

1964

EC64-531 Parliamentary Law is Good Manners in your Club Meeting

Arabelle Hanna

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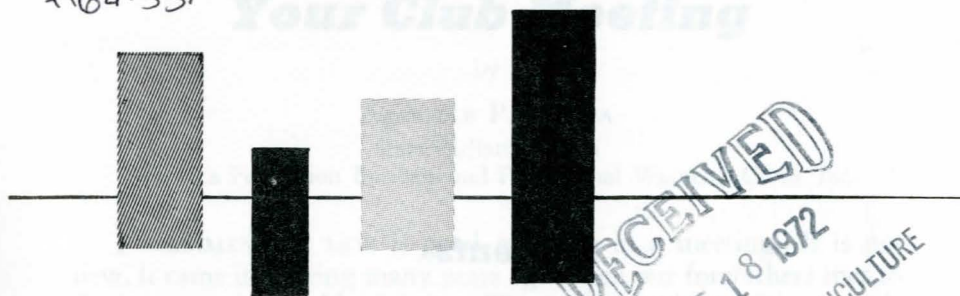
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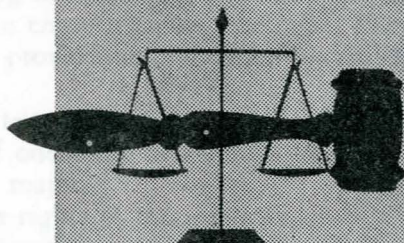
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**parliamentary law
is good manners in**

**your club
meeting**



EXTENSION SERVICE
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Your Club Meeting

by

ARABELLE P. HANNA

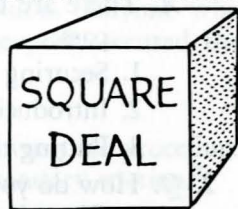
State Parliamentarian

Nebraska Federation Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.

PARLIAMENTARY LAW is good manners in a meeting. It is not new. It came into being many years ago when our forefathers met to discuss matters of public interest. They discovered that if very much was to be accomplished, some orderly method of procedure must be devised which would give each person an opportunity to speak and to be heard.

Parliamentary law can function only where men and women meet on a basis of equality. Obedience to any law is the "surest road to freedom." Obedience to parliamentary law is the shortest road to adjournment of a meeting and avoids "those tiresome old business meetings."

Being familiar with the rules of correct parliamentary procedure gives one confidence to participate in a business meeting. Hence, some knowledge of parliamentary law may be justly regarded as a necessary part of the education of every man, woman and child who joins an organization. It expedites business by allowing each one to take part in the discussions in a systematic and orderly fashion.



COURTESY

Learning the simple rules of any game is the first step to participating in and enjoying it. Knowing parliamentary rules helps us to participate in and to enjoy business meetings. These four basic principles, if respected, provide the foundation for building harmony in any organization:

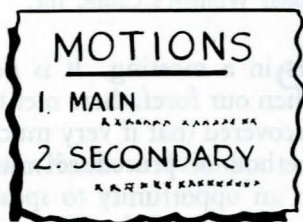
1. Justice and courtesy to everyone.
2. Consideration of one thing at a time.
3. The rule of the majority.
4. Protection of the rights of the minority.

There may be disagreement among parliamentary law authorities on minor rulings, but on the basic principles they are in accord. Every organization should adopt an accepted authority,¹ name it

¹ Accepted Authorities: *Robert's Rules of Order*, Revised; *The Main Motion*, by Anna Slaker.

in the by-laws, and abide by the rules contained therein on all matters which the by-laws do not mention.

Two Kinds of Motions



There are two kinds of motions—main motions and secondary motions. Since most of the business of any ordinary organization is done through the main motion, it is quite important that we master it first. Later we will touch upon secondary motions.

The Main Motion

1. Q. How do you make a motion?
 - A. There are three stages through which a main motion must pass:
 1. Securing the floor.
 2. Introducing business.
 3. Putting the question.
2. Q. How do you secure the floor?
 - A. 1. Rise, give your name. If in a district or state meeting, give your name and town. If in a national meeting, give name and state.
 2. Address the chair by title. Example—"Mr. President" or "Madam President," "Mr. Chairman" or "Madam Chairman." Don't start talking now. Wait for recognition.
 3. Chair recognizes you. (You do not have the floor and have no right to talk until recognized by the chair.)
3. Q. Why do you use the term "chair"?

