

# **Running an Effective Meeting: The Art of Presiding**

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# Quick Parliamentary Quiz

## How do we learn to preside?



The presider is a \_\_\_\_\_ and when people criticize the meeting they may often really be criticizing themselves.

Your leadership with clarity, poise, and facility can make the assembly run well.

A good presider knows that:

“ \_\_\_\_\_ *is that* \_\_\_\_\_ *that*  
*makes others think we* \_\_\_\_\_ .”

## A GOOD PRESIDERS WILL. . .

(The Nine Magic Ingredients)

1.



AGENDA LOGIC: PAST ≡ FUTURE

ORDER OF BUSINESS HANDOUT



- bylaws and standing rules
- list of committees, boards, officers
- ballot paper
- RONR

- ▶ Check
  - comfort
  - sight & hearing
  - facility to obtain the floor
  - seating at head - parliamentarian & secretary
- ▶ Check with
  - if “no report” don’t place on agenda
  - assign this job to 1st VP to be sure reports are in and who needs to speak

## 2. Exercise

- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_ or
- ▶
  - personalities should be avoided
  - firm but fair to all

## 3. SHOW

- ▶ voice inflection
- ▶ vitality & energy for the work
- ▶ be early for the meeting
- ▶ speak optimistically
- ▶ work to make each officer successful

## 4. STAND

- ▶ assures eye contact
- ▶ helps to keep the attention of the group
- ▶ stay out of the chair before the meeting and during recesses

## 5. CLARIFY

- ▶ handling of a motion
- ▶ restating motions to clarify
- ▶ be sure the members always know what they are voting on:
  - previous question
  - second degree amendment

## 6. CONTROL

- ▶ 2/3rds required to close debate
- ▶ focus all debate to the chair or thru the chair
- ▶ use “just a moment. . .” to get control back if needed

## 7. EXPEDITE

### PRESIDING HANDOUT

- ▶ use committees whenever possible
- ▶ use unanimous consent on matters of general agreement
- ▶ use of a “consent agenda” or “consent calendar”
- ▶ Ask for permission not to read motions that are printed
- ▶ print reports & minutes and do not read them
  - call attention to the report and ask for questions, but don’t read it
- ▶ require all motions to be in writing
- ▶ don’t read printed motions over and over again; read them once only

## 8. CLARIFY

- ▶ “The question is on . . .”
- ▶ “The pending questions is . . .”
- ▶ “We are now voting on the motion that . . .”

## 9. TAKE

- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_ if relatively little controversy

- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_ if controversial or if 2/3rds
- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_ if appear to be very close
- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_ is permissible in small groups  
instead of standing
- ▶ DEFINITIONS: majority, 2/3rds, plurality
- ▶ use \_\_\_\_\_ instead of standing in  
large assemblies

## CONCLUSION:

If you preside with confidence and with grace. . .

If you expedite business and respect the rights of everyone. .

If you prepare adequately and listen carefully. . . .

**USUAL ORDER OF BUSINESS  
IN ORDINARY SOCIETIES**  
(RONR, p. 347)

- 1. Reading and approval of minutes**
- 2. Reports of officers, boards and standing committees**
- 3. Reports of special committees  
(select or ad hoc)**
- 4. Special orders**
- 5. Unfinished business and general orders**
- 6. New business**

# **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

## **(AGENDA DEVELOPMENT)**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

(Start on time. President checks for quorum present. Raps once with gavel, says:  
*"The meeting will come to order."* Wait quietly for order.)

### **2. OPENING CEREMONIES**

(Optional. May consist of INSPIRATION, Flag Ceremony, etc.)

### **3. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

(Chair introduces guests from most important to least important, if any. Optional.)

### **4. ROLL CALL**

(Rarely used. Some organizations have a roll call of officers. Secretary calls roll and it is recorded in the Minutes. Optional.)

### **5. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

(Minutes, not printed and distributed, are read by the Secretary, and are approved by UNANIMOUS consent, the motion being assumed by the chair, either as read or printed or as corrected.)

### **6. REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

(The President or Vice President may make a report from time to time in relation to administrative duties.)

#### **A. Correspondence**

(Secretary reads first from whom the letter has come. Summarize information when possible. Any action required, taken immediately; example-resignation.)

