

An Introduction to Parliamentary Procedure

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“Ignorance of the rules and customs of deliberative assemblies is a heavy handicap to anyone who expects to influence the policy of a society.”

—Henry M. Robert

Two Sources of Parliamentary Rules

- Parliamentary Procedure
 - The body of rules and customs traditionally governing meetings
 - Spelled in a manual adopted by the organization
- Custom Rules of the Organization
 - Supersede rules in the parliamentary manual that they conflict with
 - Maybe be placed in the bylaws or adopted separately

Signs of a Productive Meeting

- ❖ No one speaks without being recognized by the chair
- ❖ The chair makes clear what is happening
- ❖ Members stick to the point

Two Types of Motions

- Main motions

- Bring business before the council
- Only one can be considered at a time

Example: Resolutions

- Secondary motions

- Can be moved while a main motion is being considered
- May relate to the main motion or to the parliamentary situation

Examples: Amend, Refer, Postpone, Appeal

Bringing A Motion Before the Meeting

- ❖ A member makes the motion
- ❖ Another member seconds the motion
- ❖ The chair states the question on the motion

How to Make a Motion

- ❖ Obtain the chair's recognition
- ❖ Say "I move that . . ." and indicate what you are proposing
- ❖ State the words of your motion *precisely*

Ms. BROWN [Raising Hand]: Mr. President!

CHAIR: Ms. Brown.

Ms. BROWN: I move that the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries.

[MR. GREEN: Second.]

CHAIR: It is moved [and seconded] that the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries.

Ms. BROWN [Raising Hand]: Mr. President!

CHAIR: Ms. Brown.

Ms. BROWN: I move the adoption of resolution #17.

[MR. GREEN: Second.]

CHAIR: It is moved [and seconded] to adopt resolution #17 as printed.

Considering a Motion

- ❖ Members debate the motion
- ❖ The chair takes a vote
- ❖ The chair announces the result of the vote

Debating a Motion

- ❖ Members must be recognized by the chair to speak (the maker of a motion has preference in recognition)
- ❖ Debate must be *germane*—stick to the subject!
- ❖ Avoid personalities
- ❖ Work towards a decision

Taking a Vote by Voice

CHAIR: The question is on the adoption of the motion that the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries. Those in favor of the motion, say *aye*. [*Pause for response*]
Those opposed, say *no*. [*Pause*]

Taking a Vote by Voice (Cont.)

CHAIR: The ayes have it, and the motion is adopted. The Council expresses its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries

or

The noes have it, and the motion is lost.

Taking a Vote by Show of Hands

CHAIR: The question is on the adoption of the motion that the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries. Those in favor of the motion will raise the right hand. [*Pause*] Lower hands. Those opposed will raise the right hand. [*Pause*] Lower hands.

Taking a Vote by Show of Hands (Cont.)

CHAIR: The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted. The Council expresses its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries

or

The noes have it, and the motion is lost.

Taking a Vote by Roll Call

CHAIR: The question is on the adoption of the motion that the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries. Those in favor of the motion will, as their names are called, answer aye. Those opposed will answer no. The Secretary will call the roll.

Taking a Vote by Show of Hands (Cont.)

CHAIR: There are 7 in the affirmative and 4 in the negative. The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted. The Council expresses its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries

or

There are 3 in the affirmative and 7 in the negative. The negative has it, and the motion is lost.

Steps in Handling a Motion

1. A member makes a motion
2. Another member seconds it, if required
3. The chair states the question on the motion, repeating its *exact* wording
4. Members debate the motion, sticking to the point
5. The chair puts the motion to a vote, repeating its *exact* wording
6. The chair announces the result of the vote.

How to Amend a Main Motion

The pending main motion reads:

“that the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries.”

But Mr. Green wants it to read:

“that the Council express its opposition to and support the elimination of advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries.”

MR. GREEN: I move to insert the words “and support the elimination of” before the word “advertisements”.

[MS. WHITE: Second!]