MADAM PRESIDENT

 - A. In early times only those in authority were privileged to sit in a chair. Others sat on the floor or on a stool.
4. Q. Does the president or chairman speak of himself as "I"?
 - A. No. He should always refer to himself as "the chair."



5. *Q.* How is business introduced?

A. After you have secured the floor say, "I move that" or "I move to" or "I move the adoption of." Do not say, "I'd like to make a motion" or "I wish to make a motion."

6. *Q.* Is it necessary that main motions have a second?

A. Yes, to indicate that more than one person wishes to consider the matter. The form is, "I second the motion." It is not necessary for the seconder to secure the floor.

7. *Q.* Must all motions be seconded?

A. A second is required for all main motions, but not for some secondary motions nor for nominations.

8. *Q.* After a motion is made and seconded, what follows?

A. The chair states the motion to get it before the meeting thus: "It is moved and seconded that ——. Are there any remarks?" Now it is open for discussion. Anyone who wishes may speak provided he has properly secured the floor.

9. *Q.* When can a motion be amended?

A. As soon as it is before the meeting, following the procedure just outlined. An amendment is a secondary motion.²

10. *Q.* How do you make an amendment?

A. After securing the floor say, "I move to amend by inserting," or "by adding," or "by striking out," or "by substituting." Always make clear in your motion to amend which one of the above you wish to do.

11. *Q.* Must a motion to amend have a second?

A. Yes, in order to open it for discussion.³

12. *Q.* May a president speak to a motion?

A. Yes, if he calls the vice-president to the chair. He should not again take the chair until the motion before the house is disposed of.

² See Questions 21 and 22.

³ Two important things to remember:

1. Do not make a motion or an amendment in the negative. Always use the affirmative. Vote it down if you don't like it.
2. When speaking to a motion or an amendment say in the beginning, "I am speaking for the amendment" or "I am speaking against the amendment." Those who listen can put their minds on your argument instead of wasting thought trying to decide which side you are on.

13. *Q.* How many amendments may a motion have?

A. Only two. An amendment to the main motion is called a primary amendment, and an amendment to the primary amendment is called a secondary amendment. When these are disposed of others may be offered before the main motion is put to vote. All amendments must pertain to the main motion.

14. *Q.* How soon should a motion be voted upon?

A. After each one who wishes to speak to the motion has had an opportunity to discuss it, the chair puts the motion. The chair says, "As many as are in favor say 'aye'" (pronounced I).—"As many as are opposed say 'no'." Do not say, "contrary minded." You can be opposed without being contrary minded. Do not say, "Vote by the 'usual sign'." There is no "usual" sign. Always be definite. Then members will respond.

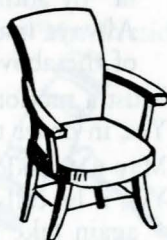
15. *Q.* What does the chair do or say after a motion has been voted upon?

A. The chair must always announce the result of the vote by saying, "The motion is carried" or "The motion is lost," lightly tapping the gavel on the table.

16. *Q.* Is there any way to stop debate if it is consuming too much time?

A. Yes. It is discourteous to simply call, "Question." Address the chair and say, "I move the previous question." This is another secondary motion but takes precedence over the motion before the house. This motion cannot be debated, cannot be amended, requires a two-thirds vote to carry, and is put by the chair immediately. If it carries, the main motion before the house cannot be debated any more and it too must come to an immediate vote.

APPEAL TO THE CHAIRMAN



OR THE CHAIR'S DECISION

17. *Q.* If at any time you are not satisfied with the decision of the chair because the "ayes" and the "noes" seem evenly balanced, do you have any recourse?

A. Yes, you may call for a division of the house. Just say, "Mr. Chairman, I call for a division of the house." The chair

says, "A division of the house has been called for. As many as are in favor stand." These are counted, then seated and the negative vote is taken in the same manner. A show of hands is another way of voting for division of the house.

18. *Q.* If you make a motion do you have to vote for it?

A. No. You may vote against your own motion, but you should not speak against it.

19. *Q.* Does the same hold true for the one who seconds a motion?

A. No. You may speak and vote against it if you wish. You seconded the motion because you wanted it discussed—not necessarily because you were in favor of it.

20. *Q.* Do all motions take a majority vote to carry?

A. Some motions require a two-thirds vote—such as changes in the by-laws, questions of privilege, and previous question. A student of parliamentary law must learn what votes are required to carry the various kinds of motions.

Secondary Motions

21. *Q.* So far only the main motion has been discussed. What is a secondary motion?

