

FUNDAMENTALS OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW

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Credits:

- “A Handbook for Conducting FFA Meetings”, by Kenneth Lee Russell (1955) and
- “Mister Chairman: A Handbook of Parliamentary Procedure” by the Activities Center, Associated Students of Washington State University, reprinted by the United States Jaycees.
- Note: major paragraphs and/or sections have been reproduced in this document from these out-of-print sources without specifying the specific source or page. I cannot claim sole authorship.

Parliamentary law is simple in principle. It is based largely on mere common sense and courtesy. It seems technical because it has been necessary to develop a special vocabulary for discussing it. If one knows the vocabulary, the rules come easily.

THE PURPOSE OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW:

- To enable an assembly to transact business with speed and efficiency. I.e., to facilitate action, not to obstruct it.
- To protect the rights of each individual.
- To preserve a spirit of harmony within the group.

To achieve these purposes, always consider the five basic principles of parliamentary procedure:

- Do only one thing at a time. Only one subject may claim the attention of the assembly at one time.
- Each proposition presented for consideration is entitled to full and free debate.
- Every member has rights equal to every other member. Justice and courtesy for all.
- The will of the majority must be carried out, and the rights of the minority must be preserved. I.e., The majority rules; the minority must be heard.
- The personality and desires of each member should be merged into the larger unit of the organization.

REGULAR ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Call to order.
2. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting(s).
3. Reports of officers and standing committees.
4. Reports of special committees.
5. Unfinished/old business.
6. New business.
7. Program.
8. Adjournment.

WHAT IS A MOTION? A motion is a proposal that the group take a certain action.

HOW ARE MOTIONS CLASSIFIED?

Main Motions: Motions of this group have for their object the bringing of questions, or propositions, before the assembly for consideration. Only one main motion can be considered at a given time by the assembly, and such a motion, when introduced, excludes all other main motions until it has been disposed of.

Subsidiary Motions: Motions of this group have for their object the modification or disposition of the main motion that is being considered. Their existence as motions depends entirely upon the principal motion to which they are subordinate. Since they relate to the question before the house, it is "in order" to propose them when a main motion is still before the assembly and to vote upon them before voting upon the main motion.

Privileged Motions: Motions of this group have no connection whatsoever with the main motion before the assembly, but are motions of such importance that they are entitled to immediate consideration. These motions have the privilege of setting aside temporarily the main business before the house.

Incidental Motions: Motions of this group have few general characteristics in common, but for convenience have been grouped into one class. The name, "incidental," has been chosen because they arise only incidentally out of the business of the assembly.

USES OF MOTIONS

To determine whether or not a motion may be correctly used, consider these questions:

1. May it interrupt a speaker?
2. Does it require a second?
3. May it be debated?
4. What vote is required to carry it?
5. Are there other motions that may be applied to it?
6. May it be proposed again, if lost?
7. What is its rank or precedence?

The chart on the page after page 3 answers each of these questions. Keep it handy at meetings!

CHART OF PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS/SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RANK OF MOTIONS

The motions in the chart following page 3 are arranged in the order of their precedence or rank.

The Specific Main Motions have NO precedence. No two Main Motions may be pending at the same time.

Incidental Motions have no order of precedence among themselves. Any one of them may be proposed whenever a situation arises that requires it. They yield to Privileged Motions.

WHAT WOULD I LIKE TO DO? (The numbers refer to the procedure numbers in the chart.)

Introduce business? 13 - Main Motion

Kill a matter or defer it? 12 - Postpone Indefinitely.

Change or modify? 11 - Amend.

Let a few attend to a matter? 10 - Refer to a Committee.

Fix a time to attend to a matter? 9 - Postpone Definitely.

Limit debate or extend limit of debate? 8 - Limit, of Extend Limits of, Debate.

Stop debate and demand immediate vote? 7 - Call for the Previous Question.

Defer action on a question? 6 - Lay on the Table.

Insist upon order of business being followed strictly? 5 - Call for Orders of the Day.

Ask a privileged question? 4 - Rise to a Question of Privilege.

Have an intermission? 3 - Take a Recess.

End the meeting? 2 - Adjourn (Unqualified).

Fix the time for an adjourned meeting? 1 - Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn.

