

Parliamentary Procedures for New County Commissioners

I. Who is Robert and who put him in charge?

II. Basic Principles

- Protect the rights of the majority
- Protect the rights of the minority
- Protect the rights of individual members
- Protect the rights of absentees
- Protect the rights of all of these together

III. Authority of Governing Documents

- State government legal proclamations
- Constitution/bylaws
- Special rules of order
- Rules of Order including parliamentary authority
- Standing rules
- Custom

IV. Quorum

Minimum number of members that must be present to conduct business

V. Those Pesky Rules (See parliamentary motions quick reference)

VI. Steps in Processing a Motion

1. Make the motion
2. Second the motion
3. Chair states the motion
4. Chair conducts debate--maker of the motion invited to speak first
Amendments can be made by striking words, inserting or adding words, or by striking and inserting words.
5. Chair takes the vote on the motion with exact wording
 - Voice vote
 - Visual vote
 - Roll call vote
6. Chair announces the results of the vote

VII. Debate

- Limit comments to the pending question (must be germane)
- All remarks made to or through the Chair
- Speakers wait for recognition

- Unnecessary interruption of members or conversation with another member during debate should be avoided.
- Really listen to what others have to say and keep an open mind
- The Chair alternates between affirmative and negative positions when possible
- It takes a two-thirds vote to close debate if speakers are waiting to be recognized
- A member's motives must not be attacked

VIII. Consent Agenda

- Allows adoption of multiple motions that are not controversial with a single vote.
- Any member may request an item be removed for debate and separate action

IX. Purpose and Content of Minutes

- Minutes refresh the memory of those in attendance, inform those who were absent, and compile a history of the organization's acts and accomplishments
- Basic information—date and time of meeting, names of those attending
- Include actions taken, not comments made
- Include name of maker of a motion, but not the seconder
- Individual request from members to list their abstention or recusal from the vote and/or discussion
- Information on motions—was it debated, amended, and exact approved wording if adopted
- All secondary motions not lost or withdrawn
- The hour of adjournment

X. Other Tips

✓ Public Hearings

/ Work Sessions

Media

Dealing with People

Parliamentary Motions—Quick Reference

These are the thirteen ranking motions. When any motion on the list is pending, no motion of a lower rank is in order. Main motions are the lowest in order and may be made only when no other business is pending.

The five motions at the top of the chart are *Privileged Motions* that do not relate to pending business, but relate to special matters of immediate and overriding importance and are allowed to interrupt the consideration of anything else.

Motions below the chart are *Subsidiary Motions* and assist the assembly in treating or disposing of a main motion.

Name of Motion	Requires Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required for Adoption
Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Adjourn	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Raise a Question of Privilege	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Call for Orders of the Day	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Lay on the Table	Yes	No	No	Majority
Previous Question	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
Limit or Extend Limits of Debate	Yes	No	Yes	Two-thirds
Postpone to a Certain Time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Commit (Refer to another group)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone Indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Interrupting Incidental Motions

These motions require immediate recognition by the Chair, who interrupts a speaker, if necessary.

- Request for Information
- Parliamentary Inquiry
- Point of Order
- Division of the Assembly
- Appeal from a Decision of the Chair

Non-interrupting Incidental Motions

- Division of a Question
- Suspend the Rules

Motions Bringing a Question Again Before the Assembly

- Take from the Table
- Rescind/amend Something Previously Adopted
- Discharge a Committee
- Reconsider

PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS - WHAT THEY MEAN

1. Fix the Time to adjourn - purpose is to set the time (and /or place) for another meeting to continue business of the session. It has no effect on when the present meeting will adjourn.
2. Adjourn - means to close the meeting. A privileged motion to adjourn is to close the meeting immediately. It is not a privileged motion if qualified in any way, as to adjourn at, or to, a future time.
3. Suspend the Rules - generally used to permit the assembly to do something which would violate its general rules (except bylaws) such as changing agenda order or considering an item not on the agenda.
4. Lay on the Table - enables the assembly to lay the pending question aside temporarily when something more urgent has arisen. Its effect is to halt consideration of a question immediately, without debate.
5. Previous Question - the motion used to bring the assembly to an immediate vote on one or more pending questions. It is used to immediately close debate and prevents the making of subsidiary motions except to lay on the table.
6. Limit or Extend Debate - one of two motions the assembly can use to exercise special control over debate on a pending question. It can be used to reduce the number or length of speeches, or to require an end to debate at a particular time. It can also be used to increase the time available to speakers or to the deliberation on the question.
7. Postpone to a Certain Time (definitely) - a motion to defer discussion of a pending question to a definite day, meeting, hour, or until after a certain event. This motion can be used regardless of how much debate there has been on the motion it proposes to postpone.
8. Commit or Refer to Committee - this is generally used to send a pending question to a committee so that the question may be investigated, providing the assembly with more information or a recommendation, or to put the motion into better form (in clearer or better wording) for the assembly to consider.
9. Amend - a motion to modify the wording--and to some extent the meaning -- of a pending question before the assembly. A pending motion may be modified by adding or deleting words and phrases, or by a combination of these--i.e., to strike out some words and insert others. It can also be used to substitute one paragraph or the entire text of a resolution or main motion. Amendments must be germane to the main motion.
10. Postpone Indefinitely - a motion which means the assembly declines to take a position on the main question. Its adoption kills the main motion and avoids a direct vote on the question.
11. Main motion - the motion which brings any general matter of business before the assembly. Any formal proposal.
12. Reconsider - enables a majority in an assembly to bring back for further consideration a motion which has already been voted on. Complex rules.
13. Rescind or Amend - motions which enable an assembly to change and action previously taken. An entire motion or any part of it may be rescinded or amended.