A. Just as the name implies, it is a motion that is secondary to or depending upon the thought of the main motion. There are three types of secondary motions:

1. *Subsidiary*—motions that amend other motions or refer motions to committee.
2. *Privileged*—motions of such supreme importance as to justify their interrupting all other questions.
3. *Incidental*—motions that apply to methods of transacting business rather than business itself.

22. *Q.* What is an amendment?

A. A subsidiary motion that is used to perfect the main motion.

23. *Q.* May any other motion be made when there is a main motion before the house?

A. Yes. Even though most of the business is done through the use of the main motion it is the lowest ranking motion. Other motions take precedence over the main motion in this order:

1. To postpone indefinitely.
2. To amend.
3. To commit or refer to a committee.
4. To postpone to a certain time.

5. For the previous question (see Question 16).

6. To lay on the table.

Any privileged or incidental motion may be made while a main motion is before the house.

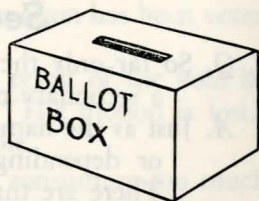
The study and mastery of secondary motions calls for proficiency in the field of parliamentary law and the many forms of procedure. These are rarely used in ordinary meetings. We shall leave that study for those who will be called upon to use it or for those who wish to delve more deeply into parliamentary mystery for the love of it.

Methods of Voting

24. Q. How many methods of voting are there?

A. There are five methods by which a vote may be taken. They are:

1. Acclamation—viva voce (pronounced, vi va - vo se)—which has been fully described under Question 14.
2. Division of the house—which was explained previously in Question 17.
3. Roll call—which is the method used in our legislative bodies, in Congress, in local city councils and at school board meetings so as to have a recorded vote of those who represent the people.
4. General consent—which is commonly used to approve minutes and accept routine reports.
5. Ballot—which is the fairest and most democratic method in elections because its secrecy gives absolute freedom of choice to the voter.



VOTING

25. Q. How would a presiding officer call for a vote by general consent?

A. After the reading of the minutes say, "Are there any corrections to the minutes?" If no corrections are offered then say, "The minutes are approved as read." Wait a moment and if no one objects say, "They are approved." The fact that no one objected indicates general consent and is equivalent to a unanimous vote. If there is a correction and no one objects to the correction being made, say, "The minutes are approved as corrected."

Many routine reports may be accepted in the same manner, thus saving a great deal of valuable time. The chair says, "If there is no objection this report will be accepted." He waits, then says, "Hearing none, it is accepted."

26. *Q.* Why is it so important in some situations to have vote by roll call?

A. Those who make our laws are answerable to the people who elected them. Their votes should be recorded for all to see.

27. *Q.* What method of voting is used to adjourn the meeting?

A. A meeting may be adjourned on motion but it saves time to follow the procedure for general consent. The chair asks, "Is there further business to come before the meeting?" If no one responds, the chair says, "If not, the meeting is adjourned," and taps the gavel.

28. *Q.* May the president vote and, if so, when?

A. Yes. He is a member of the society and like any other member is entitled to vote, but a wise presiding officer will forego that privilege unless the voting is by ballot.

29. *Q.* Should the president break a tie vote or vote a tie?

A. Never. It aligns him with a faction and creates discord. A tie vote loses a motion. Let the motion be lost and it can be brought up again. The more noncommittal a chairman is and the less partisan interest he shows on any controversial matter, the more influence and power he commands.

30. *Q.* What is meant by the Three A's of Parliamentary Law?

A. They are methods of handling business. They are "approved," "accepted," "adopted." Every presiding officer should use these correctly.

1. Minutes are approved.

2. Reports are accepted.

3. Resolutions and recommendations are adopted.

31. *Q.* May an officer move the acceptance of his own report?

A. No. An officer does not, but a chairman may.

32. *Q.* Should the report of the treasurer be accepted?

A. No. It is filed with the secretary as a matter of record and the chair makes that announcement.

33. *Q.* Is an auditor's report accepted?

A. Yes, an auditor's report is accepted.

Nominations and Elections

34. *Q.* What is the best method for electing officers?

A. There are many methods of electing officers but there is no "best" method. Any system has its advantages and disadvantages. Most commonly used methods are to have a nominating committee, to nominate from the floor, to use the ballot, and to elect by acclamation.

COMMITTEES



35. *Q.* If a nominating committee is preferred, should members of that committee be elected or should they be appointed by the chair?

