

## Facilitator Guide for

### *Simple Parliamentary Procedure:*

### *Guidelines for Better Business Meetings (IP-15)*

#### **Rationale:**

Utilizing parliamentary procedure can help an organization, board, or governing body have a productive, orderly meeting. Understanding basic principles of parliamentary procedure allows all members of the group to contribute to a smooth and effective meeting. In addition, following rules of procedure aids in minimizing conflict.

#### **Goal:**

To improve the effectiveness of meetings by building knowledge of parliamentary procedure.

#### **Objectives:**

- Review the basic principles of parliamentary procedure.
- Examine the benefits of an order of business or agenda.
- Define and discuss quorum.
- Understand the basic steps for presenting and processing a motion.
- Review five types of motions and the procedures associated with each type.
- Identify the key components of meeting minutes and procedures related to treasurer's reports.
- Highlight nomination and election procedures.
- Share parliamentary courtesies that are broadly applicable in business meetings.

#### **Teaching Resources:**

- IP-15 *Simple Parliamentary Procedure: Guidelines for Better Business Meetings* publication
- IP-15.FG *Simple Parliamentary Procedure: Guidelines for Better Business Meetings* facilitator guide
- *Simple Parliamentary Procedure: Guidelines for Better Business Meetings* PowerPoint presentation
- *Parliamentary Procedure Trivia – Activity Guide* (and associated materials)
- *Simple Parliamentary Procedure – Teaching Basic Principles via a Mock Meeting* (activity guide and associated materials)
- *Evaluation* – A brief evaluation form for use at the end of a parliamentary procedure workshop or update.



**Participant Resources:**

- IP-15 *Simple Parliamentary Procedure: Guidelines for Better Business Meetings* publication
- Handout materials associated with the specific activities to be presented.

**Estimated Time:**

This program can be adapted for a variety of times frames and settings depending upon your audience. The estimated presentation time using all included activities is 60-90 minutes. This time can be adjusted to 20-30 minutes by using fewer activities or shortening discussion times.

**Pre-Program Preparation:**

- Review the full list of materials available and select the presentation option(s) that best align to your group, timeframe, and setting.
- Prepare the materials and collect supplies as noted for your selected activities.
- Set the room to best accommodate your planned activities.

**Presentation Options:****Option 1 – Review presentation slides (20-30 minutes)*****Slide 1 – Title slide***

Share that the overall goal of this program is to review the basic principles of parliamentary procedure and parliamentary courtesies that are broadly applicable in most business meetings.

***Slide 2 – What is parliamentary procedure?***

Invite 2-3 participants to share a response to the question, then share this definition: “In basic terms, parliamentary procedure is the generally accepted rules or practices utilized by groups or assemblies for the orderly transaction of business.”

***Slide 3 – Five basic principles***

Review the five principles highlighted on the slide and included in the publication -

- Extend courtesy and equal rights to all.
- Consider only one thing at a time.
- The majority rules.
- The minority must be heard.
- The purpose is to facilitate decision making.

***Slide 4 & 5 – Order of business and agenda***

An order of business is a basic outline for a business meeting while an agenda provides additional, more specific detail. All meetings, at minimum, should follow an established order of business. A detailed agenda can be a useful tool. The key elements of both are:

- Call to order
- Opening ceremonies
- Reading of the minutes
- Reports of officers
- Reports of committees
- Unfinished business

- New business
- Announcements
- Program
- Adjournment

#### *Slide 6 – What is a quorum?*

Invite 2-3 participants to share a response, then provide the formal definition: “A quorum is the minimum number of members that must be present to conduct business.”

- This minimum is typically specified in bylaws, with terms like a majority of members (half plus one) or two-thirds of membership commonly used.
- If bylaws do not define quorum, Roberts Rules of Order generally defines it as more than half of membership.
- When a quorum is not present, no formal business action can be taken. The group can only set a time for another meeting and continue with any general programming.
- If attendance drops below the minimum during the meeting, then no further official business proceeds unless the attendance rises back to quorum.

