

Parliamentary Law:

Going Through the Motions

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“The goals of every member in a meeting should be to understand the issues, to debate freely those issues when debate is appropriate, to express their views clearly, and to make certain that their votes are counted correctly.”

– Hugh Cannon

What is Parliamentary Law?

Known by several names including ²

- parliamentary procedure;
- parliamentary practice; and
- rules of order.

Subordinate to applicable jurisdictional law (such as federal, state, and municipal laws).

Used in some form by almost all organized groups, the rules of order that various members adopt to self-govern are critical in determining how business is conducted.

Motions

Motion Classifications

- Main Motions
- Subsidiary Motions
- Privileged Motions
- Incidental Motions
- Motions That Bring A Question Again Before the Assembly

A Main Motion

Is a proposal that something be done.

Six Steps Across Two Parts

Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

1. A member *makes* a motion
2. Another member *seconds**
3. The chair *states the question on the motion*

Consideration of the Motion

1. Members *debate* the motion*
2. The chair *puts the question*
3. The chair *announces the result*

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Brought Before the Assembly

Motion is *Brought Before the Assembly*

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3. The chair *states the question on the motion*

**"I move that we donate
\$1,000 to a nonprofit."**

Brought Before the Assembly

Motion is *Brought Before the Assembly*

1. A member *makes* a motion

2. Another member *seconds**

3. The chair *states the question on the motion*

“Second!”

Brought Before the Assembly

Motion is *Brought Before the Assembly*

1. A member *makes* a motion
2. Another member *seconds**

3. The chair *states the question on the motion*

“It is moved and seconded that we donate \$1,000 to a nonprofit.”

Script (Brought Before the Assembly)

- **Member A:** "I move that we donate \$1,000 to a nonprofit."
- **Member B:** "Second!"
- **Chair:** "It is moved and seconded that we donate \$1,000 to a nonprofit. Are you ready for the question?"

Six Steps Across Two Parts

Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

1. A member *makes* a motion
2. Another member *seconds**
3. The chair *states the question on the motion*

Consideration of the Motion

1. Members *debate* the motion*
2. The chair *puts the question*
3. The chair *announces the result*

Consideration

Consideration of the Motion

1. *Members debate the motion**

2. *The chair puts the question*

3. *The chair announces the result*

**Members discuss the
motion**

Consideration

Consideration of the Motion

1. *Members debate the motion**

2. *The chair puts the question*

3. *The chair announces the result*

**The question is put to a
vote**

Consideration

Consideration of the Motion

1. *Members debate the motion**
2. *The chair puts the question*
3. *The chair announces the result*

**The chair announces the
result of the vote**

Script (Consideration)

- **Members:** {...debate...}
- **Chair:** "Are you ready for the question?"
- **Chair:** "...The question is on the motion that we donate \$1,000 to a nonprofit."
- **Chair:** "All those in favor say Aye. All those opposed say No."
- **Chair:** "The "Ayes" (or "Noes") have it and the motion is adopted (or lost). We will (or will not) donate \$1,000 to a nonprofit."

Script (Complete 6 Steps)

- **Member A:** "I move that we donate \$1,000 to a nonprofit."
- **Member B:** "Second!"
- **Chair:** "It is moved and seconded that we donate \$1,000 to a nonprofit. Are you ready for the question?"
- **Members:** {...debate...}
- **Chair:** "Are you ready for the question? ...The question is on the motion that we donate \$1,000 to a nonprofit. All those in favor say Aye. All those opposed say No."
- **Chair:** "The "Ayes" (or "Noes") have it and the motion is adopted (or lost). We will (or will not) donate \$1,000 to a nonprofit."

Key Takeaways

- Parliamentary Law is intended to increase fairness and efficiency in meetings.
- In meetings, business is introduced through motions.
- A main motion is a proposal for an action to be taken by the organization.
- Practice (and plan for) motions!

Support & Resources

- Each other – our best resource!
- Robert's Rules of Order Q&A Forum (robertsrules.com)
- National Association of Parliamentarians (parliamentarians.org)
- American Institute of Parliamentarians (aipparl.org)
- adrianstratton.medium.com

Thank You!

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