

Robert's Rules of Order Frequently Asked Questions

What is parliamentary procedure and what can it do for your chapter?

Parliamentary procedure is simply a system of conducting business when working in a group. In other words, an organized system that allows a group of people to come together and make a decision. Parliamentary procedure helps boards to stay focused, make better, more logical decisions and have the advantage having many minds working together to use a systematic approach to problem-solving.

What is a quorum?

Per the NACE chapter bylaws, "not less than a majority of the directors in office shall constitute a quorum." This is important as a quorum is necessary to conduct a board meeting where conversations and decisions are made. If you are in a meeting where no quorum is present, the business discussed, motions and voting are invalid.

Who's in charge of running the board meeting?

Per the bylaws, "the President shall serve as the Chair of the Board of Directors and preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors." In the event the president is unable to attend the meeting, the duty falls to the first vice president.

What is the standard order of business for a board meeting?

Chapters may have different ways of conducting their board meetings but at minimum, the order of business at a board meeting should cover:

- Reading and Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees
- Reports of Special (Select or Ad Hoc) Committees
- Special Orders
- Unfinished Business and General Orders*
- New Business

What should we NOT include in our meeting minutes?

Minutes are the written record of the proceedings of the board's deliberations. They are a record of what was done, not what was discussed. Once minutes are accepted by the membership, they become the official record of the meeting. Items that should *not* be included in the meetings minutes:

- The opinion or interpretation of the secretary/treasurer.
- Judgmental phrases such as "heated debate" or "valuable comment."
- Discussion. Remember the minutes are a record of what was done (motions, amendments, action items, etc.) and not what was *said* at the meeting.
- Motions that were withdrawn
- Name of person who second a motion
- Flowery language
- Reports in detail

What is a motion, how do I make a motion?

A motion is a proposal on which a group takes a special action or stand. There are several types of motions to help boards complete their work. The following is simplistic version of how a motion plays out.

- A member seeks recognition for the floor
- Chairman recognizes the member (member obtains the floor)
- Member makes a motion
- Another member seconds the motion
- Chairman **states** the question
- Debate (amendment and secondary motions)
- Chairman **puts** the question to a vote
- Chairman announces the result of the vote

Things to remember:

- The board room is to be used as a forum to conduct the business of the chapter. Committee work should be conducted with the committee. Board members should recognize when committee work is being discussed and request the conversation cease.
- The board room is where chapter leaders discuss the business of the chapter. Personal business/relationships should not be a subject of discussion during board meetings.
- If you are unable to attend the board meeting (with an excused absence) you are still responsible for proving a report for the board meeting.