



# PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE WORKSHOP

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# COMMON PARLIAMENTARY TERMS

<b>Chair</b>	-	The Presiding Officer.
<b>Dilatory</b>	-	A motion that is absurd or ridiculous in substance.
<b>Germane</b>	-	Relating to the motion pending.
<b>Improper Motion</b>	-	A motion that conflicts with the charter, State or Federal law.
<b>Main Motion</b>	-	Motion that brings business before the assembly.
<b>Majority</b>	-	More than half.
<b>Precedence</b>	-	An order of ranking motions.
<b>Previous Notice</b>	-	Notice of the proposal to be brought up announced at the previous meeting or included in the "call" of the meeting.
<b>RONR</b>	-	<i>Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised</i>
<b>Secondary Motions</b>	-	Subsidiary, Privileged or Incidental Motions (made after the Main Motion)
<b>Seriatim</b>	-	Consideration by paragraph
<b>Two-thirds</b>	-	Twice as many in favor as are against.
<b>Unanimous Consent</b>	-	Without objection by any member.

# CATEGORIES OF MOTIONS

<b>Main Motion</b>	-	<b>Brings business before the assembly</b>
<b>Subsidiary Motions</b>	-	<b>Assist the assembly in disposing of the Main Motion</b>
<b>Privileged Motions</b>	-	<b>Having to do with special or "privileged" matters</b>
<b>Bring Back Motions</b>	-	<b>Bring a question again before the assembly</b>
<b>Incidental Motions</b>	-	<b>Relate to pending business</b>

The Ranked Motions, in order of precedence, are as follows:

1. Main Motion                                    **I MOVE TO ...**    or  
**I MOVE THAT WE ...**

The Subsidiary motions are as follows (ranked in order from lowest to highest):

2. Postpone Indefinitely                    Used when the assembly declines to take a position.  
**I MOVE TO POSTPONE INDEFINITELY.**

3. Amend    Used to make changes to the main motion, such as:  
By eliminating a word, consecutive words or a paragraph:  
**I MOVE TO AMEND BY STRIKING OUT ...**

By inserting or adding a word, consecutive words or a paragraph:

**I MOVE TO AMEND BY ADDING (at the end,  
OR INSERTING (within the text) ...**

By striking out and inserting different words:

**I MOVE TO AMEND BY STRIKING OUT ...  
AND INSERTING ...**

By substituting a new paragraph or a new motion:

**I MOVE TO AMEND BY SUBSTITUTING AS  
FOLLOWS ...**

4. Commit (Refer) Used to refer the motion to a committee or staff member for disposition or report to be brought back to the full assembly.

**I MOVE TO REFER THE MOTION TO THE ... COMMITTEE.**

5. Postpone to a Certain Time Used to postpone consideration until a certain meeting date. A question may be postponed until, but not beyond, the next regular meeting session.

**I MOVE TO POSTPONE CONSIDERATION OF THE MOTION TO THE ... MEETING.**

6. *Limit or Extend Limits of Debate*  
(2/3 vote required) Used to limit the number or length of speeches permitted or set a time limit for debate; or used to allow more and longer speeches than under the regular rules. This motion should be made before debate begins.

- REMEMBER: • Members are limited to ten minutes each time they speak.
- No member may speak more than twice.
  - No member may speak the second time before all members who wish to speak have done so.

**I MOVE THAT EACH MEMBER BE ALLOWED TO SPEAK ONLY ONCE IN DEBATE ON THIS MOTION.**

or

**I MOVE THAT EACH MEMBER BE LIMITED TO SPEECHES OF FIVE MINUTES ON THIS MOTION.**

or

**I MOVE THAT MEMBERS BE ALLOWED TO SPEAK MORE THAN TWICE IN DEBATE.**

7. *Previous Question*  
(2/3 vote required)

Used to close debate.

This motion should not be made until the motion has been debated for a lengthy time or most members have had an opportunity to speak.

**I MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION.**

or

**I MOVE THE PREVIOUS QUESTION ON ALL  
PENDING MOTIONS.**

Remember: At least two votes are necessary;

- first, to close debate by roll call, and
- second, on the pending question(s).

