

APPENDIX 4

**BASIC CONCEPTS**  
**OF**  
***PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE***

# *BASIC CONCEPTS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE*

Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules for conduct of meetings. It allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

Parliamentary procedure originated in the early English Parliaments and came to Canada with the first British settlers. It became uniform in 1876 when Henry M. Robert published his manual on Parliamentary Law. Robert's Rule of Order newly Revised is most commonly used as the guide to conduct of public and private meetings.

Following the rules of parliamentary procedure helps keep meetings productive, fair -- and on schedule.

## AGENDAS

The order of business for most meetings is usually:

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Minutes of Last Meeting
4. Officers Reports
5. Committee Reports (from standing to ad hoc)
6. Special Orders (previously designated important items cited for address at "this" meeting)
7. Unfinished Business
8. New Business
9. Announcement (from general significant information to the sharing of important items)
10. Adjournment (meeting ends either by vote of members or by a decision of the chair, if adjournment was prearranged by a vote of the members)

## DEFINITIONS

### **Motions**

A motion is a proposal that the assembly TAKE A STAND or TAKE ACTION, or to express their views on some issue. Directors can:

1. *Present motions* ..... "I move..."
2. *Second motions* ..... "second"
3. *Debate motions* ..... "I think..."
4. *Vote on motions* ..... "yea", "nay"

**There are FIVE GENERAL TYPES of motions:**

1. **MAIN MOTIONS**            which introduce subjects for consideration; however, they cannot be made when another motion is before the Board. They yield to privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions.

"I move that the Board of Directors approve the..."

2. **SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS**    which change or affect how the main motion is handled, and are voted on before the main motion

"I move that the motion be amended by deleting..."

"I move the matter be referred to the Finance Committee"

Subsidiary motions have rank among themselves (described below as lowest to highest rank):

- postpone indefinitely
- amend
- refer to a committee
- postpone definitely
- limit or extend limits of debate
- lay on table

3. **PRIVILEGED MOTIONS**    which are most urgent. They concern special or important matters not related to pending business, and may interrupt any other business.

"I move we adjourn."

#### 4. INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

which are questions of procedure that arise out of other motions. They must be considered before the other motion.

"I move to suspend the rules for the purpose of..."  
"Point of Order"

#### 5. UNCLASSIFIED MOTIONS

which have to do with the taking of further actions upon those matters which have been previously considered and either acted on: favourable, adversely, or upon which final actions has been deferred. Most common are:

- to ratify
- to reconsider
- to rescind
- to take from the Table

Motions to bring a question again before the Board

1. Reconsider
2. Rescind or amend something previously adopted

## GENERAL RULES FOR PRESENTING MOTIONS

### 1. Obtain the floor

- a) wait until the last speaker is finished
- b) rise and address the Chair (Mr. or Madam Chair)
- c) the Chair will recognize you by stating your name

### 2. Make Your Motion

- a) speak clearly and concisely
- b) state your motion affirmatively: "I move that...". When moving a motion against, do not state negatively: "I move that the Board not approve...", but rather "I move that the Board take no action regarding..."
- c) avoid personalities and stay on the subject

### 3. Wait for a Second

- a) another member will say "I second the motion"
- b) or the Chair will call for a second
- c) if there is no second, your motion will not be considered

### 4. Chair States the Motion

- a) the Chair should say, "It is moved and seconded that..."
- b) after this happens, debate or voting can occur
- c) your motion is now "assembly property" and you cannot change it without consent of the members

### 5. Expand on your Motion

- a) mover is allowed to speak first
- b) direct all comments to the Chair
- c) keep to the time limit for speaking
- d) you may speak again after all other speakers are finished
- e) you may speak a third time by a motion to suspend the rules with a 2/3 vote

### 6. Putting the Question

- a) The Chair asks, "Are you ready for the question?"

- b) if there is no more discussion, a vote is taken. The Chair announces the results: or
- c) a motion for a previous question may be adopted

### **VOTING**

The method of voting depends on the situation and the procedural by-law

By Voice the Chair asks those in favour to say "yes" and those opposed to say "no" (for majority votes only). A member may move for an exact count.

By Show of Hands members raise their hands as sight verification of, or as an alternative to a voice vote, It does not require a count, A member may move for an exact count

By Roll Call If a record of each member's vote is needed, or requested under the procedural by-law rules, each member answers "yes" or "no" or "present" (indicating the choice not to vote, or following the rules of the procedural by-law in this instance) as his or her name is called.

By Ballot members write their vote on a piece of paper. This is done only in certain circumstances as permitted by the Procedural By-law.

By General Consent when a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chair says "if there is no objection..." Members show agreement by their silence. If someone says, "I object," the matter must be put to a vote.

## **RULES AND DECORUM IN DEBATE**

Debate in a meeting is important. Every member has the right to full and free discussion provided, however, that such debate is within established rules.

1. Remarks must be confined to the motion on the floor
2. A member's motive must not be questioned and the use of unkind words must not be allowed.
3. Remarks are addressed through the Chair; members do not talk directly to each other.
4. The maker of the motion has the right to speak first but must exercise that right promptly.
5. A member may speak for a specified period of time, usually ten minutes (frequently a limit of two or three minutes will be adopted). A member may speak more than two times if another member wishes to speak a first time to the same motion.
6. A member may vote against his or her own motion, but may not speak against it.
7. Debate can be stopped only through the use of the motion, call for the question. This motion requires a second; it is not debatable; and requires a two-thirds affirmative vote.

