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Parliamentary Procedures Glossary

Following parliamentary procedures to conduct meetings ensures that everyone is heard and that consensus is reached when making decisions. Management teams, policy groups and governing bodies can use this resource as a reference to understanding terms used when following parliamentary procedures.

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ABEYANCE. Temporary inactivity, cessation, or suspension, to withhold action.

ABSENTEE VOTING. Voting by mail or proxy for a member who is absent.

ABSOLUTE MAJORITY. A majority vote of an organization's entire membership at a meeting.

ABSTAIN. To publicly refrain from voting usually because of a conflict of interest.

ABSURD MOTION. A dilatory or frivolous motion used to delay action.

ACCEPT. To approve or adopt a statement, report, or motion.

ACCLAMATION. Enthusiastic approval by a voice vote.

ACCREDIT. To certify as genuine, to authorize or sanction.

ADDRESSING THE CHAIR. Using the correct title (Mr. or Madam Chairman or President) when seeking recognition from the person who is presiding.

AD HOC COMMITTEE. (Ad hoc is a Latin term meaning "for this case alone") See **SPECIAL COMMITTEE.**

ADHERE. To be attached to and dependent on. An example would be a pending amendment that is adhered to the motion to which it is applied.

ADJOURN. A privileged motion to officially close a meeting. A second is required and a majority vote is required to adopt it. If a time is not set, it is an unqualified adjournment and debate is not allowed even if it is made while no question is pending. It is debatable and amendable if proposed when no motion is pending (as a main motion) with the time for adjournment (qualified). A speaker may not be interrupted to propose this motion.

ADJOURNED MEETING. A meeting which is a continuation of a preceding meeting. Sometimes called a "continued meeting."

ADJOURN SINE DIE. (Sine die is a Latin term meaning "without day") Meetings may adjourn "sine die," which means that no date is set for a future meeting.

ADOPT. Pass, accept, or agree to by a vote.

AFFIRMATIVE VOTE. The "yes" vote supporting a stated motion. It is always taken before the negative vote.

AGENDA. The sequence of items for a meeting based on the organization's Order of Business. A typical agenda would be: 1) Call to order and roll call; 2) Reading and approval of minutes; 3) Reports of officers, boards, and standing committees; 4) Reports of special committees; 5) Special orders; 6) Unfinished business and general orders; 7) New business; 8) Announcements; 9) Program; 10) Adjournment.

ALTERNATE. A member authorized to substitute for another member.

AMENDABLE. A motion that may be amended.

AMENDING BY ADDING. Amending by adding a word or phrase at the end of a motion or resolution.

AMENDING BY INSERTING. Amending by placing a word or phrase between words of a motion or resolution.

AMENDING BY STRIKING OUT. Amending by deleting a word or phrase in a motion or resolution.

AMENDING BY STRIKING OUT AND INSERTING. Amending by deleting a word or phrase in a motion or resolution and replacing it with another word or phrase.

AMENDING BY SUBSTITUTING. Amending by striking out an entire paragraph of one or more sentences, or an entire motion or resolution or section thereof, and replacing it with a new paragraph, motion, or section.

AMENDMENT. A change proposed in a motion by altering it. An amendment to a main motion is called a primary or first degree amendment. An amendment to an amendment is called a secondary amendment or a second degree amendment. An amendment to a secondary amendment is not allowed due to possible procedural complications. This subsidiary motion requires a second, is debatable if the motion to which it is applied is debatable, and requires a majority vote to be adopted. A speaker may not be interrupted to propose this motion.

AMEND SOMETHING PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED. A motion used to change a previous motion or action. The motion must be seconded, and debate and amendments are allowed. It requires a two-thirds vote to be adopted. If previous notice is given, a majority vote is required. Debate may go

into the motion to which it is applied. If notice is not given, a majority of the entire membership must vote in favor of the motion in order for it to be adopted. A speaker may not be interrupted to propose this motion. Can only be moved when no other motion is pending.

ANNOUNCING THE VOTE. Declaration by the chair of the vote results.

ANNOUNCEMENT. Written or verbal notice.