#### *Slide 7 – Presenting and processing a motion*

Briefly review the six basic steps that apply to the process of making and considering a motion.

1. A member of the group must obtain the floor.
2. The motion must be stated, “I move that .....
3. The motion, unless coming from a committee, must be seconded.
4. The presiding officer should restate the motion and open the floor for discussion.
  - a. The person who makes the motion has the right to speak first, then each member is afforded an opportunity to speak, if desired.
  - b. No member can speak a second time unless all members have had an opportunity to speak.
  - c. Amendments must be considered and acted upon before the group can close debate on a main motion.
  - d. Secondary motions, depending upon their rank, take precedence over the main motion and must be considered before debate can resume.
5. Once debate has closed, the presiding officer calls for the vote.
  - a. The presiding officer must ask for vote on both sides (for and against the motion).
  - b. The presiding officer should give specific instruction for the negative vote versus simply stating “like sign” (i.e., “All opposed, say nay”).
6. Following the vote, the presiding officer will announce the outcome and must indicate:
  - a. which side won (affirmative or negative vote),
  - b. the result of the vote (the motion carries or is defeated), and
  - c. the action that must follow (the organization will....).

#### *Slide 8 – Classification of Motions*

Highlight the five basic types of motions and indicate the specific pages in the publication that provide additional details about each.

- Main motions - Motions used to introduce a main item or question of business to the group. Only one main motion may be before the group at a time. It must be disposed of before another item may be considered but does yield to a secondary motion.

- Subsidiary motions - Modify, defer, remove, or dispose of a main motion. Subsidiary motions take precedence over main motions and must be handled first. Examples includes a motion to lay an item on the table, close debate, limit debate, extend debate, amend a motion, refer to committee, etc.
- Privileged motions - Relate to order and the rights of the members. They rank higher than subsidiary motions or main motions. Examples include motions to adjourn, recess, raise a question of privilege, etc.
- Incidental motions - Relate to procedures. Incidental motions have no rank and are considered before the motions from which they stem. Examples include motions that appeal a ruling of the chair, suspend the rules, rise to a point of order, or withdraw a motion.
- Motions that bring a question again before the group - Allow the group to reopen an item of business during the same meeting, take up a motion that was temporarily disposed of, or change something previously adopted. Examples include motions to take from the table, rescind a previously approved motion, reconsider a motion, or discharge a committee.

Additional details about the types of motions are on page 9 and 10 of the publication.

#### *Slide 9 – Amending a Motion*

If a member would like to make changes to a motion during debate, the member can move to amend the motion. Amendments can add wording to the main motion, remove or strike out wording included in the main motion, and/or replace or substitute wording in the main motion. Once an amendment has been moved and seconded, the group must discuss the amendment and vote on the amendment. The main motion would then be considered as amended (if the amendment is approved) or as originally stated (if the amendment was defeated).

#### *Slide 10 – Meeting Minutes*

Minutes from a meeting are the permanent record of the group's actions. Minutes record facts, not opinions. Minutes should include the date, time, location, and type of meeting; record of presiding officer and secretary or person taking minutes; exact wording and disposition of each motion; all points of order or appeals; the time of adjournment; and the signature of the recorder. Minutes should be provided at the next meeting, with an opportunity for corrections before acceptance.

#### *Slide 11 – Treasurer's Reports*

Robert's Rules of Order require an annual financial report following the ending of a group's fiscal year. However, it may be customary or defined in the organization's bylaws or standing rules that reports be provided at each meeting. Periodic reports require no action or vote by the group. Final year-end reports do require formal adoption, with the specific process determined based upon the audit status. If a year-end report is presented and has not yet been audited, the group should move that it be accepted and referred to audit. If it has been audited, the group can move acceptance of the report and audit findings, or move specific action be taken based upon audit findings.

#### *Slide 12 – Nomination Procedures*

Robert's Rules of Order define procedures to follow in electing officers, and organizations will commonly define specific guidelines for nominations and elections in their bylaws. In general, Robert's Rules of Order allow for nominations to come from committee or from the floor during a meeting. Voting takes place either individually by position as nominations for each position are closed or after nominations have been accepted for all positions.

