

Parliamentary Procedure- Robert's Rules

This is a continuation of our article from last week. If you missed it, please go to our website at www.sentrymgt.com and look in the lower right hand corner. You can read it in its entirety.

We were talking about motions. Motions are a way to present a proposal and to introduce discussion on a topic or issue on which the Board will make a decision. Here is what happens when you list a motion on the agenda.

- 1.You obtain the floor and present your motion - "I move that we approve the proposed contract with ABC Landscaping Services as presented, for the maintenance of our common areas for the period of the next year beginning October 1."
- 2.You wait for a Second - Another member will say, "I second the motion," or the Chair will call for a second. If there is no second, your motion will not be considered.
- 3.At this point the Chair states your motion - "It is moved and seconded that we approve the contract by ABC Landscaping." At this time any debate or discussion can occur. If there are no questions or debate, a vote can occur.
- 4.The Chair puts the question - The Chair asks, "Are you ready for the question*?" If there is no more debate or if a motion to stop debate is adopted, the question is called and a vote is taken. The Chair would then announce the results.

*A question (motion) is pending when it has been stated by the Chair, but not yet voted on.

There are many kinds of motions and actions. Here are some questions relating to Motions:

- 1.Is it in Order? - Your motion must relate to the business at hand and be presented at the right time. It must not be obstructive, frivolous, or against the bylaws.

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2. May I interrupt the speaker? - Some motions are so important that the speaker may be interrupted to make them. The original speaker regains the floor after the interruption has been attended to.

3. Do I need a Second? - Usually, yes. A Second indicates that another member would like to consider your motion. It prevents spending time on a question that interests only one person.

4. Is it debatable? - Parliamentary procedure guards the right to free and full debate on most motions. However, some subsidiary, privileged, and incidental motions are not debatable.

5. Can it be amended? - Some motions can be changed by striking out or inserting wording, or both. Amendments must relate to the subject as presented in the main motion.

6. What vote is needed? - Most require only a majority vote of the members present.

So, ultimately parliamentary procedure helps get things done. Make motions that are in order. Obtain the floor properly. Speak clearly and concisely. Obey the rules of debate.

And most of all, be courteous!