

# LeGIT Presentation

## Division of Community and Regional Affairs



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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LGIT

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# Parliamentary Procedure

## The Basics for Governmental Meetings



## Parliamentary Procedure Basics

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# The Standard, Robert's Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order were first published in 1876 and were named for Colonel Henry Martyn Robert, a military engineer in the United States Army. Robert developed the rules after being asked to conduct a meeting at his church. Due to his inexperience in this role and no shared understanding among the attendees as to how a meeting should be conducted, the outcome was unproductive and disappointing. Robert recognized the need for a uniform understanding of parliamentary procedures and went about developing a reference document.

Robert's Rules of Order provide a basis for the conduct of public meetings and a framework for the decision-making process. This guide to parliamentary procedures helps ensure that the rights of all participants in the process are recognized and considered. Having a set of rules to follow for decisions can be particularly useful in very contentious situations where there may be very differing and heated opinions.



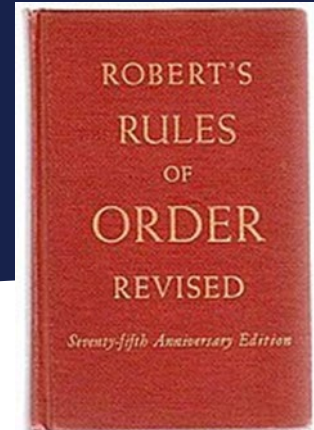
## Parliamentary Procedure Basics

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# What is Parliamentary Procedure?

Parliamentary procedure is a formal set of rules for conducting a meeting of an organized group. The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to:

- enable the group to transact business with speed and efficiency;
- protect the rights of each individual to be heard at the meeting;
- assure that the will of the majority is carried out;
- ensure full and free debate of each item of business brought before the organization;
- and
- preserve a spirit of harmony within the group.



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# MAIN MOTIONS

## Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11<sup>th</sup> Edition)*

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2 <sup>ND</sup> ?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§21 Close meeting	I move to <b>adjourn</b>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§20 Take break	I move to <b>recess</b> for	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§19 Register complaint	I rise to a <b>question of privilege</b>	Yes	No	No	No	None
§18 Make follow agenda	I call for the <b>orders of the day</b>	Yes	No	No	No	None
§17 Lay aside temporarily	I move to <b>lay</b> the question <b>on the table</b>	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§16 Close debate	I move the <b>previous question</b>	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§15 <b>Limit or extend debate</b>	I move that debate be limited to ...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
§14 <b>Postpone to a certain time</b>	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§13 <b>Refer to committee</b>	I move to refer the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§12 Modify wording of motion	I move to <b>amend</b> the motion by ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
§11 Kill main motion	I move that the motion be <b>postponed indefinitely</b>	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
§10 Bring business before assembly (a <b>main motion</b> )	I move that [or "to"] ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

# SECONDARY MOTIONS



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# INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

## Parliamentary Motions Guide

Based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (11<sup>th</sup> Edition)*

**Incidental Motions** - No order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decided immediately.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	INTERRUPT?	2 <sup>ND</sup> ?	DEBATE?	AMEND?	VOTE?
§23 Enforce rules	<b>Point of order</b>	Yes	No	No	No	None
§24 Submit matter to assembly	I <b>appeal</b> from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Varies	No	Majority
§25 Suspend rules	I move to <b>suspend the rules</b> which ...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
§26 Avoid main motion altogether	I <b>object to the consideration</b> of the question	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
§27 Divide motion	I move to <b>divide the question</b>	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
§29 Demand rising vote	I call for a <b>division</b>	Yes	No	No	No	None
§33 Parliamentary law question	<b>Parliamentary inquiry</b>	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None
§33 Request information	<b>Request for information</b>	Yes (if urgent)	No	No	No	None

**Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly** - no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.

§34 Take matter from table	I move to <b>take from the table</b> ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
§35 Cancel or change previous action	I move to <b>rescind/ amend something previously adopted...</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or maj. w/ notice
§37 Reconsider motion	I move to <b>reconsider</b> the vote ...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority

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# All about Motions- Main Motions

What is a motion?

