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RULES-OF-ORDER SUMMARY

I. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE-ITS PURPOSE AND USE

Parliamentary procedure—obeying the “rules of order”--- provides a uniform process for conducting meetings in a fair, orderly, and expeditious manner.

The following is a very brief summary of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR 11th ed., 2011).

II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Every member of an organization should be familiar with the following simple rules and customs:

- A. All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations; rules must be administered impartially.
- B. All members, majority or minority, have the right to full and free discussion of all motions, reports, and other items of business.
- C. In doing business the simplest and most direct procedure should be used.
- D. Logical precedence governs introduction and disposition of motions.
- E. Only one question can be considered at a time.
- F. Members must be recognized by the chair before they may make a motion or speak in debate.
- G. No one may speak more than twice on the same question on the same day without permission of the assembly. No member may speak a second time on the same question if anyone who has not spoken on that question wishes to do so.
- H. Members must not attack or question the motives of other members. Customarily, all remarks are addressed to the presiding officer.
- I. In voting, members have the right to know at all times what motion is before the assembly and what affirmative and negative votes mean.

III. PARLIAMENTARY TERMS

Addressing the Chair: Getting the chair's attention by saying, e.g., "Madam Chairwoman," "Mr. Chairman," "Madam President," or "Mr. Moderator."

Agenda: Order of business; program of a business meeting.

Ad Hoc Committee: Committee established for a specific purpose, for a particular case.

Announcing the Vote: In announcing the vote on a motion, the chair should:

- (1)report on the voting itself, stating which side has prevailed;
- (2)declare that the motion is adopted or lost; and
- (3)state the effect of the vote or order its execution.

For a voice or rising vote in which no exact count is taken, the chair might say, for example, "The ayes have it, the motion carries, and the brochure will be published." For a vote in which an exact count is taken, the chair might say, "There are 14 in the affirmative and 15 in the negative. The negative has it and the motion is lost. No additional funds will be spent on publicity this semester."

Carried: Passed or adopted; used in referring to affirmative action on a motion.

Caucus: Private session in advance of a scheduled meeting.

Division of the Assembly; a Division: A vote retaken for the purpose of verifying a voice vote or show of hands; a division may be ordered by the chair or by a single member.

Division of the Question: A motion to divide a pending motion into two or more separate questions in order that they may be considered separately.

Having the Floor: Having been recognized by the chair to speak.

Immediately Pending Question: The last motion stated by the chair.

In Order: Correct according to rules of parliamentary procedure.

Motion: A proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the assembly take a particular action.

Obtaining the Floor: Securing permission to speak.

Orders of the Day: Agenda for a meeting.

Parliamentarian: Parliamentary adviser to the presiding officer.

Pending Question: A motion awaiting decision.

Point of Information: Request for information concerning a motion.

Quorum: The minimum number of members who must be present at a meeting for business to be legally transacted.

Recognize: To allow someone to obtain the floor in order to speak.

Resolution: Motion used to express the sentiment of a group, usually beginning with the words "resolved that...."

Rising Vote: A vote taken by having members stand.

Roll Call Vote: A procedure by which the vote of each member is formally recorded in the minutes.

Second: To indicate support for consideration of a motion by saying: "I second the motion."

Slate: List of candidates.

Unanimous (or General) Consent: A means of taking action on a motion without a formal vote. When a presiding officer perceives that there is little or no opposition to a motion before the assembly, business can often be expedited by the chair's simply calling for objections, if any. If no objection is heard, the motion is adopted; if even one member objects, the motion is brought to a formal vote by the usual procedure.

Voice Vote: A vote taken by having members call out "aye" or "no" at the chair's direction.

Yield: To give the floor to the chair, to another speaker, or to a motion taking precedence over that being considered.

V. TRANSACTING BUSINESS AT A MEETING

A. Quorum:

A quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present at a meeting for business to be legally transacted.

An organization, in its established rules, may define its own quorum.

In the absence of such a provision, the quorum is a majority of the entire membership.

