



Parliamentary Procedures

Parliamentary procedure is of great importance to volunteers. It helps make every moment productive and encourages getting to the heart of the matter under consideration. Parliamentary law is simply the courteous way of discouraging the irrelevant while giving every Member the opportunity of being heard.

Except as specifically provided in Optimist International Club Bylaws, the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* is used for all business sessions of Optimist groups. Robert's gives the following reasons for parliamentary rules:

Rules are based on a regard for the rights:

- of the majority,
- of the minority, especially a strong minority — greater than one third,
- of individual Members,
- of absentees, and
- of all these together.

The President is the presiding officer at regular Club meetings and meetings of the Club's Board of Directors. Since 90 percent of the Club's business will occur at board meetings, parliamentary procedure should be studied with board meetings in mind. By using parliamentary procedures, the President will have more efficient, productive board meetings.

Study the Chart of Basic Motions, Tips for the Presiding Officer and Methods of Voting before studying the explanations of the motions. After the 13 basic motions and the motion to reconsider have been learned, study the additional motions in conjunction with Robert's manual. The chart can be used for a quick reference during meetings. Robert's manual is available from Shumsky Enterprises; check the Official Supply Catalog for the price.

The 13 basic motions plus the motion to reconsider will be adequate for almost all business at board meetings. Procedures for elections and for amending the Club's Bylaws are in the Standard Form for Optimist Club Bylaws.

TIPS FOR THE PRESIDING OFFICER

1. The presiding officer (the Chair) should not debate motions while presiding; he should preside with impartiality. The astute President will have his pre-chosen "Lieutenants" promote his point of view or will surrender the Chair in order to debate. He resumes the Chair after the vote is taken.
2. Under Robert's rules, the Chair may vote at any time. However, he is wise to vote last and only when his vote would alter the result by creating or breaking a tie.
3. At board meetings, a Member may remain seated and raise his hand to be recognized. At other times, he must stand and identify himself to be recognized.
4. It is the Chair's responsibility to recognize those who wish to address the group. He does this by saying, *The Chair recognizes _____(name),* or something like: *The Chair recognizes the Member in the first row.*
5. The Chair is responsible for maintaining order and conducting meetings with the proper decorum.
6. The Chair may remain seated at board meetings; otherwise he should stand when:
 - a. opening a meeting
 - b. welcoming or introducing guest or officials
 - c. putting motions to vote
 - d. formally addressing the assembly
 - e. answering points of order, parliamentary inquiries, appeals from his decisions, etc.
 - f. seeking to better control the proceedings
 - g. declaring the meeting adjourned
7. The gavel should be used sparingly (one rap at a time) and only to:
 - a. call a meeting to order
 - b. maintain or restore order
 - c. give to someone temporarily acting as chairman
 - d. give to his successor in office
8. The Chair repeats a motion that has been made and seconded. This helps assure that the motion is understood and properly recorded.
9. Debatable motions may be debated only after having been made, seconded and stated (repeated) by the Chair.

METHODS OF VOTING

1. VOICE VOTE is the most used method; note when it is not used, however.

Chair: *Those in favor of the motion will say "aye."* (Pause for response.) *Those opposed will say "no."* (Pause for response and then announce the result.) *The "ayes" have it; the motion is carried. Or, The "noes" have it; the motion is lost.*

A voice vote should not be used:

- a. when the Bylaws specify another method of voting
 - b. when the vote could be close
 - c. when two-thirds majority is required
 - d. after a Member doubts (questions) a voice vote
2. HAND VOTE can be used when the vote could be close, when a Member doubts a voice vote, when two-thirds majority is required.

Chair: *Those in favor of the motion will raise their hand.* (Votes are counted, the number stated and Members instructed to put hands down.) *Thirty affirmative, hands down. Those opposed will raise their hand.* (Votes are counted, the number stated and Members instructed to put hands down.) *Seven negative, hands down.* (The result is then announced.) *The affirmative has it; the motion is carried. Or, the negative has it; the motion is lost.*

A hand vote should not be used:

- a. when the Bylaws specify another method of voting
 - b. after a Member doubts a hand vote
 - c. in a group larger than a small board or committee
3. RISING VOTE may be used when a Member doubts a hand vote or when a more positive display is desired. A rising vote cannot be doubted.

