

RUNNING A LODGE MEETING

***A Guide on Parliamentary Procedure
and Maintaining Order
for BMWED Lodge Officers***



A Joint Guide by the
BMWED Secretary Treasurer's Department
and BMWED Education Department



Foreword



Part of the new series of *Guides* for our BMWED Lodge officers, *Running a Lodge Meeting* will give our Lodge Presidents, Vice Presidents, and all our members a task-focused resource they can use to help make their Lodge meetings meaningful, impactful, and engaging.

The content of this *Guide* condenses material found in other resources, offering our members a more accessible tool they can put to use in figuring out how to effectively use parliamentary procedure, tips to facilitate discussion, and how to stick to a meeting agenda.

When in doubt, our Lodge officers should know they have a team of experts within our union on their side, dedicated to supporting them and ensuring our Lodge officers are set up for success in what we do, together.

Any inquiries regarding the roles and tasks laid out in this *Guide* should be directed to your BMWED System Division or Federation officers and staff. You can find contact information for all our BMWED officers and staff at <https://www.bmwe.org/directory>.



Burlington System Division Lodge 42, Chicago, IL, 2012

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Approved for Unrestricted Release

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Quick Reference Guide – Running a Lodge Meeting
Robert's Rules of Order – Simplified
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Getting Started

This *Guide* does not replace the governing documents which guide our union. While using this *Guide*, understand it supplements our BMWED Bylaws, your System Division's or Federation's bylaws, our IBT Constitution, and our BMWED/IBT Merger Agreement. The intent of this *Guide* is to offer you a useful tool that makes the information in our governing documents more accessible for day-to-day work at the Lodge level.

This *Guide* works with others as a "toolbox" our Lodge officers can use. We learn by doing, and by focusing on tasks, not titles. At the Lodge level, our officers may lend each other a hand or hold more than one job within their Lodge. Whether you are holding a Lodge election, managing a Quarterly Audit Report, or building a meeting Agenda, we will have a *Guide* for that.

Remember! You are not alone in doing union work! Never hesitate to reach out to your sisters or brothers for assistance in finding out how you can act to build on the work that sustains our collective strength. We work together, we learn together, we stand together.

As we all learn by doing, it is essential that you take charge of your role and responsibilities. Find ways you can act in line with our overall mission and values. Where you need pointers or to understand our legal obligations, reach out to your elected leaders. As a Lodge officer, it's up to you to **DO** work that makes a positive impact on your Lodge and for your fellow members. It is important to know that your action matters! You are the leading edge of our strength as a union.

Know your agreement. Know our Bylaws and understand what we are here to accomplish together. Then, refer to this *Guide* as you find ways to **ACT** within your Lodge.



BMWED Member working on BNSF's Emporia Subdivision in Kansas.

Gathering Your Tools



Register for Member Access to our BMWED Website!

bmwe.org/account.aspx

- Find information
- Order Material
- Submit Reports
- Review Records

As a Lodge officer, you will do a more effective job, and your job will be easier, if you have all the tools for the work at hand.

While our union has its roots in the 19th century, we work and act in the 21st century! We use online platforms and technology to be more agile and reduce unnecessary costs to our members.

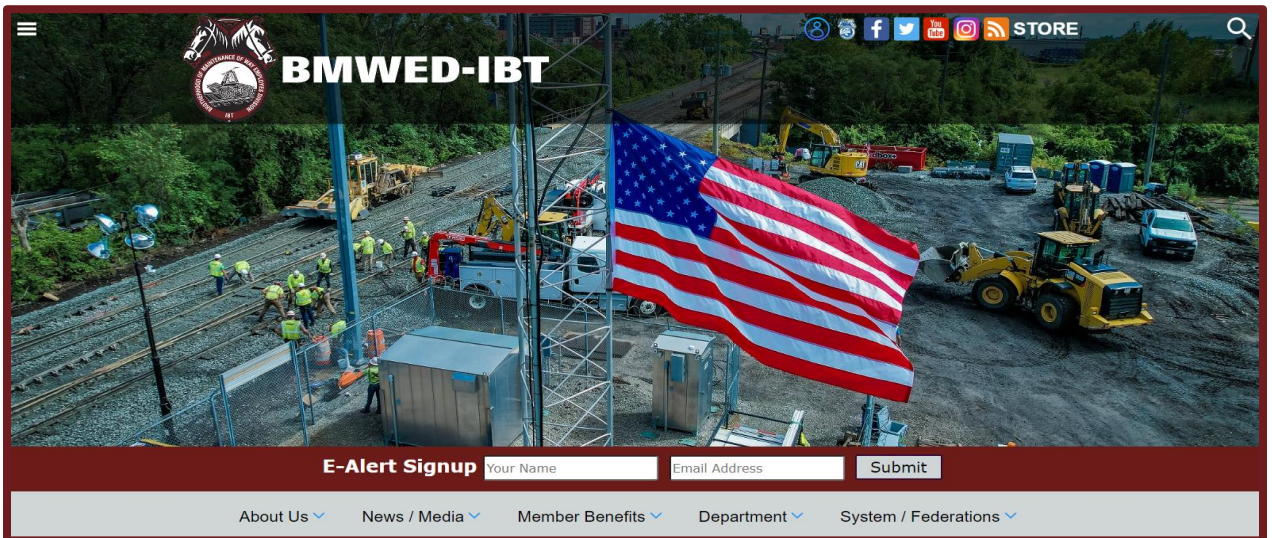
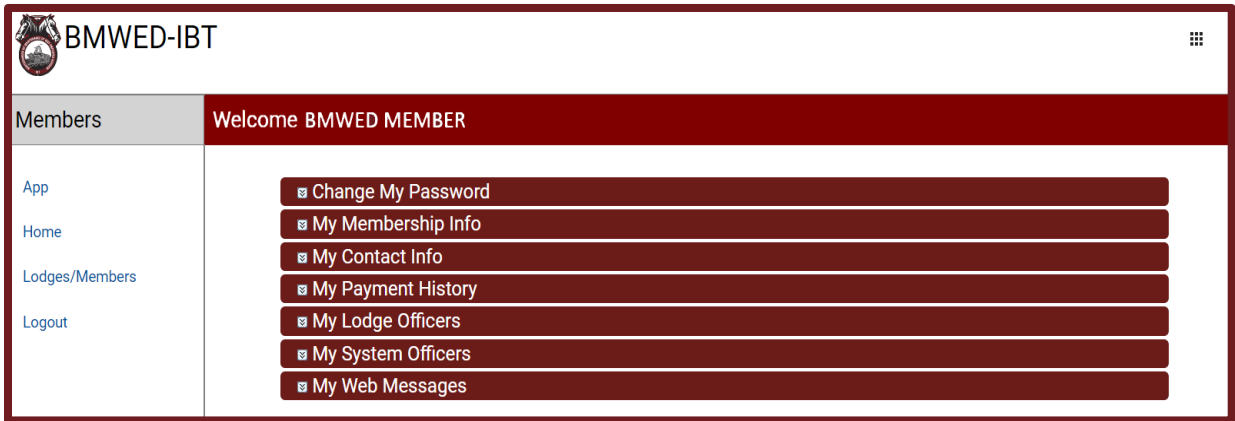


Image capture of <https://www.bmwe.org> from November 17, 2024

All BMWED members have access to special online tools and resources, if they register. Lodge officers can access unique and important tools for reviewing or submitting reports, ordering supplies, notifying their Lodges about meetings, and more.

Creating a Member account at bmwe.org requires a personal e-mail address (**not a railroad-provided account**). You can create a free e-mail address for yourself with Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook (Hotmail) or other services.

Gathering Your Tools



With your Member access account set up, you can access the part of our bmwe.org website shown above.

Here you can review personal information, update your own contact data with our union (your phone number, mailing address, or email) and find information about your own Lodge officers, your System Division or Federation officers, and other information.