(SPECIFIC MAIN MOTIONS)

Consider a motion a second time? Take from the Table, Reconsider or Rescind.

Prevent a vote from being final? Reconsider and Have Entered on the Minutes.

Have a matter deferred until some specific time? Create Orders of the Day.

(INCIDENTAL MOTIONS)

Suspend the rules that interfere with another matter? Suspend Rules.

Prevent a vote from being taken upon a motion? Withdraw a Motion.

Have a paper read which is not on the program? Read Papers.

Suppress a question? Object to Consideration. (Must be BEFORE debate)

Make some inquiry as to Parliamentary procedure? Rise to a Parliamentary Inquiry.

See that order is restored? Rise to a Point of Order.

Object to a decision made by the Chair? Appeal from the decision of the Chair.

Have the assembly divided in voting? Call for a Division of the Assembly or Recount.

Have a question divided into parts? Call for a Division of a Question.

CHART OF PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS AND SUMMARY OF GOVERNING RULES

	May Interrupt a Speaker	Requires a Second	Debatable	Vote Required	Motions that May Apply
Privileged Motions					
1. To fix time to which to adjourn	No	Yes	Limited	Maj.	Amend, Reconsider
2. To adjourn (unqualified)	No	Yes	No	Maj.	None
3. To take a recess	No	Yes	Limited	Maj.	Amend
4. To rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	Chmn. rules	All
5. To call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	None	None
Subsidiary Motions					
6. To lay on the table	No	Yes	No	Maj.	None
7. To call for the previous question	No	Yes	No	2/3	Reconsider
8. To limit, or extend limits, of debate	No	Yes	Limited	2/3	Amend, Reconsider
9. To postpone definitely	No	Yes	Limited	Maj.	Amend, Recon., Prev. Ques.
10. To refer to a committee	No	Yes	Limited	Maj.	Amend, Recon., Prev. Ques.
11. To amend	No	Yes	Yes	Maj.	Amend, Recon., Prev. Ques.
12. To postpone indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	Maj.	Limit De, Prev. Ques., Recon.
Main Motions					
13. a. General main motions	No	Yes	Yes	Maj.	All
b. Specific main motions					
To take from the table	No	Yes	No	Maj.	None
To reconsider	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.	Lim. Deb., Prev. Ques., Table, Postpone definitely
To reconsider and have entered on the minutes	Yes	Yes	No	Called for	None
To rescind	No	Yes	Yes	2/3	All
To expunge	No	Yes	Yes	2/3	All
To adopt a resolution	No	Yes	Yes	Maj.	All
To adjourn (qualified)	No	Yes	Limited	Maj.	All
To create orders of the day (Special)	No	Yes	Yes	Gen. Maj.; Spec. 2/3	All
To amend (constitution, etc.)	No	Yes	Yes	2/3	All
Incidental Motions					
To suspend rules	No	Yes	No	2/3	None
To withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Maj.	Reconsider
To read papers	No	Yes	No	Maj.	Reconsider
To object to consideration	Yes	No	No	2/3	Reconsider
To rise to a point of order	Yes	No	No	Chmn. rules or Maj.	None
To rise to parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	None	None
To appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes	Yes	Limited	Maj.	All except amend
To call for a division of the house	Yes	No	No	Maj.	None
To call for a division of a question	No	Yes	No	Maj.	Amend

Skit 1 – Theory

This skit will use the following procedures:

General Main Motion	To Call for a Division of the Assembly
To Amend	Recount
To Withdraw a Motion	To Postpone Indefinitely
To Call for the Previous Question	To Adjourn

INTRODUCING NEW BUSINESS - THE MAIN MOTION

Steps required

1. Member seeks recognition. "Mr. Chairman", raising hand.
2. President recognizes member. "Yes, Mrs. _____"
3. Member states motion. "I move that . . ." (or even more simply, "I move we . . .")
4. Another member seconds motion. "I second the motion."
5. President repeats motion. "It was moved and seconded that _____"
6. President asks for discussion. "Is there any discussion?"
7. President calls for vote. "All in favor of the motion say "Aye". Opposed say "No".
8. President announces result of the voting. "Motion carried" or "Motion defeated."