- A motion is a proposal that the body, or group, take a certain action.

MAIN MOTION:

- A main motion brings a question or an item of business in front of the body for consideration.
- Only one main motion can be considered at a time.

AMENDMENT (Secondary or Subsidiary Motion):

- An amendment changes the wording of a main motion and must be voted on before the main motion can be voted on.



# All about Main Motions, continued

How does a main motion occur?

- A member addresses the presiding officer, “Mr. Chairman”
  - The Chair recognizes the member
- The member proposes a motion
  - “I move to accept the minutes of our last meeting”
    - The motion is seconded by another member. This member does not need to have the floor to second a motion.
    - If another member does not second the motion, the motion dies for lack of a second.
- The chair restates the motion and discussion can begin.



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# All about Motions, continued- Subsidiary Motion

## Amendment:

- Used to "fine tune" a motion to make it more acceptable to the group.
- The amendment must be related to the main motion's intent and cannot be phrased in a way that would defeat the main motion.
- Two amendments may be on the floor at one time: the first amendment modifies the main motion, and the second amendment must relate to the first amendment.
- When an amendment is on the floor, only the amendment may be debated. The amendments are voted on in the reverse order in which they were made, as each amendment changes to some degree the intent of the main motion.
- As each amendment is voted on, an additional primary or secondary amendment may be introduced.
- Requires a second, debatable, majority vote.



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# All about Motions, continued- Subsidiary Motion

How does an amendment motion occur?

- A member addresses the presiding officer, “Mr. Chairman”
  - The Chair recognizes the member
- The member proposes a amending motion
  - “I move to amend the minutes of our last meeting, on page two, line five, to clarify that Council Member Smith was speaking.”
    - The motion is seconded by another member. This member does not need to have the floor to second a motion.
    - If another member does not second the motion, the motion dies for lack of a second.
- The chair restates the motion and discussion can begin on the amendment. After voting on the amendment, the body returns to the main motion.



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# A list of Subsidiary (Secondary) Motions

## Tabling:

- Used to postpone discussion until the group decides by majority vote to resume discussion. By adopting the motion to "lay on the table", a majority has the power to halt consideration of the question immediately without debate. Requires a second, non-debatable, not amendable.

## Previous question or close debate.:

- Used to bring the body to an immediate vote. It closes debate and stops further amendment. Contrary to some misconceptions, the majority decides when enough discussion has occurred, not the moderator. The formal motion is to "call for the question" or "call for the previous question," or simply, "I move to close debate." The motion requires a second, is not debatable and requires a two-thirds majority



# A list of Subsidiary (Secondary) Motions

## Limit/extend debate:

- May be desired if the group has adopted a rule limiting the amount of time that will be spent on a topic, or if the group desires to impose a time limitation.

## Postpone to a definite time :

- Similar to tabling, except that the motion directs that the matter will be taken up again at some specific date and time.

## Refer to committee:

- Directs that some other body will study the matter and report back.

## Postpone indefinitely:

- This motion effectively kills a motion, because, if adopted, a two-thirds vote is subsequently required to take the matter up again.



# All about Incidental Motions, continued

## What is an incidental motion?

- An incidental motion arises incidentally and is decided immediately.
- Only one incidental motion can be considered at a time.

## If you want to enforce the rules:

- “Point of Order” is the motion to enforce the rules
  - This motion does not need a second and should be enforced by the chair immediately.

## If you want to suspend the rules:

- “I move to suspend the rules which limit public speakers to 5 minutes and extend their speaking time to 7 minutes. “
  - This motion requires a second and a 2/3 vote of the body.



# More Incidental Motions, continued

Appeal from the decision of the chair:

- The group can overrule the chair on any decision.
  - While the motion must be seconded, it cannot be amended.
  - When this motion is moved and seconded, the chair immediately states the question, "Shall the decision of the chair stand as the judgment of the organization?"
  - If there is a tie vote, the chair's decision is upheld. The motion is not debatable when it applies to a matter of improper use of authority or when it is made while there is a pending motion to close debate.
  - However, the motion can be debated at other times. Each person may speak once, and the moderator may also state the basis for the decision.

