PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES OVERVIEW

Parliamentary procedure is a format for conducting a meeting in an orderly manner. Whenever people hold a meeting, they need rules to help them accomplish their purpose. The rules of parliamentary procedure help the chairperson keep order during a meeting.

Before a group becomes a permanent organization, it should have 1) a Constitution and 2) a set of By-Laws. A Constitution states the basic principles and general structure of the organization and the By-Laws tell the members how to carry out the provisions of the Constitution.

Electing Officers:
Most organizations elect officers once a year. The most common method is to have the presiding officer declare, "Nominations are in order." Nominations are then accepted from the floor and voted on. Nominations do not need a second. A motion to have nominations cease and cast a unanimous ballot for “John Doe” does require a second.

Business Meetings:
A business meeting officially begins when the presiding officer calls the group to order. This is done when a quorum (minimum number of members) is present. This number may be a majority or can be decided in the constitution or by-laws.

Order of Business:
In a well-organized meeting, a standard series of steps follows the call to order.

1. Secretary reads the minutes of the last meeting.
2. Treasurer's Report is given.
3. Committee Reports
4. Unfinished Business
5. New Business
6. Miscellaneous matter - announcements, requests, etc.
7. Meeting is adjourned by majority vote.

Secretary's Minutes:
The minutes should be an accurate record of all the organization's activities. A running account of all business matters and actions is taken and reported. The minutes do not summarize the discussions that take place, but simply state actions proposed and what the organization decided to do about each one. The secretary keeps the minutes in a permanent record book. Each set of minutes begins with the date and place of meeting, name of presiding officer and a list of members present.

Motion:
A motion is a brief precise statement of a proposed action made by a member of the group. The motion must be seconded by another member of the group before discussion of the motion can take place. Once the motion is made and seconded, the motion can be debated by any of the group members. If the members want to amend the motion, they must propose and pass a new motion amending the original. They must then debate the original motion as amended. The members may postpone action on a motion by voting to, "Table the motion." Voting on motions takes place when there are no more requests to speak or after debate has ended. The motion is repeated by the presiding officer or read from the secretary's minutes and voted on in a voice call vote.

Committees:
Committees are smaller groups organized from the membership to do jobs that cannot be done by the entire membership at regular meetings.