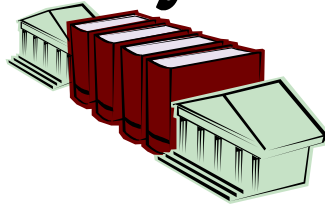


Parliamentary Procedures



Introduction

Parliamentary procedure was designed to help organizations conduct orderly, efficient meetings. These rules of order are important because they protect the rights of individual members and enable the group to accomplish its purpose. The procedures followed by most organizations today were developed by the British Parliament. Probably the best known source of information on parliamentary procedure is *Robert's Rules of Order* by General Henry M. Robert. The Order of Business outlined below gives a meeting structure and provides the chairman with a schedule to follow.

Order of Business

The order of business is the general sequence of events in meetings.

1. Call to order *"The meeting will come to order."*
2. Reading of Scripture/ Exhortation
3. Reading of the minutes *"The secretary will read the minutes."*
"Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes?"
"If not, the minutes stand approved as read."
or
"The minutes stand approved as corrected."
"The treasurer will read the financial report."
4. Financial Report (No motion is needed to accept this report. Financial reports are audited periodically.)
5. Committee reports (Handle recommendations as motions.)
6. Unfinished Business (If any remains from the previous meeting.)
7. New Business (Recognize members with motions to be made.)
8. Announcements (Set the date of the next meeting, etc.)
9. Adjournment *"Is there any further business?"* (Pause)
"The meeting is adjourned."

Procedures

Obtaining the Floor

- A. Before a person can make a motion or address the group, he must rise and address the presiding officer as *"Mr/Madam Chairman"* or *"Mr/Madam President."*
- B. The chairman recognizes him (permits him to speak) by calling his name or bowing.

Motions

- A. A motion is a proposal that the group hold certain views or do a certain thing.
- B. To make a motion, a person, after being recognized by the chairman, may say, *"I move that _____."*
- C. The motion should be seconded by another person. He may say, *"I second the motion"*, or *"I second it"*. A person does not need to be recognized by the chairman to second a motion.

- D. If no second is given, the chairman should ask, *“Is there no second to the motion?”* If the chairman is sure that the group approves of a motion, he may proceed to the question without a second.

Stating the Question

- A. After a motion has been made and seconded, the chairman states the exact question that is before the group as, *“It is moved and seconded that _____,”* or *“It is moved and seconded to adopt the following resolution.”* He then calls for discussion of the proposed action.
- B. If no discussion is needed, a vote may be taken.

Debate

- A. The group may wish to discuss the proposed motion. People must rise and be recognized by the chairman before giving their opinions.
- B. The person who made the motion may not speak against it, but he may if he wishes, vote against it.
- C. The chairman may not participate in the discussion. He may, however, present facts not known to the group.
- D. Members should not talk directly to each other but to the group as a whole.
- E. When there is no further discussion, the chairman asks, *“Are you ready for the question?”* If the group is ready, he then takes a vote.

Voting

- A. A vote may be taken in several ways, according to the desire of the chairman.
1. Those in favor of the motion may say “aye,” or raise their right hands, or rise.
 2. Those opposed to the motion may say “no,” or raise their right hands, or rise.
 3. In certain cases, it may be necessary to vote by ballot.
- B. After the count, the chairman says,
1. *“The aye’s have it and the motion is adopted”* or
 2. *“The motion is adopted,”* or
 3. *“The motion is carried,”* or
 4. *“The no’s have it and the motion is defeated.”*

Amending a Motion

- A. When a change in the wording of a motion is desired, a second motion may be made to amend the motion by substituting, adding, inserting, or striking out words.
- B. In such a case, the group must vote on the amendment before voting on the main motion.

Deferring Action

- A. A motion may be made to postpone further consideration of a question.
- B. The motion may be postponed to a definite time in the future, such as the next meeting.
- C. The motion may be postponed to an indefinite time in the future.

Resolutions

- A. When a motion is presented in written form to the chairman, it is called a resolution and begins, *“Resolved that _____”*.
- B. A person may say, *“I move the adoption of the following resolution,”* and reads the resolution.
- C. When the resolution gives reasons, they are stated first and called a preamble.

