SPOTLIGHT

on

YOU

the

PRESIDENT

A Leadership Handbook
by
the National Association
of Parliamentarians®
Spotlight on You the President
Spotlight on You the Vice-President or President-Elect
Spotlight on You the Secretary
Spotlight on You the Treasurer
Spotlight on You the Member
Spotlight on You the Parliamentarian
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Spotlight on You the President Leadership Handbook
First Edition, December 1993
Printed in the United States of America
SPOTLIGHT
on
YOU
the
PRESIDENT

National Association of Parliamentarians®
Education Committee
1991 - 1993

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INTRODUCTION

The “SPOTLIGHT” series provides basic leadership and parliamentary procedure. For further study of meeting procedure, we recommend you read *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised* by Henry M. Robert and *Pointers on Parliamentary Procedure* by Louise E. Bereskin, Professional Registered Parliamentarian. Both books are available from the National Association of Parliamentarians (NAP).

The precedence (or rank) of motions is printed on the outside of the back cover. By memorizing the chart you will learn a great deal in a short time.

The chart shows that there are classifications of motions. Three classes are listed: privileged, subsidiary, and main. Some are debatable; others are not. Some are amendable; others are not. Most of the motions require a majority vote. Some require a two-thirds vote. These ranking motions are listed with their principal characteristics on page 16.

Two other classifications of motions (non-ranking) are listed with their principal characteristics on page 17.

Contact NAP for a complete listing of educational materials:

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THE SPOTLIGHT is on
YOU the PRESIDENT

As the chosen leader of your organization, you should have a working knowledge of parliamentary procedure. You should be familiar with the objectives, bylaws, and other rules of the society. You don’t have to memorize everything, but you do need to know where to find the answers. Of course, you’ll set the example for impartiality, courtesy, and obedience to rules.

Check the bylaws and other rules of your own organization for specific duties of your office. In general, as president you will be expected to:

✓ Be the official representative of your organization.
✓ Preside at all meetings of the society and of the board (if there is one).
✓ Refer to yourself as “the chair.” (“I” is not used.)
✓ Call meetings to order on time.
✓ Determine that a quorum is present.
✓ Announce, in proper order, the business to come before the meeting.
✓ Recognize members entitled to the floor.
✓ State and put to a vote all questions that legitimately come before the assembly.
✓ Announce the result of each vote and the effect of the action.
✓ Expedite business in every way possible without denying members their rights.
✓ Enforce rules of debate, order, and decorum.
✓ Decide all points of order (subject to appeal).
✓ Respond to relevant questions of members.
✓ Refrain from voting except when the vote is by ballot or when your vote would change the result.
✓ At the proper time, declare the meeting adjourned (by general consent or by a vote of the assembly).
✓ Stand while calling a meeting to order, while declaring it adjourned, and while taking a vote.
✓ Carry out administrative and executive duties outlined in the bylaws or as directed by the assembly.
✓ Prepare a report to be given at the annual meeting.

The bylaws may provide for the president to be ex-officio a member of all committees except the nominating committee. This is not a duty of the office, but is a privilege granted by the bylaws. Without such a provision
the president has no more right to attend the committee meeting than anyone else who is not a member of the committee.

Ex-officio means “by virtue of office.” If given this privilege, the president has all of the rights extended to other members of the committee -to make motions, debate, vote, etc. The president is not obligated to attend committee meetings and is not counted in the quorum. However, it is the duty of the committee chairman to notify the president of each committee meeting.

In enforcing the rules there is need for the exercise of tact and good sense. It is usually a mistake to insist upon technical points, as long as no one is being defrauded of his rights and the will of the majority is being carried out. The rules and customs are designed to help and not to hinder business.”

-Henry Martyn Robert
Parliamentary Law
A successful win/win meeting doesn’t just happen. It requires thoughtful research and preparation by a planning team. Each member is an important part of that team. The success of a meeting depends on the quality of the members.

