

Parliamentary Procedures

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Parliamentary law provides for an orderly plan to follow in carrying on the business of a meeting. It is simple in principle and is based largely on common sense and courtesy.

A system of rules for the conduct of meetings is adopted with the following objects in view:

1. that business may be carried on with ease, dignity and dispatch;
2. that the interests of the organization as a whole may be preserved;
3. that the view and rights of the individual may meet with due recognition

This booklet is intended to provide guidance to officers and members in their roles, and in the conduct of meetings. In addition, many organizations will need bylaws dealing with its objectives and specific practices to ensure a general understanding of procedures among members.

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Disclaimer

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Officers

The President

The president is the chief officer and, as such, takes the lead in the affairs of the organization.

The president presides at each meeting in such a way that all members will feel free to take part.

The president may be re-elected but it is not good practice to keep the same president for more than two consecutive years.

Major responsibilities:

- Directing business meetings
- Keeping up to date
- Encouraging the work of committees

Duties of the President

1. Directs the activities of the group and presides at meetings, maintaining order and keeping the meeting moving.
2. Delegates to other officers or committees the task of making all arrangements for the use of buildings, equipment, etc but should check to be sure that this is done satisfactorily.
3. Meets with other officers, especially secretary and program committee to prepare the agenda prior to the meeting.
4. Call the meeting to order
5. Cast deciding vote in case of ties.
6. Manages or conducts meetings by:
 - a. assigning the floor to one speaker at a time;
 - b. co-ordinating discussion and assuring that the discussion stays on topic or problem under consideration;
 - c. referring to self as “the chair”
 - d. providing and/or summarizing facts and details as necessary;
 - e. stating clearly every motion before the vote is taken, announcing the results of the vote and overseeing the actual voting such as appointing scrutineers as required;
 - f. recognizing members who wish to address the chair and referring to them by name.
7. If the president wishes to take part in the discussion, the vice-president, or someone else should be asked to occupy the Chair or “to assume Chairpersonship of the meeting.” It is not good procedure to give opinions while in the Chair.

Suggestions for the President

- Open meetings on time and proceed in a business-like manner. Adjourn meetings on time – this is important too!
- Arrive for the meeting early to check on seating and equipment, and to review items of business with officers.
- Know the simple rules of parliamentary procedure and any variations of these that appear in the organization by-laws.
- Conduct the meetings with tact, firmness and fairness. It is not good practice to hold whispered conferences with other officers while in the Chair, although it is in order to consult the secretary or other officers in a normal voice.
- Remember all members have equal right on the floor but, politely and firmly, declare members out of order when necessary.
- Avoid use of personal pronoun. Instead use “Your President” or “the Chair, when referring to self.

The president may vote:

- When vote is by ballot;
- To break a tie

The president should:

- Approve payment of bills passed by the organization
- Be one of the co-signers of cheques issued on the organization’s bank account

In more formal settings, the president may stand to:

- Open the meeting or call the house to order;
- Put a question and to announce a vote;
- Address the meeting;
- Introduce a speaker;
- Express appreciation and thanks.

Duties of the Vice-President

1. Learns the duties of the president and acts as Chairperson when he/she is absent or when called to the Chair by the president.
2. Assist the president whenever possible.
3. Assumes duties as allotted by the organization such as assisting other members to prepare their part of the program and looking after visitors and special guest on behalf of the group.
4. In many organizations, the vice-president automatically becomes Chairperson if the president moves away or, for some other reason, leaves the group.

Duties of the Secretary

1. Take charge of the secretary's book. Provides a definite place for keeping this book, correspondence, and other records belonging to the organization.
2. Receives and reads correspondence and brings it to the attention of the appropriate officer.
3. Confers with president to ensure awareness of pending business.
4. Keeps notes on all motions and happenings of the meeting and writes them into the secretary's book, and prepares to read minutes at each meeting.
5. Sits at the front of the table, near the president.
6. Reads all pertinent letters received by the organization at the request of the president.
7. Acts as Chair if both the president and vice-president are absent and then appoints an acting secretary for that meeting.
8. Participates when appropriate in discussion and voting.