D. Each reason in the preamble begins “*whereas*” and ends with a comma.




Privileged Motions

Privileged motions are given high rank because of their importance, taking priority of most other motions. They are only four in number, and they appear in order of priority.

Adjourn

To adjourn is to end a meeting. It requires a second, is undebatable, is amendable, requires a majority vote for adoption, and cannot be reconsidered.

The effect of an adjournment on unfinished business follows three rules.

-  When the adjournment does not close the session, the business interrupted by the adjournment is resumed immediately after the reading of the minutes at the next meeting and the new meeting is simply a continuation of the meeting of which it is an adjournment.
-  When the adjournment closes a session in an assembly that meets at least quarterly, then the unfinished business is taken up at the next succeeding regular session prior to new business, and it is treated as if there had been no interruption.
-  When the adjournment ends a session in an assembly that does not meet at least quarterly, or when the assembly is a body elected for a definite time and this session ends the term of a portion or all of the members, the adjournment puts an end to all business unfinished at the time. The business can be introduced as new business at the next session, as if it had never been before the body.

Recess

To recess is to adjourn for only a short intermission (not overnight). After a recess, business is resumed at the point where it was interrupted, and the minutes are not read previously. A recess requires a second, is not debatable, is amendable, requires a majority vote for adoption, and is not reconsiderable. Some typical words are:

1. “*to recess until 8:00 pm,*”
2. “*to recess for twenty minutes,*”
3. “*to recess until called to order the chair.*”

Raise a Question of Privilege

Questions relating to the rights and benefits of the assembly or one or more of its members are called questions of privilege. They typically involve:

1. the comfort of members;
2. ability to hear or see the speakers;
3. conduct of officers, employees, and guests;
4. or the accuracy of published reports of proceedings.

Call for the Orders of the Day

A call for the orders of the day is a motion urging consent with an agreement concerning the timing of an item of business.

Orders of the day are items of business scheduled by vote for a certain session, meeting, or time, either by themselves or with others.

Chair

The chair refers to the presiding officer or the position from which that person presides.

Floor

The floor is the position of persons other than the presiding officer or the right to have the attention of the group. When a motion is “on the floor”, it is the topic to which the group should direct its attention. When a member “has the floor”, he has the opportunity to exercise his speaking rights and should be given attention.

Member

A member is a person with the full right of participation, including the right to vote.

Motion

A motion is a formal proposal by a member in a meeting that the assembly take certain action.

Pending

A motion has been stated by the chair but not yet disposed of is said to be pending. It is “on the floor”.

Meeting

A meeting is an official gathering of members in one area to transact business for a period with no interruption longer than a recess. The gathering is official. It involves members, though guests may be present. It is in one area, not over the phone, by computers, through the mail, or otherwise in two or more locations. The period of time can vary from a few seconds upward, but most meetings last an hour or more. It can have no interruption more than a few minutes or hours.

Session

A session is one or more connected meetings transacting a single order of business. Thus, a convention of three days would consist of three meetings but only one session.

Executive Session

An executive session is simply any meeting or part of a meeting where the proceedings are to be secret; thus, attendance of persons other than members may be severely limited.

Precedence

Precedence means priority or rank.

Question

Question is a synonym for motion. When members exclaim, “Question!” they are informally calling for a vote on a motion

Quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present at a meeting for the transaction of business. Unless there is a rule to the contrary, a quorum is the majority of the members. It is usual, however, to adopt a much smaller number, the quorum often being less than one-twentieth of the members.

The presiding officer should not take the chair until a quorum is present, unless there is no hope that a quorum will appear. When a quorum is present, the chair does not need to announce that fact unless asked. If the quorum is not present after waiting a reasonable period of time, the presiding officer should take the chair, call the meeting to order, announce the absence of a quorum, and present a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Agenda

The agenda is a detailed list of specific items arranged in an order of business. The agenda may or may not be adopted by an assembly at the beginning of a meeting. When nonbusiness matters, such as guest speakers, meals, or an educational program, are included in the agenda, it is often called a program. Having a printed copy of the tentative agenda in the hands of each member is a popular procedure.