THE PLANNING TEAM

Parliamentarian

Vice-President

Standing Committees

Appointed Officers

Members

Special Committees

Treasurer

Secretary
THE PLANNING TEAM

PRESIDENT
- Assures the facility is adequate and appropriate for the meeting being planned.
- Interacts with the planning team to prepare the meeting agenda.
- Mentally prepares for a win/win meeting.

VICE-PRESIDENT
- Assists the president, as requested.
- Mentally prepares for a win/win meeting.

SECRETARY
- Reviews minutes of previous meeting(s) for items of business to be considered in this meeting.
- Reviews minutes of board meeting(s) for board recommendations to be presented.
- Identifies prior emergency action requiring ratification in this meeting.
- Advises the president whether a report will be given.
- On request of the president, prepares the final meeting agenda.
- Mentally prepares for a win/win meeting.

TREASURER
- Advises the president on bills to be presented for approval or ratification.
- Notes whether the bills are covered in the budget.
- Alerts the president when:
  * Audit report must be presented and voted on.
  * Annual financial report will be given and whether it must be adopted.
  * New business will be introduced by the treasurer.
- Mentally prepares for a win/win meeting.

PARLIAMENTARIAN
- Advises the president on:
  * Placing business on the agenda in correct order.
  * Actions required in the bylaws to be taken at this meeting.
- Mentally prepares for a win/win meeting.
STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
- Advises the president whether:
  * A report will be given.
  * Recommendations requiring action will be made.
- Mentally prepares for a win/win meeting.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
- Advises the president whether:
  * A report will be given.
  * The report will be an interim or final report.
  * Recommendations requiring action will be made.
- Mentally prepares for a win/win meeting.

APPOINTED OFFICER
- Advises the president whether:
  * A report will be made.
  * Recommendations requiring action will be presented.
- Mentally prepares for a win/win meeting.

MEMBER
- Advises the president of intent to:
  * Introduce new business.
  * Move to rescind or amend previous action.
  * Give notice of business to be presented that requires previous notice.
  * Propose limiting debate on all business introduced during the meeting.
- Mentally prepares for a win/win meeting.
Parliamentary authorities list the preparation of the agenda as a duty of the secretary, but many presidents prefer to prepare their own order of business. The sample agenda below probably contains more than will be needed for a small organization, but it can be adapted to help in conducting an orderly regular meeting.

**SAMPLE AGENDA**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The president takes his place, stands quietly for a few seconds, taps the gavel once, waits until the group is quiet, then says: *The regular meeting of the __________ Club will come to order.*

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

The call to order may be followed by religious or patriotic exercises, or by other opening ceremonies.

Example:

*Please rise. Wait for quiet. The invocation will be given by __________. Please remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, to be led by __________.*

Invocation and Grace are given before the Pledge of Allegiance. Inspiration is given after the Pledge of Allegiance.

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The chair welcomes members and guests, introduces those seated at the head table, and may introduce those of rank in the audience.

**ROLL CALL QUORUM**

This may be done silently by the secretary. If taken verbally, the names are usually recorded in the minutes. The president confirms that a quorum is present.
MINUTES
The secretary will read the minutes of the previous meeting.
The chair sits while they are read.
Are there any corrections?
Pause.
If not, they are approved as read.

If there are corrections:
Are there further corrections?
Pause.
If not, the minutes are approved as corrected.

CORRESPONDENCE
The secretary may read official correspondence not requiring action,
first stating from whom it was received and, if possible, condensing
the information. Correspondence requiring action should be presented
under the appropriate heading; such as, board report, standing committee
reports, new business.

TREASURER’S REPORT
May we have the treasurer’s financial report?
The chair sits while report is given.
Are there any questions?
Pause.
The report will be filed.
The treasurer’s report is NEVER adopted; it is the auditor’s report that
is adopted.
Are there any bills?
The treasurer reads the bills and may move that they be paid, or any
member may make the motion. A second is required. If no one makes
such a motion, the chair may assume the motion: The question is on
the payment of the bills.

OTHER REPORTS
The chair sits while reports are given. The chair stands while putting
any question to a vote.