Chair: *Those in favor of the motion will rise.* (Votes are counted, the number stated and Members instructed to be seated.) *Thirty affirmative, be seated. Those opposed will rise.* (Votes are counted, the number stated and Members instructed to be seated.) *Seven negative, be seated.* (The result is then announced.) *The affirmative has it; the motion is carried, Or, The negative has it; the motion is lost.*

Although they will be used less often, study secret ballot and other methods on 405 - 421 of Robert's.

BASIC PROCEDURE FOR A MOTION

1. At a board meeting, a Member may raise his hand for recognition. In a large group, he rises, addresses the Chair and identifies himself.
2. The Chair recognizes the Member.
3. The Member makes the motion: *I move that the Club purchase a new, two-drawer file cabinet from City Supply, and that the Secretary-Treasurer be authorized to buy it.*
4. Another Member seconds the motion, if a second is required.
5. The Chair repeats the motion and calls for discussion if the motion is debatable. *It has been moved and seconded that the Club purchase a new, two-drawer file cabinet from City Supply, and that the Secretary-Treasurer be authorized to buy it. Is there any discussion?*
6. After debate and amendments, if the motion permits and if there are any, the Chair says: *Is there any further discussion?* (Chair pauses briefly for additional discussion. If there is none, he continues.) *There being no further discussion, the Chair will put the motion to a vote.* (Motions that require a decision of the Chair, such as 9 and 10, are not voted upon.)
7. The Chair calls for the vote. If the debate has been lengthy, if the motion has been amended or if the motion is complicated, the Chair repeats the motion: *The question is on the motion that the Club purchase a new, two-drawer file cabinet from City Supply, and that the Secretary-Treasurer be authorized to buy it. Those in favor of the motion say "aye." Those opposed will say "no."*
8. The Chair announces the result of the vote: *The "ayes" have it; the motion is carried. The "noes" have it; the motion is lost*

#1 Main Motions

USE: To introduce a specific subject for consideration.

RULES:

- a. Only one can be considered at a time
- b. Can be proposed only when no other business is pending
- c. Require a second
- d. May be debated
- e. May be amended
- f. Require only a simple majority
- g. Can be reconsidered at the same meeting

PHRASING:

Mr. Chairman, I move that the Club purchase a new, two-drawer file cabinet from City Office Supply, and that the Secretary-Treasurer be authorized to buy it.

#2 Motion To Postpone Indefinitely

USE: To test strength of a motion; to kill a motion. A motion, postponed indefinitely, cannot be brought up again unless introduced as a new motion at a later session.

RULES:

- a. Takes priority over main motions (#1) only
- b. Requires a second
- c. May be debated and reopens the main motion for debate
- d. Requires only a simple majority
- e. Can be reconsidered

PHRASING:

Mr. Chairman, I move that we postpone the motion to buy a file cabinet indefinitely.

#3 Motion to Amend

USE: To change or improve a main motion. Amendments are voted upon before the main motion is voted upon.

RULES:

- a. Must be pertinent to the motion
- b. Takes priority over motions #2 and #1 only
- c. Requires a second
- d. May be debated
- e. May be amended (Amendment may be amended once but not more. There is no limit on the number of times amendments may be made, however.)
- f. Requires only a simple majority even if the main motion requires a two-third majority
- g. May be reconsidered

PHRASING: Amendments may be made by:

- a. Adding words. *Mr. Chairman, I move to amend the motion by adding the words "before the next meeting."* If the amendment is seconded, the Chair says: *It has been moved and seconded, that the motion be amended by adding the words, "before the next meeting."* Is there any discussion? After discussion, if any, the vote is taken: *Those in favor of the amendment say "aye." Those opposed say "no."* If the amendment is carried, the main motion as amended must still be voted upon.
- b. Inserting words. *Mr. Chairman, I move to amend the motion by inserting the word "steel" before the word "file."*
- c. Striking out words. *Mr. Chairman, I move to amend the motion by striking out the word "new."*
- d. Striking out and inserting words. *Mr. Chairman, I move to amend the motion by striking out the word "two-drawer" and inserting the word "four-drawer."*

After the desired amendments have been made, the main motion as amended is voted upon. Assuming all the amendments noted above carried, the Chair calls for the vote in this manner: *The question is now on the main motion as amended: That the Club purchase a four-drawer, steel file*

cabinet from City Supply, and that the Secretary-Treasurer be authorized to purchase it before the next meeting. Is there any discussion? Those in favor of the motion as amended will say "aye." Those opposed will say "no." The Chair announces the results of the vote.

