RONR" is the standard abbreviation parliamentarians use to cite Henry M. Robert III and others, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Da Capo Press, 2011). The standard citation to particular pages and lines is "RONR (11th ed. [for 'edition'], p. [for 'page'] pp. [for 'pages'])."
- IV. QUORUM: “The minimum number of members who must be present at the meetings of a deliberative assembly for business to be validly transacted is the *quorum* of the assembly.” RONR (11th ed.), p. 21. If not defined in the bylaws, a quorum is a majority of the entire membership.

V. ON THE DISPOSITION OF MAIN MOTIONS

RONR (11th ed.), p. 59

“Only one question can be considered at a time; once a motion is before the assembly, it must be adopted or rejected by a vote, or the assembly must take action disposing of the question in some other way, before any other business (except certain matters called “privileged questions”) can be brought up.”

RONR (11th ed.), p. 75

- a) *During the meeting or series of connected meetings (called a “session”) in which the assembly has decided a question, the same or substantially the same question cannot be brought up again, except through special procedures which imply an unusual circumstance.*

- b) *While a question is temporarily disposed of ... but is not finally settled, no similar or conflicting motion whose adoption would restrict the assembly in acting on the first question can be introduced.*
- c) *To change what the assembly has adopted requires something more (in the way of vote or previous notice to the members) than was necessary to adopt it in the first place.*

A motion violating principles (a), (b), or (c) is not in order.

- VI. ORDER OF AUTHORITIES (Hierarchy of Rules): RONR (11th ed.), pp. 10-19
 1. State & Federal Law (e.g., Labor Management Reporting & Disclosure Act)
 2. Organizational Charter & Articles of Incorporation (if applicable)
 3. Constitution (e.g., National/International Constitution)
 4. Bylaws (e.g., Local union's bylaws)
 5. Special Rules of Order (e.g., rules limiting debate length & convention standing rules)
 6. Adopted Parliamentary Authority (e.g., current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*)
 7. Standing Rules (e.g., when & where regular meetings will be held)
 8. Custom (e.g., opening ceremonies and particular union rituals)

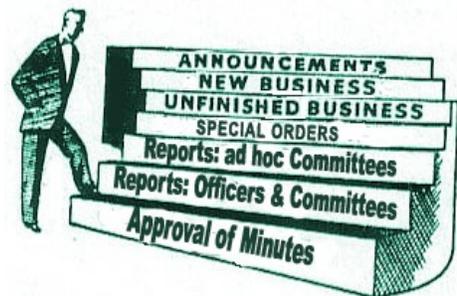
VII. ORDER OF BUSINESS: RONR (11th ed.), p. 26

To keep the meeting moving at a good pace keep the meeting in order and yet see that each member has a fair chance to participate. Follow the announced order of business.

A standard agenda runs as follows (Mrs. Sun):
call to Order

- M reading and approval of minutes of
- R reports - officers, boards, committees
- S special (ad hoc) committees reports
- S special orders
- U unfinished business & general orders
- N new business

announcements: good and welfare
adjournment



VIII. HANDLING OF A MOTION: RONR (11th ed.), pp. 32-57

Whenever there is any action to be taken, it is done by means of a motion or resolution. A motion is a formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the assembly take certain action.

A Main Motion - is a motion whose introduction brings business before the assembly and is only in order when no other motion is on the floor (pending).

Steps in processing a main motion:

- (1) The Chair recognizes a member = gives him/her the floor.
- (2) The member makes a motion.
- (3) Another member seconds the motion.
- (4) The Chair states the question (motion).
- (5) Members (not the chair) debate the question. (alternating pro & con)
- (6) The Chair puts the question to a vote.
- (7) Members vote -affirmative & negative.
- (8) The Chair announces the result & effect of the vote.

IX. ELECTRONIC MEETINGS:

RONR (11th ed.), pp. 97-99

Except as authorized in the bylaws, the business of an organization or board can be validly transacted only at a regular or properly called meeting—that is, as defined on pages 81–82, a single official gathering in one room or area—of the assembly of its members at which a quorum is present.

Regardless of the technology used, the opportunity for simultaneous aural communication is essential to the deliberative character of the meeting. Therefore, a group that attempts to conduct the deliberative process in writing (such as by postal mail, e-mail, "chat rooms," or fax)—which is not recommended—does not constitute a deliberative assembly. Any such effort may achieve a consultative character, but it is foreign to the deliberative process as understood under parliamentary law.

X. DEBATE & DECORUM:

RONR (11th ed.), pp. 34-35

NO DISCUSSION WITHOUT A MOTION: "Discussion of any subject is permitted only with reference to a pending motion." ... "The general rule against discussion without a motion is one of parliamentary procedure's powerful tools for keeping business "on track," and an observance of its spirit can be an important factor in making even a very small meeting rapidly moving and interesting."

RONR (11th ed.), pp. 42-44; pp. 391-394:

- The Chair must first recognize a member before the member may debate.
- The Chair should first recognize the maker of the motion.
- Unless the assembly by 2/3rds vote adopts a rule otherwise, a member may speak only twice and no more than 10 minutes on a pending question.
- A speaker's remarks must be confined to the merits of the pending question.
- The speaker may not attack or question the motives of another member.
- The speaker must address all remarks through the chair.
- The use of names of members in debate must be avoided.
- The speaker may not reflect adversely on any prior action of the society not pending.
- The speaker may not speak against his/her own motion.
- In any member objects, the speaker may not read from any paper or book, without permission of the assembly.
- A speaker must be seated during an interruption by the chair.
- No member may disturb the assembly during voting or debate or remarks by the chair.

