

Conducting a GREAT Business Meeting

The Cheat Sheet!

Fundamental Principles

Parliamentary law is based on:

- the will of the majority;
- the right of the minority to be heard;
- protection of the rights of absentees;
- courtesy and justice for all; and
- consideration of one subject at a time.

Governing documents

- Law
- Corporate charter/Articles
- Constitution and/or bylaws
- Special rules of order
- Rules of order
- Standing rules
- Custom

Agenda (*MRS SUN*)

An **agenda** is a list of meeting activities in the order in which they are to be taken up. It usually includes one or more specific items of business to be discussed. It may, but is not required to, include specific times for one OR more activities.

- Minutes
- Reports of Officers and Standing Committees
- Special Committee Reports
- Special Orders
- Unfinished Business
- New Business

Motions:

A motion is a formal proposal, made by a member, that the organization do something. It cannot interrupt someone who is already speaking, or other business on the floor. It must be seconded, and is both debatable and amendable. Adoption of a main motion requires a majority vote.

Two steps to be recognized by the chair:

- A member rises (or raises a hand)
- The chair calls upon the member

Six steps to process a motion:

- A member makes a motion "I move that..."
- Another member seconds the motion "Second"
- The chair states the motion "It is moved and seconded that..."
- Members debate the motion
- The chair puts the question to a vote "The question is.... Those in favor say 'Aye' (pause) Those in favor say 'No.'"
- The chair announces the result of the vote "The Ayes have it, the motion is *adopted*, and the organization will.... The next business in order is...."

Basic script for handling a motion (new business):

- Presiding Officer:** Is there any new business? (*Call on member, who makes motion. Another member seconds.*)
- Presiding Officer:** It is moved and seconded that (*repeat motion.*) (*Maker*), would you like to speak first? (*Maker debates, if desired.*)
- Presiding Officer:** Is there further debate? (*Pause.*)
- Presiding Officer:** Hearing no further debate, the question is that (*repeat motion.*) All those in favor of the motion, say Aye. (*pause for Ayes.*) Those opposed to the motion, say No. (*pause for Noes.*)
- Presiding Officer:** The (*Ayes/Noes*) have it, the motion is (*adopted/defeated*), and the club (*will/will not*) (*repeat motion.*) Is there any further new business?

Basic script for handling an amendment:

- Member:** I move to amend the motion by (*amendment.*) (*Second!*)
- Presiding Officer:** It is moved and seconded to **amend** the main motion by (*repeat motion.*) If adopted, the main **motion** would read (*state main motion as amended.*) The **pending** question is (*repeat amendment.*) Is there any debate. (*Members debate.*)
- Presiding Officer:** Is there further debate? (*Pause.*)
- Presiding Officer:** Hearing no further debate, the question is that (*repeat amendment.*) All those in favor of the proposed amendment, say Aye. (*pause for Ayes.*) Those opposed to the amendment, say No. (*pause for Noes.*)
- Presiding Officer:** The (*Ayes/Noes*) have it, the amendment is (*adopted/defeated*), and the main motion is now (*repeat motion – as amended if the amendment is adopted.*) Is there any debate?

Frequently used motions:

- *Amend:* Changes the wording (and perhaps the meaning) of the motion
- *Commit:* Appoints a smaller group to study the issue
- *Postpone to a Certain Time:* Postpones further consideration of the motion to a specific time at the current meeting or the next meeting
- *Previous Question:* Ends debate and moves directly to a vote (requires 2/3 for adoption)
- *Recess:* Take a short break in the proceedings
- *Adjourn:* End the meeting

BASIC SCRIPT AND INFORMATION FOR A PRESIDING OFFICER

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Before the meeting:

Determine that a quorum is present.

Rise.

Signal for quiet (countdown from 5 to 1!)

Presiding Officer: The meeting will come to order.

Opening ceremonies:

God before Country, but inspirational messages come after patriotic exercises

Roll may be called, if customary for the group.

Presiding Officer: The secretary will call the roll.

Minutes:

After the minutes are read, or if they have been previously distributed, the chair asks,

Presiding Officer: Are there any corrections to the minutes?" *(Pause)* "If there are none, the minutes are approved as written."