#### **B. Treasurer's Report**

(At regular meetings, very brief. After questions, it is filed. At annual meeting, very detailed and already audited. Auditor's report is adopted not the Treasurer's report.)

### **7. REPORT OF EXECUTIVE BOARD**

(Read by Secretary, generally for information only. Contains all action taken by the Board. If recommendations included, Secretary makes motion to implement, and action taken immediately.)

### **8. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

(Made in order listed in bylaws. Chair calls on only those with reports to make. If recommendations included, chairman or reporting member makes motion to implement, any action taken immediately.)

### **9. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES**



(Called upon in order they were appointed, and only those prepared or required to report. Recommendations handled as in ITEM 8. If committee makes its final report, its work is completed and it goes out of existence automatically.)

**10. SPECIAL ORDERS**

(Items of business postponed from a previous meeting or earlier in the current meeting by a 2/3rds vote are special orders and are taken up before other general business. Also matters required by the bylaws to be taken up at a specific meeting such as election of officers are special orders.)

**11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND GENERAL ORDERS**

(Chair announced this item; does not call for it. Consists of business left unfinished at previous meeting or business postponed to this meeting by a majority vote, if the organization meets at least quarterly.)

**12. NEW BUSINESS**

(Chair calls for new business. This is the members' opportunity to bring before the organization items in which they are interested. Must fall within the objects of the organization as provided in the bylaws. The main motion is used to introduce items of new business.)

**13. PROGRAM**

(Chair calls upon the Program Chairman who presents the program; the chair does not turn the meeting over to this chairman, merely assigns him the floor. Chair remains in control of meeting from call to order to adjournment. Optional)

**14. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(Optional)

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

(Chair asks: *"Is there further business to come before the assembly?"* If there is, it is handled. If not, the chair says: *"There being no further business to come before the assembly, the meeting is adjourned."* The chair does not need to call for a motion to adjourn from the assembly. He simply declares the meeting adjourned when there is no further business.)

# THE HANDLING OF A MOTION

**The handling of a motion varies according to condition. However, normally the following six steps are essential:**

1. A member makes the motion.
  - A MEMBER must be recognized by the chair before MAKING A motion.
  - Common form: *"I move that \_\_\_\_\_."*
2. Another member seconds the motion.
  - It is not necessary to be recognized prior to seconding a motion.
  - The name of the member who seconds a motion is NOT recorded in the minutes.
  - Common form: *"Second" or "I second the motion."*
3. The Chair states the question, i.e., states the exact question and indicates that it is open to debate.
  - Common form: *"It has been moved and seconded that \_\_\_\_\_. Is there any discussion?"*
4. The members debate the motion.
  - Each member must be recognized before SPEAKING TO the motion.
  - Discussion is strictly limited to the motion on the floor.
  - All debate is directed to the chair or through the chair to other members. Members never speak directly to one another.
  - Ordinarily, each member may speak only twice on the same motion, and each speech is limited to 10 minutes. The organization may adopt other rules that limit debate.
5. The Chair puts the question, i.e., takes the vote.
  - The affirmative vote is taken first, then the negative.
  - Abstentions are not counted.
  - A majority vote means a majority of those who vote for or against a motion. Members present but not voting are not counted. A majority is MORE THAN HALF.
  - The chair votes only when THE CHAIR'S vote WOULD affect the results, i.e., to make or break a tie vote.
6. The Chair announces the results of the vote.
  - The vote on any motion is not considered final until the chair has done this.

# AMENDMENTS

## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Amendments, like main motions, require a second, are amendable, are debatable, and require a majority vote.
2. An amendment should be stated so that indicates exactly what is being done to the main motion.
3. An amendment must always be handled before voting on the motion to which it was applied.

## **EXAMPLES OF VARIOUS TYPES OF AMENDMENTS:**

**MAIN MOTION:** *"That we sponsor a delegate to our association's National Convention in March."*

Amendment by **STRIKING OUT**: *"I move to amend the main motion by striking out the words 'in March.'" (Such an amendment would be useful if the exact dates of the convention are not known.)*

Amendment by **ADDITION (or insertion)**: *"I move to amend the main motion by adding at the end of the word 'providing' however that this club shall not be responsible for expenses in excess of \$150.00."*

Amendment by **STRIKING OUT AND INSERTING**: *"I move to amend the main motion by striking out the words 'a delegate' and inserting the words 'two delegates.'"'*

All of the above are examples of **PRIMARY** (first degree) amendments, because they apply directly to the main motion stated above. A **SECONDARY** (second degree) amendment is one that applies to another amendment. A **SECONDARY** amendment could be applied to the above amendment by addition, as follows:

**SECONDARY AMENDMENT:** *"I move to amend the amendment by striking out '\$150' and inserting '\$100.'"'*

**Amendment of the THIRD DEGREE are not permitted**, but an unlimited number of primary and secondary amendments can be made. However, no more than one primary and one secondary amendment can be proposed at a time.

