

Service Bulletin—How to Conduct a Meeting Using Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules for conducting business meetings and public gatherings.

Parliamentary procedure allows everyone in the meeting to be heard and allows the group to make decisions without confusion.

Each meeting should have an agenda or a list of items to be discussed during the meeting. Club members will discuss topics on the agenda and share their opinions. The group makes decisions about how to move forward with projects and other activities.

Using the rules of parliamentary procedure will help the club get things done.

To understand how to conduct a meeting, you will need to understand the meaning of the following words:

Parliamentary procedure glossary

Adjourn:	to end the meeting
Adopt:	to choose or accept
Agenda:	items to be discussed during the meeting
Amend:	to change a motion
Chairman:	the person in charge of a group of people in a meeting or in a committee
Committee:	a group of people chosen to act upon a certain task
Debate:	discussion about a motion
General consent:	adopting a motion without a vote
Majority:	more than one-half of the members who are present and voting
Motion:	a proposal that the group take a stand or take action on some issue
Quorum:	the number or percentage of members who must be present to conduct business legally
Second:	a verbal signal from a member that he or she wishes to consider a motion
Voting	the means by which motions are accepted or rejected by the group

An agenda lists items to be discussed during a meeting. Below is an example of discussion topics listed on a fixed agenda.

AGENDA

1. Call to order—The person leading the meeting (the chairman or president) says, “The meeting will come to order.” This is how the meeting is started.
2. Minutes—One of the club secretary’s jobs is to take notes during the club meeting and write down everything that was discussed. During the meeting, the secretary will read the minutes of the previous meeting.
3. Officers’ reports—Officers of the Builders Club include the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and sergeant-at-arms. A report is given by each of the officers during the meeting.
4. Committee reports—The chairman of each club committee tells the club what the committee has been doing.
5. Unfinished business—The president presents items discussed at the previous meeting that need to be discussed further.
6. New business—The president presents new topics for discussion. New business sometimes is referred to as “special order.”
7. Club program—A guest speaker is invited to speak about a topic of interest.
8. Announcements—The president or another club member shares information with club members about upcoming events and activities.
9. Adjournment—The president moves to adjourn the meeting and closes the meeting.

How members express their opinions!

When a club member wants to share an idea, he/she makes a motion. A motion is a proposal that the group take a stand or take action on some item. Members have a right to:

Present motions—(to make a proposal)

"I move that we have a special teacher appreciation day!"

Second motions—(to share support for the discussion of another member's motion)

"I second that motion!"

Debate motions —(to give opinions on the motion)

"I would like to discuss our plans for teacher appreciation day."

Vote on motions—(to make a decision)

"I move that we adopt this motion and organize a teacher appreciation day."

"All those in favor, say 'aye'; all those opposed, say 'no.'"

Here is an example of how to vote on a motion:

The club is discussing the idea of holding a can drive during the first week of November.

A club member makes a motion: "I move that we hold a can drive the third week of November"

Another club member seconds the motion: "I second that motion!"

The president asks for all members who are in favor, or agree with the motion, to vote by saying "aye" and those who are opposed, or do not agree with the motion, to say "no." Members may be asked to raise their hands to show who voted for and against the motion. This is called a show-of-hands vote. If the majority votes in agreement with the motion, it is adopted (or accepted). If the majority votes in disagreement with the motion, it is not adopted.

Other methods of voting include:

Roll call—The president will ask that a record of each person's vote is needed. Each member answers "yes," "no," or "abstain/present" (indicating the choice not to vote) as his or her name is called.

Ballot—Members write their votes on a slip of paper. The slips of paper are then collected by the president and counted. This vote is done by secret ballot.

General consent—When a motion isn't likely to be opposed, the president says, "If there is no objection. ..." Members show consent by their silence. If someone says, "I object," the matter must be put to a vote.