Suggestions for the Secretary

In writing the minutes of the meeting, the secretary should record the following:

- kind of meeting (regular or special);
- name of organization;
- date and place of meeting;
- number of members and names of special guests;
- statement that the minutes of the last meeting were or were not read and approved;
- all business transacted, including motions made, names of members who moved and seconded each motion and whether the motion was carried or defeated;
- committees appointed – names of members and terms of reference;
- committee reports and their disposal – accepted, tabled etc.;
- statement on correspondence handled by the meeting;
- any special features of the meeting such as the program;
- time of adjournment;
- time and place of next meeting, if not indicated in bylaw of the organization.

Duties of the Treasurer

1. Monitors the organization's budget so it will meet its financial needs
2. Keeps the money belonging to the organization in a safe place, such as a bank or credit union as directed by the organization.
3. Keeps an accurate record of all receipts and expenditures.
4. Makes regular written financial reports which include the following information:
 - a. Name of organization
 - b. Period which report covers
 - c. Cash balance at beginning of period
 - d. Income received during period
 - e. Expenses paid during period
 - f. Cash balance at end of period
 - g. Signature of treasurer

Note: The income and expenses categories in the report should match with those listed in the organization's budget.

5. The treasurer and president usually act as co-signers for all cheques.
6. Pays accounts voted by the organization.
7. Submits an annual report showing receipts, payments and balance on hand.

The secretary should receive a copy of the treasurer's report to attach to the meeting minutes.

A treasurer's report is "received" as it is given and no motion should be made to "adopt", "accept" or "approve" it. However, an annual auditors' report, is "accepted" or "adopted", but not the treasurer's financial report itself.

In many organizations, one person often carries the responsibilities of both secretary and treasurer; that person's office is then known as the secretary-treasurer.

Vacancies and Resignations by Officers

1. If an officer retires from office during the year, the vacancy may be filled at the next regular meeting by nomination and election in a regular way or by the procedure laid down in the bylaw.
2. Resignations should be in writing and given to the president or secretary.

Committees

Most organizations have committees of two types:

- a. **Standing committees** – permanently established to deal with continuing aspect of the organization’s work such as a program, membership and study; and
- b. **Special committees** – are set up to do specific tasks such as organize a recreation event for the group or assemble facts and figures required by the group to make a suitable situation.

It is important that the committee’s terms of reference (objectives) be accurately defined when it is first set up to avoid misunderstanding. Terms of reference should outline what is to be done, what authority the committee possesses to carry out the task, what monies have been allotted, and when the report is required.

Committees are set up in various ways:

- a. Named by the Chair when so directed by the meeting, or
- b. Named by nominating committee, or
- c. Elected after nominations from the floor, or
- d. Members volunteer to serve, or
- e. As directed on the organizations bylaws.

Procedures of Committees

1. The elected or selected Chair of a committee proceeds to chair committee meetings to achieve the objectives outlined in the terms of reference.
2. Committee reports are presented in writing:
 - a. to the organization’s chair who presents it to a meeting or uses it appropriately, or
 - b. to the meeting by chair or secretary of the chair of the committee, in which case a motion by the chair or member of the committee or by the meeting may be made in one of the following ways:
 - i. that it be recorded and filed – no action be taken;
 - ii. that it be received as information and filed;
 - iii. that it be adopted – motion for adoption made by one presenting report. If this motion is carried, it has the effect of endorsing the statement and making the organization assume responsibility for it;
 - iv. that it be referred back to committee for further consideration (usually by the meeting);
 - v. that it be tabled (usually by the meeting) – no action taken unless motion made at later meeting to “take it off the table.”