ANNUAL MEETING. A yearly meeting generally used to elect officers and to hear annual reports of committees and officers.

ANNUL. To repeal, rescind, or render void.

APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR. A request that the assembly vote to sustain or reject a decision made by the presiding officer. The appeal must be made at the time of the chair's ruling and may interrupt the chair. This motion cannot be debated if the pending question is undebatable (the chair may always state the reasons for the ruling), if made during a division of the assembly, if applied to transgression of the rules of speaking, indecorum, or priority of business. It must be seconded but is not amendable. A tie vote sustains the decision of the chair.

APPLY. A motion that is used to change, dispose of, or affect the first motion.

APPOINT. To name or assign a person.

APPROVE. To agree to, accept, adopt, or ratify.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Acceptance of the secretary's record of a meeting either by unanimous (general) consent or a vote of the members.

ARTICLES. The parts of a constitution or bylaws. The usual nine articles include; Name, Object, Members, Officers, Meetings, Executive Board, Committees, Parliamentary Authority, and Amendment of Bylaws. The mnemonic "NO MOME CPA" (the first letter of each article) is often used to remember them. An easy way to remember the mnemonic is to say "No Mommy, see Pa."

ASSEMBLY. A body of people assembled for the transaction of business.

ASSESSMENT. An authorized fee imposed upon members.

AUDIT. Examination of an organization's financial records.

AUSTRALIAN BALLOT. A secret ballot that lists all candidates for an office.

AYE. An affirmative vote. A voice vote meaning "yes." Pronounced as "I" or "Eye."

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BALANCE. In bookkeeping, equal total sums on the two sides of an account; the amount by which one side is greater than the other. Any remainder.

BALLOT. A piece of paper on which a member writes or marks a choice in an election or vote. A secret vote or method of voting.

BLANKS, FILLING. A technique of decision-making regarding a motion when many courses of action are possible. An exact amount, a name, a date, or some other specific information is left blank.

BOARD (OF TRUSTEES, DIRECTORS, MANAGERS). A group of members of an organization created by, and authorized to act for, the organization which determines its duties and powers.

BOND OR BONDING. The insuring of an officer of an organization (usually the one who handles the funds) to secure repayment of money in case of financial loss to the organization.

BRAINSTORMING. A group procedure that is used to stimulate ideas on a problem by encouraging a free flow of ideas.

BUDGET. An itemized estimate of income and disbursements.

BUSINESS. Important matters brought before an assembly for action.

BYLAWS. Specific rules related to structure and administration that an organization makes for itself. Elaborations of the constitution.

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CALL FOR THE ORDERS OF THE DAY. A motion used to demand a return to the scheduled order of business of the assembly. A speaker may be interrupted to propose this motion. The privileged motion does not need a second, is not debatable or amendable, and is enforced at the discretion of the chair, who *may* put it to a vote. A two-thirds vote of the assembly sets aside the orders of the day. A member of the assembly can also propose to set aside this motion by moving "that the time for considering the pending question be extended" for a specific amount of time. This motion does not need a second, is undebatable, and requires a two-thirds minimum affirmative vote for adoption.

CALL OF THE MEETING. The official notice of a special meeting given to all members of an assembly.

CALL TO ORDER. An announcement by the presiding officer to convene a meeting.

CALLED MEETING. A special meeting.

CALLING A MEMBER TO ORDER. An order from the presiding officer to a member to be seated because he/she is disorderly or has violated a rule related to decorum of debate.

CANDIDATE. One who is selected as a contender for, or who seeks, an office.

CARRIED. Adopted, accepted.

CAUCUS. A meeting to decide action towards a motion or event.

CENSURE. A reprimand or admonition; to find fault.

CHAIR. Same as **CHAIRMAN**. Also refers to the station from which the presiding officer presides. The chair should always refer to herself or himself as "the Chair," not as "I."

CHAIRMAN. A generic title that refers to either a man or woman. The presiding officer who conducts a meeting; the **CHAIR**.

CHAIRPERSON. A title used by some organizations to refer to the presiding officer. It should only be used when specified in the bylaws.