A "yes" vote means you wish debate closed.

A "no" vote means you wish debate continued.

8. Lay on the Table

Used to temporarily set aside pending business so that more pressing business can be conducted.

**I MOVE TO LAY THE MOTION (AND ALL  
PENDING QUESTIONS) ON THE TABLE.**

Remember: This motion is not to be used in an attempt to "Kill" a motion.

No conditions may be attached to the motion.

No debate is allowed.

The Privileged motions are as follows (ranked in order from lowest to highest):

9. Call for the Orders of the Day                      Used to bring the assembly's attention to the fact that the agenda (order of the day) is not being followed. You do not have to be recognized.

**I CALL FOR THE ORDERS OF THE DAY.**

10. Raise a Question of Privilege                      Used to correct problems with heating, lighting, noise or other disturbances. You do not have to be recognized.

**QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE.**

11. Recess    Used to take a short break in the meeting.

**I MOVE TO RECESS FOR . . . MINUTES.**

or

**I MOVE TO RECESS UNTIL . . .**

12. Adjourn    Used to close the meeting.

**I MOVE TO ADJOURN.**

13. Fix the Time To Which to Adjourn                      Used to set the time to continue the same meeting.

**I MOVE THAT WHEN WE ADJOURN, WE ADJOURN TO (TIME) (DATE).**

Remember: This must conform to the requirements of the Open Meetings Act (18 hour posting).

The Bring Back motions are as follows - They have no ranking:

Reconsider

Used to vote again on something previously decided.

**I MOVE TO RECONSIDER THE MOTION . . .**

- Remember:
- The motion may only be made at the same meeting.
  - A member must have voted on the prevailing side. ("Yes," if it passed; "No," if it was defeated).
  - The vote is first taken on whether or not to reconsider. If this motion passes by a majority vote, then the question is again on the floor, may be debated, and Secondary motions may be applied.

*Rescind*

(Majority vote with previous notice otherwise 2/3)

Used to cancel a previously adopted motion. Any member may make the motion.

**I MOVE TO RESCIND . . .**

- Remember: This motion is not in order:
- when something has been done as a result of the vote,
  - when it is in the nature of a contract and the other party has been informed of the vote, or
  - when a resignation has been accepted or a person has been elected (or appointed) and the person was present or was officially notified.

Take from the Table

Used to consider a motion that was previously tabled.

**I MOVE TO TAKE THE MATTER OF . . . FROM THE TABLE.**

- Remember: This motion can only be made at the same or next meeting; otherwise the motion "falls from the table."

The Incidental motions are as follows (they have no ranking order, but are "incidental" to the handling of pending motions; therefore they are considered first):

Withdraw a Motion

Used when the maker of a motion wishes to withdraw it from consideration.

Before the motion is stated by the Chair:

**I WITHDRAW THE MOTION.**

After the motion has been stated by the Chair, the motion no longer belongs to the member, but to the assembly.

**I REQUEST PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW THE MOTION.**

*Object to Consideration  
of a Question*  
(2/3 vote against required)

Used so that a motion/resolution will not even be considered. This motion cannot be made after debate has begun.

**I OBJECT TO CONSIDERATION OF THE MOTION.**

Parliamentary Inquiry

Used when a member has a question regarding parliamentary procedure (is not sure if a motion would be in order or if a procedure is correct, etc.).  
You do not have to be recognized. No second required.

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY.**

Point of Information

Used when a member seeks information relative to the business at hand, but not having to do with parliamentary procedure. You do not have to be recognized. No second required.

**POINT OF INFORMATION.**

Point of Order

Used when a member believes that the rules are being violated. You do not have to be recognized. No second required.

**POINT OF ORDER.**

The Chair will ask "What is your point?"  
The member should state the point of order.

The Chair may rule "Your point is well taken" and take appropriate action to make the correction; or

The Chair may rule "Your point is not well taken" and business will proceed as before the Point was raised.



## Appeal

When the Chair has made a ruling, any member may appeal from the decision of the Chair.

You do not have to be recognized: however, a second is required and the appeal must be made at the time of the ruling. If any debate or business has intervened, it is too late!