Suggestions for Committees

- First one named on the committee is temporary chair:
 - gets lists of members, appoints time, place and makes arrangements for meeting, calls meeting to order, asks for nominations for permanent chairperson.
- Notify president of all meetings.
- Committees should know:
 - if they can add to their number;
 - if they can take action or if they must report to the executive before doing so;
 - duties – report on activities, not to undertake responsibility or spend money unless given authorization.
- Committee proceeds to carry out its directives and reports the majority decision.
- A minority of a committee may present a “minority report” which shall be heard before the committee report has been acted upon.

Need more help?

Contact the Recreation and Regional Services office nearest you.

See Appendix A

Members

The members are the indispensable part of any organization and they are responsible for the activities and atmosphere of the group. It is they who empower officers and committees to perform in various ways and it is their co-operation with these officers and committees that allows the group to move toward its objectives.

Certain forms of co-operation are implicit in the duties of officers and committees. These are:

- motions are made by one member and seconded by another;
- voting on motions and elections is done honestly;
- members speak to a motion only once until all who wish to speak have done so;
- members keep to the topic under discussion;
- members participate in committees and projects in ways which are appropriate to their skills and interests.

Other forms of co-operation develop from the needs and expectations of the group:

- members of an organization should make it a point of honour not to discuss the affairs of the organization outside. If everything that is discussed in a meeting is spoken of abroad it is often garbled and misunderstood and must often prevent free expression of opinion by the members, thus unfavourably affecting one of the best uses for which the organization exists. A member who breaks this law of honour may often unwittingly do the organization a great deal of injury;
- members are expected to voice difficulties and criticism within the group rather than outside;
- members who are the minority are expected to accept, and if possible to assist in carrying through projects decided by the majority;
- members are well-advised to note the talents of themselves and of other members and, when possible, encourage their use and development through participation in group activities;
- members should expect to encourage the development of the many variety of leadership in themselves and each other. These may be valuable to both the group and the larger community.

Meetings

Types of Meetings

1. Regular
2. Annual
3. Special - held when necessary
 - secretary notifies members
 - only business the meeting is called for is transacted
 - minutes of it are read at the next regular meeting

Suggested Order of Business at Regular Meetings

1. Opening exercises
2. Reading and adoption of minutes
3. Report of the treasurer
4. Discussion of business arising out of the minutes
5. Reading of correspondence
6. Discussion of correspondence
7. Discussion of unfinished business if not included in (4) – optional
8. Reports of committees and discussion of same
9. New business
10. Adjournment

Approval of the minutes from a meeting

1. Minutes are presented by the secretary
2. The Chair asks if any additions or corrections. If none:
 - a. says, "I declare the minutes approved as read," and signs the minute book
 - b. the Chair calls for motion from the floor for adoption of minutes and a member says, "I move the minutes adopted as read – or corrected." This requires a seconder and a general vote.

Report of the Treasurer

1. The report of the receipts and disbursements of the organization is read by the treasurer.
2. The report is for information only. As such it is not adopted nor voted on except after audit.
3. Audited financial statements are read by the treasurer. The chairperson puts the question on adopting these statements. This requires a seconder and is voted on by the meeting.

Motions

The business of a meeting is carried on by means of motions. In a broad sense, a motion is a formal statement of a proposal for an assembly to consider and vote upon. To put forth a motion is equivalent to announcing to the group. "Here is a good suggestion. What do you think of the idea? Maybe we should decide to use it." Any member may make a motion. A member, who wants to suggest something, an idea or plan or wants something done, makes a motion.

Making and Handling Motions

1. To make a motion, first obtain the floor by being recognized by the presiding officer. Then state the motion as "I move that...."
2. Any member may second it by saying, "I second the motion," indicating that he/she also approves of the motion.
 - a motion may not be discussed nor voted upon unless it is seconded by another member.
 - if no one seconds a motion immediately, the Chair should ask "Is there a seconder to the motion?" If there is still no seconder, the Chair then declares the motion lost without a vote.
3. Once a motion is made and seconded, the Chair repeats the motion and then asks for discussion by the members. All discussion should be addressed to the Chair and be about the motion. A member should speak only once to a motion.
 - A motion introducing a new subject or idea must not be made while there is another motion before the meeting. Such a motion would be declared out of order. Amendments, postponements, adjournments and tabling motions are not considered "out of order."
(See chart page
4. After a reasonable length of time for discussion, or when discussion stops, the Chair puts the motion to a vote.

