

# Meetings and Motions in Twenty Minutes

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# Objectives

- Understand basic concepts of typical business meetings
- Recognize common motions under *Robert's Rules of Order*
- Identify sources for further study of parliamentary procedure

# Meeting

- The event of being assembled to transact business
- Members must be given notice
- A quorum must be present
  - The minimum number of people that must be present in order for the meeting to be valid
  - Check your Bylaws for this number
- A Chairperson/President presides; Secretary takes minutes

# Standard Order of Business

- **M**inutes
- **R**eports of Officers and Standing Committees
- **S**pecial Committee Reports
- **S**pecial Orders
- **U**nfinished Business
- **N**ew Business



MRS SUN

# Minutes

- Written by the Secretary
- Contains the wording of motions/proposals and their disposition (adopted, rejected, sent to committee, postponed until next meeting, etc.)
- Once approved, it becomes the legal record of what occurred at a meeting
- NOT supposed to be a summary of debate
- The meeting votes to approve the minutes

# Reports of Officers and Standing Committees

- Longer, written report should be submitted to President and Secretary for distribution prior to the meeting
- Short oral summary of activities since last meeting and upcoming activities, followed by any proposals that require a vote by the whole body
- Treasurer's Report should be a quick account of receipts, disbursements, and cash on hand

# Special Committee Reports

- Special committees are temporary committees for special items of business and are disbanded after their final report
- Same form and content as a standing committee report

# Special Orders

- Special items of business that must occur at the meeting
  - Example: If your Bylaws state that the budget for the year is adopted at the July Board meeting, it would be a special order at the July meeting
- Check your bylaws



# Unfinished Business

- Business left over from the previous meeting

# New Business

- Members present new items of business for consideration and vote by the whole body
- Follow your organization's norms
  - Some require ideas to be vetted by committee first
  - Some only entertain new business that has been submitted prior to the meeting
  - Ask your President and check your Bylaws

# Tips for Smooth Meetings

- All reports should be due to the Secretary 10 days prior
- The reports, minutes, and agenda should be compiled and sent out to all members 7 days prior
- Allow everyone to be heard
- Put all valid proposals to a vote
- When in doubt check the Bylaws; when further in doubt put it to a vote

# Questions About Meetings?

# Main Motion

- A main motion is a proposal that the organization take an action
- Form:
  - I move to... [host a bake sale at back-to-school night].
  - I move that... [ABC School PTA endorse Mrs. A for PTA State President].
- Motions should never be made in the negative or that we ***don't*** take an action
  - **DO NOT** say, “I move that we don’t approve the cleaning contract.”
  - Instead, “I move to reject the cleaning contract and authorize the President to renegotiate.”

# Steps to Handling a Motion

1. Member seeks recognition from the chair and states the motion
  - Keep your setting in mind: in a board meeting you can raise your hand, but in a national convention you may need to step to a microphone
2. The chair asks for a second to the motion
  - You can just say “second” from your seat
  - This is to weed out proposals with only 1 supporter

# Steps to Handling a Motion

3. The chair restates the motion to the meeting
4. The chair opens the motion up to debate
  - Try to alternate between pros and cons
  - Be respectful; let everyone else go once before someone speaks twice
  - Debate needs to be related to the business at hand
  - This is the time to propose any procedural motions (covered later)

# Steps to Handling a Motion

5. After there is no further discussion, the Chair states the motion in the form that it will be voted on
  - This is so members know what they are about to vote on
  - This is the form of the motion that goes into the minutes
6. The chair puts the motion to a vote and announces the result



# Types of Votes

- Voice Vote
  - Those in favor, say “aye.” [*Pause*] Those opposed, say “No.” The ayes have it an the motion is adopted.
- Rising vote
  - Those in favor please rise [or please raise your hand].
- Ballot vote
  - Typically reserved for special occasions like elections
- Roll Call Vote
  - Typically for conventions of delegates

# Calculating Votes

- Majority vote = more than half of those present and voting
  - Do not count abstentions when calculating a majority vote
  - 10 for, 8 against, 15 abstaining = motion passes
  - 20 for, 20 against = motion fails. (20 is **not** more than half of 40)
- In the event of a tie, the President breaks the tie (if [s]he did not vote in the first place)

# Calculating Votes

- Two-Thirds vote = at least  $\frac{2}{3}$  of those present and voting
  - Multiply the total voting (not including abstentions) by 2, then divide by 3
  - 33 for, 17 against = 50 voting
  - $50 * 2 = 100$ .  $100 / 3 = 33.3333$ )
  - 33 is **not** at least 33.333 so therefore the motion would fail
- $\frac{2}{3}$  vote is reserved for items like bylaw amendments and cutting off debate (check your bylaws for other instances)
- Should be taken as a show of hands or raising vote

# Procedural Motions

- Can be applied during the debate phase of a motion
- Alters the form of a motion or changes how it is to be considered
- Must be voted on before the original motion is voted on
- Made the same way as a main motion (“I move to...”)

# Top 4 Procedural Motions

- I move to **AMEND** the motion by...[striking out \$500 and inserting \$700].
  - Changes the text of a main motion
  - Debatable, requires a majority vote
- I move to **REFER** the motion to the Y Committee.
  - Sends the motion to committee for deliberation and recommendation at a later meeting
  - Debatable, requires a majority vote

# Top 4 Procedural Motions

- I move to **POSTPONE** this motion until our next meeting.
  - Majority vote, debatable
- I move to **LIMIT DEBATE** to 10 minutes. Or I move to **CLOSE DEBATE**. [Called the “Previous Question”]
  - 2/3 vote, not debatable

# Resources for Further Study

- Robert's Rules of Order In Brief
  - Quick read, about 100 pages
- Contact me for consulting, help with bylaws, or a more detailed workshop
  - Donald Garrett, PRP
  - [donaldigarrett@gmail.com](mailto:donaldigarrett@gmail.com)
- Stop by a local National Association of Parliamentarians meeting!
  - Beatrice Squire, [Knight757@msn.com](mailto:Knight757@msn.com)