

A TYPICAL AGENDA

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(optional as to placement)
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A GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS



PROFESSIONAL
PARLIAMENTARY
RESEARCH
UNIT
OF
COLORADO

The Professional Parliamentary Research Unit of Colorado is affiliated with the Colorado Association of Parliamentarians and the National Association of Parliamentarians. As its name implies, it conducts research on parliamentary subjects.

The information in this pamphlet is based on the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

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Where there is no law, but every man does what is right in his own eyes, there is the least of real liberty.

- Henry M. Robert

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Professional Parliamentary
Research Unit of Colorado

BASIC SCRIPT AGENDA

Before calling a meeting to order, it is the president's duty to determine that a quorum is present, although he need not announce the fact.

The *quorum* is the number of members who must be present for business to be legally transacted. An organization's bylaws should establish the quorum. If they do not, the quorum is a majority of the entire membership.

At the appointed time, the president calls the meeting to order: ***The meeting will come to order.***

If the president and the vice-president are absent at the time a meeting is scheduled to begin, the secretary calls the meeting to order and presides until a chairman pro tem is elected.

A presiding officer and a secretary are the minimum officers necessary for the conduct of business.

OPENING CEREMONIES (optional)

- a. Invocation
- b. Pledge of Allegiance
- c. Welcome
- d. Introductions

1. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

If minutes are distributed in printed form, they still must be approved whether or not they are read aloud.

The secretary will read the minutes. (Secretary stands and reads.) **Are there any corrections to the minutes?... If there are no corrections, the minutes are approved as read.** If there are corrections, they are usually made by *unanimous (or general) consent*, and **the minutes are approved as corrected.**

The reading of the minutes may be dispensed with (not carried out at the regular time), but at the following meeting the minutes must be read before the reading of the later minutes. If more than one set of minutes are read, they are considered in the order the meetings took place.

2. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The treasurer will present the financial statement. (The treasurer stands and reads.) **Are there any questions?... The report will be filed.**

No action is required on the financial statement. It should not be accepted or adopted or approved. The books and other records of the treasurer should be audited at the end of the term. It is the *auditor's* report which is adopted; this action releases the outgoing treasurer from further responsibility.

The treasurer should provide the president and the secretary with a copy of the financial statement before the meeting begins.

The beginning balance, total receipts,

total disbursements, and the ending balance should be entered in the minutes.

3. CORRESPONDENCE

The secretary reads the correspondence. If action is required, the secretary may make the motion.

When correspondence is read, the name and title of the writer should be read first.

Longer communications should be summarized.

4. REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND STANDING COMMITTEES

The officers report in the order of their rank as listed in the bylaws, the president reporting first. The standing committees also report in the order they are listed in the bylaws. Any recommendations for the assembly's consideration should be placed at the end of the report. Adoption should be moved by the reporting member of a board or committee. A motion to adopt an officer's recommendation should, however, be made by another member. Motions do not require a second if they come from a board or a committee of more than one person.

5. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Special committees report in the order they were appointed.

6. SPECIAL ORDERS

Special orders are items of business mandated by the bylaws for particular meetings, and any motion made a special order. Examples of special orders include the election of a nominating committee or of officers.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND GENERAL ORDERS

Unfinished business (never called "old" business) is business brought over from a previous meeting to this meeting because adjournment occurred before the order of business was completed.

General orders are those items of business which were postponed from the previous meeting to this meeting or motions for which previous notice was given. Such items should be reflected in the minutes of the last meeting.

8. NEW BUSINESS

Is there any new business? If the president knows of items of new business which require action, he may introduce them at this time.

Is there any further new business? At this point members, by making motions, may introduce new business.

9. PROGRAM

The program is usually presented before the meeting adjourns. The president should never "turn over the meeting". He should say, ***It is time for the program, which will be introduced by the program chairman.***

At the program's conclusion the program chairman should say, ***Mr. President, this concludes the program.*** He should not "turn the meeting back" to the president.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Announcements may be made just prior to adjournment and should be related to the purpose of the organization.

When it appears that there is no further business, the president may say: ***If there is no further business, this meeting will adjourn... The meeting is adjourned.***

A motion for adjournment is not required.

The president may tap the gavel once to indicate that the meeting has ended.

MOTIONS AND VOTING

Members place their ideas before the assembly by making motions.

A **motion** is a proposal in a meeting by a member that the organization take certain action.