Officers
If an officer makes a recommendation in his report, he should not move
that it be adopted. Another member should make the motion.
Board
The secretary reads the report of the action taken by the board (not the minutes of the board). When the report includes motions or resolutions to implement recommendations of the board, the secretary moves their adoption. No second is required.

Standing Committees
The president checks in advance and, in the order listed in the bylaws, calls on those who have reports to make. The chairman or reporting member moves the adoption of motions or resolutions to implement recommendations of the committee. No second is required, unless it is a committee of one.

Special Committees (sometimes called ad hoc or select)
Only those prepared or instructed to report should be called on (in the order of their appointment). Some reports are given for information only. If there are recommendations, the same procedure is used as that for a standing committee. When a special committee has completed its work and made its final report, it’s automatically discharged.

SPECIAL ORDERS
Matters postponed from an earlier meeting and made a special order, but not assigned a particular time, are taken up under this heading. Then matters required by the bylaws to be considered at this meeting are taken up.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND GENERAL ORDERS
Unfinished business (never called “old business”) is that which was recorded in the minutes as begun but not completed at the previous meeting(s).

Under unfinished business the first item is … — puts the business back before the assembly just as it was when the previous meeting adjourned.
Or, The chair knows of no unfinished business.
The president never asks the assembly if there is any unfinished business. Motions postponed from previous meetings are taken up after unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS
The chair always announces the next business in order.

New business is now in order. Is there any new business?
PROGRAM
The program can be presented before or after the business meeting depending upon the situation. The chair calls on the program chairman to present the program. He does not turn the meeting over to anyone. The presiding officer is always in control of the meeting.

FURTHER BUSINESS
Is there further business?
Additional business is permitted following the program, but members should be encouraged to bring up new business at the proper time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
The chair makes announcements first, then asks for other announcements.

CLOSING AND ADJOURNMENT
An invitation may be extended to guests to return; a closing thought may be given.
The meeting may be adjourned by general consent or by a motion and vote of the assembly.
The presiding officer stands ——
If there is no further business, the meeting will adjourn.
Pause.
The meeting is adjourned.
One tap of the gavel may be given to signify adjournment, but this is not necessary unless your organization requires it.

NOTE: Each organization has a certain meeting at which elections are held, certain reports are given, special action is required, etc. Bylaws and other rules should be checked for this information and these items placed on the agenda for those particular meetings.

“Where there is no law, but every man does what is right in his own eyes, there is the least of liberty.”
—Henry M. Robert
EFFECTIVE USE OF MOTIONS

IF YOU WANT TO:

Propose that the group take an action, make a MAIN MOTION.

Member: I move that the club donate $500 to the Boy Scouts.  
(second)
Chair: It is moved and seconded that the club donate $500 to the 
Boy Scouts. Is there any discussion?

Kill a pending motion without taking a vote on it, move to POSTPONE INDEFINITELY.

Member: I move to postpone the pending question indefinitely.  
(second)
Chair: It is moved and seconded to postpone the pending question 
indefinitely. Is there any discussion on the motion to postpone indefinitely?

Perfect the wording of a pending motion, move to AMEND by inserting, 
striking out, or striking out and inserting.

Member: I move to amend by striking out $500 and inserting $750.  
(second)
Chair: It is moved and seconded to strike out $500 and insert 
$750. Is there any discussion on the amendment?

Have a few members investigate a pending motion, take action, or report 
with a recommendation at a future time, move to REFER TO A 
COMMITTEE.

Member: I move to refer the pending question to a committee of 
three to be appointed by the chair to investigate and report 
with a recommendation at the next business meeting.  
(second)
Chair: It is moved and seconded to refer the pending question to 
a committee (state full motion). Is there any discussion on 
the motion to refer to a committee?

Delay making a decision until a later time; such as, after an event during 
the same meeting but no later than the next regular meeting, move to 
POSTPONE the pending question TO A CERTAIN TIME.

Member: I move to postpone consideration of the pending question 
until after adoption of the budget. (second)
Chair: It is moved and seconded to postpone consideration of the pending question until after adoption of the budget. Is there any discussion on the motion to postpone?