MODIFYING, CHANGING, OR IMPROVING A MOTION

A main motion may be amended by striking, adding, or changing words, clauses, whole paragraphs, or even the entire motion an infinite number of times. The amendment must be related to the main motion though. An amendment may be amended but there may not be an amendment to an amendment to an amendment.

The same steps in considering a main motion apply to a proposed amendment. The proposed amendment is voted on first, then, if the amendment succeeds, the motion as amended is voted on. If the amendment fails, the main motion is still open to discussion and must be voted on.

WITHDRAWING A MOTION

A member may withdraw his motion without the consent of anyone before the President has restated it. After that, the President must ask if there is any objection to the motion being withdrawn, and if there is none he announces, "The motion is withdrawn." If there is an objection, the matter must be voted on. It is not necessary to withdraw a second as it has no meaning if the motion is withdrawn.

STOPPING DISCUSSION - QUESTION AND THE PREVIOUS QUESTION

When a member feels discussion has gone far enough, he may call for the question by saying in a moderate tone of voice, "Question." This does not stop debate unless the group is ready to stop, but when the Chair checks for objections by saying, "The question has been called for. Is there any further discussion?" This is often enough to stop debate. Remember though, If you are in a meeting and you have something to say that's important, and someone calls for the question, don't be railroaded into thinking you can't say it.

To move to stop debate, the proper motion is, "I move the Previous Question" although a less formal, "I move we stop debate" also works. This motion requires a second and a 2/3 vote to stop debate.

Note: anytime there is a supermajority vote needed to pass a motion, the Chair should say so before the vote.

An alternative motion is to move to limit debate. For example, the debate may be limited to X minutes per speaker, X minutes in total, etc.

SECURING A COUNTED VOTE - DIVISION AND RECOUNT

If a member believes a mistake was made in announcing the results of the voting, he may ask for a counted vote by rising, and without recognition from the chair, say "I call for a division," The President must then immediately take a vote again by saying, "A division has been called for. We shall vote again. Those in favor of the motion say "Aye". Opposed say "No".

A further appeal is possible if a member believes a mistake in counting was made by asking for a recount, again without needing to secure recognition from the chair, saying, "I call for a recount." The President then takes a recount, using a standing vote (or in more informal settings, by raising hands).

Skit 1

(Roles are in italics, lines are bolded, instructions to cast members are in regular type.)

CHAIR: The meeting will come to order. (Assume that the usual beginning of the meeting has been completed and you are now in "New Business".)

ABLE: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: Yes, Mr. Able.

Pardon the sexism of using "Mr. X" throughout these skits. "Mr." is used to denote the formality members use in the larger, more formal meetings. It is not intended to slight the contributions of the female gender, but only for convenience.

ABLE: I move that the Chairman of the Events Committee be authorized to spend up to \$200 on materials to be distributed at the Bedford Business Association Trade Fair March 6-7.

BAKER: I second the motion.

CHAIR: It has been moved and seconded that the Chairman of the Events Committee be authorized to spend up to \$200 on materials to be distributed at the Bedford Business Association Trade Fair March 6-7. Is there any discussion?

CONE: I move to amend the motion by striking the amount of \$200 and inserting the amount of \$400.

DANE: I second the motion to amend.

The formal requesting recognition by a member and the Chair recognizing a member is not as necessary in a smaller group or less formal meeting.

CHAIR: It has been moved and seconded to amend the motion by striking the amount of \$200 and inserting the amount of \$400.

DANE: I rise for information.

CHAIR: Mr. Dane, what is your question?

DANE: How much will the materials actually cost?

Rising for information is a type of "rising to a question of privilege", and may interrupt a speaker if the question asked is essential to the member effectively participating in the discussion. Beware of potential for abuse, which the Chair must control.

CHAIR: The Chairman of the Events Committee has estimated the costs to be \$150.

EVERS: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: Yes, Mr. Evers.

EVERS: If the Chairman of the Committee estimates the costs to be \$150, authorizing \$400 sounds stupid!

CHAIR: Mr. Evers, \$400 does appear to be more than the \$150 needed, but I must remind everyone to please keep your comments civil.

The Chair is responsible for maintaining control of the meeting, and restraining comments which are out of line.

CONE: I withdraw my motion to amend.

CHAIR: There being no need for the withdrawal of the second, we can return to discussion.

BAKER: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: Mr. Baker.

BAKER: I move that we hold a fundraiser next week at the Barley Pub.

