



# **Robert's Rules of Order: A Guide To Parliamentary Procedure**

# What are the Basic Rights at Stake?

1. Right of majority to make decisions
2. Right of minority to be heard
3. Rights of individual Committee members to participate

# Individual Member Rights

- To receive meeting notification and attend all meetings
- To introduce and second motions
- To speak on agenda items *after* first seeking recognition of chair
- To vote

# Right of Minority

- Right to be heard and to voice their dissent
- Right to have their dissent noted in the record
- But, once dissent is given and vote taken, it is the decision of the collective body, even those who objected

# Role of the Chairperson

- Presides; recognizes speakers and controls meeting
- Does not take sides; passes the gavel (role as chair) when taking a position, speaking on a matter
- Remarks of speakers are to the chair
- Appeal from decision of the chair, requires a second; vote is on whether decision of the chair shall be sustained

# Quorum



- Number of members that *must* be present to legally transact business
- Why? We don't want small unrepresentative groups making decisions for entire body

# The Right to Make a Motion

- Matters considered one at a time
- To be in order, the motion must be *directly related* to the question under consideration
- Frivolous, vague, incoherent, and duplicative motions are “out of order” (ruling by chair)



# The Right to Make a Motion cont...

- Subsidiary motions, i.e., motions to postpone, refer to committee, table, etc. must directly relate to the main motion
- All motions need a second
  - If no second, then no motion
- After a motion's first reading, Chair should inquire, "Is there any discussion?"
- Maker of a motion has the first right to speak and to amend it



# Voting,

## **Voting**

- Chair should announce minority votes, i.e., “Hearing one “nay” and no others....”
- If vote requires more than a majority, Chair should announce before the vote the supermajority that is required
- Tie vote is a lost vote because no majority was obtained

# Duties of the Chair

- Know and enforce Bylaws
- Begin meeting at appointed time
- Ensure that the meeting room is ready
- Assign and manage the “floor”
- Nonpartisan; pass the gavel if speaking to pending matter

# Duties of the Chair, cont...

- Clarify ambiguity and reduce conflict
- Politely ask colleagues to refrain from “side bars”
- Know your agenda in advance
- Clearly announce items on the agenda
- Before voting on a motion, restate the motion so everyone is clear what it is they are voting on

# Duties of the Chair, cont...

- Announce the motion's results
- Confine the discussion to that motion—if the discussion is wandering, pull it back to the item at hand
- If others are struggling to phrase their motions or amendments, help them to do so
- Remain calm, composed and impartial

# Vice-Chair

- Presides when the president:
  - Is absent
  - Steps down from the chair
  - Is being censured
  - Is at issue of a motion
- President in training: Bylaws can state order of succession

# Secretary

- Maintain documents
- Take meeting minutes
- Sign the minutes
- Bring relevant documents to meeting

# Parliamentarian

- The parliamentarian shall assist the chairperson in conducting the meetings in an orderly manner, serving as procedure advisor to the Chairperson.
- The parliamentarian shall be a member with knowledge of parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules of Order, and the council/committee's bylaws.
- The parliamentarian shall facilitates in the functioning of the committee
- **Parliamentarian shall resolve questions of procedure, often with the help of “Robert’s Rules of Order” or similar guide**

**Thank you for being here  
and participating !**