Allow additional time for debate or limit the time, number of speakers, etc., on a pending question, move to LIMIT OR EXTEND LIMITS OF DEBATE.

Member: I move to limit debate on the pending question to five minutes. (second)

Chair: It is moved and seconded to limit debate on the pending question to five minutes. Are you ready for the question? (Two-thirds vote)

Stop debate and further amendment, move the PREVIOUS QUESTION.

Member: I move the previous question OR I move to stop debate. (second)

Chair: It is moved and seconded to stop debate. Those in favor will rise. Be seated. Those opposed will rise. Be seated. (Two-thirds vote) OR

Previous question has been called for. Those in favor of ordering the previous question will rise....

Temporarily lay aside consideration of a motion when something else of immediate urgency has arisen, move to LAY ON THE TABLE.

Member: I move to lay the pending question on the table. (second)

Chair: It is moved and seconded to lay the pending question on the table. Those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say no.

Have the chair return to the adopted agenda, program or order of business, or to take up a general or special order due to come up at this time, CALL FOR THE ORDERS OF THE DAY.

Member: I call for the orders of the day.

Chair: Orders of the day are called for. We will proceed to (state what business is in order.)

Request immediate action relating to rights and privileges of the assembly or any of its members, RAISE A QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE.

Member: I rise to a question of privilege. We can’t hear the speaker with the window open. May we close the window?

Chair: A question of privilege has been raised. Please close the window.
IF YOU WANT TO:

Take a short intermission during the business meeting, move to TAKE A RECESS.

Member: I move to recess for ten minutes. (second)
Chair: It is moved and seconded to recess for ten minutes. The motion is not debatable but is amendable. Is there an amendment?

Close the meeting, move to ADJOURN.

Member: I move to adjourn. (second)
Chair: It is moved and seconded to adjourn. Those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say no.

Continue the same meeting at a later date and time, before the next regular meeting, move to FIX THE TIME TO WHICH TO ADJOURN.

Member: I move that when the meeting is adjourned, it adjourns to meet again next Tuesday at 5 p.m. (second)
Chair: It is moved and seconded that when the meeting is adjourned, it adjourns to meet again next Tuesday at 5 p.m. The motion is not debatable but may be amended. Is there an amendment?

Allow the members to take another look at the decision they made, with an opportunity to change the results of the vote, move to RECONSIDER the vote.

Member: Having voted on the prevailing side, I move to reconsider the vote on the motion that the club donate $500 to the Boy Scouts. (second)
Chair: It is moved and seconded to reconsider the vote on the motion that the club donate $500 to the Boy Scouts. Is there discussion on the motion to reconsider?
[After discussion, take vote on the motion to reconsider. If adopted, open the motion to donate $500 to the Boy Scouts for further debate, amendment, and vote. If motion to reconsider is not adopted, no further action is taken.]

Allow members an opportunity to reverse the affirmative vote taken on a motion, move to RESCIND the vote.

Member: I move to rescind the vote on donating $500 to the Boy Scouts. (second)
Chair: It is moved and seconded to rescind the vote on donating $500 to the Boy Scouts. Is there any discussion?
IF YOU WANT TO:

Verify a vote taken by voice or show of hands, call for DIVISION OF THE ASSEMBLY.

Member: Division, I call for a division, or I doubt the results of the vote.

Chair: Division has been called for. We will take the vote by rising.

Allow members an opportunity to modify a motion that was previously adopted, move to AMEND SOMETHING PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED.

Member: I move to amend the motion that the club donate $500 to the Boy Scouts, which was adopted at the last meeting, by striking out $500 and inserting $600. (second)

Chair: It is moved and seconded to amend the motion by striking out $500 and inserting $600. Is there any discussion on the amendment?

Take from the table a motion that was laid on the table when something of immediate urgency had arisen, move to TAKE FROM THE TABLE.

Member: I move to take from the table the motion relating to the donation of $500 to the Boy Scouts. (second)

Chair: It is moved and seconded to take from the table the motion relating to donating $500 to the Boy Scouts. Those in favor, say aye. Those opposed, say no. The ayes have it and the motion before you is that the club donate $500 to the Boy Scouts. Is there any discussion?