- e. Substituting a related motion. A substitute motion must have the same goal or purpose as the main motion. *Mr. Chairman, I move to substitute for the main motion: That the Club purchase a desk from Acme Furniture Company, and that the finance chairman be authorized to buy it during the Acme Company's current sale.*

A substitute has the same rules as any other amendment. However, the procedure is slightly different. A substitute is stated by the Chair after it has been made and seconded. *It has been moved and seconded to substitute for the main motion: That the Club purchase a desk from Acme Furniture Company, and that the finance chairman be authorized to buy it during the Acme Furniture Company's current sale.* No action is taken on the substitute until the main motion is debated and amended as desired. After this, the substitute is open for debate and amendment. When the substitute has been debated and amended as desired, it is voted upon. *Those in favor of the substitute motion say "aye." Those opposed say "no."* If the substitute motions is carried, it is voted on again as the main motion. *The question now is on the main motion as substituted: That the Club purchase a desk from Acme Furniture Company, and that the finance chairman be authorized to buy it during the Acme Furniture Company's current sale. All in favor will say "aye." Those opposed will say "no." The Chair announces the results of the vote.*

#4 Motion to Refer

USE: To have a smaller number of Members give depth consideration to a question. If the question is to be referred to the Committee which previously considered it, the term is "recommit."

RULES:

- a. When the motion to refer is carried, the floor is clear for other business
- b. Takes priority over motion #3, # 2, and # 1
- c. Requires a second
- d. May be debated
- e. May be amended
- f. Requires only a simple majority
- g. May be reconsidered

PHRASING:

- a. May be referred to an established Committee. *Mr. Chairman, I move that the motion be referred to the Finance Committee with instructions to report at the next meeting.*
- b. May be referred to a Committee appointed by the Chair or nominated from the floor. Procedures for those are on page 172 of Robert's.

#5 Motion to Postpone to a Definite Time

USE: To set a time to consider the question, usually the next meeting.

RULES:

- a. When the motion to postpone to a definite time is carried, the floor is clear for other business
- b. Business that has been postponed is automatically taken up under “unfinished” business at the meeting specified
- c. Takes priority over motions #4 through #1
- d. Requires a second
- e. May be debated
- f. May be amended
- g. Requires only a simple majority. If the postponement is to the next meeting at a specific time (9:00 a.m.) and will interrupt business then on the floor, the motion becomes a “special order” and requires a two-thirds majority
- h. May be reconsidered

PHRASING:

Mr. Chairman, I move that we postpone the motion to the next meeting. After a second and discussion (if any) the Chair says, Those in favor of postponement will say “aye”; those opposed say “no.” He then announces the result of the vote.

#6 Motion to Limit or Extend Debate

USE: To set a definite length of time for debates, to set a definite number of speakers, to set the length of each speech. Robert’s procedures allow each Member 10 minutes for debate. This motion is to shorten or lengthen that time.

RULES:

- a. Takes priority over motions #5 through #1
- b. Requires a second
- c. May be amended
- d. Requires a two-thirds majority
- e. Can be reconsidered
- f. The Chair may, on his own initiative, apply limitations if there are no objections

PHRASING:

- a. Shorten or lengthen the time for each speaker. *Mr. Chairman, I move that we limit time for each speaker to three minutes.*
- b. Limit the number of speakers. *Mr. Chairman, I move that the number of speakers be limited to two on each side of the question.*
- c. Fix a time to end discussion. *Mr. Chairman, I move that all discussions on the motion cease at 10:15 a.m.*

#7 Motion for the Previous Question

USE: To terminate all debate and amendments and vote immediately.

RULES:

- a. When the motion for the previous question is carried, the motion before the group is voted upon with no additional discussion.
- b. Takes priority over motions #6 through #1
- c. Requires a second
- d. Requires a two-thirds majority
- e. May be reconsidered

PHRASING:

Mr. Chairman, I move the previous question.

#8 Motion to Lay on the Table

USE: To lay aside temporarily.

RULES:

- a. The motion to table applies to the main motion and any motion affecting the main motion.
- b. When the motion to table is carried, the floor is clear for other business.
- c. Business that has been tabled does not automatically come before the group again. A motion to take from the table can prevail no later than the next meeting.
- d. Requires a second.
- e. Requires only a simple majority.

PHRASING:

Mr. Chairman, I move that the motion to be laid on the table.

#9 Motion to Call for the Order of the Day

USE: To force a return to an adopted program or order or business.

