

Parliamentary Procedure 101

A committee, as understood in parliamentary law, is a body of one or more persons, elected or appointed by an assembly to consider, investigate, or take action on certain matters or subjects, or to do all these.

Making Meetings Work

1. Effective meetings require planning in advance, both on the part of the person who chairs them and of the people who participate.
2. Listen to what others at the meeting have to say.
3. Make sure you understand the reason for a meeting and do your homework in accordance with this understanding.
4. Actively engage in the discussion.
5. Recognize that five kinds of knowledge are all needed for a successful meeting participant:
 - Knowledge of the subject matter at hand
 - Knowledge of parliamentary rules of order
 - Knowledge of rhetoric-the power to persuade
 - Knowledge of problem solving and decision making
 - Knowledge of human social-emotional dynamics
6. Be sure the purpose of each meeting, and each item on the agenda, is clear to the members:
 - To share ideas and information only
 - To brief members before action
 - To generate new ideas
 - To make a decision
 - To make a recommendation
7. Suggest committee work when an issue is too big for the group or the group hasn't adequately considered the topic.

Basic Principles

1. Parliamentary procedure exists to facilitate the transaction of business and to promote cooperation and harmony.
2. All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.

3. A quorum must be present for the group to act.
4. Full and free discussion of every motion considered is a basic right.
5. Only one question at a time can be considered at any given time.
6. Members have the right to know at all times what the immediately pending question is, and to have it restated before a vote is taken.
7. No member can speak until recognized by the chair.
8. No one can speak a second time on the same question as long as another wants to speak a first time.
9. The chair should be strictly impartial.

Handling a motion.

Three steps by which a motion is brought before the group

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

Three steps in the consideration of a motion

1. The members debate the motion (unless no member claims the floor for that purpose).

2. The chair puts the question to a vote.

A. The chair restates the question.

B. The chair takes the vote:

"All in favor of the motion, say aye."

"Those opposed, say no."

3. The chair announces the result of a vote.