A. The democratic way is to elect a nominating committee. If this is done, no one can accuse the chair of unfairness.

36. *Q.* How many names for an office should the nominating committee submit?

A. That is provided for in the by-laws of the organization. Since the ticket is always open for nominations from the floor any additional number may be added.

37. *Q.* After the nominating committee submits its report what is the procedure?

A. The chairman of the nominating committee reads the report which lists the nominees for each office and hands the list to the president. The president says, "The nominating committee has presented the name (names, if more than one) of ——— for president. Are there any nominations from the floor?" The chair must allow ample time and if no names are offered he may say, "If there are no further nominations for the office of president, the chair declares the nominations closed." He waits a moment, then says, "They are closed." If other names are offered they are added to the list presented by the nominating committee. Then the chair asks, "Are there any further nominations for the office of ———." He must allow plenty of time for nominations. If there are none, he closes the nominations. The chair then proceeds with each office in the same manner.

38. *Q.* Is it ever permissible to vote on the nomination list without asking for nominations from the floor?

A. No. Opportunity should always be given for additional nominations. Remember also that the chair opens and closes each office for nominations from the floor before proceeding with the next office.

NOMINATIONS	
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

39. *Q.* Is it proper to accept the report of the nominating committee?

A. Some authorities say it is, but if it is accepted it is only the report itself, and is done as a courtesy to the committee members for the work they have done. Acceptance of the committee's report never constitutes an election of the names submitted. If the report is formally accepted, proceed with nominations from the floor, as described in Question 37.

40. *Q.* What procedure is best to follow for election?

A. The fairest way is to vote by ballot, but your by-laws should govern that. The by-laws should also state how many votes are required to elect—majority, two-thirds, or plurality. Otherwise the accepted parliamentary authority governs.

41. *Q.* What is a majority vote?

A. Any number over one-half.

42. *Q.* What is a plurality vote?

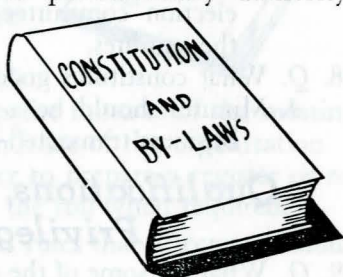
A. A plurality vote means the greatest number of votes received by one when there are more than two names.

43. *Q.* When there is only one candidate for an office is it permissible to suspend the rules and instruct the secretary to cast a unanimous ballot for that candidate?

A. Unless the by-laws specifically give permission for suspension of election rules the secretary may not cast a ballot for the group. Only a ballot from each one present makes the election unanimous.

44. *Q.* If the by-laws state that officers must be elected by ballot, may the election be by acclamation?

A. No. When the by-laws state that elections are to be by ballot it is not legal to vote any other way.



Minutes of Meeting

45. *Q.* When are minutes to be read?

A. Minutes of a regular meeting are read and approved at the next regular meeting.

Minutes of annual meetings must be approved before the adjournment of the meeting. If there is not time for this reading of the minutes, a motion may be made authorizing a board or executive committee to approve the minutes.

Minutes of an executive committee meeting or of a board meeting should not be read at club meetings or conventions.

46. *Q.* What does the chair say when he wishes the minutes read?

A. Say, "We will listen to the minutes of the November 6 meeting." Identify minutes by the date of the meeting, rather than referring to them as the "minutes of the last meeting."

47. *Q.* Should minutes contain reports?

A. If an oral report is given, facts from it may be recorded. Written reports may be attached to minutes as Exhibit A, Exhibit B. The report of the auditor and report of the election committee should be accepted and attached to the minutes.

48. *Q.* What constitutes good minutes?

A. Minutes should be a record of what is actually done—the business transacted—not the conversation or comments.

Qualifications, Responsibilities and Privileges of Officers

49. *Q.* What are some of the desirable qualifications for the officers?

A. Each officer should have some knowledge of parliamentary law, should be familiar with the by-laws of the organization, and should possess the attributes and the "know how" that qualify one for the particular office in which he will serve.

PRESIDENT⁴

50. *Q.* What are some of the responsibilities of the president?

A. The president presides at all meetings. He should represent his organization at any public meeting where such repre-

⁴ See Questions 28, 29 and 46.

sensation is desirable. He is usually given power to appoint committees with the approval of the executive committee. He must be unbiased, impersonal, and extend justice and courtesy to all. He must always refer to himself as "the chair" or "your president"—never as "I." Usually the president stands for all of the business session but may be seated during reports, reading of minutes and speeches.

