

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE EXAMPLE MOTIONS

Privileged Motions

Motion to Set Time for Next Meeting

Typically used when the next meeting needed is not the next regularly scheduled meeting. Usually implies that business will not or can not be completed in the current meeting, but also can not wait until the next regular meeting. Therefore, it is not really an adjournment, but rather a lengthy recess, usually of at least one day.

“I move to set the time of our next meeting for 7:00 pm tomorrow night to continue the present discussion.”

Not debatable, amendable, majority vote required.

Motion to Adjourn

Has the affect of closing the meeting. If the motion fails, it cannot be made again until after the completion of other business.

“I move that we adjourn.”

Not debatable, not amendable, majority vote required.

Motion to Recess

Calls for a specific time for the recess to begin and a specific time for the meeting to resume. When other business is pending, it is a privileged motion. If there is no business pending, it is a main motion and may have subsidiary motions applied to it.

“I move that we recess from now until 9:00 pm.”

Debatable, amendable, majority vote required.

Question of Privilege

Deals with disturbances, unfavorable condition of the room, or the rights and privileges of the body or of a member. Raising a question of privilege does not require being recognized by the Chair before speaking.

Member: “rise to a question of privilege.”

Chair: “State your question of privilege.”

Member: “Due to the noise in the outer hallway, I request that the doors be closed.”

Chair: “Your point is well taken. The doors will be closed.”

OR

Chair: “Your point is not well taken. Due to the temperature in the meeting room, the doors must remain open for ventilation.”

Not debatable, not amendable, no vote required, unless:

Any two members, one moving and one seconding, may appeal the decision of the chair and bring the question of privilege to a vote of the body.

Call for the Orders of the Day

A request to have the chair return the meeting to the regular order of business. This motion may be made only when there is no other privileged motion on the floor, but may be made when another member is speaking. It is a signal that the body is no longer on its agenda.

“I call for the orders of the day.”

Not debatable, not amendable, no vote required.

Subsidiary Motions

Motion to Table

A way of setting aside consideration of a motion. May be done to allow more urgent business to come forward, or to consider the motion under more favorable circumstances. The motion must specify that the motion will be considered at a meeting when a majority of the members are present and when the members choose to remove it from the table.

“I move to table the motion until a future meeting”

To remove from the table requires another motion.

“I move to remove from the table the motion to.....”

Not debatable, not amendable, requires majority vote.

Motion to Close Debate (Call the Previous Question)

Used to end discussion regardless of previously established limits and move to a vote at once.

“I move to close debate.”

“I call for the previous question.”

Not debatable, not amendable, requires 2/3 vote.

Motion to Limit (or Extend) Debate

To limit the number of times a member may speak on the same motion, the length of time members may speak, the amount of time allowed for total discussion or time at which debate will cease. Also to extend the time limit of a given speaker, or extend other previously set limits.

“I move that speeches be limited to two more in favor and two more against.”

“I move that the speaker’s time be extended for two more questions from the body.”

Not debatable, amendable, requires 2/3 vote.

Motion to Postpone to a Definite Time

Allows the members to consider the motion either later in the same meeting or at a future meeting.

“I move to postpone consideration of this motion until our next regularly scheduled meeting.”

Debatable, amendable, requires majority vote.

Motion to Refer to a Committee

Made in order or to give a committee an opportunity to obtain additional necessary information, or to allow a committee to make a recommendation to the body, or to delay a vote until a more favorable time.

“I move to refer this motion to the _____ committee for further consideration and that the committee chair report back at our next meeting with facts and a recommendation.”

A standing committee may be named, or the Chair may be designated to appoint a specified number of members to an ad hoc committee. A specified time for the committee’s report may also be included in the motion.

Debatable, amendable, majority vote required.

Motion to Amend

Used to adjust and to “fine tune” a motion already on the floor. There is no limit to the number of times a motion may be amended. However, there may be no more than one amendment and one amendment to the amendment pending at any one time. Amendments may be to insert or add, strike out, or to substitute a word, phrase or clause. An amendment that would completely change the original intent of the original motion would be out of order.

Debatable, amendable (within limits), requires majority vote.

Motion to Postpone Indefinitely

Typically used as a means to kill a motion, with no further action to be taken. Does not prevent the motion from being introduced again.

Debatable, not amendable, majority vote required.

Incidental Motions

Appeal the Decision of the Chair

Appealing the decision of the Chair means that a member disagrees with a decision or ruling made by the Chair. An appeal must be made immediately after a decision made by the Chair, and must be seconded.

Member: "I appeal the decision of the Chair."

Chair: "The question is, shall the decision of the Chair be upheld?"

If another motion is pending, an appeal is not debatable; if no motion is pending the appeal is debatable. An appeal is not amendable. A tie vote or majority of affirmative votes sustains the decision of the Chair.

Motion to Suspend the Rules

A motion which suspends an established rule of the organization for a specific purpose or period of time. This practice is not to be entered into lightly for it is assumed that the rule to be suspended was established for a purpose.