Notice of Motion

This is used in matters of special importance such as changes in the organizations by-laws.

- A notice of motion is given verbally at the preceding meeting, OR
- Written notices may be sent to members at least three weeks before the meeting.

Voting on a Motion

A vote may be taken:

- a. at the meeting (see page) OR
- b. at a later meeting (see below)

Voting on a Motion at a later meeting

1. If majority of members do not wish to take the vote at the meeting it may be disposed of by one of these methods:
 - a. The vote be postponed until a specified future date or indefinitely.
 - b. The motion laid on the table; that is it be left for consideration at unspecified future time. A majority is needed to carry this and the motion is not debatable.
 - c. The question be referred to a committee to report at a later date.

2. Also, a motion may be:
 - a. Amended, see below
 - b. Withdrawn (refer to page)
 - c. Taken from the table

Amending a Motion

An amendment alters or modifies intention of the original motion, but does not reverse the intent. A motion is altered by:

- a. Adding to it, or
- b. Deleting from it, or
- c. Both

Sample motion: *Moved that the club purchase stacking chairs. (Seconded)*

Example of:

- a. Adding to a motion:
Amendment: *"I move that we add costing less than \$10.00 each."*
- b. Deleting a motion:
Amendment: *"I move we delete "stacking."*

1. A member moves an amendment before the vote is taken on the original motion, and the amendment must be seconded before discussion.
2. The chairperson reads original motion, and the amendment, calls for a discussion and a vote on the amendment.
3. An amendment is always voted on before the original motion is put to the meeting.
4. If the amendment is carried, the change is made in the original motion and a vote on the amended motion is called.
5. If the amendment is lost, a vote is called on the original motion.

Reconsidering a Motion

1. A motion which has been voted on and carried may not be reconsidered at the same meeting.
2. A member intending to re-introduce a question must give "notice of motion" stating the date of the meeting at which the motion will be brought forward.
3. Two-thirds of members present is required to rescind a motion.

Withdrawal of a Motion

A member having made a motion may withdraw it with consent of the seconder before it is debated; after debate, it may be withdrawn only with the unanimous consent of the meeting.

Motion to Adjourn

1. The motion is always in order provided a speaker is not interrupted.
2. A motion to adjourn is not debatable.
3. A majority vote is required to carry a motion to adjourn.

The chairperson asks for a motion to adjourn. When responded to by a member, "I move this meeting be adjourned," neither a seconder nor a vote is required.

Action for Handling Different Motions

From the time a motion is first put forward until it is finally passed, many things can occur to alter, postpone, suppress or defeat it. To facilitate the handling of different types of motions and the action of motions, the sample chart has been provided.

1. **Subsidiary Motion:** Motions that pertain to a main motion which is pending or under consideration.
2. **Privileged Motion:** Motions which are vital and take precedence over all others. Chiefly concerned with personal comfort, ability to hear a speaker, misconduct etc.
3. **Incidental Motion:** Secondary motions which grow out of another already under consideration and must be decided prior to the original.
4. **Unclassified Motion:** General motions.

Out of Order

Occasionally a person, motion or remark is "out of order" and does not follow the approved rules of procedure. This presents a difficult situation to the chairperson because he must stop the proceedings and direct the board back onto the correct course. When the situation arises, the chairperson must act immediately and make three separate statements. In effect, he/she must say "Stop. This is not right," and then carry on and explain why it is "out of order" and explain why it is "out of order and what is "in order.

A motion is "out of order" when it is moved while a motion of higher precedence is pending.

A person is "out of order" when he begins to speak without recognition of the Chair or when he/she is not a member in good standing of the organization.

A remark is out of order when it violates some ruling of the organization.

