

# ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY | OFFICE OF GREEK LIFE

## WHAT IS PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE?

A set of rules for conduct at meetings, which allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

It's a time-tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings. It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization and still serves as the basic guide for operation for most clubs, organizations, and associations.

## THE BASICS

**HAVING THE FLOOR:** Having a member speak at a meeting. S/he must be recognized by the chairperson. Once recognized, the speaker cannot be interrupted except by the chairperson.

**MAKING MOTIONS:** One makes a motion to propose a course of action that one thinks the group should take. If another member agrees that the motion should be open for discussion, s/he will second the motion. Discussion pertaining only to the motion can be discussed at this time. Only one motion can be on the floor at a time. A motion to close discussion and a second are needed before a vote can be taken.

**AMENDING MOTIONS:** Amendments to a motion can be made as long as the person who has moved the original motion is agreeable to the amendment. If the originator of the motion is not agreeable, then the group must vote on the original motion.

**TABLING MOTIONS:** If it appears that more information is needed to consider a motion fairly, then a motion to table the discussion can be made. The length of, and reason for, tabling the motion must be included in the table to motion. A majority of members must support the tabling in for it to pass.

**CALLING THE QUESTION:** When it appears that the discussion of a particular motion is no longer productive, the question can be called with a two-thirds vote of the call to a question is an immediate vote on the motion.

## STRUCTURE

- I. CALL TO ORDER.
- II. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS PRESENT.
- III. READING OF THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.
  - a. Meeting the leader typically will ask if there are any additions or changes to the minutes.
  - b. This typically will be followed by a vote to approve the minutes.

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- IV. OFFICERS' REPORT
  - a. These are simply updated and do not include votes.
- V. COMMITTEE REPORTS
  - a. These are also updates and do not include votes.
- VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
  - a. This is important business previously planned for discussion at the current meeting.
  - b. This can include items that were discussed at the last meeting, but more information was needed or they weren't on the agenda for a vote.
  - c. Unfinished business can include votes
- VII. NEW BUSINESS
  - a. Any new business before the body that requires a vote.
  - b. This must also include a description on the agenda.
- VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS
  - a. These are announcements from the body, but do not include votes.
- IX. ADJOURNMENT
  - a. The meeting leader will move for adjournment, signifying the end of the meeting

## PRESENTING A MOTION

- Obtain the floor
  - Wait until the last speaker has finished
  - Rise and address the Chairman by saying, "Mr./Madame Chairman or Mr./Madame President."
  - Wait until the Chairman recognizes you.
- Make your Motion
  - Always state a motion in the affirmative. "I move that we..." rather than "I move that we do not..."
- Another member will second your motion, or the Chairman will call for a second.
  - If there is no second to your motion, it is lost.
  - If there is a second, the motion goes for discussion.
- The chairman states your motion
  - The chairman will say, "It has been moved and seconded that we..."
  - The membership may discuss/ debate your motion, or may move directly to vote.
- Putting the Question to the membership
  - If there is no discussion and/or after all discussion, the motion goes for vote.

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## FORMS OF VOTING

- GENERAL (UNANIMOUS) CONSENT
  - The president asks if there is any objection, and if none, the motion passes.
  - "If there is no objection, we will adjourn. (Pause) There being no objection, the meeting is adjourned."
- VOICE VOTE
  - Regular method of voting on any motion that does not require more than a majority vote; most common form of voting.
  - "The question is on the adoption of the motion that \_\_\_\_\_. Those in favor, say AYE." (Pause.) "Those opposed, say NO/NAY." (Pause.)
- RISING VOTE
  - Method used when a two-thirds vote is required for adoption; is also used when a delegate calls for a division of the assembly.
  - "The question is on the adoption of the motion that \_\_\_\_\_. Those in favor, please stand." (Pause.) "Thank you, please be seated. Those opposed, please stand." (Pause.) "Thank you, please be seated."
- SHOW OF HANDS
  - An alternative method for a voice vote; used in small boards, committees or very small meetings.
  - "The question is on the adoption of the motion that \_\_\_\_\_. Those in favor please raise your hand." (Pause.) "Thank you. Those opposed please raise your hand." (Pause.) "Thank you."
- VOTING CARDS
  - An alternative method for a voice vote; cards must be issued during the credentialing process.
  - "The question is on the adoption of the motion that \_\_\_\_\_. Those in favor please raise your voting card." (Pause.) "Thank you. Those opposed please raise your voting card." (Pause.) "Thank you."
- COUNTED VOTE
  - Can be ordered by the president when it appears a voice vote is unclear, and it can be ordered by a majority vote of the delegates.
- BALLOT OR ROLL CALL VOTE
  - Can be ordered by a majority vote of the delegates and is required if specified in the bylaws.