Using Basic Parliamentary Procedure
This presentation is based on Robert’s Rules of Order, newly revised, 11th edition (October 2011).
Why do we use Parliamentary Procedure?

• To facilitate the transaction of business
• To promote cooperation and harmony
• To ensure that all members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations
• Ensure the majority has the right to decide, but the minority has rights which must be protected as well
Parliamentary Procedure

• Rules that limit, guide and protect the individual
• Protect the rights of the minority
• It’s not that the decision you make must be correct, but each decision you make must be correctly made.
Bylaws

- Rules that govern the organization
- Legally binding
- Can override parliamentary authority
Basic Principles

• There are some basic principles for the use of Parliamentary Procedure.
• When they are remembered, then meetings will run more smoothly and business will take place.
Basic Principles

• A quorum must be present for the group to act.
  – As defined by the by-laws
  – If not, then majority of membership

• Only one question should be considered at any given time.

• No member should speak until recognized by the chair.

• The chair should maintain strict impartiality during discussion.
  – Chair can vote if it will affect the outcome
Quorum

• Quorum is minimum number of members necessary to conduct business (present throughout meeting)

• Chair should determine quorum before meeting
  – Bylaws can determine method to determine, i.e. roll call

• Quorum should be determined by bylaws
  – For all meetings – regular, special, annual, etc
  – Otherwise, it is majority of entire membership

• If quorum ceases to exist during meeting:
  – Only motions in order are:
    • To recess until quorum returns
    • Motion to adjourn
Presiding Officer

• Stands when calling the meeting to order (in larger meetings)
• Says, “The meeting will come to order.”
• Can approve the minutes without a motion
• Can adjourn a meeting without a motion
  – After asking for additional business and not hearing any
  – Adjournment time is reached on an adopted agenda
Procedure for Handling Main

- Member rises and addresses the Chair.
  - “Mr./Madam President or Chairperson.”
- Chair recognizes the member.
- Member states:
  - “I move that _______ (states motion).”
- Second to motion (not necessary to stand or be recognized).
  - “I second the motion.”
  - If the motion comes as a recommendation from two or more members, the motion does not need a second.
Procedure for Handling Main

• Chair states motion:
  – “It has been moved by (name) and seconded that __________.”

• Discussion:
  – If debatable, every member has right to debate
  – Chair refrains from debate while presiding
  – Proposer of motion has first right of debate
  – Must be related (germane) only to motion

• The Chair says:
  – “If there is no further discussion, the motion is __________(restate motion).”
Procedure for Handling Main Motions

- Vote:
  - The Chair says, “All those in favor of ______ (the motion is stated) say ‘aye.’ Those opposed say ‘no.’
  - If motion requires 2/3 vote, ask for rising or by show of hands.
  - Should always ask for those opposed.

- Result of the vote is stated by chair.
  - “The motion is carried” or “the motion is lost.”
  - If counted vote, give number on both sides.
Debate

• Chair begins debate by asking for discussion
• Maker of motion has right to speak first, if properly recognized
• Can only speak twice on same question during the same day
• Any motion that stops or limits debate requires a 2/3 vote
Tie Vote

• A tie vote is a failed vote
• President/chair does not have to break a tie unless specified in bylaws
• President/chair can vote to make or break a tie vote
• RONR states that the chair can vote anytime it will affect the outcome
Classes of Motions

• Main Motions
• Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly
• Incidental Motions
• Subsidiary Motions
• Privileged Motions
Order of Pending Motions

- Privileged Motions
- Subsidiary Motions
- Incidental Motions (non-ranked)
- Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly
- Main Motions
Privileged Motions

• Do not relate to pending business
• Related to the rights and privileges to the assembly or to its members
• Not Debatable
Privileged Motions

- To fix the time to which to adjourn
- To adjourn
- To Recess
- To rise to a question of privilege
- To call for the order of the day
Subsidiary Motions

- Assisting in treating or disposing of a main motion
- All require second
- Debatable: Depends
- Requires majority vote unless involving rights of others
  - Call for previous question (2/3)
  - Limit or extend of debate (2/3)
- Most widely used is “Amend”
Subsidiary Motions

• To lay on the table
• To call for the previous question
• To limit or extend debate
• To postpone to a definite time
• To refer to a committee
• To amend
• To postpone indefinitely
Incidental Motions

• Incidental to pending motions or business at hand
• Not debatable
Incidental Motions

- To suspend the rules
- To withdraw a motion
- To call for reading of papers
- To object to consideration
- To rise to a point of order
- To rise to a parliamentary inquiry
- To appeal from the decision of the Chair
- To call for a division of the house
- To call for a division of the question
Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the House

• Brings back to the assembly a question that has already been considered
• Requires a second
• May or may not be debatable
  – Take from table, non-debatable
Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the House