RULES:

- a. Calling for the orders of the day is in order only if the Chair has departed from the scheduled order of business
- b. Takes priority over motions #8 through #13
- c. Any Member may make the motion
- d. The motion does not require a second, may not be debated or amended and is not put to a vote
- e. May interrupt a speaker
- f. The Chair considers the motion and acts in the appropriate manner

PHRASING:

Mr. Chairman, I call for the orders of the day. Item number six on the agenda was omitted.

#10 Motion to Raise a Question of Privilege

USE: To inform Members of a matter concerning their Safety, Health, Integrity, or Property (catchword: S-H-I-P).

RULES:

- a. Does not apply to business matters already before the body
- b. Takes priority over motions #9 through #1
- c. A question of privilege may affect an individual, a group of individuals or the entire body
- d. The motion does not require a second, may not be debated or amended, and is not put to a vote
- e. May interrupt a speaker
- f. The Chair calls for the question of privilege and deals with it in the appropriate manner

PHRASING:

- a. *Mr. Chairman, I rise to a question of privilege. The public address system is not operating correctly and is impossible to hear.*
- b. *Mr. Chairman, I rise to a question of privilege. There is a small fire in the adjacent room; we should leave quickly.*

#11 Motion To Recess

USE: To suspend business temporarily.

RULES:

- a. A motion to recess implies a short-term recess such as for lunch or to count ballots
- b. Takes priority over motions #10 through #1
- c. Requires a second
- d. May be amended
- e. Requires only a simple majority
- f. If no business is on the floor when the motion is proposed, it becomes a main motion (#1) and is subjected to the same rules as any main motion

PHRASING:

Mr. Chairman, I move that we take a fifteen-minute recess.

#12 Motion to Adjourn

USE: To bring the meeting to a close.

RULES:

- a. May be proposed at any time after the opening ceremonies
- b. Does not require a quorum
- c. Takes priority over motions #11 through #1
- d. Requires a second
- e. Requires only a simple majority
- f. After a motion to adjourn has carried, only the following can be considered:
 - (A) A motion to fix a time to which to adjourn (#13)
 - (B) Motions to reconsider or rescind.
 - (C) Business requiring previous notice
 - (D) Announcements

If none of these is presented, the Chairman declares the meeting adjourned

- g. If no business is on the floor when this motion is proposed, it becomes a main motion (#1) and is subject to the same rules as any main motion

PHRASING:

Mr. Chairman, I move we adjourn. After the motion has been seconded and voted upon, the Chairman calls for necessary business as described above. If there is none, he declares the meeting adjourned. *It has been moved and seconded to adjourn. Those in favor will say "aye." Those opposed say "no." The "ayes" have it; the motion is carried. Is there any necessary business to come to the floor? (Pause) There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned.*

#13 Motion To Fix A Day To Which To Adjourn

USE: To set time and place for a meeting sooner than the next, regularly scheduled meeting.

RULES:

- a. Takes priority over motion #12 through #1
- b. Requires a second
- c. May be amended
- d. Requires only a simple majority
- e. May be reconsidered
- f. Is in order only when it sets a time sooner than the next regularly scheduled meeting
- g. Does not adjourn the meeting when it is carried; it merely designates another time to meet
- h. If no business is on the floor when this motion is proposed, it becomes a main motion (#1) and is subject to the same rules as any main motion

PHRASING:

Mr. Chairman, I move that when we adjourn, we meet on Thursday, June 23.

BASIC MOTIONS

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS (high priority)

13. **Fix a time to which to adjourn** (S, A, M, R, 241)
12. **Adjourn** (S, M, 232)
11. **Recess** (S, A, M, 229)
10. **Raise a question of privilege** (IS, CD, 223)
9. **Call for the order of the day** (IS, CD, 217)

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS (assisting)

8. **Lay on the table** (S, M, 207)
7. **Previous questions** (S, 2/3, R, 194)
6. **Limit or extend debate** (S, A, 2/3, R, 188)
5. **Postpone to definite time** (S, D, A, M, R, 176)
4. **Refer to a committee** (S, D, A, M, R, 165)
3. **Amend** (S, D, A, M, R, 127)
2. **Postpone indefinitely** (S, D, M, R, 123)

PRINCIPAL MOTIONS

1. **Main motion or resolution** (S, D, A, M, R, 97)

The letters in parenthesis indicate the rules which apply to that motion; the number refers to the explanatory page in Robert's. Priority is determined by the number in front of each motion. The larger the number, the higher the priority. For example, the motion to refer to a committee (#4) cannot be considered if a motion to table (#8) is on the floor.