B. Obtaining the Floor:

Before a member in an assembly can make a motion or speak in debate, he or she must obtain the floor; that is, the member must be recognized by the chair as having the exclusive right to be heard at that time. If two or more members rise to seek recognition at the same time, the member who rose and addressed the chair first after the floor was yielded is usually entitled to be recognized. A member cannot establish "prior claim" to the floor by rising before it has been yielded.

C. Introducing Business (Making Motions):

Business may be introduced by an individual member or by a committee. Business is always introduced in the form of a motion.

D. Seconding a Motion:

1. After a motion has been made, another member, without rising and obtaining the floor, may second the motion.
2. A second merely implies that the seconder agrees that the motion should come before the assembly and not that he or she necessarily favors the motion.
3. A motion made by a committee requires no second, since its introduction into the assembly has been approved by a majority of the committee.
4. The purpose of a second is to prevent time from being consumed by the assembly having to dispose of a motion that only one person wants to see introduced.

E. Placing a Motion Before the Assembly:

1. After a motion has been made and seconded, the chair repeats the motion verbatim, thus placing it before the assembly for debate and action.
2. During the brief interval between the making of a motion and the time when the chair places it before the assembly by restating it, the maker of a motion may modify or withdraw it simply by stating the intention to do so.
3. After the motion has been restated by the chair, it is officially before the assembly and must be dealt with appropriately (e.g., adopted, rejected, postponed).

F. Debate:

1. Every member of the assembly has the right to speak on every debatable motion before it is finally acted upon; this right cannot be interfered with except by a motion to limit debate.
2. All discussion must be confined to the immediately pending question and to whether or not it should be adopted.
3. While debate is in progress, amendments or other secondary motions can be introduced and disposed of accordingly.
4. In an organization that has no special rule relating to the length of speeches, a member can speak no longer than 10 minutes unless he or she obtains the consent of the assembly; such permission can be given by unanimous consent or by means of a motion to extend debate. Likewise, debate may be curtailed by a motion to limit debate.
5. No member may speak twice on the same motion at the same meeting as long as any other member who has not spoken on the motion desires to do so.
6. Unless the rules are suspended, a member who has spoken twice on a particular question on the same day has exhausted his or her right to debate that question for that day.
7. During debate, no member can attack or question the motives of another member.

8. The maker of a motion, although allowed to vote against it, is not allowed to speak against it.

H. Voting:

1. Unless special rules apply, a majority decides. A majority is more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote, excluding blank ballots or abstentions.
2. Unless otherwise provided for, voting is by voice vote.
3. If the presiding officer is a member of the assembly, he or she can vote as any other member does when the vote is by ballot. In other cases, the presiding officer, if a member of the assembly, can (but is not obliged to) vote whenever his or her vote will affect the result; i.e., he or she can vote either to break or to create a tie.
4. A member has no right to explain his or her vote" during voting since that would be the same as debate at such a time.
5. Any member may request a division of the assembly if there is uncertainty as to the true result of the vote.

I. Announcing a Vote:

1. In announcing the vote on a motion, the chair should: a. report on the voting itself, stating which side has prevailed; b. declare that the motion is adopted or lost; c. state the effect of the vote or order its execution.
2. For a voice or rising vote in which no exact count is taken, the chair might say, "The ayes have it, the motion carries, and the brochure will be published." For a vote in which an exact count is taken, the chair might say, "There are 14 in the affirmative and 15 in the negative. The negative has it and the motion is lost. No additional funds will be spent on publicity this semester."

VI. SUMMARY OF STEPS IN HANDLING A MOTION

- A. A member rises and addresses the presiding officer.
- B. The presiding officer recognizes the member.
- C. The member states the motion.
- D. Another member seconds the motion.
- E. The presiding officer restates the motion, thus placing it before the assembly for consideration.
- F. The assembly may discuss the motion if it is debatable and amend the motion if it is amendable.
- G. The presiding officer takes the vote.
- H. The presiding officer announces the result.