- To reconsider
- To rescind
- To take from the table
Commonly Used Motions

• Main Motion
• Motion to Amend
• Call for the Question
• Call for the Division of the House
• Refer to a Committee
• To lay on the Table
• Withdraw a Motion
• Rise to a Point of Order
• Adjourn
Main Motion
(Class of Motions)

• Brings before the assembly a question or business consideration
• In order only when no other motion is pending
• Only one main motion on the floor at any time
• Requires second, debatable, usually approved by majority vote, unless some provision in bylaws require different vote
Amendments

• Only two amendments can be pending at any one time
  – Primary
    • Applied to Main Motion
  – Secondary
    • Applied to primary amendment
      – Can have infinite number of secondary amendments as long as only two total amendments pending at any one time

• Vote on amendments in reverse order
  – Secondary then primary
Amending a Motion

• Most used Subsidiary Motion
• Methods of Amending
  – Insert (inside the motion)
  – Add (at the end)
  – Strike out
  – Strike out and insert (words only)
  – Substitute (a paragraph)
• Must be germane to main motion
― Question or Call for the Question

• Actual motion is “Call the Previous Question”
  – Must be recognized by chair to make motion, cannot be just shouted out
• Is a vote to stop debate and not to vote on pending motion
•Requires a 2/3 vote to pass
  – 2/3 votes are taken by rising vote
• If receives 2/3 vote, motion passes and debate is stopped and a vote is taken immediately on pending question
• If does not receive 2/3 vote, motion fails and debate continues
Call for the Division of House

• Questions results of a vote
• Only in order if a questionable vote
• Can be made by a single member
• Can interrupt a speaker
• Is not debatable
• Does not require a vote
• Made only by rising vote or show of hands
  – Counted vote must be made in form of motion
  – Chair can ask for counted vote at any time
Refer to Committee

- Allows for additional information or study of issue before voting
- Motion to Refer should include details of who the committee will be and who will appoint
- Usually defines time for committee to report
Tabling a Motion

• Proper form of motion is to “Lay on Table”
• Misuse of “Postpone Indefinitely” or “Postpone to a Definite Time”
• Intention sometimes is “Refer” or “Commit” which sends to committee for further review
• Out of order when no business is pending
• Definite time to “Take From the Table”
  – If next meeting within quarter, by end of next meeting
  – Over quarter, end of current session
Withdraw a Motion

• Motion can be withdrawn at any time prior to voting

• Before restated by chair belongs to maker
  – Can be withdrawn, changed or modified in any way with only approval of maker

• After restating, belongs to assembly
  – Maker asks permission to withdraw
  – Chair treats first as unanimous-consent request
  – If objection, treated as a subsidiary motion
Rise to a Point of Order

• Used to correct a mistake in procedure
• Can interrupt a speaker
• Doesn’t require a second
• Is not debatable
• Chair rules
• Must be raised at time of mistake before action has been taken
Adjourn

- Next to highest ranking motion
- Fix the time to which to adjourn is highest
- Can not interrupt a speaker
- Requires a second
- Not debatable
- Majority rules
- Chair can adjourn without motion
  - If no other business is pending
  - If time is reached on an adopted agenda
Motions Requiring 2/3 Vote

- Suspends or modifies Rules of Order
- Prevents introduction of a motion
- Closes, limits or extends debate
- Limits freedom of nominations or voting
- Takes away membership or office
Out of Order Motions

- Motion to suspend bylaws
- Motion in conflict with bylaws or Articles of Incorporation
- Any motion outside the scope of the organization
  - “The purpose of this organization is ....”
- Any motion to conduct business if quorum is not present, except motion to recess or adjourn
Minutes

• Only record what was done, not everything that was said
• Seconder of motion need not be recorded
• Corrected at any time mistake is discovered, even years later
• Good minutes are first line of defense in lawsuit
Common Mistakes

• Asking for “Additions, Deletions or Corrections, etc” on minutes
  – Only ask for correction – covers everything
• Using “So Moved” to make motion
  – Use “I moved that........”
• Approving treasurers report
  – Filed for audit, audit report is approved
• Reporting too much information in minutes
  – Only report what was done, not said
• Using “Old Business” on Agenda instead of “Unfinished Business”
Conducting Meetings
Order of Business vs. Agenda

- **Order of Business**
  - Basic outline of business proceedings

- **Agenda**
  - Schedule of the order of business, with details
  - Should never be included in bylaws
  - Could not vote to immediately suspend the rules if in bylaws
  - Should not be confused with Rules of Order
Order of Business

• Call to order
• Reading and approval of the minutes
• Reports of Special Committees
• Special Orders (matters which demand special priority)
• Unfinished Business (not old business)
• New Business
Agenda

• Call to Order
• Opening Ceremonies
• Roll Call
• Reading and Approval of the Minutes
• Report of Officers, Boards and Committees
• Unfinished Business
• New Business
• Program
• Announcements
• Adjournment
Questions?