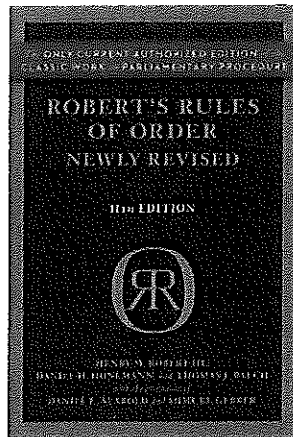


Parliamentary Procedures For Civic Leagues



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Quick Parliamentary Quiz

True/False Questions

- _____ 1. The mover of a motion can speak against his/her own motion.
- _____ 2. A motion is before the assembly when it has been moved and seconded.
- _____ 3. The motion to lay on the table is used to kill a motion without a direct vote on it.
- _____ 4. Amendments can be applied to any motion regardless of whether they are germane.
- _____ 5. The minutes of a meeting must be approved using a motion, a second, and a majority vote of the assembly.
- _____ 6. A Majority means one more than half.
- _____ 7. The person seconding a motion must, by definition, be in favor of the motion being seconded.
- _____ 8. A presiding officer should say you are out of order when ruling that a motion offered by a member is not in order at the time according to the parliamentary situation.
- _____ 9. When an election is conducted for a position on a board where six people have been nominated, if no one receives a majority vote, it is proper to drop off all but the top two candidates and hold a run-off election.
- _____ 10. A quorum is always a majority of the members in any parliamentary assembly.

THE HANDLING OF A MOTION

The handling of a motion varies according to condition. However, normally the following six steps are essential:

1. A member makes the motion.
 - A MEMBER must be recognized by the chair before MAKING A motion.
 - Common form: "I move that _____."
2. Another member seconds the motion.
 - It is not necessary to be recognized prior to seconding a motion.
 - The name of the member who seconds a motion is NOT recorded in the minutes.
 - Common form: "Second" or "I second the motion."
3. The Chair states the question, i.e., states the exact question and indicates that it is open to debate.
 - Common form: "It has been moved and seconded that _____. Is there any discussion?"
4. The members debate the motion.
 - Each member must be recognized before SPEAKING TO the motion.
 - Discussion is strictly limited to the motion on the floor.
 - All debate is directed to the chair or through the chair to other members. Members never speak directly to one another.
 - Ordinarily, each member may speak only twice on the same motion, and each speech is limited to 10 minutes. The organization may adopt other rules that limit debate.
5. The Chair puts the question, i.e., takes the vote.
 - The affirmative vote is taken first, then the negative.
 - Abstentions are not counted.
 - A majority vote means a majority of those who vote for or against a motion. Members present but not voting are not counted. A majority is MORE THAN HALF.
 - The chair votes only when THE CHAIR'S vote WOULD affect the results, i.e., to make or break a tie vote.
6. The Chair announces the results of the vote.
 - The vote on any motion is not considered final until the chair has done this.

AMENDMENTS

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Amendments, like main motions, require a second, are amendable, are debatable, and require a majority vote.
2. An amendment should be stated so that indicates exactly what is being done to the main motion.
3. An amendment must always be handled before voting on the motion to which it was applied.

EXAMPLES OF VARIOUS TYPES OF AMENDMENTS:

MAIN MOTION: *"That we sponsor a delegate to the National Convention in March."*

Amendment by STRIKING OUT: *"I move to amend the main motion by striking out the words 'in March.'" (Such an amendment would be useful if the exact dates of the convention are not known.)*

Amendment by ADDITION (or insertion): *AI move to amend the main motion by adding at the end of the word 'providing' however that this board shall not be responsible for expenses in excess of \$150.00."*

Amendment by STRIKING OUT AND INSERTING: *"I move to amend the main motion by striking out the words 'a delegate' and inserting the words 'two delegates.'" (Such an amendment would be useful if the exact dates of the convention are not known.)*

All of the above are examples of **PRIMARY** (first degree) amendments, because they apply directly to the main motion stated above.

SECONDARY AMENDMENTS

A **SECONDARY** (second degree) amendment is one that applies to another amendment. A **SECONDARY** amendment could be applied to the above amendment by addition, as follows:

SECONDARY AMENDMENT: *"I move to amend the amendment by striking out '\$150' and inserting '\$100.'" (Such an amendment would be useful if the exact dates of the convention are not known.)*

Amendments of the **THIRD DEGREE** are not permitted, but an unlimited number of primary and secondary amendments can be made. However, no more than one primary and one secondary amendment can be proposed at a time.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION

Whenever it is desired to change the wording of a motion so substantially that several amendments would be required, a substitute motion may be used. A **substitute motion has the same status as a primary amendment**, but the procedures for handling it are somewhat different. Both the main motion and the proposed substitute are opened to amendment. Then when both have been PERFECTED, a vote is taken on whether the substitute will replace the main motion. Finally, the vote is taken on the adoption of the final motion (which may be either the proposed substitute or the original main motion.)