### **I APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR.**

Remember: Rules of debate change.

- The Chair may speak first and last.
- All other members may speak only once.

The question before the Council then becomes:

"Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?"

A "yes" vote means you agree with the decision;  
a "no" vote means you do not agree with the decision.

It is important to remember that you are not voting on the appeal; but you are voting on whether the Chair's ruling should be upheld.

A tie or majority "yes" vote upholds the decision;  
A majority "no" vote overturns the decision.

*Suspend the Rules*  
(2/3 vote required)

Used to temporarily set aside a certain rule to accomplish a specific purpose.

**I MOVE TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ALLOW. . .**

or

**I MOVE TO SUSPEND THE RULES AND TAKE UP  
THE FOLLOWING . .**

# GENERAL RULES OF DEBATE

1. The maker of a motion is entitled to speak first.
2. A member must obtain the floor by being recognized by the Chair.
3. No member is entitled to speak a second time on the same motion while any other member wishes to make their first speech.
4. A member may not speak against his/her own motion, but may vote against it.
5. Remarks must be confined to the merits of the pending question.
6. Questions and remarks must be addressed through the Chair.  
Members are not to speak directly to each other or to a staff member.
7. A courteous tone must be maintained, and interjecting personal notes or attacking another member's motives is prohibited.
8. Use of a member's name is to be avoided, if at all possible; for example, you should refer to "the maker of the motion" or "the previous speaker" whenever possible.
9. Reading from books, reports, etc. is only allowed with permission of the assembly by vote or general consent, that is, if there are no objections.
10. The Presiding Officer may not participate in debate without relinquishing the Chair.
11. No member may comment adversely on any prior act of the assembly that is not pending.

# STEPS IN HANDLING A MOTION

1. A member addresses the Chair (or raises his or her hand).

**MADAM MAYOR.**

2. The member is recognized by the Chair.

**COUNCILMAN . . .**

3. The member makes a motion.

**I MOVE . . .**

4. Another member "seconds" the motion (without waiting for recognition).

**SECOND.**

5. The Chair states the question on the motion.

**IT IS MOVED AND SECONDED THAT . . .**

6. The Chair opens the motion for debate.

**IS THERE ANY DISCUSSION?**

7. Members are recognized by the Chair and debate the pending motion, make secondary motions, etc.

8. When no one seeks the floor, the Chair may ask:

**ARE YOU READY FOR THE QUESTION?**

9. The Chair "puts the question."

**THE QUESTION IS ON THE ADOPTION OF THE MOTION TO . . .**

**ALL THOSE IN FAVOR, SAY "AYE." (Pause for response)**

**ALL THOSE OPPOSED, SAY "NO." (Pause for response)**

10. The Chair announces the result of the vote.

**(THE AYES HAVE IT, AND) THE MOTION IS ADOPTED AND (indicate the effect of the vote or order its execution).**

**or**

**(THE NOES HAVE IT, AND) THE MOTION IS LOST.**

# Basic Information On Motions

## RANKING MOTIONS

## Principal Characteristics

These motions are listed in order of rank. When any one of these motions is immediately pending, those above it are in order and those below are not in order.

### PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

	Second Required	Can Be Debated	Can Be Amended	Vote Required	Can Be Reconsidered	Can Interrupt
13. Fix Time to Which to Adjourn .....	yes	no	yes	maj	yes	no
12. Adjourn .....	yes	no	no	maj	no	no
11. Recess .....	yes	no	yes	maj	no	no
10. Raise a Question of Privilege .....	no	no	no	X*	no	yes
9. Call for the Orders of the Day .....	no	no	no	X*	no	yes

### SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

8. Lay on the Table .....	yes	no	no	maj	no	no
7. Previous Question (to close debate) .....	yes	no	no	2/3	yes*	no
6. Limit or Extend Limits of Debate .....	yes	no	yes	2/3	yes*	no
5. Postpone to a Certain Time .....	yes	yes	yes	maj	yes	no
4. Commit (or Refer) .....	yes	yes	yes	maj	yes*	no
3. Amend .....	yes	=	yes*	maj	yes	no
2. Postpone Indefinitely .....	yes	yes	no	maj	+	no
1. MAIN MOTION .....	yes	yes	yes	maj*	yes	no

## NON-RANKING MOTIONS

Whether these motions are in order depends upon the business already under consideration and what purpose they may serve when introduced.

### INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

Appeal .....	yes	*	no	maj	yes	yes
Close Nominations or the Polls .....	yes	no	yes	2/3	no	no
Consider by Paragraph or Seriatim .....	yes	no	yes	maj	no	no
Division of the Assembly .....	no	no	no	no	no	yes
Division of a Question .....	yes	no	yes	maj	no	no
Objection to Consideration of a Question .....	no	no	no	2/3	#	yes*
Parliamentary Inquiry .....	no	no	no	Chair	no	yes
Point of Order .....	no	no	no	Chair	no	yes
Reopen Nominations or the Polls .....	yes	no	yes	maj	#	no
Suspend the Rules* .....	yes	no	no	2/3*	no	no
Withdraw a Motion .....	no*	no	no	maj*	#	yes*

### MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY

Reconsider .....	yes	=	no	maj	no	no
Rescind .....	yes	yes	yes	*	#	no
Take from the Table .....	yes	no	no	maj	no	no

#### Key to Markings

\* — See *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* for special rules.

X — Usually no vote taken. Chair responds.

+ — Only an affirmative vote may be reconsidered.

# — Only a negative vote may be reconsidered.

= — Debatable when applied to a debatable motion. See *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

## TIPS FOR CONDUCTING PUBLIC HEARINGS AND RECEIVING PUBLIC INPUT

1. **Create and follow your own Rules of Procedure**
  - Rules should be simple, clear, easy to interpret and to enforce, but flexible enough to handle difficult situations
  - Once promulgated, rules should be strictly followed
  - Begin each meeting with an oral summary of the rules
  
2. **Treat every person fairly and impartially**
  - Treat everyone politely and with respect
  - Give each speaker your attention
  - Reciprocate courtesies--if you grant one person extra time, automatically extend that courtesy to others
  - Never express personal feelings about any individual
  
3. **Always maintain control and decorum**
  - Usually this is the responsibility of the Chair, but all members should assist
  - Be fair but firm
  - Never let speakers cross-talk or speak out of turn
  - Use the gavel judiciously
  - Don't allow clapping or demonstrations to take over a meeting
  
4. **Do not delay or compromise decision-making unnecessarily**
  - Avoid the human urge to delay every controversial decision in the hope that it will be resolved later
  - Accept the fact that you will not be able to make everyone happy
  
5. **Remember that citizens don't have all the information that you do**
  - Make sure you are following proper notice procedures
  - Try to remain objective by keeping your focus on the unknown public when dealing with questions of notice
  - Try to avoid surprising the public with new information at the decision-making hearing
  - Allow the public an opportunity to review available information ahead of time
  - Never express your conclusions prior to hearing all of the evidence
  
6. **Provide for an accurate record**
  - If you want your decisions to be upheld, keep a good record to support those decisions
  - Remember that what you say is being recorded--Flip comments, in addition to being inappropriate, will often come back to haunt you
  - Never go "off the record" to have private discussions
  - Try to make sure every decision has an explained rationale, either written or expressed at the public hearing
  - Be consistent in your decision making
  
7. **Listen to your legal counsel**
  - If you ask a legal question, follow the advice given
  - If you are not prepared to follow advice, don't ask the question

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- T F 1. To second a motion, means you are in favor of it.
- T F 2. A motion made on behalf of a committee does not require a second.
- T F 3. A person may withdraw her motion at any time.
- T F 4. A member may speak against his own motion.
- T F 5. A member may vote against her own motion.
- T F 6. A point of order always requires a ruling by the chair.
- T F 7. The chair can close debate when there has been enough discussion.
- T F 8. A 2/3 vote may be taken by voice.
- T F 9. The chair need not ask for the negative vote when the affirmative vote sounds loud enough.
- T F 10. A tie vote is a lost vote.
- T F 11. A motion passed by unanimous consent means everyone agrees.
- T F 12. A meeting can adjourn before the agenda has been completed.