XI. ORDER OF PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS: RONR (11th ed.), pp. 61-62

Though only one main motion may be considered at a time, it is in order to entertain various *secondary motions* that are related to the main motion, or are of a procedural character, or urgency. Secondary motions fall into three categories: subsidiary, privileged, and incidental. They take precedence over a pending main motion and sometimes over each other according to the rules of order, which also provide that some are not debatable, and some require more or less than a majority vote.

Refer to the attached chart.

XII. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE FOR SMALL BOARDS & COMMITTEES

RONR (11th ed.), pp. 487-488

These modifications are applicable during the meetings of all standing and special committees and in board meetings where there are not more than about a dozen members present, unless the committee is otherwise instructed by the society:

- Members may raise a hand instead of standing when seeking to obtain the floor, and may remain seated while making motions or speaking.
- Motions need not be seconded.
- There is no limit to the number of times a member can speak to a debatable question.* Appeals, however, are debatable under the regular rules—that is, each member (except the chair) can speak only once in debate on them, while the chair may speak twice.
- Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.
- When a proposal is perfectly clear to all present, a vote can be taken without a motion's having been introduced. Unless agreed to by unanimous consent, however, all proposed actions must be approved by vote under the same rules as in larger meetings, except that a vote can be taken initially by a show of hands, which is often a better method in small meetings.
- The chairman need not rise while putting questions to vote.
- If the chairman is a member, he may, without leaving the chair, speak in informal discussion and in debate, and vote on all questions.**

*However, motions to close or limit debate (15, 16), including motions to limit the number of times a member can speak to a question, are in order even in meetings of a small board.(but not in meetings of a committee; see RONR (11th ed.), p. 500), although occasions where they are necessary or appropriate may be rarer than in larger assemblies.

** Informal discussion may be initiated by the chairman himself, which in effect enables the chairman to submit his own proposals without formally making a motion as described in pages 33-35 (although he has the right to make a motion of he wishes).

* RONR (11th ed.) pp. 97-99. "Polling" or consultation with each member of the board separately is not an acceptable substitute, because it does not allow an opportunity for members to participate in and be influenced by debate before voting [RONR (11th ed.) p. 487, ll. 4-9; p. 503, ll. 21-24]

NOTE: "Committees of organized societies operate under the bylaws, the parliamentary authority, and any special rules of order or standing rules of the society which may be applicable to them. A committee may not adopt its own rules except as authorized in the rules of the society or in instructions given to the committee by its parent assembly in a particular case." [RONR (11th ed.), pp. 500-501]

"When a special committee has finished with the business assigned to it, a motion is made for the committee to "rise"—which is equivalent to the motion to adjourn sine die (or without day)—and for the chairman or some other member to make its report to the assembly. The motion to rise is never used in standing committees, or in special committees until they are ready to go out of existence." [RONR (11th ed.), p. 502]

TABLE OF COMMON PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS

MOTION	PURPOSE	REQUIRES SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTED REQUIRED
5 PRIVILEGED MOTIONS* (Procedural)					
13. Fix the time to which to adjourn	To continue the current meeting on another day.	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
12. Adjourn	To end the meeting	Yes	No	No	Majority
11. Recess	To create a short intermission in the meeting.	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
10. Raise a question of privilege	To make a special request during debate	No	No	No	Chair
9. Call for the Orders of the Day	To bring the meeting back to the agenda or program	No	No		none
7 SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS*					
8. Lay on the table	To postpone temporarily	Yes	No	No	Majority
7. Move the previous question	To cease debate and vote immediately	Yes	No	No	2/3
6. Limit or extend limits of debate	To modify freedom of debate	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
5b Postpone and make a special order	To create a special order	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3
5. Postpone to a certain time	To create a general order	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
4. Refer to committee	To modify a motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
3b. Amend an amendment	To modify an amendment	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
3. Amend or substitute	To modify a motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
2. Postpone indefinitely	To suppress action (kill the motion)	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
PRINCIPAL MOTIONS					
1a. Main Motions and/or Resolutions	To introduce business	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
1b Bring Back motions:					
- Reconsider	To undo a vote taken earlier (same meeting)	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
- Discharge a Committee	To take back a motion referred earlier	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj. w/notice; 2/3
-Rescind	To undo a motion adopted (earlier meeting)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj. w/notice; 2/3
-Take from the table	To resume consideration of motion tabled same day	Yes	No	No	Majority
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS (Procedural)					
Point of order	To correct a parliamentary error	No	No	No	Chair
Appeal decision of the chair	To correct or reverse chair's ruling	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Suspend the rules*	To do something by setting aside a procedural rule	Yes	No	No	2/3
Object to consideration of a question*	To prevent discussion of a main motion	No	No	No	2/3
Withdraw or revise a motion*	To allow the maker to remove or change a motion	No	No	No	Majority
Divide a motion*	To vote separately on different parts of a motion	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Call for a division of the assembly	To verify an unclear voice vote by a rising vote	No	No	No	None
REQUESTS & INQUIRIES					
Parliamentary Inquiry	To ask the Chair a parliamentary proc. question	No	No	No	None
Request for Information	To REQUEST information pertaining to the issue on the floor, NOT TO GIVE information; NOT TO ARGUE or DEBATE.	No	No	No	None

Wm. Puette, Ph.D., Professional Registered Parliamentarian, Honolulu, HI (based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th ed.)

* When moved as "secondary motions" (while another main motion is pending). They are treated differently if moved when there is no other motion pending.