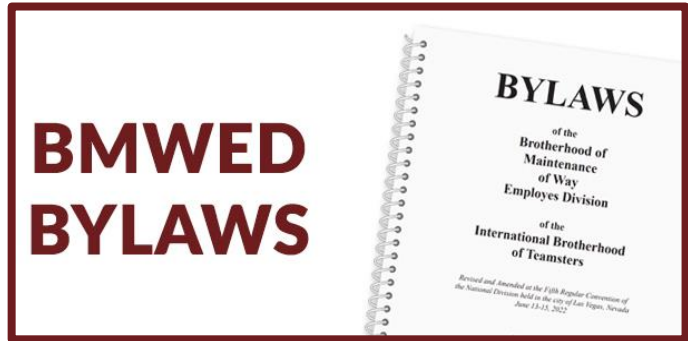
Our Lodges should encourage all our members to sign up for this access. It's quick, easy, and helps our members stay informed.

As a Lodge officer, more tools are available to you by clicking the Lodges/Members link in the left-hand column.

[Lodges/Members](#)  ***Tools for Lodge Officers!***

Gathering Your Tools

While online tools will help you perform your work, it's important to remember that they do not replace our governing documents. You should always have these accessible for your Lodge's business!



For conducting any Lodge business, you should always have access to:

- ***Our BMWED Bylaws***
- ***Our BMWED Ritual***
- ***Your System Division or Federation Bylaws***
- ***Your Lodge's Rules***
- ***Your Lodge's Meeting Minutes***
- ***Your Lodge's Committee Reports***
- ***Financial Records and Reports***
- ***Bank Statements***

You may also want to refer to:

- ***Functions and Structure of the BMWED***
- ***BMWED Lodge Elections Guide***
- ***Setting an Agenda: A Guide on BMWED Ritual for Lodge Officers***
- ***BMWED Ritual and Parliamentary Motions Guide***
- ***BMWE/IBT Merger Agreement***
- ***IBT Constitution***
- ***BMWED ACTS! Guide***

Find these at bmwe.org/library/!

So, What's My Job Here?

Article XVIII of our BMWED Bylaws establishes how our Local Lodges are governed. As a BMWED Local Lodge officer, you should take time to read and understand the provisions within our Bylaws and in Article XVIII.

The Lodge **President** is the responsible officer for many of the tasks laid out in this *Guide*. A full description of the Secretary-Treasurer's responsibilities is provided in Article XVIII of our Bylaws. These responsibilities include:



- **Presiding at all meetings of the Lodge.** The President is the “buck stops here” person accountable for what the Lodge does or fails to do. As such, the President takes charge of meetings and ensures business is conducted smoothly. This includes resolving any questions of order or procedure, subject to an appeal to the entire Lodge.
- **Preserving decorum.** If there are disputes, tension, or disrespectful behavior occurring within the Lodge, the President restores the situation.
- **Overseeing officers,** who may perform work or make reports to the Lodge. The President also ensures proper records are kept, audits are completed, and necessary reports are filed.
- **Enforcing Bylaws** and other governing provisions of our IBT Constitution and the BMWED/IBT Merger Agreement.
- **Casting tie-breaking votes** when necessary, for any business or questions that are deadlocked at the Lodge level.

The President is supported by the **Vice President** if they are unable to perform their role for the Lodge. The **other officers and committees of the Lodge** also report to the President. All BMWED officers and members should have a solid understanding of the work performed by a Lodge President on behalf of their Lodge and our union.

Who Else Can Help?

Your **BMWED Secretary-Treasurer's Department** has subject matter experts that can help you understand the financial or records-related work you need to get done at the Local Lodge level. You can get guidance and assistance on how to properly prepare reports, how to conduct specific pieces of Lodge business in compliance with governing laws or regulations, and how your work fits into the “big picture” or our union’s organization.

- **Membership Services**
- **Handling Reports and Records**
- **Lodge Elections**
- **Financial Questions**

Your **System Division or Federation** can help you navigate administrative issues or matters governed under your System Division or Federation Bylaws. Reaching out to your System Division or Federation can help you in nearly every task you perform. Contact your **General Chairperson** for more guidance.

- **Status Updates**
- **Lodge Rosters**
- **Questions about procedures or requirements**

Your **BMWED Education Department** works with all parts of our union to build tools we can use to sharpen our skills and teach one another. *Guides* like this one, online or in-person training, or specialized tools are all available by reaching out to your Education Department.

- **Training Tools and Support**

If your Lodge maintains the position of **Past President** this honorary officer can provide your Lodge with an important continuity, linking our past traditions and experience with our current issues and demands. Your Past President can offer guidance, assist in some matter of Ritual, or even preside over Lodge meetings in the absence of both the President and Vice President.

- **Maintaining Traditions**
- **Supporting officers**
- **Initiating New Members**

First Thing's First!

We don't hold meetings just for the sake of holding meetings! Our union's function is to **ACT** on behalf of our members. Every level of our union, including your Local Lodge, should have a solid list of work that it can perform to educate our members, increase our strength, or improve our quality of life and dignity at work.

Your Lodge's work may be as straightforward as offering informational reports to regularly scheduled meetings, catching your members up on issues or topics that matter to them. You might review news from your System Division, Federation, our National Division, or other unions near you, since informed union members are dangerous union members!

The foundation of our union is our people, and your Lodge is the closest and most impactful level of our union for your members and your families. You can assist members in need, help celebrate important events or achievements for your families, and come together for fellowship, community, and solidarity. Work as seemingly simple as a holiday party or family picnic is crucial to building the bonds that strengthen our union. Those activities are best planned and done at the Lodge level.



As other levels of our union engage with lawmakers on Capital Hill, negotiate contracts with railroad managers, organize new members in other parts of our country, or resolve disputes within our agreements, your Lodge is an essential link in keeping all our members informed and engaged in our mission.

Finally, you can use Lodge meetings as a chance to listen to members on issues affecting them right now. As a forum for listening to our members, our Lodge meetings keep us on track together. They inform and strengthen the work we do throughout our union.

You can learn more about the tasks or information you can include in your Lodge meeting in our **Setting an Agenda** guide for Lodge officers. Once you've built your plan and get your meeting cards out, then it's time to do the work of holding your meeting!

The Basics

There are a few basic components to our Lodge meetings:

Reports from officers, committees, visitors that serve to inform your members about what's going on in our industry, in our union, or in your Lodge. These form part of the regular ***Order of Business*** within our ***BMWED Ritual***. Reports do not require an approval vote to occur, but are often noted as received for the record.

Motions are used for actions any Lodge members want to take during the meeting. If a member wants to propose a topic, ask a question, change the course of business, or something similar, they make a motion.

Motions are made to the Chair and recognized by the Chair. The Chair (usually your Lodge President) uses Robert's Rules to identify orders of priority, special considerations, or other rules of fair play when recognizing motions.

Motions are voted upon using procedures discussed later in this Guide.

Debate is moderated by the Chair. Debate offers Lodge members a chance to bring up new business, if no other business is pending on the agenda, or to discuss any proposed actions or business of the Lodge.

The Chair, or your Lodge, can set up general rules or time limits for debate. Debate is always done as though the speaker were talking to the Chair, not directly to another member, to avoid the potential for creating tension or argument.

The Basics

There are a few basic components to our Lodge meetings:

Discussions and Presentations are less formal than reports or debate. While they are not considered regular order within Robert's Rules, many Lodges likely have periods in their meetings where the rules are more relaxed and the floor more open for conversations among members about topics or issues. Each Lodge can set its own rules for how formal they want their meetings to be.

Presentations may be from Lodge guests and visitors, or from within the Lodge itself. These can form part of your agenda, but generally don't require motions from the members to take place. Your General Chairperson, a National Division Vice President, a Designated Legal Counsel attorney, or other visitors are some examples of guest presenters you can invite or include in your meeting.

Initiations, Appointments, Elections, & Installations may or may not happen during a meeting. If you have new members joining you, have a vacant office to fill, or created a committee to work on a special project, our ***BMWED Ritual*** offers guidance on how to conduct these ceremonies. Our Lodge ***Elections Guide*** offers a "one-stop" resource to conducting a Lodge election.

Fellowship

While not considered part of regular order within Robert's Rules or explicitly laid out in our **BMWED Ritual** or **Order of Business**, Lodge meetings should also be welcoming places where members can catch up, feel like they are valued, and feel like they are part of a community.