EXAMPLE: *"That we encourage all of our members to attend the National Convention."* (This is a logical substitute for the main motion stated above. It deals with the same topic--attendance at the National Convention--but proposes a completely different course of action.)

Motions, Motions, Motions

The use of parliamentary procedure is meant to facilitate the conducting of business in organizations. The purpose is not to make the rules more important than the purpose of the organization. Therefore, it is necessary for the presiding officer to use good judgment in the application of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11th Edition)*. [RONR]

General Henry M. Robert himself often said that many parliamentary rules could and should be modified for small organizations. It is important to keep the procedure simple, but fair.

HANDLING MOTIONS:

The subject that confuses small organizations the most is the process of handling motions. It is important that business of the organization be formalized through this process because the members will then have a clear understanding from the meeting and/or the minutes, of what has occurred. Furthermore, the procedure focuses on one decision at a time and allows for several ways to deal with each cause.

A subject is introduced to the meeting by a member making a "**main motion**." Most motions must be seconded. Before any discussion takes, the chair will then state the motion and indicate that it is open to discussion. During discussion, only motions affecting the original motion, or the general conduct of the meeting may be made. The main motion may be **amended** (by majority vote), **referred** to a committee (by a majority vote), or **postponed** (by majority or 2/3rds). These are debatable motions in themselves and each can also be amended.

The motion to "**lay the pending motion on the table**" (*temporarily set aside because something more urgent has come up*) or the motion on the previous question (*close debate and force an immediate vote on the issues at hand*) are not debatable. A matter may be laid on the table by majority vote and taken from the table by a majority vote. The motion on the previous question always requires a 2/3^{rds} vote.

VOTING:

Voting in small organizations can take place by "**unanimous consent**" (no member objecting). This is most often used on routine or non-controversial items such as approval of the minutes. The presiding officer says, "If there is no objection" and pauses to allow any possible objection, then proceeds to declare the decision.

Voting is usually done by **voice** (Aye or No) in small organizations. It is acceptable to use a **show of hands** in a school board of 7 because every member can see every other member.

A **counted vote** or a **roll call vote** can be ordered by the chair or by a majority of the members. A **ballot vote** can be ordered in the same manner. (In public bodies ballot votes are generally not allowed by State Open Meeting Laws – for further information please consult the MSBA Attorneys.)

OTHER PROCEDURAL MOTIONS:

There are several other procedures which are commonly used in small organizations such as:

1. Point of Order
2. Point of Information
3. Parliamentary Inquiry
4. A Question of Privilege
5. Appeal from the Decision of the Chair

The most common of these is the **Point of Order**. If a member feels that the rules of the assembly are not be observed, the member may "Raise a Point of Order." This requires the chair to make a ruling as to whether the point is "well taken" or "not well taken." Then if the member disagrees with the decision of the chair, the member may "**appeal from the decision of the chair.**" If this is done, it will take a majority opposed to the decision of the chair to reverse it.

If a member wants to get information, the member raises a **point of information**.

If a member needs help with parliamentary procedure, the member raises a **point of parliamentary inquiry**.

If a member feels that the comfort of the assembly or anything else is interfering with the decision-making process, the member can raise a **point of privilege** and ask the chair to correct the situation.

AGENDA AND MEETING DURATION:

Other motions can be used to affect the agenda and the duration of the meeting. If the agenda is not being followed correctly a member can "**call for the order of the day**" which is a request that the presider return to the approved agenda.

If the assembly wishes to take a short intermission in its proceedings it can vote to **recess** (majority vote) and if it wishes to end the session, it can vote to **adjourn** (majority vote).

If the assembly wishes to set up another meeting to continue the business of the present meeting it can "**fix the time to which adjourn.**" In this case the meeting so set up is a legal continuation of the present meeting.