### *Slide 13 – Voting Procedures*

If an organization's bylaws define a process for voting, then that process should be followed. In general terms, Robert's Rules of Order recommend using a ballot when there are multiple candidates for the same position. Tellers are assigned to distribute, collect, and count ballots. The head teller will report to the presiding officer noting the number of votes cast, number required for a majority, number of votes each nominee received, and the number of ballots declared illegal. The presiding officer will share the report with the assembly and announce the results of the vote. Voice votes are commonly used when there is a single candidate running unopposed.

### *Slide 14 – Remote or Virtual Meetings*

For an organization to conduct official business via a remote or virtual meeting, bylaws should include specific language authorizing meeting in this manner. The technology used should allow members to hear each other at the same time (and see each other if meeting via videoconference). Robert's Rules of Order do apply to remote or virtual meetings.

### *Slides 15 & 16 – Courtesies expected of all members*

While it is important for officers within an organization to have a good working knowledge of parliamentary procedure, all members should have a general understanding and should adhere to these 10 basic courtesies.

- Stand (or raise your hand to be recognized) when addressing the presiding officer.
- Address the presiding officer by title (Mr. President, Madam Chair, etc.)
- Sit promptly when finished talking.
- Speak only when addressing the chair and once recognized by the chair.
- Avoid talking or whispering to others during the meeting.
  
- Do not stand (or raise your hand) for recognition when someone else is speaking.
- Confine discussion to the question before the group.
- Refer to others by titles versus names.
- Accept the decision of the majority.
- Be punctual in arrival.

### *Slide 17 – Presiding officers*

The presiding officer sets the tone for the meeting and correct procedure should always be the goal. Presiding officers should always state the exact wording of all motions, refrain from entering discussion of a motion while presiding, clearly indicate how a vote is to be taken, always ask for the negative vote, and maintain focus on the business at hand and not a person or persons.

### *Slide 18 – Summary*

Parliamentary procedures are the guidelines that assure an effective, fair meeting. Observing the prescribed procedures will help your group stay on task and conduct business in an orderly fashion.

### *Slide 19 – Equal Opportunity*

This slide contains equal opportunity information and should be displayed at the conclusion of the presentation.

### Option 2 – Parliamentary Procedure Trivia/Quiz

If your primary objective is to provide a review or refresher, consider utilizing the *Parliamentary Procedure Trivia* activity. A detailed activity guide and corresponding materials have been developed and provide two options – a team trivia contest or an individual quiz format. Depending upon the option chosen, the timeframe needed will range from 20-45 minutes. The number of rounds in the team option or number of questions in the individual quiz option can be reduced to shorten the activity to fit a limited timeframe. A copy of the publication should be provided to each participant as part of the activity wrap-up.

*Note: For groups with a routine meeting schedule where presenting for 20 minutes or more is a challenge, consider incorporating a quick parliamentary procedure refresher into a series of meetings by utilizing 4-8 questions per meeting across a series of 3-6 meetings.*

### Option 3 – Mock Meeting

To review, highlight, and demonstrate parliamentary procedure basics, consider facilitating a mock meeting. An activity guide and script are available for your use. The script is based upon a fictitious County Extension Council. While it is not typical for a County Extension Council to have financial accounts and a treasurer, the mock meeting script does include a treasurer and financial report. You can omit this portion of the script if it is not applicable or beneficial for your group.

The timeframe needed for the mock meeting activity will range from 15-20 minutes, depending upon the pace at which the ‘actors’ move through the script. Be sure to recap the errors in procedure once the ‘actors’ have completed the mock meeting presentation.

### ***Evaluation:***

An end-of-program evaluation form is provided for your use to assess knowledge gain and how participants anticipate utilizing the information shared. The long-term goal is that you will see a change in how parliamentary procedure is utilized by the participating groups and individuals.

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