BMWED Lodge 509 Meeting, February 2020

This often takes the form of providing some sort of meal, refreshments, or unstructured time before or after the formal business of the meeting.

Lodges are empowered to determine for themselves how to use their funds for refreshments, meals, door prizes, or similar items, as long as they are able to fulfill their other financial and legal obligations. Critical Lodge functions like sending delegates to BMWED Conventions, training members, and fulfilling union and legal obligations should always take precedence for Lodge funds.

If you have questions about what's permissible in using Lodge funds for the purposes of meals, door prizes, refreshments, or other items, reach out to your **General Chairperson** or contact your **Secretary-Treasurer's Department** and your **BMWED Field Auditors** for advice.

Parliamentary Procedure



You built your agenda. You gathered your members. Your Lodge meeting is about to begin.

To keep your work from bogging down in idle chatter, and to ensure that business is conducted fairly, with all members given a chance to share their thoughts, your best tool is understanding how to use ***parliamentary procedure***.

Parliamentary procedure seems like an old-fashioned holdover from a different time, but it remains one of the best ways to ensure equality within a meeting, keep business running smoothly, and the Lodge works democratically. With these goals in mind, if you were to try and make a set of rules from scratch to govern your meetings, you would likely end up with something close to what we already use today.

Luckily, you don't have to invent the rules. ***Article I, Section 5 of our BMWED Bylaws*** establishes ***Robert's Rules of Order*** as governing in all cases where they apply.

So, how do Robert's Rules work for you in your Lodge meeting?

Parliamentary Procedure



“The Chair”

Brother Perry Rapier addressing the Chair at a Convention of the former Pennsylvania Federation in 2019.

If you are running a Lodge meeting, regardless of whether you are your Lodge’s President, Vice President, Past President, or what, for that meeting you are now **“the Chair.”** As the Chair of the meeting, you will use Robert’s Rules of Order to:

- **Have your hands on the throttle**, controlling the tempo of the meeting and how long you spend time on any piece of business or discussion.
- **Act as referee**, deciding on issues or disputes that may arise among your members on what to do next or how to conduct meeting business.
- **Be a neutral voice** in the conduct of Lodge business, setting a tone that ensures all members respect one another even if they disagree about a proposal, piece of business, or decision.
- **Act as quarterback** to determine how to move forward with any item or business that wasn’t planned for or expected, keeping your Lodge from bogging down in its work.
- **Be the “traffic cop”** that controls discussion. To keep tempers level and to stay fair, giving everyone a chance to speak their mind, all members should debate issues, propose actions, or ask questions to you, not getting into “cross talk” with one another.

Being “The Chair”

Know when to hold ‘em, know when to fold ‘em!

As Chair for your meeting, it’s important to keep a few tips in mind. Robert’s Rules of Order give you a playbook, but they don’t work by themselves. Your understanding of your people, your situation, and the business at hand all play a part in how you run your meeting.

- **Use tact!** Stay sensitive to difficult issues and in dealing with others. Mutual respect will keep your work a lot smoother than being blunt or harsh.
- **Offer alternatives** for your members if there are issues that keep slowing things down or creating tension.
- **Be mindful of time.** While it sometimes may seem respectful to let everyone speak their mind, if a member starts going off topic or “soapboxing,” it’s more respectful to bring them back to the issue at hand.
- **“Watch the game film”** Review your own experience and watch others to determine how to move forward with any item or business that wasn’t planned for or expected, keeping your Lodge from bogging down in its work.
- **Be the “traffic cop”** that controls discussion. To keep tempers level and to stay fair, giving everyone a chance to speak their mind, all members should debate issues, propose actions, or ask questions to you, not getting into “cross talk” with one another.



Members of the American Rail System Federation meeting to elect officers in early 2022.

Robert's Rules – Guidelines, not Scripts

Key to understanding how to use parliamentary procedure as the Chair is to recognize that it's a tool to get you where you want to be, not an end in itself.

Some Lodges may simplify some aspects of parliamentary procedure for routine items, and may choose to use more complex rules for formal business. While a discussion of the latest news on the territory may not need to be incredibly formal, a large expense from your Lodge funds or an election should use Robert's Rules to ensure clarity, fairness, and accountability.

If your Lodge uses simplified Rules, you should still be consistent and have a written set of Lodge rules or policies. If disputes, appeals, or other issues happen, you can refer to the rules your Lodge agreed to follow and, where they don't cover the issue, look at the correct path in Robert's Rules. If the question is less "how" and more about whether the issue is allowed within our Bylaws, reach out for guidance!



JPB Delegate at 2020
Burlington System Division
Convention

When Lodge members forget the rules or bog down the meeting, your job as Chair is to get them back in order. Gently remind them of the current issue or guide them on how they can make their case or propose an action within your rules and parliamentary procedure.

Motions

During regular order, your members participate in the business of the Lodge through making motions. These motions can be for:

- ***Asking a Question***
- ***Changing the Agenda***
 - ***Adding new business***
 - ***Ending discussion on an item***
 - ***Returning to a previous discussion***
- ***Deciding on an item in discussion***
- ***Amending the way the Lodge does business***
- ***And so on.***

Motions are made to the Chair. The Chair recognizes the moving member and determines whether the motion is “in order.” Depending on what the motion is or attempts to do, it may be “out of order,” in the case that it’s getting in the way of other business being conducted.

For instance, if a member just moved to close debate “move the previous question” on buying the Lodge a new computer, while that motion is being considered a new motion from another member to buy all new members baseball caps would be out of order, it gets in the way of the business being decided. The Chair would rule the second motion (for ballcaps) out of order until the original motion (closing debate on whether to buy a new computer) is completed.

In Robert’s Rules, certain motions have precedence and can be considered Privileged, Incidental, Subsidiary, or Main Motions.

Motions

Luckily, our Lodge officers don't have to memorize what kinds of motions can happen within a meeting. As an appendix to our **BMWED Ritual** we have a **Parliamentary Motions Guide** based on Robert's Rules of Order.

A Chair can judge what it is the member wants to do, refer to the Parliamentary Motions Guide, and determine how to keep the meeting on track. If the member's motion can interrupt a motion already "on the table," the Guide will indicate that. The Parliamentary Motions Guide also shows which motions require a "second" from another member, which must be opened for debate, amended by further motions, or put up to a vote.

The Lodge President can use this as a "cheat sheet" to help them do their job, keeping meeting business on track and keeping members engaged. This Parliamentary Motions Guide can be found with our BMWED Ritual, in printed copies of our BMWED Bylaws, available on our website, and is also included as an appendix with this *Guide*.

Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)*

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2 ND ?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§21 Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§20 Take break	I move to recess for	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19 Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18 Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17 Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	I move the previous					

Voting on Motions

Once a motion has been recognized and, if necessary, seconded by another member, the motion may be debated or voted on directly. See the Parliamentary Motions Guide to know which motions should have debate and which do not. If debate is allowed for the motion, it can be called to a vote by a member “moving the previous question.”

In their role as the Chair, the Lodge President is empowered to determine whether or not a motion passes or fails through a voice vote. This is often where a Chair asks for all in favor to say “aye” or yes, and all opposed to say “nay” or no. This may also involve raising hands to show favor or opposition to the motion. It is the Chair’s judgment whether the yes or no votes win and the motion carries or fails.

If Lodge rules require it, if the Chair is in doubt about the results, or if a member requests it, other methods of voting may be used. These includes a “rising vote” or “division,” where members stand in favor or stand against so they may be seen. They will remain standing until counted.

Roll call votes may be used. If so, the Recording Secretary or Secretary-Treasurer will read off the names of members present, giving them each a chance to voice their decision and record it.

The different “winning” numbers for votes, often simple majority or two-thirds majority, can be found in the Parliamentary Motions Guide. The meeting minutes should record all aspects of the vote, how it was conducted, and how it was decided.

For voting in Lodge elections, refer to the ***BMWED Lodge Elections Guide***.

Debate

“It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it.”

— Joseph Joubert

As a Lodge, your members can deliberate together on how best to use your resources and ACT! Not everyone will agree on the best course of action, so it's important to provide a way all members can share their views openly, consider other opinions, and find consensus on important business.