Issues of Particular Importance to small assemblies

1. A good civic league uses parliamentary procedure as a tool to assist in the efficient transaction of business, not as a weapon to frustrate the opposition.
 - Courtesy and service
 - Agreement of parliamentary principles before problems develop
2. When a motion is offered, be particular about the wording. The item of business before the assembly is the wording, not the concept.
 - Avoid "I so move."
 - After a report by a superintendent or staff member, a full and complete motion should be offered.
3. When desiring to change the substance of a motion before the board, remember that amendments are "changes in wording" and not conceptual changes.
4. Agree in advance on any special rules or order to be used by the board outside of the ordinary parliamentary rules. **RONR, Page 470** indicates the following "simplified rules for small boards and committees." These adjustments to the normal rules should be used only on the advanced agreement of the board adopted in a board policy.
5. Using "consent agenda" works well, if the items on them are REALLY routine and non-controversial.
6. **Minutes:** Be sure to accurately record "what was done and NOT what was said" in the minutes of a board meeting. Also be sure to approve all minutes at the next meeting.
7. Using informal consideration can ease the process of coming to agreement and then allow for the board to move back into formal consideration.

ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Object to procedure or personal affront	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"I call for a division of the house"	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	None unless someone objects
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to..."	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MAIN MOTION

NOTE: Nothing goes to discussion without a motion being on the floor.

Obtaining and assigning the floor

A member raises hand when no one else has the floor

- The chair recognizes the member by name

How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

- The member makes the motion: *I move that (or "to") ...* and resumes his seat.
- Another member seconds the motion: *I second the motion* or *I second it* or *second*.
- The chair states the motion: *It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the question?*

Consideration of the Motion

1. Members can debate the motion.
2. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor.
3. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly
4. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion.
5. Debate can be closed only by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate.

The chair puts the motion to a vote

1. The chair asks: *Are you ready for the question?* If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote.
2. The chair says: *The question is on the adoption of the motion that ... As many as are in favor, say 'Aye'. (Pause for response.) Those opposed, say 'Nay'. (Pause for response.) Those abstained please say 'Aye'.*

The chair announces the result of the vote.

1. *The ayes have it, the motion carries, and ...* (indicating the effect of the vote) or
2. *The nays have it and the motion fails*

WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS

1. Listen to the other side
2. Focus on issues, not personalities
3. Avoid questioning motives
4. Be polite

HOW TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN MEETINGS

MAIN MOTION

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.

- After recognition, make a main motion.
- Member: "Madame Chairman, I move that _____."

AMENDING A MOTION

You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by adding the following words _____."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words _____."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words, _____, and adding in their place the following words _____."

REFER TO A COMMITTEE

You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the question be referred to a committee made up of members Smith, Jones and Brown."

POSTPONE DEFINITELY

You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question until _____."

PREVIOUS QUESTION

You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move the previous question."

LIMIT DEBATE

You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker."

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

You want to kill a motion that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madam Moderator, I move to postpone the question indefinitely."

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

You are against a motion just proposed and want to learn who is for and who is against the motion.

- After recognition, "Madame President, I move to postpone the motion indefinitely."

RECESS

You want to take a break for a while.

- After recognition, "Madame Moderator, I move to recess for ten minutes."

ADJOURNMENT

You want the meeting to end.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to adjourn."

PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW A MOTION

You have made a motion and after discussion, are sorry you made it.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I ask permission to withdraw my motion."

CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY

At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda was adopted. The chairman is not following the order of the approved agenda.

- Without recognition, "Call for orders of the day."

SUSPENDING THE RULES

The agenda has been approved and as the meeting progressed, it became obvious that an item you are interested in will not come up before adjournment.

- After recognition, "Madam Chairman, I move to suspend the rules and move item 5 to position 2."

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing.

- Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."
- Chairman: "State your point."
- Member: "There is too much noise, I can't hear."

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

You are going to propose a question that is likely to be controversial and you feel that some of the members will try to kill it by various maneuvers. Also you want to keep out visitors and the press.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that we go into a committee of the whole."

POINT OF ORDER

It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules.

- Without recognition, "I rise to a point of order," or "Point of order."

POINT OF INFORMATION

You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

- Without recognition, "Point of information."

POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

You are confused about some of the parliamentary rules.

- Without recognition, "Point of parliamentary inquiry."

APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR

Without recognition, "I appeal from the decision of the chair."

Rule Classification and Requirements

Class of Rule	Requirements to Adopt	Requirements to Suspend
Charter	Adopted by majority vote or as proved by law or governing authority	Cannot be suspended
Bylaws	Adopted by membership	Cannot be suspended
Special Rules of Order	Previous notice & 2/3 vote, or a majority of entire membership	2/3 Vote
Standing Rules	Majority vote	Can be suspended for session by majority vote during a meeting
Modified Roberts Rules of Order	Adopted in bylaws	2/3 vote