CHAIR: It is moved [and seconded] to insert the words “and support the elimination of” before the word “advertisements”. If the amendment is adopted, the main motion will read, “That the Council express its opposition to and support the elimination of advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries.”

—*Debate*—

CHAIR: Is there any further debate? [*Pause*]

The question is on inserting the words “and support the elimination of”. If the amendment is adopted, the main motion will read, “That the Council express its opposition to and support the elimination of advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries.” Those in favor of inserting the words “and support the elimination of”, say aye. [*Pause*] Those opposed, say no. [*Pause*]

CHAIR: The ayes have it, and the amendment is adopted. The question is now on the main motion as amended: “That the Council express its opposition to and support the elimination of advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries.” Is there any further debate?

or

The noes have it, and the amendment is lost. The question is now on the main motion, “That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries.” Is there any further debate?

The pending main motion reads:

“that the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries.”

But Ms. White wants it to read:

“that the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines in school libraries.”

Ms. WHITE: I move to strike the words “and junk food”.

[MR. BLACK: Second!]

CHAIR: It is moved [and seconded] to strike the words “and junk food”. If the amendment is adopted, the main motion will read, “That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines in school libraries.”

—*Debate*—

CHAIR: Is there any further debate? [*Pause*]

The question is on striking the words “and junk food”. If the amendment is adopted, the main motion will read, “That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines in school libraries.” Those in favor of striking the words “and junk food”, say aye. [*Pause*] Those opposed, say no. [*Pause*]

CHAIR: The ayes have it, and the amendment is adopted. The question is now on the main motion as amended: “That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines in school libraries.” Is there any further debate?

or

The noes have it, and the amendment is lost. The question is now on the main motion, “That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco and junk food in magazines in school libraries.” Is there any further debate?

The pending main motion reads:

“that the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines in school libraries.”

But Mr. Black wants it to read:

“that the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines available in schools to students.”

MR. BLACK: I move to strike out the words “in school libraries” and insert the words “available in schools to students”.

[MS. WHITE: Second!]

CHAIR: It is moved [and seconded] to strike out the words “in school libraries” and insert the words “available in schools to students”. If the amendment is adopted, the main motion will read, “That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines available in schools to students.”

CHAIR: Is there any further debate? [*Pause*]

The question is on striking the words “in school libraries” and inserting the words “available in schools to students”. If the amendment is adopted, the main motion will read, “That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines available in schools to students.” Those in favor of striking the words “in school libraries” and inserting the words “available in schools to students”. [*Pause*] Those opposed, say no. [*Pause*]

CHAIR: The ayes have it, and the amendment is adopted. The question is now on the main motion as amended: “That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines available in schools to students.” Is there any further debate?

or

The noes have it, and the amendment is lost. The question is now on the main motion as previously amended, “That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines in school libraries.” Is there any further debate?

The pending main motion reads:

“that the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines in school libraries.”

But Mr. Grey wants it to read:

“that the Council urge the Department of Education to seek voluntary agreements with magazine publishers to reduce tobacco advertising.”

MR. GREY: I move to substitute for the pending motion the following: “That the Council urge the Department of Education to seek voluntary agreements with magazine publishers to reduce tobacco advertising.”

[Ms. WHITE: Second!]

CHAIR: It is moved [and seconded] to amend by substituting for the pending motion the following: “That the Council urge the Department of Education to seek voluntary agreements with magazine publishers to reduce tobacco advertising.” The motion to substitute proposes that the paragraph just read shall come before the council in place of the pending motion

CHAIR: Is there any further debate? [*Pause*]

The question is on the motion to substitute. The chair will read the pending motion first, then the motion proposed as a substitute. The pending motion is: "That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines in school libraries." The motion proposed as a substitute is: "That the Council urge the Department of Education to seek voluntary agreements with magazine publishers to reduce tobacco advertising."

The question is: Shall the resolution last read be substituted for the pending resolution? Those in favor of the motion to substitute, say aye. [*Pause*]

~~Those opposed say no. [*Pause*]~~

CHAIR: The ayes have it, and the motion to substitute is adopted. The question is now on the main motion as amended: “That the Council urge the Department of Education to seek voluntary agreements with magazine publishers to reduce tobacco advertising.” Is there any further debate?

or

The noes have it, and the amendment is lost. The question is now on the main motion as previously amended, “That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines in school libraries.” Is there any further debate?