MOTION TO RECONSIDER

USE:

To prevent hasty decisions, to prevent action on a motion which has already carried, to cancel adverse decision on a motion with merit.

RULES:

- a. Motion must be made by a Member who voted with the prevailing side
- b. Requires a second (anyone may second)
- c. Takes the priority of the motion to be reconsidered
- d. May be debated if the motion to be reconsidered is debatable
- e. Requires only a simple majority
- f. May interrupt a proceeding and a speaker with his consent
- g. Proposed and acted upon at the same meeting as the motion in question. However, notice can be given for reconsideration at the next meeting
- h. A motion can be reconsidered only once
- i. When the motion to reconsider is carried, the question to be reconsidered is always voted upon also
- j. A motion cannot be reconsidered if it, or parts of it, have been executed

PHRASING:

Mr. Chairman, I move to reconsider the vote on the motion to buy a desk which was defeated earlier tonight. I voted on the prevailing side. (If the Member does not state that he voted on the prevailing side, the Chair may ask..) After a second, the Chair says, It is moved and seconded to reconsider the vote on the motion to buy a desk. Is there debate on the motion to reconsider? After any debate, the Chair says, Those in favor of reconsideration will say "aye"; those opposed say "no." The Chair announces the results. If the motion to reconsider is carried, the Chair says, The "ayes" have it; the motion to reconsider is carried. The question now is on the original main motion to buy a desk. Is there any discussion on the main motion? The procedure from this point on is the same as for any main motion.



RULES FOR MOTIONS

S = REQUIRES A SECOND. If there is no immediate second, the Chair may say, *Is there a second?* If a motion is not seconded, the Chair says, *For want of a second, the motion is not before the assembly.* In this case, no further consideration is given the motion.

D = MAY BE DEBATED

1. The proposer is allowed to speak first on his motion.
2. Every Member may speak once on a debatable motion. A Member may speak a second time after everyone who desires to do so has spoken once. A Member may speak more than twice if no one objects. (To object, one says, *Mr. Chairman, I object to anyone speaking more than twice on the same question.*)
3. The time limit on each speech is 10 minutes; however, a speaker may continue if no one objects. If there is an objection, a two-third majority is required to permit him to continue.
4. All speeches and inquiries are directed to the Chair.
5. The Chair must remain neutral. He must call on someone else to preside if he desires to debate an issue. He returns to the chair after the question is voted upon.

A = MAY BE AMENDED. See motion #3

M = REQUIRES A SIMPLE MAJORITY. This is at least one more than one-half of the votes.

2/3 = REQUIRES A TWO-THIRD MAJORITY. This is at least twice as many affirmative as negative votes.

R = CAN BE RECONSIDERED. See previous block.

IP = MAY INTERRUPT A PROCEEDING and the speaker with his consent.

IS = MAY INTERRUPT A SPEAKER.

CD = CHAIR DETERMINES appropriate action after considering the motion.

MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY

Reconsider (S, D, M, IP, 309)

To reconsider the vote on a motion.

Reconsider and enter (S, IP, 326)

To prevent execution of a motion which has carried.

Rescind (S, D, A, 2/3 R, 303)

To annul something previously adopted.

Expunge (S, D, A, 2/3, R, 303)

To annul something previously adopted and cross out that action in the minutes.

Ratify (S, D, A, M, R, 121)

To legalize an action.

Take from the table (S, M, 294)

To take up business previously tabled.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

Point of order (IS, CD, 247)

To call attention to an infraction of parliamentary rules.

Parliamentary inquiry (IP, CD, 285)

To secure information on a parliamentary procedure.

Point of information (IP, CD, 285)

To secure additional information on the main motion.

Appeal a decision of the Chair (S, D, A, M, R, IP, 254)

To secure reversal of Chair's decision.

Division of the assembly (IP, CD, 276)

To verify vote with a more positive voting method.

Withdraw a motion (See page 287)

Withdraw a second (See page 287)

Question the quorum (IS, CD, 343)

To determine if a quorum is present.

There are no shortages of challenging opportunities today.

It's about:

- Transforming purpose into actions
- Visions into realities
- Obstacles into innovations

Being a Member of Optimist International is about creating a climate where people turn challenging opportunities into remarkable successes.



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