CHAIR: Mr. Baker. I am sorry, but your motion is out of order, as there can be only one main motion being considered at a time. Is there further discussion on the motion regarding the expenditure for the Trade Fair?

The Chair should restate or summarize the motion where helpful for the members to be able to know just what they are discussing, especially after any action which might cause the members to lose track.

Members: Discussion made up impromptu.

ABLE: Question. (ignored)

Members: Continue to discuss. Again, make it up impromptu.

ABLE: Mr. Chairman

CHAIR: Mr. Able.

ABLE: I move the Previous Question.

EVERS: Second.

Here it is not necessary for the Chair to say that the motion is not debatable, but a good Chair will make such comments when helpful to the membership to know what is permissible and what is not, preempting the need for a question. Announcing the need for a supermajority vote should always be done.

CHAIR: Seeing as a motion to close debate is not debatable, we will proceed to vote. It will take a 2/3 vote to close debate. All in favor of closing debate say "Aye". All opposed say "No". The Nos have it.

EVERS: I call for a division.

CHAIR: A division has been called for. We will vote again. All in favor of closing debate say "Aye". Opposed say "No". The No's have it.

DANE: I call for a recount.

CHAIR: A recount has been called for. We will vote again, this time by a show of hands. All in favor raise your hand. Opposed raise your hand. The Ayes have it. Debate is closed.

CHAIR: We will now vote on the motion. All in favor of the motion that the Chairman of the Events Committee be authorized to spend up to \$200 on materials to be distributed at the Bedford Business Association Trade Fair March 6-7 say “Aye”. Opposed say “No”. The Ayes have it. The motion is carried.

Again notice the Chair repeating the motion so all know exactly what they are voting on.

DANE: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: Mr. Dane.

DANE: I move that any member who does not attend the Trade Fair be fined \$250.

BAKER: Second.

ABLE: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: Mr. Able.

ABLE: Did you see the last episode of Lost? That show gets crazier by the episode.

CHAIR: I am sorry, Mr. Able, but your comment is out of order, as the discussion in order now must relate to the motion on the floor.

EVERS: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: Mr. Evers.

EVERS: I move that we postpone this motion indefinitely.

ABLE: I second the motion.

CHAIR: It has been moved and seconded that we postpone this motion indefinitely. Is there any discussion?

ABLE: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: Mr. Able.

ABLE: I move we adjourn.

EVERS: Second.

Note that a motion to adjourn is a privileged motion, which may be made at any time, may interrupt a speaker, requires a second, may not be debatable and requires a simple majority to pass. A Chair may delay adjournment if it is clear that there is additional business that needs to be attended to, however. Members may overrule the Chair’s continuing the meeting via a Rise to a Point of Order and Appeal to the Decision of the Chair, if necessary.

Again, note that stating that the motion is not debatable is optional, but helpful.

CHAIR: It has been moved and seconded that we adjourn. Seeing as the motion to adjourn is not debatable, we will proceed to vote. All in favor of adjourning say “Aye”. Opposed say “No”. The Ayes have it. The meeting is adjourned.

Skit 2 - Theory

This skit will use the following procedures:

To Take a Recess

To Rise to a Parliamentary Inquiry

To Lay on the Table

To Limit, or Extend Limits of, Debate

To Refer to a Committee

Motion to fix time to which to adjourn

MOTIONS TO ADJOURN OR RECESS

Even though the motion to adjourn has been made, seconded and passed, the President may delay adjournment if important business still needs to be attended to.

A meeting may be interrupted by a motion to recess. "I move we recess for lunch until 1:00 P.M." or "I move we recess for 10 minutes." The motion is amendable and debatable only concerning the length of time.

A recess may be a useful tactic to delay a vote until some supporters of your side of an issue show up, to give you some time to caucus informally to decide strategy, or to informally convince an undecided member or a member of the opposition to vote with you. This motion is also privileged and may be made with other business already on the floor.

When you wish to adjourn the meeting to reconvene at a specific time, the privileged motion to fix the time to which to adjourn is appropriate.

