

Call to Order

What Every Board Member Needs to Know about Parli Pro

Guidelines for Presidents

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Hearing a Motion

You may, and often should, assist a member in phrasing a motion clearly and fully. *Before the motion is restated by the chair*, anyone may offer a “friendly amendment” which the maker of the motion may accept or reject.

Obtaining a Second

If there is no second, say “*Since there is no second, the motion is not before this meeting.*”

A motion coming from a committee (2 or more persons) does not need a second.

Seconds are not always required at meetings of small boards. A second means “I am willing to have this discussed,” so if a discussion ensues without a second, the second is implied.

Restating the Motion

After a motion is made and seconded, restate the motion clearly and fully. “*It is moved and seconded that...*”

Discussing a Pending Motion (Debate)

Your job is to conduct the debate in an orderly manner.

Begin by asking, “*Is there any discussion?*”

Members should wait for you to recognize them before speaking. This rule may be relaxed or suspended for meetings of small, less formal groups or boards.

The maker of the motion is entitled to speak first.

Be impartial and objective. Allow members to speak both for and against the motion. Give everyone who wants to a chance to speak.

If someone interrupts another speaker, you may rule them out of order.



Keep the discussion focused on the matter at hand. If the discussion begins to wander from the subject, restate the motion. “*The motion on the floor is the printing of membership brochures. Members will please direct their remarks to that question.*”

Taking a Vote (Putting the Question)

First, state the question. “*The question is on the adoption of the motion that we print 1,000 membership brochures at a cost not to exceed \$125.*”

Call for both “aye” and “no” votes. *“Those in favor of the motion say ‘aye.’ [pause] Those opposed say ‘no.’”* Failure to call for the “no” votes is a common mistake.

If the vote is close and you are in doubt as to the results, ask for a show of hands. *“The chair is in doubt. All those in favor of the motion please raise your hand. [Count the hands.] Thank you. All those opposed please raise your hand. [Count the hands.] Thank you.”*

State the results of the vote. *“The ayes have it and the motion is carried,”* or *“The noes have it and the motion is lost.”* If the vote is by show of hands, first state the number of “ayes” and “noes.”

Conducting Business by General Consent

“If there is no objection” are the five most powerful and useful words in the chair’s vocabulary.

General consent replaces the formal process of making a motion, amending, debating, and voting on it. Only the chair may ask for general consent.

Use general consent whenever possible. It simplifies and speeds up business, especially for incidental or routine items that do not require discussion, such as approving the minutes, approving the agenda, approving payment of routine bills, referring to committee, and adjourning the meeting.

Begin by saying, *“If there is no objection. . .”* Then state the action to be taken.

If there is a single objection, the action can not be approved by general consent. You must go through the normal process of making a motion and voting.

Examples of General Consent:

General consent to approve minutes: *“Are there any corrections to the minutes? If there are no corrections [or “no further corrections”], the minutes stand approved as read [or “as corrected”].”*

General consent to pay bills: *“If there is no objection, the audited bills will be paid.”*

General consent in place of a main motion: *“If there is no objection, we will print 1,000 membership brochures at a cost not to exceed \$125.”*

General consent to amend a motion: *“If there is no objection, the motion will be amended to substitute the number 1,000 in place of 500 brochures and to substitute a cost not to exceed \$125 in place of \$75. [Pause] There being no objection, the motion is so amended. [Restate the motion as amended.] The motion is that we print 1,000 membership brochures at a cost not to exceed \$125.”*

General consent to postpone: *“If there is no objection, the motion to print membership brochures will be postponed to the next meeting.”* Or, *“As the hour is late, if there is no objection, the remaining agenda items will be postponed to the next meeting.”*

General consent to refer to a committee: *“If there is no objection, the motion will be referred to a committee of two to investigate the cost of printing brochures and to report back at the next meeting.”* (Then appoint your committee.)

General consent to adjourn: *“If there is no objection, the meeting is adjourned.”*

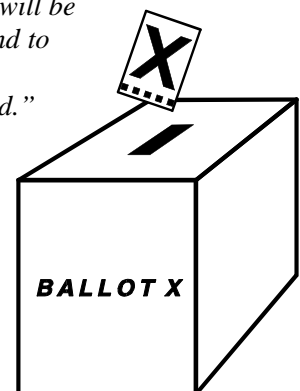
Conducting an Election

Conducting an election before the general membership may be one of the trickiest jobs an inexperienced president performs because the dialog can be so varied. If you know the basic rules of parliamentary procedure, you can sail through it looking like a pro.

First, ask for the report of the nominating committee.

Second, ask for nominations from the floor. Ask for nominations for each office or position separately.

Third, close the nominations. This may be done by general consent: *“Are there any more nominations? [pause] If there is no objection, nominations will be closed.”* Or a member may make a motion to close nominations. If a motion is made, it must be seconded and voted on. At this point you have only closed the nominations; you still need to hold the election.



If there is only one nominee per office or position, they may be elected by acclamation or unanimous ballot (unless your bylaws require a ballot vote). This may be accomplished by general consent.

“There being no nominations from the floor, I declare the slate presented by the nominating committee to be elected by acclamation.” Or, *“There being no further nominations, if there is no objection, I declare those nominated to be elected by unanimous ballot.”*

To save time, closing the nominations and electing by unanimous ballot may be accomplished in one action. You may do this by general consent: *“There being no nominations from the floor, if there is no objection, I declare nominations to be closed and the slate elected by unanimous ballot.”*

If a member moves to close nominations, *before you restate the motion* you may suggest a “friendly amendment” to add election by unanimous ballot to the motion. The final wording of the motion should be something like this: *“I move that nominations be closed and the slate elected by unanimous ballot.”* The motion needs to be seconded and voted on.

If you have more than one nominee per office, or if your bylaws require a ballot vote, each office is voted on separately. If voting is by rising or show of hands, it is a good custom to ask the nominees to retire from the room while the vote is taken.

Finally, when the voting is completed, remember to announce the results of the election.

Hints and Time Savers

Large meetings require more formal procedures. Small boards and committees (less than 12 people) are usually more relaxed.

For small boards, minutes may be distributed in writing in advance and *“approved as distributed to the members of the board,”* eliminating the need to spend time reading them aloud at the meeting.

The Treasurer’s report need not be approved by motion or general consent. It is simply received and filed. The annual report of the audit committee does require approval by motion or general consent. If possible, consult your officers and committee chairmen ahead of time and include on the agenda only those whom you know to have reports to make. When you have finished with reports on the agenda, ask if there are any other officer or committee reports.

It is the responsibility of the chair to conduct the meeting impartially. In a formal meeting, the chair usually does not make motions (except in asking for general consent), does not debate, and does not vote (except by ballot). Subject to custom, the chair may make motions, speak in discussions, and vote in a small, less formal group or board.

A motion to lay on the table is a courtesy used to temporarily interrupt the agenda for something urgent and special. Normal business should be postponed, rather than laid on the table. Note the correct term is “lay on the table,” not “tabled.”

For Further Study

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