Parliamentary inquiry:

- Not a motion, but a question as to whether an action would be in order.
  - Example, parliamentary inquiry if another amendment can be made.



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# More Incidental Motions, continued

Request to withdraw a motion:

- Contrary to popular misconception, a motion cannot be withdrawn by its mover without consent of the body. This request requires majority approval.

Point of information:

- A person may rise to offer information that is considered necessary for the group. This provision is not used to offer debate.

Object to consideration of a question:

- When a motion is so outrageous, intended to distract the group from resolving legitimate business the motion can be objected to and ruled out of order without debate. However, if the chair does not rule the motion out of order, a two-thirds vote of the group can block further consideration.



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# All about Motions, Renewal Motions

Once the group has taken action, renewal motions require the group to further discuss or dispose of a motion. Renewal motions include:

## Motion to Reconsider:

- When the group needs to discuss further a motion that has already been defeated at the same meeting. A majority of the members present must approve taking additional time to debate the motion again. The motion can be made only by a person who voted on the prevailing side earlier on the question. Contrary to another popular misconception, the motion may be brought up again at a subsequent meeting. If the chair believes that there is no indication that the group's wishes have changed, however, the motion can be ruled out of order, subject to an appeal from the decision of the chair.





# All about Motions, Renewal motions continued

Take from the table:

- Unless the original motion to table directed that the motion be brought back at a specific date and time, a majority of the group must pass a motion to take from the table. Such a motion is non-debatable.

Rescind:

- When the group wishes to annul some action, a motion to rescind is in order at any time. If prior notice has been given to the group that this action will be considered, the motion to rescind can pass with a simple majority vote; however, if no prior notice has been given, the vote requires a two-thirds majority.



# All about Motions, Questions of Privilege

Finally, there are a few questions of privilege that are in order at any time and must be disposed of prior to resuming discussion on the matter at hand:

Fix the time for next meeting:

- This is in order at any time, including when a motion to adjourn is pending. Second required, not debatable, amendable.

Adjourn:

- To bring the meeting to a halt. Second required, not debatable, not amendable. Alternatively, instead of a motion, the chair can ask if there is any further business. If there is no response, the chair can say, "since there is no further business, the meeting is adjourned."



# All about Motions, Questions of Privilege continued

## Recess:

- A temporary break in the meeting; should state a time at which the meeting will resume. Second required, not debatable, not amendable.

## Point of privilege:

- A matter that concerns the welfare of the group. Can be raised even when another person is speaking. No second, not debatable, no vote required.

## Call for the orders of the day:

- A demand that the group return to the agenda. Can be taken when another person is speaking, no second required, not debatable, no vote required.



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# Five Basic Principles of Parliamentary Law

1. Only one subject may claim the attention of the governing body at one time
2. Each proposition (motion) presented for consideration is entitled to full and free debate
3. Every member has rights equal to every other member
4. The will of the majority must be carried out, and the rights of the minority must be preserved.
5. The personality and desires of each member should be merged into the larger unity of the organization.



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# Are Robert's Rules of Order Required?

- Check your city code or board's by-laws; the code may or may not state that Robert's Rules of Order are the required parliamentary rules for your body.
- The Municipality of Anchorage Code of Ordinances states "4.70.208 - Rules of order. In all matters addressed in regular and special meetings, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern."
- Remember, Robert's Rules allows the body to suspend the rules, if the majority wishes.
- Robert's Rules is a tool and a framework to conduct business efficiently. Learn the rules so that you can make competent use of them.



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# Resources for Parliamentary Procedure

DCRA Resource Desk:

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/dcra/LocalGovernmentResourceDesk/Index.aspx>

Anne McFarlane

<https://jurassicparliament.com/>



National Association of Parliamentarians

<https://www.parliamentarians.org/>



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