Allow members to vote separately on parts of a motion containing more than one proposal, move to DIVIDE THE QUESTION.

Chair: It is moved and seconded that the club donate $500 to the Boy Scouts and $500 to the Girl Scouts.

Member: I move to divide the question by considering first that we donate $500 to the Girl Scouts and then that we donate $500 to the Boy Scouts. (second)

Chair: It is moved and seconded to divide the question by considering first that we donate $500 to the Girl Scouts and then that we donate $500 to the Boy Scouts. The motion is not debatable but is amendable. Is there an amendment to the motion to divide the question? [If adopted, state and process the question on donating $500 to the Girl Scouts. Then, state and process the question on donating $500 to the Boy Scouts.]
Parliamentary Motions - Quick Reference

Thirteen Ranking Motions

Privileged Motions relate to the rights or privileges of the organization or individual members rather than to particular items of business. They are of such urgency that they are entitled to immediate consideration.

Subsidiary Motions may be applied to another motion for the purpose of modifying it, delaying action on it, handling its consideration, or disposing of it.

Main Motions, the basis of all parliamentary procedure, bring business before the assembly for consideration and action. They can be introduced only when no other business is pending.

Name of Motion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Motion</th>
<th>May interrupt when another is speaking</th>
<th>Requires a second</th>
<th>Is debatable</th>
<th>Is amendable</th>
<th>Vote required for adoption</th>
<th>May be reconsidered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fix the time to which to adjourn</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjourn</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recess</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise a question of privilege</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for the orders of the day</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay on the table</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Neg. Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous question</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3 2/3 Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit or extend limits of debate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpone to a certain time (definitely)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commit (refer to a committee)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amend</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpone indefinitely</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Aff. Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main motion</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Is debatable if applied to a debatable motion.  
M Majority  
C Chair handles

The privileged and subsidiary motions have precedence in the order listed, from highest to lowest, when a main motion is pending. Several of the privileged and subsidiary motions may also be made when no business is pending, in which case they are main motions. The unqualified motion to adjourn is generally privileged whether a main motion is pending. See RONR

– Based on Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 10th edition
**Parliamentary Motions - Quick Reference #2**

**Incidental and “Bring Back” Motions**

Incidental Motions are made in response to a variety of situations that may arise during the consideration of a pending question. They must be resolved before business can continue. They have no rank. Listed below are those that are used most often.

Motions That Bring A Question Again Before the Assembly, sometimes called Restorative or “Bring Back” Motions, return a question to the assembly for further consideration and action. Listed below are those that are used most often.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Motion</th>
<th>May interrupt when another is speaking</th>
<th>Requires a second</th>
<th>Is debatable</th>
<th>Is amendable</th>
<th>Vote required for adoption</th>
<th>May be reconsidered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Point of Order</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal from a decision of the chair</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes**</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>M-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspend the rules</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objection to consideration of a question</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3-</td>
<td>Neg. Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of a question</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration by paragraph or seriatim</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary inquiry - requests parliamentary advice</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of information - requests factual information</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take from the table</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescind/amend something previously adopted</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2/3/M</td>
<td>Neg. Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconsider</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**To reorder, specify “Parliamentary Motions - Quick Reference” card**

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Classification and Precedence (or Rank) of Motions

Privileged Motions

- Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn
  - Adjourn
- Recess
  - Raise a Question of Privilege
  - Call for the Orders of the Day

Subsidiary Motions

- Lay on the Table
- Previous Question (2/3)
- Limit or Extend Limits of Debate (2/3)

- Postpone to a Certain Time
- Commit (or Refer)
- Amend
  - Postpone Indefinitely

- Main Motion

- Motions that can be amended

The motion to *Amend* is debatable when applied to a debatable motion. It is not debatable when applied to an undebatable motion.

The above motions rank as listed, with the lowest ranking motion, the main motion, at the bottom of the list. When any one motion is immediately pending, the motions above it are in order; those below it are not in order.

Those motions marked (2/3) require a two-thirds affirmative vote for adoption; the other motions require a majority vote.