MAKING REQUESTS - PRIVILEGE, INFORMATION, OR PARLIMENTARY INQUIRY

If something of importance needs to be taken care of immediately, a member may rise without waiting to be recognized, and say, "Mr. President, I rise to a question of Privilege." The President then says, "State your question," The member then states his question, e.g., "I can't hear the speaker", or "The air conditioner should be turned on or the windows opened, the heat is oppressive!" The President then must make a determination of action to be followed,

A member may need information. He may get it by saying, "Mr. President, I rise for information." After the President asks him to state his inquiry, the member asks his question.

When a member needs information on correct parliamentary procedure, he rises and says, "Mr. President, I rise to a parliamentary inquiry." The President asks him to state his inquiry. The President may answer the question himself or may ask the Parliamentarian to do so. This tool is important in preventing some slick member who's knowledgeable about Parliamentary Procedure from slipping a fast one past the other members who don't know what's happening. If you don't know what's happening, forget your embarrassment and ask! Others will be glad you did.

A question of privilege, information, or parliamentary inquiry may not or need not be seconded, amended, debated, or voted on. The President makes the decision, subject of course, to a Point of Order or an Appeal from the Decision of the Chair.

DELAYING ACTION ON A MOTION - THE MOTION TO TABLE, POSTPONE TO A CERTAIN TIME AND POSTPONING INDEFINITELY

There may be times when it is desirable to set business aside temporarily to get more information, wait until interested members are present or to make way for more important business.

The motion to table sets aside the motion temporarily and allows the motion to be considered later. The tabled motion must be taken from the table and considered either the same meeting or the next or it will cease to exist. A motion is tabled by saying, "I move to table the motion." It must be seconded but is not debatable.

A tabled motion may be removed from the table by a member saying, "I move that the motion that _____ be taken from the table." If this motion, which is not debatable, is passed, the original motion is before the house for discussion in exactly the same condition as it was when laid on the table.

A motion to postpone delays action on a motion to a certain time and is the proper motion when the purpose is to delay action to another day. A motion may not be postponed beyond the next meeting, however. Unlike the motion to table, a motion is not necessary to again bring the matter before the group. It automatically comes up for consideration at the proper time or in Old Business of the next meeting. Thus, it is more favorable to the proponents of a motion than the motion to table. The proper form is to say, "I move to postpone the consideration of the motion until our next meeting (or until 3:00 P.M.)." It requires a second, and may be amended and debated. If the motion fails, the main motion is open to further consideration at that time.

If the real reason for delaying action on a motion is to dispose of it without bringing the matter to a vote, the more desirable practice is to postpone the question indefinitely. This is done by saying, "I move to postpone the question indefinitely." For all practical purposes this kills the motion.

SENDING A MOTION TO A COMMITTEE

Frequently items of business are presented for consideration which cannot or should not be disposed of immediately by the group. Further investigation and the securing of additional information may be desirable. The best course of action is to place the matter in the hands of a Committee - either a standing Committee or a special one appointed. If this arises, a member may rise, secure recognition from the chair and say, "I move to refer the question to the Program Committee" or "I move to refer the motion to a Committee of three to be appointed by the President with full power to act for the club."

A motion to refer to a Committee may include:

1. the manner of appointment
 - a. by the chair or
 - b. designated in the motion, e.g., "a Committee consisting of Bob, Jane, and Harry"
2. the number on the Committee and
3. the powers of the Committee
 - a. to investigate and report back
 - b. to investigate and prepare recommendations
 - c. to act for the entire group

If the motion to refer succeeds, the main motion is disposed of. It will reappear under the Committee Reports or Old Business of a future meeting if the Committee is to report back or prepare recommendations. If the motion fails, the main motion must still be acted upon. Remember, a motion to refer to a Committee must be made before the group takes any action on the main motion.

Skit 2

(Roles are in italics, lines are bolded, instructions to cast members are in regular type.)

CHAIR: The meeting will come to order.

ABLE: I move we buy a concession trailer to use at events as a fundraiser.

BAKER: I second the motion.

CHAIR: It has been moved and seconded that we buy a concession trailer to use at events as a fundraiser. Is there any discussion?

CONE: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: Mr. Cone.

CONE: I move that debate on this motion be limited to 1 minute per member.

DANE: I second the motion.

CHAIR: It has been moved and seconded that debate be limited to 1 minute per member.

EVERS: I rise to a parliamentary inquiry.