The maker of a motion has the right to speak first in discussion if the motion is debatable. He may not speak against his own motion, but may vote against it.

During debate, the chair should let the speakers alternate, as far as possible, between those favoring and those opposing the pending question.

No member may speak more than twice in a debate on a motion. No one may speak a second time until all who wish have had the opportunity to speak once.

Requests and inquiries are not considered debate.

Adoption or defeat of a motion is based on the number of votes cast, not on the number of members present, unless a rule of the organization provides a different basis.

For adoption most motions require a majority vote; that is, approval by more than half the members voting.

A **majority vote** is more than half of the votes cast.

A **tie vote** is a lost vote because it is not a majority.

A **2/3 vote** is at least 2/3 of the votes cast; usually taken by rising.

A voice vote is the usual method of voting. If such a vote is inconclusive, the chair may say, ***The chair is in doubt. Those in favor of the motion will rise... Be seated. Those opposed will rise... Be seated.*** The result of the vote is then announced.

A member who doubts the correctness of the chair's announcement may demand a rising vote by calling out, ***Division!*** This motion does not require a second or a vote, and compels the chair to retake the vote by having the members rise.

The chair may at any time order a rising vote to be counted. Or, any member may move that a rising vote be counted. This requires a second and a majority vote for adoption.

Roll call votes are time consuming and are not usually used in ordinary assemblies.

The chair must always call for the negative vote, even if the vote seems unanimous in the affirmative.

To preserve his impartiality the chair does not vote on voice votes. If a counted rising vote results in a tie, he may vote to break the tie. The chair may also vote to cause a tie. On ballot votes the chair votes when the other members do, and cannot then vote again to break a tie.

To close debate and stop the making of secondary motions the motion **previous question** is used. Any member may obtain the floor and say, ***I move the previous question.*** The motion requires a second, is not debatable, and requires a 2/3 vote. If the motion to close debate is adopted, the chair immediately takes the vote on the motion on which debate was closed. If the motion to close debate is defeated, he calls for further discussion on the pending motion.

Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion under consideration. Speakers must address all remarks through the chair, and should not address one another directly. They must avoid personalities and must be courteous.

Only one main motion may be on the floor at any given time; however secondary motions may be made while the main motion is pending, so long as they do not introduce a new subject.

The presiding officer can save time by using *unanimous* (or *general*) consent in routine matters. For example:

If there is no objection, this meeting will be recorded for the convenience of the secretary.

If no one objects, consent has been given and the president says, ***Since there is no objection, the meeting will be recorded.***

If even one member objects by calling out, ***I object***, the question must be opened to discussion, if debatable, and a vote taken.

THE EIGHT STEPS OF A MOTION

1. Member rises and addresses chair: ***Mr. President or Madam President.***
2. Member is recognized by chair.
3. Member proposes motion: ***I move...***
4. Another member seconds motion.
5. Chair states motion: ***It is moved and seconded...***
6. Chair calls for debate: ***Is there any discussion?***
7. Chair restates motion and takes the vote: ***Those in favor say aye...Those opposed say no.***
8. Chair announces results: The (ayes) (noes) have it, the motion is (adopted) (lost), and we (will) (will not)...

THE THREE PROCESSES OF AMENDING

1. **Insert or add.**
2. **Strike out.**
3. **Strike out and insert**, a combination of the first two processes; or substitute (used only with paragraphs).

Any number of amendments may be offered, but only two may be pending at any one time.

I move to amend the motion by...

I move to amend the amendment by...



The chart on the top half of the next page shows the 13 ranking motions. The main motion is lowest in rank.

Each motion listed outranks the one(s) listed below it. When any of the ranking motions is pending, all motions listed below it are out of order at that time.

The lower part of the chart shows other frequently used motions.

THE 13 RANKING MOTIONS

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn	S	A		M	R
Adjourn	S			M	
Recess	S	A		M	
Raise a Question of Privilege				Ch	I
Call for the Orders of the Day				Ch	I

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

Lay on the Table	S			M	
Previous Question	S			2/3	R
Limit or Extend the Limits of Debate	S	A		2/3	R
Postpone to a Certain Time	S	A	D	M	R
Commit (Or Refer)	S	A	D	M	R
Amend	S	A	D	M	R
Postpone Indefinitely	S		D	M	R

MAIN MOTION

S A D M R

THE INCIDENTAL MOTIONS (NO RANK)

Request for Information						I
Parliamentary Inquiry						I
Division of a Question	S	A		M		
Division of the Assembly						I
Point of Order				Ch		I
Appeal from the Decision of the Chair	S		D	M	R	I
Suspend the Rules	S			2/3		

THE MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY (NO RANK)

Take from the Table	S			M	
Rescind/Amend Something Previously Adopted	S	A	D	2/3	R
Discharge a Committee	S		D	M	R
Reconsider	S		D	M	

MINUTES

The minutes should contain what was *done* by the organization, not what was *said* by the members.