Key Points for Amend

- ❖ The motion to amend must say precisely how the wording of the main motion should be changed
- ❖ The chair makes clear which motion is being debated or voted on
- ❖ The vote on the motion to amend does not adopt or reject the main motion
- ❖ The amendment must be germane

How to Refer a Motion to Committee

Details of Motion to Refer

- ❖ The name of the committee if it a standing committee
- ❖ The names of the committee members, if it is a special committee
- ❖ Instructions, such as:
 - ❖ When to report
 - ❖ What sort of recommendations are needed

Referring to a Standing Committee

MEMBER: I move to refer the motion to the Education Committee, and to instruct the committee to report at the June meeting.

Referring to an Ad Hoc Committee

MEMBER: I move to refer the motion to a special committee of five to be appointed by the president, and to instruct the committee to report at the June meeting.

or

MEMBER: I move to refer the motion to a special committee consisting of Mr. Brown, Ms. White, Mr. Green, and Mr. Grey, and to instruct the committee to report at the June meeting.

How to Postpone a Motion

Postponing a Main Motion

MEMBER: I move to postpone the motion until 2 p.m.

MEMBER: I move to postpone the motion to the next meeting.

MEMBER: I move to postpone the question until after the address by our guest speaker.

How to Close Debate

Closing Debate.

MEMBER A: I move the previous question.

[ANOTHER MEMBER: Second!]

CHAIR: The previous question is moved [and seconded]. Those in favor of ordering the previous question will raise the right hand. [*Pause*] Lower hands. Those opposed will raise the right hand. [*Pause*] Lower hands.

Closing Debate (Cont.)

CHAIR: There are two thirds in the affirmative and the previous question is ordered. The question is now on the adoption of the motion to [stating in full the immediately pending question]. Those in favor will raise the right hand. [Pause] Lower hands. Those opposed will raise the right hand. [Pause] Lower hands.

How to Enforce Rules

Point of Order and Appeal

MS. WHITE: Point of Order!

CHAIR: The member will state her point of order.

MS. WHITE: I make the point of order that the amendment that was just made is not germane to the pending main motion.

CHAIR: The chair rules that the point of order is well-taken. The amendment to oppose budget cuts is not germane to the pending motion on tobacco advertising.

Point of Order and Appeal (Cont.)

MR. BLACK: I appeal from the decision of the chair.

[MR. GREEN: Second.]

CHAIR: The decision of the chair is appealed from. The chair's ruling was that the motion to amend by adding the words "and oppose further school budget cuts" is not germane. The question is, "Shall the decision of the chair be sustained?"

—*Debate*—

Point of Order and Appeal (Cont.)

CHAIR: Are you ready for the question?

Those in favor of sustaining the chair's decision, say aye. [*Pause*] Those opposed to sustaining this decision, say no. [*Pause*] The ayes have it, and the decision of the chair is sustained. The amendment is not germane, and is therefore out of order. The question is now on the main motion: "That the Council express its opposition to advertisements for tobacco in magazines in school libraries."

Suspending the Rules

MR. GREY: I move to suspend the rules and allow the Membership Committee to report at this time.

[Ms. WHITE: Second!]

CHAIR: It is moved and seconded to suspend the rules and allow the Education Committee to report at this time. Those in favor of the motion will raise the right hand. *[Pause]* Those opposed will raise the right hand. *[Pause]* There are two thirds in the affirmative and the rules are suspended for the purpose of allowing the Education Committee to report at this time.

In Conclusion . . .

Main Points

- ❖ Obtain recognition of the chair before speaking
- ❖ Be clear and precise
- ❖ Stick to the point
- ❖ The council has the final say

Further Information

Robert's of Order Newly Revised (RONR), 11th edition
Robert's of Order Newly Revised in Brief, 2nd edition

National Association of Parliamentarians
at parliamentarians.org

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