

# PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

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TO PARTICIPATE EFFECTIVELY IN THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING, each voting member needs to be familiar with the fundamental rules of parliamentary procedure. These rules enable the members to transact business with expediency and efficiency, with the least possible friction, and in a manner fair to all. The minority, as well as the majority, are enabled to express their views, to make motions, and to vote.

The parliamentary rules followed by the Girl Scouts–Arizona Cactus–Pine Council, Inc. wherever applicable and not inconsistent with our Constitution, Bylaws, and/or adopted special rules of order, are Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised.

## **RULES OF DEBATE**

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Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised contains the following rules of debate that will be enforced during business meetings.

- » All debate must be relevant to the question immediately before our Council.
- » Only registered Voting Members of the Council who are present in person at the Annual Council Meeting may introduce motions, debate, and vote.

## **MAIN MOTIONS**

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A main motion introduces a new item of business. Until this is disposed of, no other main motion may be considered, as there can only be one main motion pending at a time. The making of a motion comes first and any discussion follows.

The steps relating to obtaining the floor and handling a motion are as follows:

1. The Voting Member seeks recognition at a microphone as described under the flash card system.
2. The Chair of the meeting states the microphone number to recognize the speaker.
3. The speaker states her/his name and Governing Area or position, and introduces the motion. This motion is generally worded, “**Name..., Governing Area..., I move that ...**”
4. Any member may second the motion if needed by calling out, “**second the motion.**” (Committee motions, proposals, and amendments contained in the voting member mailing do not require a second.)
5. The Chair states the motion by repeating it.
6. The Chair then asks for discussion, giving the maker of the motion the first opportunity to speak. (Thereafter, insofar as possible, the Chair uses the flash card system and alternates between those in favor and those against.)

A member may, during the discussion, after being recognized by the Chair, introduce a subsidiary, incidental, or privileged motion. The discussion at all times must relate to the immediate pending question. After the discussion, or as it appears appropriate, the Chair asks, “**Are you ready for the question/motion to be put to a vote?**”

- » The Chair repeats the question/motion and calls for the affirmative vote, then calls for the negative vote.
- » The Chair announces the result of the vote. If the vote is on any motion made subsequent to the main motion, the discussion is directed to the next ranking motion until there has been a decision concerning the main motion.

**— NOTE —**

NO amendments or revisions to the Council Bylaws can be brought forth in a motion at the Annual Council Meeting unless previously mailed with the notice of the meeting. See Article XIII of the Bylaws.

## **SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS**

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Subsidiary motions are those that modify, delay, or expedite action on the main motion. Such motions are in order while the main motion, or a motion of lower rank, is still pending (not yet decided), and must be voted on before the main motion. Subsidiary motions have a definite order of precedence from the lowest to the highest. The lowest in rank yields to motions that are higher in rank. If several subsidiary motions are pending at one time, the vote is taken first on the motion with the highest rank, then on the motion next lower in rank, and so on. The seven subsidiary motions are as follows: (Number 1 is the lowest and Number 7 is the highest in rank.)

- 1. POSTPONE INDEFINITELY.** The purpose is to indirectly reject, or kill, the main motion. This motion is generally worded, **“I move to postpone indefinitely the motion that...”** It requires a second, is debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a majority vote. Only an affirmative vote can be reconsidered.
- 2. AMEND.** Amend is used to change the wording of a motion. This motion is generally worded, **“I move to amend the motion by ... (inserting, adding, striking out, striking out and inserting, or substituting) ...”**  
An amendment to the main motion is called a primary amendment. An amendment to the primary amendment is called a secondary amendment. Only those two degrees of amendment are permitted. A primary amendment must relate to the main motion. A secondary amendment must relate to the primary amendment. Only one primary amendment at a time, or one secondary amendment at a time, can be pending. As soon as an amendment is disposed of by vote, another of the same degree is in order.
- 3. REFER TO COMMITTEE.** The purpose of this motion is to get more information or to get the main motion into more satisfactory form. This motion is generally worded, **“I move that the motion be referred to the ... committee,”** or **“I move to refer the motion...(description)... to a committee of ...(number)... appointed by the President to investigate ...(description)... and to report back at the next meeting.”** (Within the present Annual Council Meeting session, it requires a second, is debatable, can be amended, requires a majority vote, and cannot be reconsidered after the committee has taken up the subject.)
- 4. POSTPONE DEFINITELY.** This motion is used to delay action on the pending question until a definite time, to provide more time for the members to consider the issue. This motion is generally worded, **“I move that the question be postponed to ...(time)...”** In convention, the time to which the question is postponed must be within the present session. It requires a second, is debatable, can be amended, requires a majority vote, and can be reconsidered.
- 5. LIMIT OF EXTEND DEBATE.** It is sometimes desirable to limit or extend the time a question may be discussed. The purpose of this motion is to change the regular limits of debate. This motion is generally worded, **“I move that the debate on the pending motion be limited to...”** or **“be extended to...”** This motion can be applied to one or more pending motions. It requires a second, cannot be debated, can be amended, requires a two-thirds vote, and can be reconsidered.
- 6. PREVIOUS QUESTION.** The object of this motion is to close debate at once. This motion is generally worded, **“I move the previous question.”** This motion requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, requires a two-thirds vote, and cannot be reconsidered after the vote is taken. If adopted, discussion and amendments are halted, and the vote is taken immediately on the pending motion or on **ALL** pending motions if so stated in the motion.
- 7. LAY ON THE TABLE.** The object of this motion is to delay action temporarily, usually in order to attend to more urgent business. This motion is generally worded, **“I move to lay the question on the table.”** It requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, requires a majority vote, and cannot be reconsidered.

## INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

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Incidental motions are pertinent to, take precedence over, and must be decided before the pending question, and may originate out of business that has just been pending. Some incidental motions, and those generally used during the Annual Council Meeting session, are as follows:

- » **POINT OF ORDER.** This motion is used to call attention to a breach of the rules, does not require a second, and can even interrupt a speaker. A point of order motion must be made at the time the breach occurs. This motion is generally worded, **“I rise to a point of order.”** The Chair asks that the point be stated and the member replies. The Chair then decides the point.

**— NOTE —**

*(Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised)*

In ordinary meetings it is undesirable to raise points of order on minor irregularities of a purely technical character if it is clear that no one's rights are being infringed upon, and no real harm is being done to the proper transaction of business.

- » **APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR.** An appeal can be made from a decision of the Chair but only at the time the ruling is made. A second is required. This motion is generally worded, **“I appeal from the decision of the Chair.”** The Chair states the point at issue. An appeal is debatable when the pending question is debatable. The Chair puts the question as, “Shall the decision of the Chair be sustained?” A majority vote or a tie vote sustains (keeps in effect) the Chair. There is no appeal from the decision of the assembly.
- » **DIVISION OF A QUESTION.** This motion is made to divide a question and can be applied only to main motions and amendments. If a motion has several parts, each one capable of standing alone if the others are taken away, it can be divided into two or more parts. Then, each part is voted on separately. The exact method of division must be specified in the motion. This motion is generally worded, **“I move that the question be divided into...”** The motion to divide requires a second, is not debatable, may be amended, requires a majority vote, and cannot be reconsidered.
- » **DIVISION OF THE ASSEMBLY.** After the Chair has announced the result of a vote (taken by voice or by a show of hands), a member who does not agree, may, without obtaining the floor, say, **“I call for a division.”** The Chair then takes the vote again, asking the affirmative and then the negative to stand. This does not require a second, cannot be debated, amended, or reconsidered. A majority vote is required to order the vote to be recounted or taken by ballot.
- » **PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY.** When a member wants information about the use or effect of a motion, parliamentary procedure, or law, the member says, **“I rise to a parliamentary inquiry.”** The Chair answers the inquiry. The inquiry should be pertinent to the pending business.
- » **POINT OF INFORMATION.** A request for information must be pertinent to the pending business. This motion is generally worded, **“I rise to a point of information.”** If information is desired of the speaker instead of the Chair, the motion would generally be worded, **“I would like to ask the speaker a question.”** All remarks, questions asked, and answers given should be addressed through the Chair, as members cannot directly address each other in assembly. If the speaker consents to answer, the time consumed is taken out of the speaker's time. A point of information must always be stated in the form of a question. It cannot be used as a means of debate.

## PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

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Privileged motions, although not related to the pending question, need special attention and take precedence over other motions. The motion most likely to be needed is a Raise a Question of Privilege motion.

Questions of privilege concern the rights and privileges of the assembly or of a member, such as:

- » A report being read that cannot be heard
- » A speaker who cannot be heard
- » Discomfort of members with respect to heating, lighting, ventilation, seating, noise disturbances, etcetera

- » The conduct of any individual present
- » The accuracy of published reports

This motion is generally worded, “I rise to a question of privilege affecting the assembly,” or “I rise to a question of personal privilege.” It does not require a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and is decided by the Chair. If the question of privilege requires immediate attention, i.e., a speaker cannot be heard, the member may interrupt the speaker. If the question does not require immediate attention, the member cannot interrupt the speaker.

## **MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY**

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- » **TAKE FROM THE TABLE.** This motion is used to bring a tabled question back before the assembly. This motion is generally worded, “I move to take from the table the question ...” It requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, requires a majority vote, and cannot be reconsidered.
- » **RECONSIDER.** The purpose of this motion is to bring a question already acted upon before the assembly again so that the vote may be changed. This motion is generally worded, “I move to reconsider the vote on ...” It requires a second, is debatable when the motion reconsidered is debatable, cannot be amended, requires a majority vote, and cannot be reconsidered. This motion must be made by a Voting Member who voted with the prevailing side. It must be made the **same day, or next succeeding business day, as the vote to be reconsidered was taken.**
- » **RESCIND.** When an assembly wishes to annul action previously taken and it is too late to reconsider the vote, use the motion to rescind. Any Voting Member may make this motion. There is no time limit (provided no subsequent action or implementation has occurred). This motion is generally worded, “**I move to rescind the action on the motion ...**” It requires a second, is debatable, can be amended, and requires a two-thirds vote (or a majority vote if notice of rescinding was given at the previous meeting). An affirmative vote (to rescind) cannot be reconsidered.

## **USE OF GENERAL CONSENT**

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To expedite business, the presiding officer may sometimes use the procedure of “general consent” – in cases where there seems to be no opposition in routine business matters, on questions of little importance, where discussion has indicated little or no opposition to the issue.

The Chair asks, “Is there any objection to ...?” Then, if there is no objection, the Chair announces the result by saying, “There being no objection, ... will be done,” or “... is approved by general consent.” If one member objects to the actions being taken in this manner, the vote must be put in the usual formal way because a single objection defeats a request for general consent.

**— NOTE —**

*(Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised)*

Under these conditions, the method of general consent can be used either to adopt a motion without the steps of stating the question and putting the motion to a formal vote, or it can be used to take action without even the formality of a motion.

**— NOTE —**

*(Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised)*

No member should hesitate to object if he feels it is desirable to do so but should not object merely for dilatory purposes.