

The Language of Parliamentary Procedure

A. THE ORDER OF BUSINESS – The following is the standard order in which a meeting is conducted:

1. Calling the meeting to order
2. Reading, and approving or correcting the minutes of the previous meeting
3. Hearing reports of the officers of the organization
4. Hearing reports of various committees
5. Discussing unfinished business
6. Discussing new business
7. Presenting the program of the day
8. Adjourning the meeting

B. MAIN MOTION – is a new item brought up for discussion and decision. A motion is always debatable after it has been *moved* and *seconded*. Only one main motion may be discussed at a time.

C. AMENDMENT – can change the wording or intent of a main motion. Like the main motion, it must be moved and seconded before it can be discussed. The chairman always calls for a vote on the amendment before putting the main motion to a vote.

D. TABLING A MOTION – is a means of discontinuing discussion of a main motion. A motion to “table” may be made at any time during the discussion of a main motion.

E. MOVING THE PREVIOUS QUESTION – is a motion to stop the debate and bring the main motion to a vote. Members call for the “question” and the chairman calls for the vote. This move requires a two-thirds majority if the chairman is in doubt as to the wish of the meeting. Otherwise the chairman uses his judgment to decide whether the debate has lasted long enough.

F. SECONDING A MOTION – must be done before a group may discuss a motion. If a motion is not seconded, it cannot be considered or debated.

G. RISING TO A QUESTION OF INFORMATION – Any member may raise his hand and rise to a question of information, that is, ask for clarification of wording or facts. A question of information must be answered promptly by the chairman.

H. REFERRING TO A COMMITTEE – Often a motion requires further study before members are willing to vote on it. In such a situation, a motion to refer to a committee appointed by the chairman is in order.

I. ADJOURNING THE MEETING – The motion to adjourn needs no seconder, and, if passed, ends the meeting. No official business may be conducted once the motion to adjourn has been carried. A motion to adjourn is always in order.