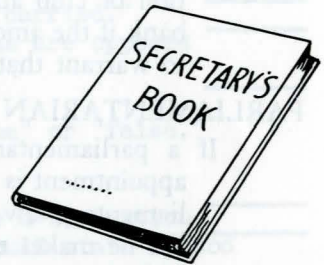
51. *Q.* Is the president a member of all committees?

A. Some organizations make him a member ex officio of all committees, with one exception. He is never a member of a nominating committee.

SECRETARY⁵

52. *Q.* What are some of the desirable qualifications for the secretary?

A. The secretary should be a person who can attend meetings regularly, who has the ability to take accurate minutes and write them up clearly, and who can keep the records of the organization in an orderly manner.



53. *Q.* What is the work of the secretary?

A. The secretary keeps the records of the organization, prepares the minutes of the meetings and carries on the correspondence of the organization. It is also the duty of this officer to prepare a register or roll of the members, and to call the roll when required.

54. *Q.* What are some of the principal rules that a secretary should know and follow?

A. When writing the minutes, include the place and date of the meeting at the top of the page. In the first paragraph give the name of the organization, the kind of meeting (whether regular, called or adjourned), the place of the meeting, the date, and the name and title of the person who called the meeting to order.

Record each motion (and the name of the person who made the motion). It is not necessary to record the seconder,

⁵ See Questions 45, 46, 47 and 48.

but his name may be included if desired.

Record the disposition of the motion—carried, lost, referred to committee, tabled, etc. Omit all discussion, giving only the explanation necessary to show why a motion was made.

Avoid the use of superlatives. Descriptions of the table decorations, the food and the games played should not be included in the minutes. Keep minutes sensible and businesslike.

VICE-PRESIDENT

The vice-president is next in rank to the president and takes the president's place in case of absence of the president.

TREASURER

The treasurer collects and holds all money belonging to the organization or club and deposits it in the bank if the amount is great enough to warrant that protection.

TREASURER



PARLIAMENTARIAN

If a parliamentarian is desired, the appointment is made by the president. He interprets parliamentary law for the president. Contrary to general belief he makes no rulings. The chair renders all decisions and these may even be the reverse of the advice given him by the parliamentarian.

In the study and practice of parliamentary procedure one should keep in mind the words of Thomas Jefferson: "Whether these forms be in all cases the most rational or not is really not of so great importance. It is much more material that there shall be a rule to go by, than what that rule is. . . . It is very material that order, decency and regularity be preserved in a dignified body."

YOUR CLUB MEETING

Source Material:

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised

The Main Motion, by Anna Slaker

Arabelle P. Hanna—State Parliamentarian—Nebraska Federation Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., and National Legislation Chairman of National Federation of B. P. W. C. Director of National Association of Parliamentarians.

1. The four basic principles of parliamentary procedure are:
 - a. Justice and courtesy _____
 - b. Consideration of one thing at a time _____
 - c. The rule of the majority _____
 - d. Protection of the rights of the minority _____
 - e. Obedience to the authority of the president _____
 - f. Short business meetings _____

2. Mark with 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., the approved order for making and passing a motion.
 - a. Discussion by members _____
 - b. Club member says: "I second the motion." _____
 - c. Member says "I move that ---." _____
 - d. Member rises to address the chair _____
 - e. Member is recognized _____
 - f. The president says: "As many as are in favor say aye." _____
 - g. Chairman says: "The motion is carried." _____
 - h. The president says: "As many as are opposed say no." _____

3. Check the following statements "true" or "false."
 - a. Nomination should be seconded _____
 - b. A person need not stand to make a nomination _____
 - c. By-laws of the constitution should state method of election. _____
 - d. If it isn't convenient to follow by-laws, they may be suspended by majority vote. _____
 - e. When only one candidate is nominated, the secretary may cast a unanimous vote for that person. _____

4. Check when the president may vote:
 - a. To break a tie _____
 - b. By ballot _____
 - c. To carry through her pet project _____

5. Write accepted, adopted or approved after each of the following:

Minutes are: _____

Reports are: _____

Resolutions are: _____

(You have permission to reproduce this quiz.)

Answers to Quiz Can Be Found on Following Pages:

Question 1. Page 3

Question 2. Pages 4, 5 and 6

Question 3. Pages 4, 10 and 11

Question 4. Page 9

Question 5. Page 9