

Robert Rules!

Understanding and Implementing Parliamentary Procedure

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What is Parliamentary Procedure?



"Look, the herd instinct has gotten us this far—
why do we need parliamentary procedure now?"

- Set of proven “rules” used to move business along during a meeting.
- Guidelines – not laws.

System that allows an organization to conduct business in a fair and democratic manner.



History Lesson

Henry Martyn Robert

First Edition of
Robert's Rules
1876

Currently 11th Edition



Why Use Parliamentary Procedure?



Why Use Parliamentary Procedure?

- Provide structure to the meeting
- Keep order
- Everyone has the opportunity to participate in discussion
- Observe the rule of the majority
- Protect the rights of the minority



Key to Effective Use



- Parliamentary procedure is based on motions.
- The key to parliamentary procedure is learning and understanding these motions.
- Don't become overwhelmed by the list of motions – concentrate on those that will be used on a regular basis.



Begin at the Beginning

Quorum – the number of members present to hold a legal meeting

In NJ, that is a majority of the full membership of the board.



"Well, let's get started now we've got a quorum."



What Can You Do Without a Quorum?

- Set the time for another meeting
- End the meeting if it was already in progress
- Take a short break (recess)
- Meet as a committee for information and discussion only, taking no action



Importance of the Agenda

- Formal listing of business that is to be conducted at a meeting.
- Usually developed by the President and Superintendent and distributed to the members in advance.
- Must be approved by the membership at the beginning of the meeting.(NJ Best Practice)
- A well planned agenda is critical to a well run, organized meeting.



Role of the Meeting Participants

- Establish and implement an effective meeting structure.
- Come to meetings prepared to do business.
- Have the right and responsibility to participate in meetings and in parliamentary procedure.



Motions

Main
Motions

Subsidiary
Motions

Privileged
Motions


Incidental
Motions

Bring Back
Motions



Main Motions

Introduces a principal subject.

- ❑ Only one main motion may be considered at a time.
 - ❑ Must be disposed of before another can be considered.
 - ❑ The way to start a motion is to say ... “I move ...”
- 
- ❑ Main motions require a second and they are debatable and amendable.
 - ❑ A majority vote is required to pass a main motion.



Using the Lingo

Bd Member #1

“I move the district implement the standards based reports cards for the 2017-2018 school year.”

Bd Member #2

“I second the motion.”