This right to Rise to a Parliamentary Inquiry is important! Don't allow yourself to be run over in a meeting just because you don't know what to do. You may interrupt a speaker to ask your question.

CHAIR: You may ask your question.

EVERS: May a motion to limit debate be debated and/or amended to change the length of time allocated?

CHAIR: The motion to limit debate may be debated, but only with regard to whether debate should be limited and the manner in which the debate should be limited. As such, a motion to amend the length of time would be in order. Is there any discussion? . . . (Silence) Seeing none, all in favor of the motion to limit debate to 1 minute per member say "Aye". Opposed say "No". (members vote "No") The No's have it; the motion to limit debate is defeated. Is there any further discussion?

CONE: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: Mr. Cone.

CONE: I move we table this motion to buy a concession trailer.

Members: (Silence)

CHAIR: Is there a second to the motion?

A Chair does not need to ask for a second, and probably should not if the motion is off the wall and unlikely to have any support. However, where support is likely, but the members are simply being lethargic, asking is proper.

DANE: I second the motion to table the motion.

CHAIR: It has been moved and seconded that the motion to buy a concession trailer be tabled.

Seeing as a motion to table is not debatable, we will proceed to vote. All in favor of tabling the motion to buy a concession trailer say “Aye”. Opposed say “No”. Motion carried. The motion is tabled.

ABLE: I move we take a 30 second recess.

BAKER. Second.

CHAIR: It is moved and seconded that we take a 30 second recess. Is there any discussion related to the length of the recess? . . . (Silence) Seeing none, all in favor of taking a 30 second recess say “Aye”. Opposed say “No”. Motion carried. We will stand in recess for 30 seconds.

CHAIR: The meeting will come back to order.

DANE: I move we refer the question of whether to buy a concession stand to a committee of 5 selected by the Chair, to report back its recommendations to the membership at our next regular meeting.

A motion to refer to a committee may stand as its own Main Motion, or may be made to refer a motion already being considered to a committee, as a motion to refer to a committee is a “subsidiary” motion.

CONE: Second.

CHAIR: It is moved and seconded that we refer the question of whether to buy a concession stand to a committee of 5 selected by the Chair, to report back its recommendations or findings or preliminary thoughts to the membership at our next regular meeting. The motion is now open to discussion. . . . (Silence) Seeing none, all in favor say “Aye”. Opposed say “No”. Motion carried.

BAKER: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: Mr. Baker.

BAKER: I move that we do not refer this to a committee.

CHAIR: Mr. Baker, the proper motion would be to reconsider the motion, which would be permissible if you voted on the prevailing side.

BAKER: Ah, forget it.

EVERS: I move we adjourn to Skit 3 in 10 minutes.

Note that a motion to reconsider, similar to a motion to take a motion off the table, must be made either at the same meeting or the next. If it is too late to reconsider, a motion to repeal or rescind would be in order.

ABLE: Second.

CHAIR: It is moved and seconded that we adjourn to Skit 3 in 10 minutes. Is there any discussion concerning the time to which to adjourn? . . . (Silence) Seeing none, all in favor say “Aye”. Opposed say “No”. Motion carried. The meeting is adjourned until 10 minutes from now.

Skit 3 – Theory

This skit will use the following procedures:

General Main Motion	To Rise to a Point of Order
To Take from the Table	To Appeal from the Decision of the Chair
To Reconsider	To Rise to a Question of Privilege

CONSIDERING A MOTION A SECOND TIME - THE MOTION TO RECONSIDER, TAKE FROM THE TABLE AND REPEAL OR RESCIND

You may want to try to secure a new vote on an item of business previously considered. The proper procedure is to say, "I move that we reconsider the question of ____." This motion may only be made by one who voted on the prevailing side, however. For strategy reasons, a member may vote with the prevailing side for the specific purpose of being in a position to move to reconsider later. The motion to reconsider may be made only on the same day or the next day. If the motion to reconsider passes, the motion is in exactly the same position it occupied before it was voted on the first time.

When it is too late to reconsider (and only then) but you want to make void a previous motion passed by the organization, a motion to repeal or rescind is in order. The proper form is to say, "I move to repeal the action of the (organization name) that _____". This motion requires a second, is amendable and debatable. The vote required is 2/3 of those present or the majority of the entire membership unless written notice was sent out prior to the meeting, in which case a simple majority is all that is needed. Of course this motion cannot be made if the original motion has caused something to be done which cannot be undone.