The agenda contains more specifics than the order of business.

Sample Agenda

- Call to order
- Opening ceremonies
- Reading and approval of minutes
- Reports of Officers
 - Report of the president
 - Report of the treasurer
- Reports of boards and committees
 - Report of the standing committee on bylaws
 - Report of the standing committee on finance
 - Report of the special committee on awards
- Unfinished business and general orders
 - Postponed motion on church roof
- New business
 - New motion on executive elections
 - New motion on computer purchase
 - Other new motions
- Program
- Announcements
- Adjournment

Board

A board is a group of members, usually small in number, empowered to act for the organization as a whole in certain regards.

President and Vice-President

The president presides over meetings. However, he may have some additional administrative duties such as:

1. calls the meeting to order
2. ascertains whether or not a quorum is present
3. to announce the business before the assembly in the correct order
4. to state and put to vote all motions in order
5. to assign the floor to members by announcing their names (recognizing them)
6. to enforce the rules
7. to maintain order and decorum

8. to sign any documents relevant to the assembly
9. be familiar with Parliamentary rules
10. set an example of obedience to the rules.

In the absence of the president, the vice-president serves in his place. A vice-president may also have additional duties.

Secretary and the Minutes

The officer in charge of minutes (documents recording the proceedings), correspondence, the roll of the members, and similar duties is usually called the secretary or clerk. During a meeting, he should be seated near the presiding officer. Some of the secretary's duties are:

1. record the minutes and keep them in a book
2. to maintain current, accurate copies of all organizational documents
3. to file reports
4. to issue written notices of meetings and certain motions
5. to prepare the agenda for the presiding officer
6. to make the minutes and organizational documents available to members at reasonable times and places
7. to call the roll when required

Sample Minutes

A regular meeting of the ABC Library was called to order at 6:03 pm on Monday, August 30, 2001, in the Library's boardroom at 345 Somewhere Street, Anytown. The president was in the chair, and the secretary was present.

The minutes of the July meeting were approved upon motion by Frank Day.

The treasurer's report was a financial statement with a balance on hand, as of July 31st, of 3,560,050 cedis.

The building committee reported minor damage to the building by the recent flooding. Repairs will be made.

The chair announced as unfinished business the motion postponed from last meeting, "That the Library approve the purchase of more books for the public to read." The motion was adopted.

During new business, Kofi Smith proposed a motion "That we properly label and organize the books, making it easier for the librarian and customers."

A motion by Comfort Kwachi "That we obtain proper information on the cost of more books, making sure we do not go in the deficit." A price list will be made by the next regular meeting.

After a program on research studying, the meeting adjourned at 8:04 pm.

Stephen Owusu Asare

Stephen Owusu Asare
Secretary

Treasurer and other officers

The duties of the chief financial officer, normally called the treasurer, vary in different organizations. In most cases he acts as a banker, merely holding the funds deposited with him and paying them out on the order of the society signed by the secretary. Treasurers tend to report frequently, and the reports are usually mere statements of the amount on hand at the beginning of

the period, the sources and amounts of income during the period, the purposes of or payees and amounts of disbursements during the period, and the balance on hand. It should always be remembered that the financial statement is made for the information of the members.

Sample Treasurer's Report

Balance on hand August 1, 2001	3,560,050
Receipts	
Dues	31,200
Fundraiser profits	<u>1,502,250</u>
Total Receipts	<u>1,533,450</u>
Total	<u>5,093,500</u>
Disbursements	
Rent	100,000
Workers salary	300,000
Electricity	65,450
Ghana Telecom	<u>44,350</u>
Total Disbursements	<u>509,800</u>
Total	<u>4,583,700</u>
Balance on hand August 30, 2001	4,583,700

J. Kwadjo Osei
J. Kwadjo Osei
Treasurer

The Parliamentary Procedure notes were adapted from the "Parliamentary Procedure for Student Organizations", Pensacola Christian College World History Text (Grade Seven), and the Modern Edition of Robert's Rules of Order by General Henry M. Robert (1876), revised by Darwin Patnode Ph. D.