Debate with parliamentary procedure is an important part of ensuring that the process focuses on people, not the other way around. You work as Chair is to ensure that debate is kept on topic, kept respectful, and allows time and space for all sides of an issue to be discussed.

During debate, your Lodge may find it should amend a motion, consider alternatives, or “table” a proposed plan of action until a later date. A lively debate may show the need to form a Lodge committee to get more facts or make more specific plans.

In Lodge business, you can have standing rules to limit the amount of time anyone can speak for or against a motion, or your members can propose a time limit through another motion. If you do have time limits, it's up to the Chair to enforce them equally. This also prevents “soapboxing.” This all depends on your Lodge, your business, and your judgment. The goal is to be fair, to be thorough, and to get business accomplished.

All members participating in debate should address the Chair and not debate directly to one another. Debate should remain on the topic at hand. A good tip is to alternate “for” and “against” speakers for any topic. If it's a particularly big issue, limiting the number of total speakers may be necessary (i.e. three “for” and three “against”).

Debate



Tips on setting up an effective debate

- When a motion is made and seconded, and pending no other motions which can take precedence (refer to the Parliamentary Motions Guide), the Chair can recognize a moving member as having “***the floor.***” The moving member may then speak on behalf of their motion for a time set by the Chair or the Lodge.
- After the first speaker concludes, the Chair can recognize other speakers. If there are speakers both “for” and “against” the motion, care should be taken to alternate between them.
- No speaker should be given the opportunity to speak twice until all others who wish to speak have done so.
- If, during debate, an amendment is proposed and seconded, the Lodge moves to considering (and debating) the amendment. Once that is resolved, the debate returns to the original (possibly amended) motion.
- Whoever has “the floor” should not be interrupted. If another member wants to ask a question, they should request this from the Chair, who may then ask the speaker if they will yield to a question.
- Any member may move to end debate by moving “***the previous question.***” This would require a second and is not itself debated. However, the Lodge can also have standing rules setting a certain number of speakers prior to “calling the question” to a vote.
- While the Lodge is engaged in debate, the Chair should make sure no other side conversations or cross-talk take place.
- The debate itself does not need to be recorded in the minutes, though the Lodge may decide to do so in certain circumstances.
- Questions on the conduct of the meeting (points of order or parliamentary inquiry) or request for information (points of information) aren’t considered part of the debate and might interrupt debate if urgent, at the Chair’s discretion.

Debate



DEBATE SHOULD	DEBATE SHOULD NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Allow members to learn the facts of the issue.</i>• <i>Offer a chance for members to weigh the merits of any decision or course of action.</i>• <i>Stay focused on the topic at hand.</i>• <i>Treat all members, the Lodge, and our union with respect.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Be places for any one member to “grandstand,” make conjectures, or state unsupported opinions.</i>• <i>Turn into “gripe” sessions or daydreaming. Discussion should focus on goals and actions.</i>• <i>Wander off topic.</i>• <i>Serve as a venue for any member, the Lodge, or the union to be treated disrespectfully.</i>

Because the topics your Lodge considers matter to our members, to our livelihood, and to our union, it's understandable that our members can have strong opinions.

Whether you agree or not, as Chair your work is to ensure that any strong opinions are presented as strong arguments for or against a course of action, not as attacks against any person. Your ability to moderate discussion, defuse tension, and maintain decorum are vital skills, useful in any leadership position.

Discussions and Presentations

Once your Lodge concludes necessary business, you may reserve time for educational presentations, guest speakers, or other content.



Brother Roy Morrison, BMWED Director of Safety, presenting before the National Association in June 2023.

Parliamentary procedure is not really used for these parts of your meeting, as they are not items to be voted upon or debated.

Whatever topic is being discussed, your work as Chair is to ensure that adequate time and respect are given to the speaker or presenter. You may help them with any materials or equipment they have to use or distribute.

Open discussion or Q&A during presentations does not have to follow parliamentary procedure.

When running your meeting, you may choose to adjourn the formal portion of the meeting before the guest speaker or presentation, or you can recess the meeting while these occur before formally adjourning at the end of all Lodge meeting activities. These both require motions within parliamentary procedure.

However you handle it, ensure your members understand what is being presented beforehand, as well as how long the presentation is expected to last. This can be done by posting the meeting agenda before your meeting.

Initiations, Appointments, Elections, and Installations

If you have new members in your Lodge, you may have a ceremony to formally induct them into your Lodge. Initiations are a ceremonial function laid out in our ***BMWED Ritual***.

Depending on the work your Lodge has done within the meeting, you may find it necessary to appoint committees of Lodge members to conduct certain work. While both the ***Lodge Audit Committee*** and the ***Grievance Committee*** are standing committees elected per our ***BMWED Bylaws***, other temporary committees are appointed by the Lodge President. These can be for routine work or special projects. Appointments have no prescribed ceremony but should be recorded. When appointments are made, a statement of their objective and a follow-up date should also be determined.

Elections for officers in the Lodge are handled as provided in our ***BMWED Bylaws*** or your ***System Division or Federation Bylaws***. Refer to the ***Lodge Elections Guide*** for tips and guidance on handling Lodge elections.



After new officers have been successfully elected, they are installed into their office with a ceremony prescribed within our ***BMWED Ritual***. Refer to our Ritual for more information on how to install officers.

Other Items

Successfully running an effective Lodge meeting is an art that takes practice. There is not single recipe for success.

This *Guide* offers some tips and helps set a good foundation for your development as a leader within your Lodge and our union. The best way to learn how to conduct effective, meaningful meetings is to learn by doing!

Lodge meetings are usually not incredibly formal affairs. They also offer you and other members a chance to practice the skills you need to be effective at larger, more formal events, like your Joint Protective Board meetings, System Division or Federation conventions, and our BMWED Convention.

Use this *Guide* alongside all your other resources to act as a “toolbox” for the tips, techniques, and concepts you can use in your work. These *Guides* are not stand-alone manuals or encyclopedias, and should form the basis for your own notes, Lodge rules, or follow-on learning.

Find these *Guides* and more resources on our union’s website at

[https://www.bmwe.org/library!](https://www.bmwe.org/library)



...and more!

Notes and Further Resources

Standing Lodge Meeting Rules:

Time Limits for Debate: _____

Voting on Motions: _____

Notes:

Jim Slaughter, Parliamentarian (Guidance and resources on parliamentary procedure from a professional):

<https://www.jimslaughter.com>

Robert's Rules of Order online:

<https://robertsrules.com>





A PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS GUIDE

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)

**A “QUICK REFERENCE” RESOURCE PROVIDED TO ASSIST YOU
IN UNDERSTANDING THE PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES
USED DURING BMWED MEETINGS**



Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)*

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2ND?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§21 Close meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§20 Take break	I move to recess for	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19 Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18 Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17 Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§16 Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§15 Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
§14 Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§13 Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§12 Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§11 Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
§10 Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that [or "to"] ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

~6~

Parliamentary Motions Guide

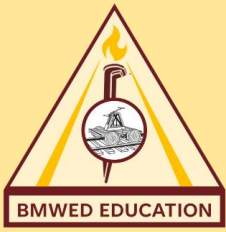
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Incidental Motions - no order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decided immediately.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2 ND ?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§23 Enforce rules	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	None
§24 Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
§25 Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules which ...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§26 Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
§27 Divide motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§29 Demand rising vote	I call for a division	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33 Parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None
§33 Request for information	Point of information	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None

Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly - no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.

§34 Take matter from table	I move to take from the table ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§35 Cancel or change previous action	I move to rescind/ amend something previously adopted...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or maj. w/ notice
§37 Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider the vote ...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority



Quick Reference – Running a Lodge Meeting

The primary responsibility of our BMWED Lodge Presidents and Vice Presidents is to effectively run our local Lodge meetings. As provided in Article XVIII, Section 13 of our BMWED Bylaws:

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Lodge, preserve decorum and decide all questions of order subject to an appeal to the Lodge. He shall see that a correct audit of the Secretary-Treasurer's books is made by the Auditing Committee as hereafter provided in this Section not later than thirty (30) days after the end of each quarter. He shall appoint all Committees, the members of which shall be elected as provided in Section 9 of this Article. He shall enforce compliance by all Officers and members of the Lodge with the provision of these Bylaws, the IBT Constitution and the Merger Agreement and any applicable System Division or Federation Constitution and/or Bylaws. He shall case the deciding vote on all questions in case of a tie vote of the Lodge.