ENFORCING THE RULES - THE POINT OF ORDER AND THE APPEAL

It is the duty of the President to enforce the parliamentary procedure rules. When a member is out of order, the President must (1) tactfully tell the member he is out of order, (2) tell why he is out of order, and (3) tell the assembly what is in order. "Bill, your new motion is out of order as there already is a motion on the floor. Discussion on the first motion is now in order."

If the President goofs or overlooks a violation of the rules, a member may bring this to the President's attention by rising, without getting recognition from the Chair and stating, "I rise to a point of order."

If a member is not satisfied by the President's ruling, the member may appeal the decision. The member rises without securing recognition from the Chair and says, "I appeal from the decision of the Chair." The appeal must be seconded but is not debatable. After explaining his decision, the President says, "Those who agree with the decision of the Chair, please raise their right hands. Those who do not agree with the decision of the chair, please raise their right hands." The President may vote to create a tie which would sustain the decision.

(Note: if a member questions the correctness of the announcement of a vote he does not appeal but should call for a division.)

Skit 3

(Roles are in italics, lines are bolded, instructions to cast members are in regular type.)

CHAIR: The meeting will come to order.

ABLE: I move that we take off the table the motion that we buy a concession trailer to use at events as a fundraiser.

BAKER: I second the motion.

CHAIR: It has been moved and seconded to take off the table the motion that we buy a concession trailer to use at events as a fundraiser. Seeing as a motion to take off the table is not debatable, we will proceed to vote. All in favor of taking the motion off the table say “Aye”. Opposed say “No”. The Ayes have it. We will now consider the motion that we buy a concession trailer to use at events as a fundraiser. Is there any discussion?

EVERS: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR: Mr. Evers.

Note that typically the maker of the motion has the right to speak first in discussion, with the person seconding the motion speaking second. When a motion to take a motion off the table is passed, the discussion on the main motion proceeds as it was prior to the earlier motion to table being passed. Here, it would still probably be best for the maker of the motion to take the motion off the table to be allowed to speak first.

EVERS: As chairman of the committee you appointed to look into this matter, I can report that we unanimously agreed that this would be a good idea.

CHAIR: Is there any further discussion? . . . If not, all in favor of our buying a concession trailer to use at events as a fundraiser say “Aye”. Opposed say “No”. The Ayes have it. Motion carried.

CHAIR: Are there details that we should consider further to implement this motion? Such as cost, type of concession trailer, etc.?

CONE: I move to reconsider the motion to buy a concession trailer.

DANE: Second.

BAKER: I rise to a point of order.

CHAIR: State your point.

BAKER: Cone did not vote on the prevailing side.

Where the Chair sees important business has not been attended to, the Chair may raise questions, without it being a breach of the Chair’s duty to be impartial.

Rising to a point of order may interrupt another speaker, does not require a second and is not debatable. The Chair makes a ruling, subject to being overruled by the members through an Appeal for the Decision of the Chair.

CHAIR: It does not matter. I am going to allow the motion anyway.

ABLE: I appeal from the decision of the Chair.

EVERS: I second the appeal.

An Appeal from the Decision of the Chair does require a second and debate may occur with regard to the appropriateness of the parliamentary ruling made by the Chair. And, yes, Chairs can make mistakes when they don’t refer to the chart.

CHAIR: I did not think it made a difference if Cone voted for the prevailing side or not. Those who agree with the decision of the chair raise your hand. (no one) Those who do not agree with the decision of the chair raise your hand. (everyone) The majority of the members do not agree with the decision of the chair. The decision is reversed. Mr. Cone, your motion to reconsider the

motion to buy a concession trailer is not in order. If someone else who voted for the motion wishes to move to reconsider, that would be in order. (Silence)

***DANE:* I rise to a question of privilege.**

***CHAIR:* State your question.**

***DANE:* Could we rearrange the chairs so we could better see each other in our discussion and so we can hear each other better?**

***CHAIR:* If there is no objection, let's do it.**

...

Rising to a question of privilege may interrupt another speaker, does not require a second, is not debatable, and the Chair makes a decision (subject, of course, to an Appeal from the Decision of the Chair).