OR

With any corrections, The secretary will make the corrections. If there are no further corrections, the minutes are approved as corrected.

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees:

Officers, boards, and standing committees report in the order they are listed in the bylaws.

The Presiding Officer should check in advance to see if they have a report, and only call on those with information to present.

Presiding Officer: The next business in order is the report of the Treasurer.

A treasurer's report is never adopted; instead a financial review or auditor's report is adopted annually.

If an officer's report contains a recommendation, another member may make a main motion following the report to adopt the recommendation.

Presiding Officer: The Treasurer's report will be filed. The next business in order is the report of the Board.

Presiding Officer: The next business in order is the report of the ___ Committee.

Committee chairmen may make motions for recommendations contained in their reports.

Reports of Special Committees:

Special committees report in the order in which they were created.

The Presiding Officer should check in advance to see if they have a report, and only call on those with information to present.

Presiding Officer: The next business in order is the report of the ____ Committee.

Special Orders:

Matters required by the bylaws for a meeting, or items voted to be considered as a Special Order.

Presiding Officer: The secretary will read from the Bylaws Article_ Section_ concerning the election of a nominating committee.

OR

Presiding Officer: The bylaws require that officers be elected at this meeting. Are there any nominations for the office of....

Unfinished Business and General Orders:

Announced only if there are such items (matters previously introduced but not finished at the prior meeting) or items postponed by way of motion to the next meeting.

Presiding Officer: When the previous meeting adjourned, the motion "That (*state motion here*)" was pending. Is there any discussion on the motion?

OR

Presiding Officer: Further consideration of the motion "That (*state motion here*)" was postponed to this meeting. Is there any discussion on the motion?

New Business:

New business listed on the adopted agenda (if any) is considered first.

Presiding Officer: Is there any new business?

OR

Presiding Officer: Is there any further new business?

Announcements:

Presiding Officer: The chair has the following announcements (*makes announcements*). Are there any further announcements?

Adjournment:

Presiding Officer: Is there any further business? (*pause*) Hearing none, the meeting is adjourned.

OR

Presiding Officer: Since there is no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting is adjourned.

OR

Presiding Officer: Is there a motion to adjourn?

To Learn More

- **National Parliamentary Organizations**
 - **American Institute of Parliamentarians**
 - www.aipparl.org – information on membership, finding a professional parliamentarian, educational materials for purchase, correspondence courses
 - **National Association of Parliamentarians:**
 - www.parliamentarians.org – information on membership, finding a professional parliamentarian, educational materials for purchase, and some limited basic information
- **Correspondence Courses**
 - <https://il.wisconsin.edu/parliamentary.aspx> – A correspondence course offered by the University of Wisconsin consisting of twelve lessons with quizzes and a final exam. Kay Crews is a graduate of the course, and is now its instructor. (Basic RONR)
 -
- **Kay Crews, CPP, PRP**
 - www.DallasParliamentarian.com – Kay Crews is a Certified Professional Parliamentarian (credentialed by the American Institute of Parliamentarians) and a Professional Registered Parliamentarian (credentialed by the National Association of Parliamentarians). She has a national client base, serving a broad spectrum of organizations across the country. Kay is always available to talk to you about your parliamentary concerns and how she can best help you address them.

Kay is available!

Kay has programs available to offer to your organization, whether at a board meeting or as a break-out session at your next annual meeting. Her humor and common sense approach to parliamentary problems make her a sought-after resource. Kay has programs available on a wide variety of parliamentary topics, including:

- Conducting a GREAT Business Meeting
- The Agenda – Laying the Foundation for a Successful Meeting
- Know your ABCs – the Importance of the Agenda, Bylaws, and Custom
- Who Was Robert? And Why DO We Care about His Rules?
- Minutes Should Not Take Hours
- Getting Started with Electronic Meetings
- Parliamentary Myths
- Presiding with Confidence!
- Amending with Precision!
- Referring with Poise!
- Law & Order: Board Governance Edition

Kay will also work with you to develop custom training for your specific group!