The President shall also discharge on behalf of the Local Lodge such duties as may be imposed upon him by applicable law, including the execution and filing of any required reports, and he shall cause to be maintained by the Lodge such records in support of such reports and for such periods as the law requires.

The Vice President shall assist the President in the performance of his duties and in the absence of the President he shall preside at all meetings of the Lodge.

[NOTE: The use of words such as he, his and him, as they appear in our BMWED Bylaws, is not intended to restrict the application of these Bylaws or a particular Article or Section to a specific gender, but are used solely for the purpose of grammatical convenience and clarification.]

So, what does all this really mean?

Quick Reference – Running a Lodge Meeting

Setting an Agenda?

Setting an effective agenda means you understand what work your Lodge members want to accomplish, what else needs to be done, and how much time you have to consider the issues around this work.

An agenda doesn't need to be perfect, but you should never go into any meeting without an agenda. Many parts of your agenda can come from following our BMWED Ritual. Using our Ritual also adds structure and **decorum** to your meeting. Decorum is the standard of respect, thoughtfulness, and proper behavior we all want to have in work that is meaningful to us. By maintaining proper decorum and sticking to an agenda, we can ensure that members feel respected within our meetings and feel they are doing something worth their time.

Your key resources for this, again, are our BMWED Bylaws and our BMWED Ritual. If you are looking for items to add to your meeting and make it more valuable, you can invite speakers from within BMWED or from other unions to present information to your members. Our BMWED Training Library has a variety of resources you can use to add content to your meetings, or you can ask your members what work they would like to accomplish, together, and set your agenda to discuss that business, plan for it, and make sure that the work gets done! It could be a family picnic, working with your System or Federation on an informational picket, reviewing your Lodge's plans and preparedness for a strike, or putting together a fundraiser to help a member in need. Your Lodge can do a lot, if you decide to do it together. If you find work you want to take on, that can inform your agenda!

More assistance in building an effective agenda can come from asking your BMWED officers and staff. Reach out!

Quick Reference – Running a Lodge Meeting

An Office, Not a One-Person Lodge!

Delegating and Appointing Committees is an important part of being an effective Lodge President or VP, often an overlooked part. While your members may look forward to a nice Christmas Party or expect a great guest presenter, you should be able to communicate clearly to them that, as a Lodge, you all work together to accomplish good things.

As President, you are empowered to appoint committees of your Lodge members to accomplish work your Lodge deems worthwhile. You can also delegate some work for exploring, developing, or managing projects. As President, you are responsible for ensuring your Lodge's work is accomplished, but that does **NOT** mean that you are supposed to do it all yourself!

Your Vice President can be a very valuable, for instance, in leading a committee to plan for a Lodge picnic or in coordinating with our Organizing Department (or other Departments). If you have strong members who aren't holding a Lodge office, you can appoint them to lead committees, too, developing their own skills and strengthening your Lodge.

If you do appoint or delegate work, that doesn't mean you're hands-off. You still have a responsibility to offer guidance, assistance, and ensure that Lodge goals or benchmarks are met. Just remember, being an effective President doesn't mean doing it all yourself, it means engaging and activating your Lodge to do more together!

Quick Reference – Running a Lodge Meeting

Order of Business for Each Meeting (BMWED Ritual)

Introduce Visitors/Visiting Members (if Any)

- 1) Roll Call of Officers
- 2) Read Minutes of Previous Meeting
- 3) Introduce New Members
- 4) Initiate New Members
- 5) Secretary-Treasurer's Report
 - 1) Report on Suspended/Expelled Members
 - 2) Communications, Bills, or Notices
 - 3) Receipts or Disbursements since last meeting
 - 4) Financial Report
 - 5) Application for Transfer or Withdrawal Cards (Member Status Changes)
- 6) Report of Committees
- 7) Unfinished Business
- 8) New Business
- 9) Health, Welfare and Sickness Benefits
- 10) Is any Brother/Sister deceased, sick or otherwise distressed?
- 11) Political Discussion
- 12) Safety Discussion
- 13) Debate – Good and Welfare of the Brotherhood
- 14) Appointment of Committees (if needed)
- 15) Election of officers, delegates, Board members (if needed)
- 16) Installation of officers

Tips, Tricks, and Techniques

- ❑ Have an agenda written out **BEFORE** your meeting. Work with your other Lodge officers to draft it. You can meet separately with your Lodge officers to prepare an agenda for your regular meeting, if needed.
- ❑ Keep our BMWED Bylaws, your Sys. Div/Fed. Bylaws, and a copy of Robert's Rules of Order (parliamentary procedure) available for reference at each meeting.
- ❑ For Political Discussion items, reach out to our Legislative Department or work with your Lodge Legislative Representative.
- ❑ For Safety Discussion items, reach out to our Safety Department.
- ❑ Our Educational Department can offer brief training modules or content to add to your meeting.
- ❑ Your Grievance Committee (Local Chairperson) should also prepare a report for each meeting, to give after the S/T Report (in Report of Cmtes.)
- ❑ Find tools and resources at <https://www.bmwe.org> and [bmwe.org/library](https://www.bmwe.org/library).
- ❑ Find contact information for BMWED officers or staff at <https://www.bmwe.org/directory>.

Roberts Rules of Order – Simplified

Guiding Principles:

- Everyone has the right to participate in discussion if they wish, before anyone may speak a second time.
- Everyone has the right to know what is going on at all times. Only urgent matters may interrupt a speaker.
- Only one thing (motion) can be discussed at a time.

A **motion** is the topic under discussion (e.g., “I move that we add a coffee break to this meeting”). After being recognized by the president of the board, any member can introduce a motion when no other motion is on the table. A motion requires a second to be considered. If there is no second, the matter is not considered. Each motion must be disposed of (passed, defeated, tabled, referred to committee, or postponed indefinitely).

How to do things:

You want to bring up a new idea before the group.

After recognition by the president of the board, present your motion. A second is required for the motion to go to the floor for discussion, or consideration.

You want to change some of the wording in a motion under discussion.

After recognition by the president of the board, move to amend by

- adding words,
- striking words or
- striking and inserting words.

You like the idea of a motion being discussed, but you need to reword it beyond simple word changes.

Move to substitute your motion for the original motion. If it is seconded, discussion will continue on both motions and eventually the body will vote on which motion they prefer.

You want more study and/or investigation given to the idea being discussed.

Move to refer to a committee. Try to be specific as to the charge to the committee.

You want more time personally to study the proposal being discussed.

Move to postpone to a definite time or date.

You are tired of the current discussion.

Move to limit debate to a set period of time or to a set number of speakers. Requires a 2/3rds vote.

You have heard enough discussion.

Move to close the debate. Also referred to as calling the question. This cuts off discussion and brings the assembly to a vote on the pending question only. Requires a 2/3rds vote.

You want to postpone a motion until some later time.

Move to table the motion. The motion may be taken from the table after 1 item of business has been conducted. If the motion is not taken from the table by the end of the next meeting, it is dead. To kill a motion at the time it is tabled requires a 2/3rds vote. A majority is required to table a motion without killing it.

You believe the discussion has drifted away from the agenda and want to bring it back.
 “Call for orders of the day.”

You want to take a short break.
 Move to recess for a set period of time.

You want to end the meeting.
 Move to adjourn.

You are unsure the president of the board announced the results of a vote correctly.
 Without being recognized, call for a “division of the house.” A roll call vote will then be taken.

You are confused about a procedure being used and want clarification.
 Without recognition, call for "Point of Information" or "Point of Parliamentary Inquiry." The president of the board will ask you to state your question and will attempt to clarify the situation.

You have changed your mind about something that was voted on earlier in the meeting for which you were on the winning side.
 Move to reconsider. If the majority agrees, the motion comes back on the floor as though the vote had not occurred.