Handling Different Types of Motions

Type of Motion	Purpose	Requires Discussion	Requires Vote
To postpone indefinitely	To prevent a vote on the question, or to suppress	Yes	Over 1/2
To lay on the table or to table a motion	To clear the floor for more urgent business; to set aside	No	Over 1/2
To amend	To improve the motion	Yes	Over 1/2
To refer to committee	To allow more careful consideration, delays action on motion	Yes	Over 1/2
To limit to extend discussion to a certain time	Provides more or less time for discussion of the motion	No	2/3
Question of privilege	To bring up urgent matter due to undesirable conditions	No	Over 1/2
To take a recess	Secure a rest	Yes, if no motion is pending	Over 1/2
To adjourn	End the meeting	No	Over 1/2
To call for the order of the day	To keep the meeting going along proper order	No	No vote
To rise to a point of other	To enforce rules or call attention to violation of rules	No	No vote (Chair rules)
To appeal from decision of chair	To determine attitude of board on ruling made by chair	No	Over 1/2
To suspend rules temporarily	Allows special action not possible under rules	No	2/3
To withdraw motion	To present vote or inclusion in the minutes	No	Over 1/2
To take from the table	To continue discussion of the question	No	Over 1/2
To object to consideration of a question	To prevent wasting time on unimportant discussion	No	2/3
To rescind	To repeal discussion on a motion	Yes	2/3
To ratify	To approve previous action taken	Yes	2/3
To postpone definitely (to a certain time)	Allows more time for informal discussion for obtaining more support	Yes	Over 1/2

Voting on a Motion at a Meeting

The chairperson reads the motion to the meeting, says that the motion had been seconded, and asks, “Are you ready for the question?”

The vote is taken by:

1. Show of hands or standing

The chairperson call for those in favour and after these are counted, for those against. Both the chairperson and secretary take the count and the chairperson announces the result.

Note: The chairperson votes only to break a tie.

2. Ballot

- a. At least two scrutineers are appointed by the Chair to distribute and collect ballots and count the votes. In an election, no member whose name is voted on should as a scrutineer.
- b. All blank or uncertain ballots are discarded.
- c. After counting the ballots the scrutineers report – usually in writing –the results to the chairperson.
- d. The chairperson declares, “The motion is carried” or “The motion is lost,” or “has been elected” according to the vote. In an election, the chairperson does not announce the number of ballots cast for each nominee.

3. Word of Mouth

Used as a matter of routine and where it is unlikely to cause conflict.

4. Division

Vote by division is rare. Those in favour assemble to the side of the room to the chairperson’s right, and those against to the left.

5. Roll Call

Another form that is rarely used. Each member votes as his/her name is called.

Nominations and Elections

Nominating and electing officers are important parts of an organization's business. Much of the success of an organization will depend upon the officers elected. The annual election of officers should always be conducted in an orderly, parliamentary manner. Only members in good standing may vote in the election.

Nominations: A nomination is the formal presentation to the assembly of the name of a candidate for the office to be filled. The candidate or person suggested for the office is referred to as the *nominee*.

Methods of Nominating a Member for Office

1. **By open nominations from the floor:** Chairperson asks for nominations. A member should address the Chair and, after being recognized, state the name of the nominee and position or office. It is not necessary for nominations to be seconded. The chairperson will repeat the name of the person nominated and ask for further nominations. The secretary should record all the names of those nominated. When there are no further nominations, the chairperson may close the nominations or a member may move that the nominations cease. This motion must be recorded and voted upon. The listing of nominees is the basis of the election.
2. **Nominations by a Nominating Committee:** A committee may be appointed to submit a list of names of one or more members as candidates for each office and obtain their consent. This list should be posted and treated in the same way as nominations from the floor. Further nominations may be made from the floor, once the nominating committee has presented its report. If no further nominations occur, the Nominations chairperson presents the list – called a *slate* – as a motion which is then seconded. A majority vote adopts the slate. If there is more than one nominee for an office, an election must be held.
3. **Nominations by written ballot:** Scrutineers are appointed to pass out ballots for votes. Each member writes the name of the candidate he/she wishes to nominate, and the office on the ballot, folds it and passes it back to the scrutineer. From the ballots, a list of all nominees for all offices is prepared. The chairperson announces this listing and elections are held among all nominees for each office.