The first paragraph of the minutes should contain: the kind of meeting (regular, special, etc.); the name of the organization; the date and time of the meeting, and the place if it is not always the same; the fact that the regular presiding officer and the secretary were present or the names of the persons who substituted for them; and whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as read, or as corrected.

The body of the minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each subject matter: all main motions, worded as stated or amended, and whether adopted or defeated. The name of the maker of the motion should be included in the minutes and the fact that it was seconded, but not the name of the seconder unless ordered by the assembly.

Remarks of a speaker, or details of the program, should not be included.

The last paragraph should state the hour of adjournment.

Minutes should be signed with the name and title of the person writing them. *Respectfully submitted* and similar phrases should not be used.

The secretary should provide the president with a copy of the minutes of the previous meeting well in advance of the next meeting. Minutes are the legal record of an organization. They should **never** be destroyed.

SAMPLE MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Centennial Club was called to order at 7:30 P.M. on Thursday, November 17, 20___. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as corrected.

The financial statement showed a balance October 13 of \$405.00; receipts, \$94.00; disbursements, \$38.00; balance, November 17, \$461.00.

The report of the Executive Board contained a recommendation, which, after amendment, was adopted as follows:

That the Education Chairman be authorized to purchase seven copies of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* for the use of the members.

Mrs. Jones moved that the group contribute \$50.00 to the Historical Society's fund for the establishment of a museum on local history. The motion was adopted.

The program consisted of a talk by Dr. John Peterson on *Rocks and Minerals of the Rocky Mountain Region*.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 P.M.

James Black
James Black,
Secretary

BUDGETS

A budget is a plan for the receipts and expenditures of funds during a term. It is usually presented in the form of a recommendation from a committee. The assembly may amend the budget before adopting it. The adoption of the budget does not authorize the expenditure of funds even to the extent contained in the budget; expenditures are authorized only by approval of the assembly unless otherwise provided in the bylaws, standing rules, or policies.

SAMPLE BUDGET

January 1- December 31, 20__

Estimated Income:

Dues	\$250
Club Projects	\$400
Other	<u>50</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$700</u>

Estimated Expenses:

Dues to National	\$200
Printing	150
Hospitality	50
Programs	50
Convention Expenses	150
Contingency Fund	<u>100</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$700</u>

Budget Committee

SAMPLE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Financial Statement
Centennial Club
December 21, 20__

Balance November 17 \$461.00

Receipts:

Dues	<u>\$48.00</u>
Total Receipts	<u>48.00</u>
 Total	 <u><u>\$509.00</u></u>

Disbursements:

Stationery	\$12.00
Postage	<u>10.00</u>

Total Disbursements 22.00

Balance December 21	<u>\$487.00</u>
Total	<u><u>\$509.00</u></u>

Mary Smith

Mary Smith,
Treasurer

*In a land where perhaps more persons...
are members of one or more societies
some knowledge of parliamentary
procedure may be justly regarded as a
necessary part of the education of every
man and woman.*

Henry M. Robert

BOARDS

A board is a group of members of an organization authorized to act, within specified limitations, for the organization when necessary between its regular meetings, and in some cases to have complete control over certain phases of the organization's business.

The bylaws should specify the composition of the board, define the board's duties and powers, and make provision for the regular and special meetings of the board. The quorum of a board is a majority of the total membership of the board unless otherwise specified in the bylaws.

The board has only such power as is delegated to it by the bylaws or by a vote of the organization's assembly referring individual matters to it.

No action of the board can conflict with action taken by the assembly of the organization. Except in the matters placed by the bylaws exclusively under the control of the board, the organization's assembly can give the board instructions which it must carry out, and can countermand any action of the board if it is not too late.

A board can appoint committees to work under its supervision or according to its specific instructions.

A designated secretary keeps the minutes of the proceedings which are usually accessible only to the members of the board.

COMMITTEES

Standing Committees should be listed in the bylaws. Each standing committee is in charge of a certain type of work for the entire term. Members serve until their successors are appointed.