## **SUBSTITUTE MOTION**

Whenever it is desired to change the wording of a motion so substantially that several amendments would be required, a substitute motion may be used. **A substitute motion has the same status as a primary amendment**, but the procedures for handling it are somewhat different. Both the main motion and the proposed substitute are opened to amendment. Then when both have been PERFECTED, a vote is taken on whether the substitute will replace the main motion. Finally the vote is taken on the adoption of the final motion (which may be either the proposed substitute or the original main motion.)

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** *"That we encourage all of our members to attend the Association's National Convention."* (This is a logical substitute for the main motion stated above. It deals with the same topic--attendance at the National Convention--but proposes a completely different course of action.)

# PRESIDING

In every deliberative assembly there must be a presiding officer and a secretary. Among the duties of the presiding officer are to keep order, to expedite the business of the assembly, and to see that the rules of the assembly are enforced.

To perform these duties, it is important that the presiding officer be familiar with the fundamental rules of parliamentary law, the charter, bylaws, and standing rules of the organization.

One of the first requirements is that the presiding officer be at the place of meeting sometime before the assembly's designated hour of meeting. A good presiding officer is never late.

The agenda should be carefully prepared and the parliamentary authority, charter, bylaws, and standing rules should be on the desk.

When the time arrives for calling the meeting to order, the president strikes once with the gavel and says, "the meeting will come to order." The president uses the gavel only to call the meeting to order and to maintain order. Many presiding officers prefer to adjourn the meeting with a tap of the gavel. While RONR does not specify this may be done, it is customary usage and should not cause comment.

## **The president should:**

1. Maintain order.
2. Announce the business in order.
3. During debate, BE SEATED and pay attention.
4. Reprove a member WHO calls "Question, question" while a member is claiming the floor or has the floor. PL p. 306. (Calling "Question, question" is misunderstood by many members. They feel that it is the proper manner to hurry the chair into putting the question immediately to vote.)
5. It is the duty of the chair to make perfectly clear the question before the assembly, to take the vote and announce the result, then announce the next business in order.
6. The chair has not completed the vote until The RESULTS OF THE VOTE IS ANNOUNCED.
7. The chair never puts the negative vote on a complimentary motion, unless a member objects.
8. The chair must take the affirmative and negative votes on all questions except a complimentary motion.
9. It is the duty of the chair to be impartial and fair.
10. The chair should not recognize a frivolous motion.

11. The president has no right to exercise THE rights OF A member when so doing would lessen the confidence of the assembly in THE CHAIR'S fairness.
12. The president should not express HIS/HER opinion or debate while in the chair.
13. The president may expedite business by the use of General Consent. "If there is no objection . . . "
14. If the chair puts a motion so hurriedly that a member trying to secure the floor for debate is not allowed THE right TO SPEAK although THE MEMBER HAS BEEN diligent in claiming the floor, THIS MEMBER is entitled to the floor and the motion is in the same position as it was before the vote was taken.
15. The chair never addresses a member by name; the title is used or the words, "The member" for example, "Did the member vote on the prevailing side?"
16. The chair should not allow dilatory or absurd motions.
17. The chair should never use "I." Always in presiding use the third person, for example, "The chair decides ..."
18. In case of serious disorder, fire or riot the chair has the right to declare the assembly adjourned to some other time and place.
19. The chair is entitled to vote when it would change the results. The word is "may" and not "shall." The chair is entitled to vote in such an instance but cannot be compelled to do so.
20. Whenever addressing the assembly the chair stands. The chair sits during debate, reports, etc. Including in the terminology of addressing would be putting a question, taking a vote, ruling on points of order, etc.
21. The method of addressing the chair varies according to the title given the presiding officer.
22. The chair stands when recognizing a member.