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

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Standard Order of Business

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

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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 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
  - $50 \times 2 = 100$. $100/3 = 33.3333$)
  - 33 is **not** at least 33.333 so therefore the motion would fail
- 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

• Stop by a local National Association of Parliamentarians meeting!
  – Beatrice Squire, Knight757@msn.com