You want to change an action voted on at an earlier meeting.
 Move to rescind. If previous written notice is given, a simple majority is required. If no notice is given, a 2/3^{rds} vote is required.

Unanimous Consent:

If a matter is considered relatively minor or opposition is not expected, a call for unanimous consent may be requested. If the request is made by others, the president of the board will repeat the request and then pause for objections. If none are heard, the motion passes.

- **You may INTERRUPT a speaker for these reasons only:**
 - to get information about business –point of information to get information about rules– parliamentary inquiry
 - if you can't hear, safety reasons, comfort, etc. –question of privilege
 - if you see a breach of the rules –point of order
 - if you disagree with the president of the board’s ruling –appeal
 - if you disagree with a call for Unanimous Consent –object

Quick Reference					
	Must Be Seconded	Open for Discussion	Can be Amended	Vote Count Required to Pass	May Be Reconsidered or Rescinded
Main Motion	√	√	√	Majority	√
Amend Motion	√	√		Majority	√
Kill a Motion	√			Majority	√
Limit Debate	√		√	2/3 ^{rds}	√
Close Discussion	√			2/3 ^{rds}	√
Recess	√		√	Majority	
Adjourn (End meeting)	√			Majority	
Refer to Committee	√	√	√	Majority	√
Postpone to a later time	√	√	√	Majority	√
Table	√			Majority	
Postpone Indefinitely	√	√	√	Majority	√

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE⁴

A Basic Guide to Meeting Procedures for Boards and Groups

Many boards follow parliamentary procedures to accomplish their business discussions and decisions. A review of parliamentary procedure follows.

Purpose of Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure was developed by General Henry M. Robert during the Civil War to bring order to officer meetings. The basic premise of Robert's Rules of Order is to protect each member's rights, while seeing that the majority rules. Parliamentary procedure is designed to accomplish one thing at a time, bringing each to resolution before going on to the next, all the while seeing that courtesy is extended to everyone.

Building the Agenda

Before each meeting, the Chair should create a detailed agenda. This includes the regular procedures for the board such as call to order, any opening ceremonies (pledge to the flag, etc.), reading of minutes, treasurer's report, committee reports, announcements, items of old business, items of new business, executive sessions, breaks, next meeting date and location, and any other major items that should come up during the meeting.

Questions to ask before the agenda would be:

- Does the secretary have the minutes ready for approval?
- Does the treasurer have a financial report ready to present?
- Do any officers or standing committee chairs have actions to propose or reports to make?
- Are any special committee reports due? Will any actions be proposed? What are they?
- Were any agenda items not reached at the time the last meeting adjourned?
- Was anything postponed to this meeting?
- Does the annual planning calendar require that action be taken at this meeting?
- What items will support the strategic direction? How does this meeting promote the organization's progress?
- Have you kept your ear to the ground so there are no surprises?

There are five basic types of agenda:

Priority Agenda: Put the items that must be decided at this meeting early on the agenda. Make sure that the most important items are considered first, when everyone is fresh.

Subject-Based Agenda: Group similar subjects together so that you aren't constantly changing focus, such as: administrative, financial, membership, etc.

⁴ Taylor, Bill, Northeast Area Community Development Educator, University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service, July 2007.

Strategic Agenda: Group your decisions according to the goals of the board. You can also create a strategic agenda for an entire meeting, retreat, or time period.

Presiding Agenda: After the member's agenda is prepared, make yourself a separate agenda with notations about votes required, committee appointments, etc. Leave extra space for notes and reminders.

Consent Agenda: The consent agenda is usually put near the start of the meeting. It is actually part of the regular agenda and can be made up of any number of items, but any item placed on the consent agenda should be so uncontroversial that it can be reasonably expected that it will be adopted with no debate or separate vote. The Chair calls up the consent agenda by saying "the consent agenda is before you" and then asks if anyone wants to remove anything. To do so, a member does not need to be recognized; he just calls out the item number. The Chair responds, "Item number x is removed." When no more items are removed, the Chair says: "Without objection, the remaining items on the consent agenda will be adopted." Remember: no debate or separate vote is allowed on any item unless it is removed. If no one objects, all items are adopted. Removed items are either taken up right after the adoption of the consent agenda or are placed later on the agenda under the heading where they would have otherwise appeared. The approval of the minutes, routine matters, or motions that have been discussed at previous meetings are good candidates for a consent agenda.

It is often helpful to ask each person as they arrive if they have any agenda items and to check with committee chairs to see if they have reports to be included. Items of business brought up during committee reports can be handled immediately after the report or added to the order of business during old and/or new business.

Often the agenda is put before the group as soon as the meeting is called to order and the Chair asks for any changes, additions, or suggestions. The agenda can be agreed to by consensus and it remains simply a suggested outline for the Chair. However, if a motion is made and passed to approve the agenda, it becomes the order of the day and must be followed unless a motion is passed to suspend the order. If the "order of the day" is established and the group strays from this order of business, any member may call for the "order of the day" and the Chair is required to immediately bring the meeting back to the current or next item on the agenda.

Voting

There are four basic methods of voting in a meeting:

1. *Voice*

The Chair asks members to verbally say "Aye" or "Nay" to a motion. This type of vote is used when a specific count is not required. When used, the Chair must decide and announce which vote carried the majority and whether the motion passed or failed.

2. *Rising*

Rising means standing or raising of hands. This method is used for a specific

count and that count should be announced by the Chair along with the passage or failure of the motion.

3. *Secret ballot*

The secret ballot is used to allow each member to cast their vote while avoiding undue influence by others. The Chair is allowed to vote when using this method.

4. *Roll call*

The secretary polls and records the vote of each member. The Chair then announces the results, often stating which members voted for and against the issue.

Most votes require a simple majority, which is one more than half the members voting (**not** 51% of those present). For example, suppose there are 20 members present at a meeting and a vote is required on a motion which needs a simple majority to pass. Fifty one percent of the members present would be 10.2 members. Since you cannot count a portion of a member, 51% would be rounded up to 11 members. However, if only 16 of the members vote on the motion, then one more than half of those voting would be 9 members. So, in this case, it would require 9 favorable votes to pass the motion (one more than half those members voting), instead of 11 (51% of those members present).

A two-thirds majority is required for motions which limit rights. A two-thirds vote requires a rising or ballot vote.

The Chair does not vote during a voice vote to avoid undue influence by the power of his or her position. If the Chair cannot determine whether the “ayes” or “nays” have more votes, he or she may decide to call for a rising vote. In the case of a rising vote, the Chair may vote to create or break a tie, but not both. The Chair is free to vote in a secret ballot like any other member. In all cases, a tied vote fails to pass the motion.

If a member does not agree with the determination of the chair on a vote, they may call for a “Division of the House.” If the Division of the House is called for, the Chair must proceed to a counted vote (rising or ballot).

Not all motions require a vote by the body, some are simply ruled on by the Chair (e.g. point of order).

Quorum

A quorum is the number of members required to be present at the meeting to conduct business. This amount is usually one member over half unless otherwise stated in the bylaws. If a quorum is not present at the meeting, a general discussion can be held on various issues, but no official business can be conducted.

If stated in the by-laws or previously approved by the membership, alternative methods may be used to obtain a quorum, such as using electronic communications (speaker phone, web cam, email, etc.), proxy votes, or other methods.

General Meeting Requirements

- Presiding officer
 - Usually the Chair or President

- Secretary or recorder
- Other officers as stated in the bylaws
- A quorum of members

Motion

A motion is simply a tool to transact business. If parliamentary procedure is strictly followed, there should be no discussion or business completed without a motion on the floor. This means there is enough interest for discussion of the issue to proceed. However, this rule is often not strictly adhered to, especially in smaller boards and/or groups which may want to have some open discussion before deciding whether the issue needs to be considered as a formal item of business. However, the Chair should see that most issues proceed quickly to a motion. If a motion is not forthcoming, the item should be referred to another place and time outside the business meeting. The term "business meeting" means just that – a place where business is conducted, not unending discussion of related or unrelated issues.