Voting on Nominees

Once nominations have closed, the chairperson should read the names of all those nominated.

1. If only one person has been nominated for an office, that person is declared elected by acclamation.
2. When the election is necessary, the members usually vote for each office separately by ballot.

A Guest Speaker

Selecting the Speaker

1. Invite a speaker, with the appropriate experience and skills, to discuss a predetermined theme based on the goals of the organization and the wishes of the membership.
2. Invite the speaker well in advance of the meeting.
3. Supply the speaker with all the information you can about the objectives of a program, the community and the organization.

Preparation for the Speaker

1. Secure biographical information for the member who is to introduce the guest speaker.
2. Arrange for publicity if applicable.
3. Decide who is to introduce and who is to thank the speaker.
4. Prior to the meeting check into:
 - lighting
 - seating arrangements
 - drinking water for speaker
 - other
 - heating and ventilation
 - audio-visual equipment
 - extension cords

Welcoming the Speaker

The chairperson or another person authorized by the chairperson, should meet the speaker, conveying last-minute details and information.

Introducing the Speaker

1. Sometimes the chairperson makes the introduction; more often, he/she delegates the honour to someone else.
2. Answer these questions in the introduction briefly but adequately:
 - Why this speaker?
 - On this subject?
 - At this time?
 - To this audience?

A summary of the presentation should be kept in the organization's files.

Thanking the Speaker

- ✓ Thanks are usually expressed by one of the members
- ✓ Be sincere and brief. Unwarranted praise may embarrass.
- ✓ If the speaker receives no fee, it is an acceptable practice to present him or her with a small memento.
- ✓ A letter of thanks is sent the day after the speaker has visited a group. This is often overlooked.

The Annual Meeting

The annual meeting is the last meeting of the organization's year as outlined in the by-laws.

1. Reports of officials, treasurer and standing committees are presented.

Suggested Order of Business at Annual Meeting

1. Opening Remarks and Call to Order
2. President's Address
3. Reading and Approval of minutes of last annual meeting
4. Treasurer's annual report
5. Auditor's report
6. Reports of special committees
7. Annual reports of standing committees
8. Review of Notice of Motions
9. Election of officers
10. Adjournment

Resolutions

A resolution is an expression of an opinion of a group.

Resolutions are used to:

- a. change bylaws;
- b. commend action by individuals, groups or agencies;
- c. endorse ideas of other groups;
- d. bring opinions of an organization to the attention of other organizations and/or agencies for action.

When a resolution is directed toward action by another organization the explanatory material should be accurate and detailed.

A resolution is:

- a. in two parts – the resolution and supporting information
- b. always in writing
- c. used instead of motion in large conventions
- d. circulated among voting members prior to the convention if so ordered by the bylaws
- e. presented in the same way as a motion and requires a seconder
- f. may be amended in the same way as a motion
- g. after discussion, voted on by a show of hands, ballot or by other means (see page 17) on call by the presiding officer
- h. if carried, forwarded to the person, organization or agency to whom it is directed or as outlined in the originating groups procedures.

Example of a resolution:

WHEREAS car accidents are becoming more frequent; and

WHEREAS many of these are caused by the physical ailments of the drivers;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the (*Name of Group*), recommend that all applicants for driver's licences (new or renewal) in Saskatchewan be required to pass a medical examination.

Present trends make it acceptable to write the resolution with the desired change first followed by the reasons or information. The above resolution in this form would read:

BE IT RESOLVED that we, the (*Name of Group*), recommend that all applicants for driver's licences (new or renewal) be required to pass a medical examination.

BECAUSE car accidents are becoming more frequent, and

BECAUSE many of these are caused by physical ailments of the drivers.

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Contact List

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