# Parliamentary Procedure

## The Key to a Great Meeting!

## Missouri PTA

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# And just who is this guy “Robert” anyway and why should I follow his rules of order?

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# General Henry Martyn Robert:

Henry Martyn Robert (1837-1923)

engineering officer in U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

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# Steps in Handling a Motion

1. A member <u>makes</u> the motion.
2. Another member <u>seconds</u> the motion.
3. The Chair <u>states</u> the question

# Steps in Handling a Motion

4. **The members <u>debate</u> the motion**.
5. **The Chair <u>puts</u> the question** (takes the vote).
6. **The Chair <u>announces</u> the results of the vote.**

# Debate

- One at a time
- All remarks directed to the Chair
- Members do not speak directly to each other

# Debate

- A member does not call another member’s name
- 10 minutes maximum per speech
- The Chair does not speak in debate, but may give information

# Main Motions

The motion heard most frequently in almost any business meeting of a deliberative assembly is the main motion. A member who wishes to propose that the organization take certain action or express itself as holding certain views introduces these ideas to the assembly by means of a main motion.

# Resolutions

When a main motion is of great importance or lengthy, it is usually written in the form of a **resolution**. In this case, the member, having obtained the floor, says, **"I move the adoption of the following resolution..."** or **"I offer the following resolution..."** The member then reads the resolution and hands it to the presiding officer.

# Resolutions

***Whereas,*** The health and welfare of all children is a primary concern for all members; and

***Whereas,*** Pollution of the environment is becoming a matter of grave concern and an identifiable health hazard; and

***Whereas,*** Many organizations and concerned citizens are attempting to establish laws to set proper standards of environmental control; therefore, be it

***Resolved,*** That this Council urge the State General Assembly to provide needed legislation for environmental control and the funds to enforce such legislation; and

***Resolved,*** That this Council develop a campaign on environmental control and urge the National Association to support and encourage the immediate enactment of appropriate national legislation.

# Amendments

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

# Example: Main Motion

***"That we sponsor a delegate to the PTA National Convention in June"***

# Example: Amendment by Striking Out

***"I move to amend by striking out the words 'in June.'"***

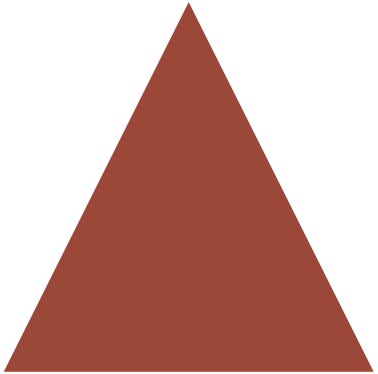
# Example: Amendment by Adding (or inserting)

***"I move to add the words, 'with expenses not to exceed $150.00.'"***

# Example: 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.'"***

# Primary & Secondary Amendments



**SECONDARY AMENDMENT**

**PRIMARY AMENDMENT**

**MAIN MOTION**

# Example: Primary Amendment

***"I move to add the words, not to exceed $150.00."***

# Example: Secondary Amendment

***"I move to amend the amendment by striking our $150 and inserting $100."***

# Example: Substitute Motion

***"I move that we amend the motion by substituting the words that we encourage all members to bring their own chairs to club meetings."***

# OTHER USEFUL MOTIONS

# Postpone to a Definite Time

- To postpone action until a certain time or until after a certain event
- Majority or 2/3rds
- Form: ***"I move to postpone the motion to the next meeting."***
- Form: ***"I move to postpone the question until 9:00 p.m."***

# Lay on the Table

- To temporarily set aside pending business because something more urgent needs immediate attention.
- Form: ***"I move to lay the question on the table."***

# Commit/Refer

- To send a pending motion to a committee so it can be carefully considered and/or put into better condition for the members to consider.
- FORM: ***"I move to refer the motion to the Finance Committee."***

# Previous Question

- To immediately close debate and take a vote.
- Form: ***"I move the previous question (on all pending questions)."***

# DOING THINGS AGAIN

# Reconsider

- *"...enables a majority in an assembly, within a limited time and without notice, to bring back for further consideration a motion which has already been voted on."* (RONR, p. 315)

# Reconsider

- PURPOSE: to permit correction of hasty, ill-advised or erroneous action to
- can be moved only by a member who VOTED ON THE PREVAILING SIDE

# Reconsider

- Time Limits:
  - 1 day session—only on that day
  - Multi-day session—on the same or next calendar day

# Rescind/Amend Something Previously Adopted

- *"...previous action or orders can be canceled or countermanded (Rescind) . . . Or to change only a part of the text, or to substitute a different version." (RONR, Page 305)*

# Rescind/Amend Something Previously Adopted

- Vote Required:  2/3rds without previous notice or a majority with previous notice
- no time limit to be moved and can be moved by anyone regardless of how they voted originally

# DECIDING

# Voting (Page 18 of 41)

- Majority – more than half
- 2/3rds – at least 2 out of 3
- Plurality – more than any other

# Voting (Page 18 of 41)

All officers of a group (assuming they are members) have the same voting privileges as other members. However, except in small boards or committees (as distinguished from an assembly), **the presiding officer** should protect his impartiality by voting only:

1. When the vote is by secret ballot.
2. When his/her vote will change the outcome: break a tie, thus passing a motion; make a tie, thus defeating a motion; or cast a deciding vote in the case of a motion requiring a 2/3rds vote.

# Methods of Voting

A. **Voice**—the normal method of voting on motions

B. **Rising**—used in verifying an inconclusive voice vote and is the usual method in a 2/3rds vote

C. **Show of Hands**—in very small assemblies only

D. **Counted Vote** —when ordered by the Assembly or the Chair

# Quorum (Page 19 of 41)

- A quorum in an assembly is the number of members entitled to vote who **must be present** in order that business can be legally transacted.
- The quorum refers to the number of such members present, **not to the number actually voting** on a particular question.

# General Henry Martyn Robert:

"When every one does what is right in his own eyes, there is the least of real liberty."

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