A second is required by most motions to show that more than one person is interested. If there is no second then the motion lost for lack of second, and the Chair announces it as such. Until a motion is seconded the maker can withdraw it. Once it is seconded, it becomes the property of the group and is on the floor for discussion or final determination.

There are four types of motions:

- Main – to introduce business
- Subsidiary – to change or take action on the main motion
 - Most common – amendment
- Incidental – deals with rules and parliamentary procedure
- Privileged – handles personal matters
 - Such as: can't hear, don't understand, too cold, adjourn

See the ***Summary of Motions*** at the end of this document for a listing of the major motions of each type and their characteristics, such as whether they require a second, if they are debatable and amendable, what vote is required for passage, whether they can be reconsidered, whether subsidiary motions can be applied to them, and whether they are in order when someone else has the floor.

Handling a Main Motion

Let's review the proper procedure for handling a main motion which has been properly made during the meeting.

A member rises or raises their hand for recognition and addresses the Chair, "Mr/Madam/Ms President/Chair Person."

The Chair must recognize the member before the member continues by using their name or some other format and asking them to continue.

The member presents the motion by saying, "I move...". A motion is **NOT** offered by saying, "I make a motion..." or "I motion...". Motions are made in the positive. In other words, motions intend to do something or cause something to happen. Motions are not usually offered to **NOT** do something – simply refrain from making a motion if you don't want to follow a course of action.

The Chair asks for a second. Parliamentary law does not require the recognition or recording of who made the second. Consequently, a second only requires a member to call out that they second the motion. A second is required to prove that more than one person is interested in the motion. If a second is required and not made, the Chair will declare that the motion is lost for want of a second.

If seconded, the Chair repeats the motion and asks for discussion. Only during discussion can other motions be made to change the main motion or do something with it. Each member who wants to discuss must be recognized by the Chair. The maker of the motion should have the first right to provide arguments in favor of their motion. The Chair has the responsibility to recognize persons on both sides of the issue, preferably in alternating order if their position is known.

The Chair should not discuss or introduce business. The Chair should only discuss business if he or she gives up the chair to another (vice-chair, etc.). This should not become a general practice and only be used if the Chair feels they have vital discussion concerning the issue before the group. On the other hand, the Chair may provide information previously unknown to the board without giving up the chairmanship if it is given in a factual and neutral matter and allowing the members to discuss its implications and decide how the information should affect its decisions.

If the Chair gives up the chairmanship to discuss a motion, he or she should not take the chairmanship back until the matter is decided, and then must wait for the invitation of the person who assumed the chairmanship in their place.

Bringing the discussion to an end:

1) The Chair can ask for a vote if (s)he has asked for more discussion and there is none.

2) A member can call out "*Question*," which means they are ready and asking for a vote. The call for the question carries no legal weight – it is only a suggestion. If more discussion is offered, the call for the question is ignored.

The Chair states, "*The question has been called. Is there any further discussion?*" If there is none then..."*Seeing none, we will proceed to vote.*"

3) A member can move "The Previous Question." In this case the member is moving to end discussion and move to a vote. This motion requires a second and, since it curtails the right for further discussion, takes a two-thirds vote to pass.

After discussion, the motion must be voted on unless another motion has done something else with it; e.g. – lay on the table, postpone indefinitely, postpone to a certain time, refer to a committee. The Chair states, "*We shall now proceed to vote on the motion to...*" and restates the motion (as amended, if amended) so all understand what they are voting on. If a counted vote is not required, the Chair calls for a voice vote: "*All in favor of the motion say 'aye.'* All opposed '*nay*'."

After the vote, the Chair must announce the outcome: "*The motion is carried/lost.*" If a gavel is used, one tap of the gavel follows the Chair announcement.

Order of Precedence

Order of precedence is the order in which motions must be handled if more than one is on the floor at one time. The chart below shows the order of precedence of some of the more common motions. A motion lower on the chart is out of order if a

motion above it is being considered. Whenever a motion is decided it loses its precedence because it is no longer on the floor.

Adjournment
Recess
Points of Order
Lay on the Table
Previous Question
Postpone to Definite Time
Refer to a Committee
Amendment to Amendment
Amendment to Main Motion
Postpone Indefinitely
Main Motion

The motion to adjourn always has highest precedence because it will end consideration of all other business.

See a complete guide in Robert's Rules of Order for in-depth directions on precedence procedures.

Amendments

Amendments can be made to insert, delete, or change the wording of an amendable motion. However, an amendment is not in order to completely reverse the meaning of the motion. Amendments are made during discussion of the main or another amendable motion. A second is required, it is debatable and amendable, a majority vote is required, and the amendment can be reconsidered.

If made and seconded, the amendment must be discussed and voted on before going back to discussion on main motion. Why? Because it may change the main motion and change opinions on whether it be pass or fail.

Once the amendment is passed or failed, business proceeds back to discussion on the main motion as it was made or as amended. If amended, the Chair should state the wording of the main motion as amended.

Amendments can be amended.

The same procedure applies as for the amendment to a main motion. However, only two levels (an amendment to the amendment) are usually allowed – too many levels of amendments are confusing. Remember that the “amendment to the amendment” must be decided first (takes precedence), then the “amendment to the main motion,” and then the main motion. And each level of amendment is offered, discussed, and voted upon during the discussion of the motion to which it applies.

Example Procedure

Chair: *Is there any further business?*

MAIN MOTION:

Member: *Mr. Chairman*

Chair: *Tom (Sam, Eunice, Mary, Bill...)*

Member: *Since our treasury is getting low I move that we hold a sale of services.*

SECOND:

I second the motion.

Chair: *It has been moved and seconded to hold a sale of one day services by members. Is there any discussion on the motion?*

DISCUSSION:

Member 1: *Mr. Chairman*

President: *Mary*

Member 1: *I think this is a great idea because we have the manpower and our benevolence fund has been completely drained.*

Member 2: *Mr. Chairman*

Chair: *Dick*

Member: *I would urge the membership to vote against this motion because I am so busy. I just don't have the time to donate a day of free work, and I doubt that many of you do either.*

AMENDMENT ONE:

Member: *Mr. Chairman*

Chair: *Lucy*

Member: *I move to amend the motion to add the words "at the February 10th basketball game."*

Chair: *Is there a second?*

Member: *I second the motion.*

Chair: *It has been moved and seconded to amend the motion by adding the words "at the February 10th basketball game." Is there any discussion?*

Member: *Mr. Chairman*

Chair: *Sam*

Member: *I don't think that will work because that is the same day that most of us will be gone on a business trip to Cheyenne.*

AMENDMENT TWO:

Member: *Mr. Chairman*

Chair: *Susie*

Member: *I move to amend the amendment by changing the 10th to the 17th.*

Member: *Second.*

Chair: *It has been moved and seconded to amend the amendment by changing the date from the 10th to the 17th. Is there any discussion? (No discussion offered.)*

If there is no discussion, we are ready to vote on the amendment to the amendment to change the date to the 17th. All those in favor say "aye." Those opposed "nay." (Makes judgment on prevailing vote.)

The motion carries.

AMENDMENT ONE:

Chair: *We will now resume discussion on the amendment as amended to add the words "at the February 17th basketball game." Is there any further discussion? (No discussion offered.)*

If not, we shall proceed to vote on the amendment. All those in favor say "aye."

All those opposed "nay." (Makes judgment on prevailing vote.)

The "ayes" have it. The amendment is passed.

MAIN MOTION:

Chair: *We will now resume discussion on the main motion as amended to read: "We will hold a sale of services at the February 17th basketball game." Is there any further discussion? (No discussion is offered.)*

Hearing none, we will proceed to vote. All those in favor of holding a sale of services at the February 17th basketball game, say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay." (Makes judgment on prevailing vote.)

The motion is carried.

Member: *I call for a division of the house.*

Chair: *A division of the house has been called for. All those in favor of the motion please stand and remain standing to be counted. (Those standing are counted.)*

All those opposed please stand. (Those standing are counted.)

The count is 23 to 14 in favor of the motion. The motion is carried.

MOVING TO NEXT ITEM OF BUSINESS:

Chair: *The next item of business on our agenda is...*

[or]

Mr./Madam Secretary, what is our next item of business?