"I move to suspend the rule prohibiting the introduction of motions which have not been submitted by the required deadline, so that a motion regarding _____ may be brought before the body."

Not debatable, not amendable, requires 2/3 vote.

Object to Consideration

A motion to prevent discussion on a main motion. An objection must be made before discussion begins or subsidiary motions are attached to the main motion. An objection may interrupt a speaker and requires no second.

Member: "I object to consideration of this motion."

Chair: "State your objection."

Member: "This motion deals with personnel issues which are not appropriate to be brought before the entire body in this fashion."

Chair: "Your point is well taken. The motion is ruled out of order."

OR

Chair: "Your point is not well taken. Our rules clearly state that the body must discuss such matters. Discussion will continue."

OR if a vote is needed:

Chair: "Will the body consider this motion?" If 1/3 of the body votes to hear the question, the motion will stand on the floor for debate and action.

Point of Order

A point of order may be called when a member realizes that a breach of the rules of procedure has occurred. The member may interrupt another speaker.

Member: "I rise to a point of order."

Chair: "State your point."

Member states what is believed to have been incorrect. The Chair generally states, without discussion, his/her ruling on the point of order. The ruling may be appealed. The Chair, if in doubt, may refer the decision to the body for a vote.

Not debatable, not amendable, no vote required unless referred to body by the Chair.

Point of Procedural Inquiry

Allows a member to interrupt and address the Chair to ask a question regarding the procedures presently being followed. Its purpose is to make sure that all members understand what is happening. A procedural inquiry does not call for a ruling, but merely an explanation.

Member: "I rise to a point of procedural inquiry."

Chair: "State your question."

Member: "Would you please explain the voting process we are about to use?"

The Chair then explains the process not understood.

Not debatable, not amendable, no vote is taken.

Point of Information

Allows a member to interrupt and address the Chair to share information of interest to the body.

Member: "I rise to a point of information."

Chair: "State your point."

Withdraw a Motion

A member may withdraw a motion to remove it from consideration by the body. If the motion has not yet been seconded, the author may state the decision to withdraw and no further action is necessary. If the motion has been seconded the author must gain the permission of the seconder to have it withdrawn. The Chair must ask if there are any objections. If none, the motion is withdrawn. If there are objections, a motion to withdraw must be introduced. A second is not required. A majority vote is then required to approve withdrawing the motion.

Division of a Motion

A motion may be divided into parts for two reasons. It may be lengthy and be able to be more effectively discussed if considered paragraph by paragraph.

Amendments may be concentrated on one paragraph at a time. A final vote to approve the entire motion is then in order.

A motion may also contain two or more provisions that could each stand on their own. A motion for division would then separate the original motion into two or more separate questions which would each be voted upon.

Not debatable, amendable, requires majority vote.

Division of the Assembly

A call by a member for a show of hands or for members to stand to confirm the count following a voice vote. If the Chair fails to recognize a call for division, a motion for a method of voting which determines an accurate count is in order.

Motions Relating to Voting

Types of voting are as follows:

Voice - Members saying “aye” or “no” when called for by the Chair. No accurate count is available.

Show of hands - an accurate count may be taken.

Standing vote - an accurate vote may be taken by asking each row, from front to back, to be seated after their row is counted.

Secret ballot - each member’s vote is written, unsigned, and counted by appointed tellers.

Secret roll-call ballot - each member’s vote is written, signed, recorded and counted by tellers.

Roll call - Members respond orally when their names are called.

A member may make a motion for any form of voting that will provide for an accurate count of the vote and a procedure suitable to the wishes of the body.

Debatable, not amendable, requires majority vote.

Motion to Postpone Reading of Minutes

Minutes are the official record of an organization. Their approval at the next meeting ratifies the actions taken at the previous meeting. If errors to the minutes are not corrected, they still stand as official. Unless the minutes of the previous meeting have been printed and distributed, it is not good practice to dispense with their reading.

Not debatable, not amendable, requires majority vote.

Special Main Motions

Motion to Reconsider

A motion to reconsider proposes that a previously completed motion be discussed and voted upon again. The maker of this motion must have voted with the prevailing side in the previous vote.

Debatable, not amendable, requires majority vote.

Motion to Rescind (Repeal)

The purpose of the motion to rescind is the annulment of a previously adopted motion. If prior notice is given, only a majority vote is required; if no notice then a 2/3 vote is required.

Debatable, not amendable, majority or 2/3 vote required.

Motion to Take from the Table

A motion to take from the table allows a previously tabled motion to come back on the floor for debate and action.

Not debatable, not amendable, requires majority vote.

Discharge a Committee

This motion has the effect of terminating the work of a committee. It will dissolve the committee if passed in the affirmative. It requires a 2/3 majority vote unless previous notice of intent is given which would then require a majority vote.

Debatable, amendable, majority or 2/3 vote required.

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