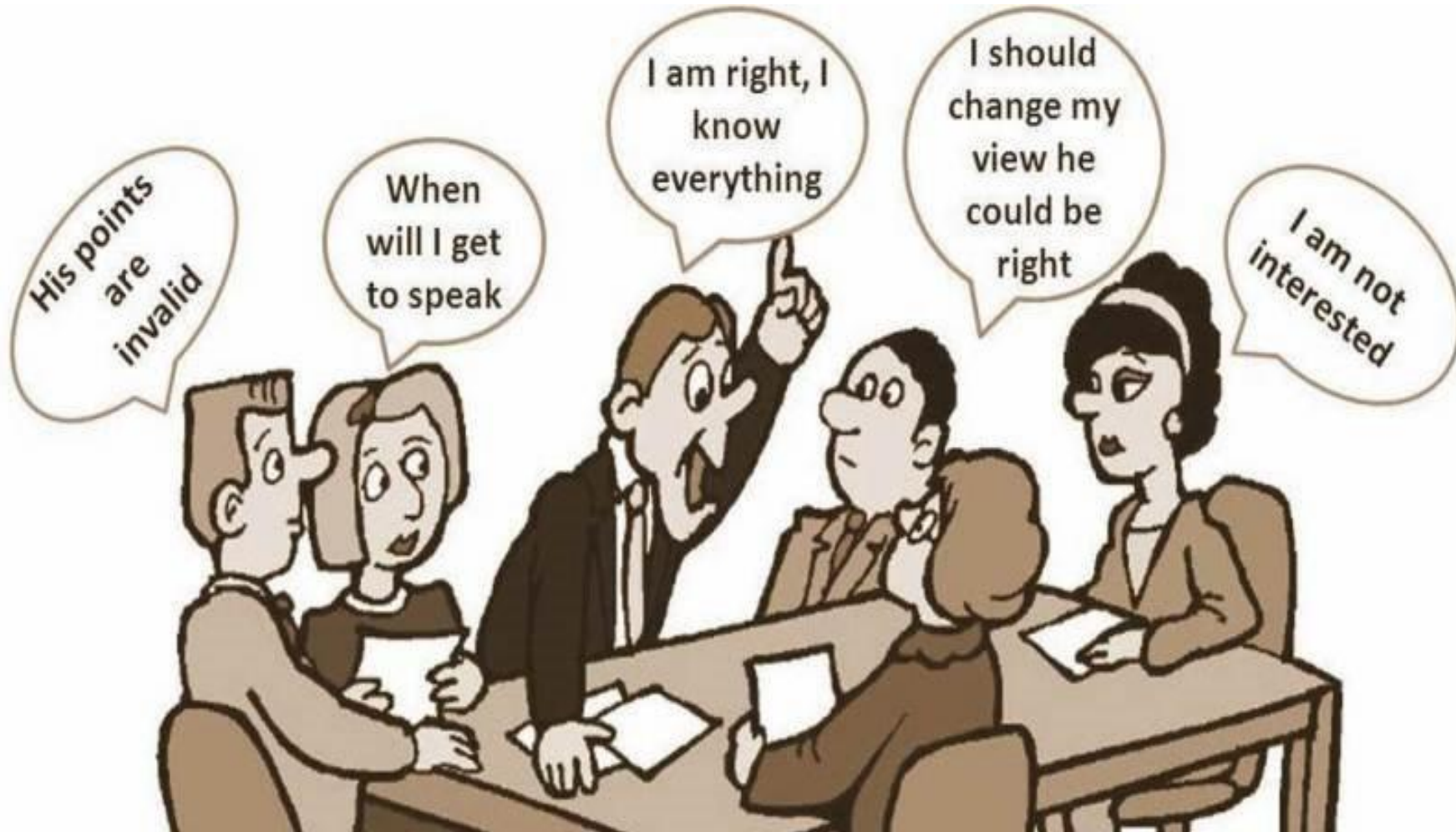


Bd President

“The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion?”



Debating a Motion



Debating a Motion

- **President** recognizes each speaker and gives all members chance to speak.
- Debate should be confined to the question being considered.
- Avoid using members' names during debate.
- During debate, **all remarks should be addressed to the President**, not to other board members.

Board Civility Allows for Productive Debates



Amending a Motion

Main motion can be altered by:

- Adding a word or phrase
- Removing part of the motion but not changing the intent
- Substitution – removing part of the motion and inserting a word or phrase

Subsidiary Motion

This is not a main motion – there is only one main motion on the floor at a time.

AMENDMENT



Using the Lingo

Bd Member #1 I move that we amend the main motion to read: the district will implement the standards based report cards for the ~~2017-2018~~ **2018-2019** school year.

Bd Member #2 “I second the motion”.

Bd. Pres. The motion to amend the main motion to read...has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed. Hearing none the motion carries.



A Word of Caution

The vote taken was
on the Amendment
only.

We will now need to
vote on the main
amended motion.



Other Subsidiary Motions

- **Lay on the table** postpones discussion for a later date.
- **Postpone definitely** To delay action on a pending motion until a subsequent meeting.
- **Refer to a committee** for more information or investigation



Other Subsidiary Motions, cont..

- The motion to **postpone indefinitely** is a subsidiary motion used to kill a main motion without taking a direct vote on it.
- Motion to **call the question** is asking to stop the debate on the main motion and call for a vote.



Incidental Motions

Change the procedure for handling a motion but not the motion itself

- Not debatable*



- Point of Order
- Withdrawal of motion



Using the Lingo

Bd Member: Point of Order

Bd President: Yes, your point?

Bd Member: I wanted to clarify, we are voting on the amendment only.

Bd President: That is correct. The vote is for the amendment to the main motion.



Using the Lingo

Bd Member: I move to withdraw the motion of implementing the standards based report cards for the 2017-2018 school year.

Bd Member #2: I second the motion.

Bd President: Seeing that the motion to withdraw was made by the member who moved the main motion, there is a motion on the table to withdraw the motion. All in favor? Opposed? Hearing none the motion carries.



Privileged Motions

Do not relate to the main motion but take precedence over the motion.

- Call for the orders of the day
- Recess
- Adjourn
- Raise a question of privilege



Using the Lingo

During the debate of the main motion to implement the standards based report cards...

Bd Member: Question of privilege

Bd President: Your question.

Bd Member: I am unable to hear the other side of the table due to the noise from the fan.

This motion does not need a second, there is no debate and no vote. The chair decides.



Bring Back Motions

- To resume consideration of a motion that was previously laid on the table is to **Take from the table.** It is not debatable.
- **Rescind** is a motion to repeal a previously adopted motion entirely.
- A motion to **Reconsider** a previously decided motion. Must occur at the same meeting. Member offering the motion must have voted on the prevailing side.



Voting Methods

- Voice vote
- Rising vote
- Roll call
- Secret ballot



Voting Requirements

Various board actions have minimum requirements

- Recorded roll call of majority of full membership
- Recorded roll call of 2/3 of full membership
- Majority of full membership
- 2/3 of full membership
- 3/4 of members present
- Majority of members present



A Word About Abstentions

An abstention is a member's way of not voting.

- Member conflicts
- Not enough knowledge to make decision
- It does not count as a Yes or a No vote.
- Members should not abstain to avoid a tough vote.



Voting

Did it pass?

The board votes on the main motion of implementing Standards Based Report Cards for the 2018-2019 school year.

4 YES

4 NO

1 Abstention

Did it Pass?

The board votes to hire Tony Stark as their new Facilities Director.

4 Yes

2 No votes

3 abstentions due to conflicts.



Orderly Meetings – Other Considerations

Open Public Meetings Act:

1. Requires opportunity for “Public Comment”, not “Public Debate”
2. All comments directed to the **President**

The School Ethics Act:

- d) I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.
- j) I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.



Using the Gavel

The gavel is used for:

- Calling a meeting to order
- Restores order to a meeting
- Signals the completion of a item

Don't be afraid to use it.



Final Thoughts