[or]

Is there any further business to be presented?

[or]

That completes our business for today. I declare this meeting adjourned.

Reports

Secretary's minutes, the Treasurer's report, and committee reports are just that, reports. They do not require a motion for acceptance and are simply received by the Chair.

The minutes of previous meetings should be read, either at the beginning of the meeting, or sent out to members previously. After reading, the Chair simply asks whether there are any corrections, then declares the minutes approved as read or corrected. No motion is necessary.

The same procedure is used for the Treasurer's report.

If committee reports contain recommendations for the board, then the person making the report should properly move for the adoption of the report at its conclusion. A second is not required, since the committee recommendation proves that more than one person is already interested in its passage. Adoption of the report means that the group has approved and adopted the recommendations. If there is disagreement on whether the recommendations should be adopted, discussion on the motion to adopt the report should reveal the pros and cons. If necessary, use the motion "Divide the Question" to consider recommendations separately.

All reports should become part of the Secretary's records.

Nominations

A nomination is a suggestion, not a motion. Consequently, nominations do not require a second. Nominations should be taken for the highest office first and election for that office should be completed. Then those not winning the election can be nominated for succeeding offices. If a nominating committee is used, accept their report, but then the membership should be asked for any additional nominations. A motion to close nominations requires a two-thirds vote since it is closing the privilege of offering names for the office in question.

Referral to Committee

A motion to refer to a committee can be made with three levels of power for the committee:

1. To report findings back to the body.
2. To report and make recommendations to the body.
3. To have the power to act on behalf of the body.

When a committee recommendation is brought in the form of a motion, no “second” is required from the floor since the committee is made up of several persons and this shows that more than one person is already interested in passage of the motion.

How to preside

President must:

- Keep members well informed concerning:
 - Pending business
 - Vote results
 - Motion before the group
 - Any matters affecting members’ rights
- Insist on accepted parliamentary procedure
- Maintain order

If an improper motion is made, the Chair should tactfully and courteously suggest the proper motion, avoiding “You are out of order!”.

Depending on the formality and working relationship of the group, the Chair can assume general consent without asking for a vote or motion. This is often reserved for items of lesser importance for which there is little indication of a difference of opinion. The Chair should state that the item is decided by consensus unless there is an objection. Members may ask for any item to be put to a vote if they doubt there is consensus.

Meeting Minutes

The following are items that should be included in meeting minutes.

- Kind of meeting
- Date
- Place
- Starting time
- Members present and absent
- Presiding officer
- Reading and approval of past minutes
- Balance of treasurer’s report
- Name of member introducing motion
- Action taken on motion
- Vote if counted
- Other actions/items which affect body
- Adjournment and time
- Secretary’s name and/or signature

It is not necessary to record who seconded a motion – it is sufficient to simply record that the motion was seconded. Nor is it necessary to record discussion or comments; only motions and decisions need be recorded.

Parliamentarian

It is quite acceptable for the Chair to stop the proceedings to check with a designated parliamentarian on proper procedure. If a parliamentarian is not designated, the Chair may take time to check on proper procedure or ask someone within the meeting to do the necessary research. It is better to get it right first than to try to go back and correct mistakes.

Use When Prudent and Necessary

Once you understand the basics of parliamentary procedure, the question remains – how much do you use? You can go all the way from not using any parliamentary procedure on the one end, such as using consensus or other methods to find agreement, to the other end, insisting on complete and total parliamentary law for any and everything in the meeting.

Most boards or groups find a middle pathway that works best for them. One of the dictating factors will be the board's bylaws. Most sets of bylaws state that meetings will be run by Robert's Rules of Order. If your bylaws state such, and you are not following proper parliamentary procedures, your actions could be deemed null and void, or even worse, illegal. Consequently, if you are constrained by law or your board bylaws state to function by parliamentary law, you must do so.

At the same time, there is a wide variance in the degree of enforcement of the use of parliamentary rules. Usually it is best to not use more parliamentary rules and procedures than is necessary and practical for your board and/or group meetings to run smoothly and efficiently. It may not be necessary to use more than the basics of properly making and completing main motions, amendments, and a few of the other subsidiary and incidental motions as needed. At the other extreme are legislative bodies and the Congress who follow very detailed, and sometimes convoluted parliamentary rules which are often used by one faction to thwart the efforts of another.

Find the level of parliamentary law that works well for your meetings and still falls within the requirements of being legal and efficient according to your bylaws and the statutes which empower your board.

SOME OTHER COMMON MOTIONS

Question of Privilege

Used for questions or issues which relate to the rights or privileges of any member. For issues affecting the entire group, the person raising the issue would say, "I rise to a question of privilege related to the assembly." These could be issues or questions related to items like heating, lighting, ventilation, disturbance or noise, punishing disorderly conduct, accuracy of reports, etc. For personal issues you would state, "I rise to a question of personal privilege." The Chair should do their best to remove any obstacles to a proper meeting and/or environment.

Point of Order

This is used to correct a parliamentary error occurring in the meeting to bring the group back to the proper order of procedure. To raise a Point of Order say, "Mr/Ms Chairperson, I rise to a point of order," without waiting for

recognition. After being recognized, state the error in parliamentary procedure. The Chair will rule on the point if (s)he knows the answer, check with the parliamentarian, ask for advice from other knowledgeable members, or a decision by the body.

The Chair will state, "Your point is well taken," or "Your point is not well taken," with an explanation of the reasoning for the decision.

Appeal From the Decision of the Chair

If you do not feel the Chair made a proper or legal decision, you may appeal their decision. Your appeal should be based on the occurrence of improper procedure, not disagreement on issues. This motion must be made at the time of the decision. Say, "Mr/Ms Chairperson, I appeal the decision of the Chair," without being recognized. The Chair must then put their decision to a vote of the body.

Parliamentary Inquiry

This motion is used to clear up a parliamentary question that needs to be answered immediately or may affect the outcome of the meeting. Start by saying, "Mr/Ms Chairperson, I rise to a parliamentary inquiry," without recognition. The Chair should provide an answer immediately if necessary, or may wait for the speaker to finish if possible. The Chair may need to check with the parliamentarian, other members, or the body to determine the proper parliamentary procedure.

To Lay on the Table

The object of this motion is to clear the floor for more urgent business and has the effect of delaying action on the issue to which it is applied. It should not be used to kill action on an item. The item of business should be taken up again as soon as is practical and is brought back to the floor by the motion: *To Take From the Table*.

To Postpone to a Certain Time

Unlike *To Lay on the Table*, this motion sets a specific time when the item of business is returned to the floor for action. This motion is not in order when the time set could not be realistically used to bring the item back on the floor, such as when the assembly will not be in session or when the time set is after the action must occur.

To Postpone Indefinitely

The purpose of this motion is to prevent a vote on the question and to actually suppress or kill the item.

Other Types of Meeting Facilitation (also see p. 11-12)

There are other types of meeting facilitation besides using parliamentary procedure and Robert's Rules of Order. These other methods of leading a meeting are usually used for other things besides legal business which can be recorded in typical minutes.

Consensus is often used by working groups that have certain tasks to perform, such as a committee or a conflict resolution process. Consensus does not mean that everyone always sees eye to eye or totally agrees on every issue, but rather those involved in the meeting are willing to give and take to find a resolution or solution that all can live with. Consensus means that everyone involved in the process will support the final solution put forth by the group and will not take action to stop or undermine that solution.

Another type of meeting facilitation which might be used is asking for unanimous support and agreement. If an issue is especially important, the board may not want to go ahead unless everyone is in agreement. This would require a favorable vote or comment by everyone involved in order to proceed.

If the board is not looking to conduct official business, general discussion may be in order. This is often used when the group is in the information gathering stage and the meeting is simply open to each person asking questions and making comments to come to greater shared understanding.

General discussion is similar to brainstorming. However, brainstorming is more generative. With this method, everyone is invited to provide any idea they might have on a subject or problem – the purpose being to get as many ideas on the table as possible without discussing the pros and cons, strengths or weakness of any of them. That is done later by other group processes which can help to group ideas, identify those that seem most practical or useful and have the most interest from group members.

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