Special Committees are appointed or elected from time to time to perform a certain task. When the assigned work is completed and the final report is presented to the assembly, the committee ceases to exist.

The quorum of a committee is a majority of its members. The bylaws of most organizations provide that the president serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee. The president, when serving as an ex-officio member, is not counted in determining the presence of a quorum. The president has no right to create or appoint committees unless given this power by the bylaws or by vote of the assembly.

When the president is authorized to appoint committees, the first person named is the chairman. When committees are chosen in any other manner and the chairman is not specifically designated, the first person named serves as temporary chairman until the committee meets and selects its chairman.

Soon after a committee is appointed, the chairman or first person named should call a meeting. Should he fail to perform this important duty, any two members

of the committee may call a meeting by notifying all members including the chairman and the president, if he is an ex-officio member.

Committee meetings are informal. The chairman takes an active part in the discussion. He must keep the meeting under control and see that the purpose of the meeting is accomplished.

Discussion in committee meetings is important. Motions to close or limit debate are not usually allowed.

Committees do not usually keep minutes, but notes may be kept by a member of the committee for the committee's own use.

Only members of a committee have the right to attend committee meetings. Other members of the organization may attend only by invitation.

Committee reports should usually be submitted in writing, and should be given in the third person.

It is not necessary or proper for the assembly to accept or adopt or approve committee reports. If a report contains recommendations, these are handled as motions by the chair.

The final decision is always reserved for the assembly, unless the committee is given power to act for the organization.

BYLAWS AND OTHER RULES

Bylaws. An organization's own rules take precedence over its parliamentary authority (usually *Robert's Rule of Order Newly Revised* (RONR)). Thus, for example, if the group wishes to limit

discussion in all meetings to a shorter time than allowed by the parliamentary authority, it can do so by adopting a special rule, which must be adopted by a 2/3 vote with previous notice.

The highest internal rules of an organization are its bylaws, which are adopted initially by a majority vote. Thereafter, amendment of the bylaws usually requires previous notice and a 2/3 vote.

Bylaws typically contain the following nine articles: Name, Object, Members, Officers, Meetings, Executive Board (if there is one), Committees, Parliamentary Authority, and Amendment.

Bylaws may never be suspended, even by unanimous consent, no matter how inconvenient the situation.

Standing Rules are those rules which are observed on a continuing basis by the organization but which are not as difficult to change as the bylaws. Examples of standing rules are those relating, for example, to the starting time of meetings or to the holding of an annual bazaar. They are adopted by a majority vote as the need arises.

Standing rules relate to the details of administration rather than to parliamentary rules. A standing rule may be suspended for the duration of the current session by a majority vote. Standing rules may be amended (changed) or rescinded (eliminated) by majority vote if notice has been given, or by a 2/3 vote without previous notice.

NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS

A nomination is a proposal that someone be elected to a specified position.

Nominations do not require a second.

A nominating committee, if there is one, should be elected by the organization or by the executive board. The president should neither select the committee nor be a member of it.

If no rule prohibits it, the nominating committee may nominate more than one candidate for a position. Usually this is not wise, especially if the candidates are voted upon by ballot, all at the same time. In such a case, losing candidates for higher offices have no way of being considered for lower ones.

After the nominating committee's report has been given, the president should call for nominations from the floor. When it appears that nominations have ceased, the president may declare the nominations closed.

The tellers (appointed by the chair) distribute, collect, and count the ballots. Blank ballots are ignored. Illegal ballots are reported, stating the specific illegality. A majority of the votes cast is required for election. A plurality vote (the highest number of votes received when there are three or more choices) does not elect a candidate or decide a proposition unless the plurality is also a majority or unless the bylaws permit it.

If rebalotting is required to achieve a majority, no candidate may be dropped unless the organization's rules specifically allow it.

SAMPLE TELLERS' REPORT

Number of votes cast.....	27
Necessary for election	14
Mrs. J. received	17
Mr. A. received	9
Illegal votes	1

(Two for Mrs. B. folded together)

All the tellers should sign.

The chairman of tellers reads the report but does not declare who is elected. The president reads the report again and announces the results. The tellers' report should be entered in the minutes.



The application of parliamentary law is the best method yet devised to enable assemblies of any size, with due regard for every member's opinion, to arrive at the general will on a maximum number of questions of varying complexity in a minimum time and under all kinds of internal climate ranging from total harmony to hardened or impassioned division of opinion.

- Henry M. Robert