CHALLENGING A VOTE. Objecting to a vote when the member who voted does not have the right to vote.

CHARTER. A legal document which includes the name, object, and other required information of a society.

CHARTER MEMBERS. The members of an organization who signed the permanent record of organization.

CLASSES OF MOTIONS. There are five classes of motions: Main motions (original and incidental), subsidiary motions, privileged motions, incidental motions, and motions that bring a question again before the assembly. Subsidiary, privileged, and incidental motions are also called **SECONDARY MOTIONS**.

CLERK. A member who makes a record of what is done at a meeting; see **SECRETARY**.

CLOTURE. A motion used by the United States Senate to close debate.

COMMIT or Refer. To refer a motion to a committee. The subsidiary motion must be seconded, is debatable and may be amended by giving the committee instructions. If a special committee is involved, the motion should state the number of committee members, their method of selection or their names. Instructions such as when they are to report and if they have "full power to act" can also be included. The presiding officer should also name the committee chairman, who is usually the first member named. When debating the referral, it is not allowed to discuss the merits of the main motion. A speaker may not be interrupted to propose this motion. The motion to Commit or Refer can be reconsidered if the committee has not begun consideration of the question.

COMMITTEE. One or more members appointed or elected to complete a specific task.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE. The whole assembly acts as a committee to consider a matter informally. This motion requires a second, and a majority vote, is debatable, and may not interrupt a speaker. A new chairman is appointed and the regular presiding officer leaves the chair.

CON. Against; on the negative side; as, to argue pro and *con*.

CONFERENCE. A meeting held for discussion and consultation.

CONSENT. Agreement.

CONSENT CALENDAR. The routine parts of the agenda which are approved without discussion or dissent.

CONSIDER. To discuss and decide upon a pending motion with or without debate.

CONSIDER BY SERIATIM. An incidental motion used to consider a motion by paragraph. It is not in order when another member has the floor. It must be seconded, is undebatable, amendable, requires a majority vote to be adopted and may not be reconsidered.

CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTION. Debate by the assembly after the presiding officer has stated the question (motion).

CONSTITUTION. As distinguished from bylaws, the governing document of the parent organization which all subordinate organizations must follow.

CONVENE. To meet together or to be summoned to a meeting. To open a meeting or convention.

CONVENTION. An assembly of delegates usually chosen for one session.

CONVENTION RULES. Rules that are determined by a convention's delegates to provide an orderly procedure to achieve business during a convention. A two-thirds vote is needed to adopt convention rules or to effect any change in the rules after they have been adopted.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY. The officer who is responsible for providing the general correspondence and the meeting notices of the organization.

CREDENTIALS. A document which shows that a person is authorized to be a delegate or representative.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE. The convention committee that registers and verifies the credentials of the delegates, and presents a list of the registered delegates to the convention.

CURATOR. An individual who serves as a custodian of the objects of value belonging to an organization.

CUSTOM. Uniform practice, long established.

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DAIS. A platform raised above the floor of a hall or a large room.

DEBATABLE. May be discussed. That which is open for discussion.

DEBATE. Discussion or argument after the chair has stated a motion that is debatable.

DECISION. A determination or ruling by the presiding officer or the assembly.

DECORUM. To conduct oneself in a proper manner. Examples related to debate would be to refrain from attacking someone's motives, addressing all comments through the chair, avoiding use of members' names, avoid speaking against your own motion, and refraining from disturbing the assembly.

DEFEATED MOTION. A motion that has been voted on and lost (not passed).

DEFER ACTION. To delay action on a motion by the use of certain motions. Examples are to postpone, commit, and lay on the table.

DELEGATE. A member acting as a representative and voting for an organization.

DELEGATION OF DUTY. An assignment of the authority of one person or group to another person or group.

DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLY. A group of persons which meets to determine--by full and free debate--action to be taken by the whole group.

DEMAND. Any official request for a parliamentary action that a member has the right to assert by himself.

DEMOCRATIC. Based upon the principles of democracy; a society where government by the people is characterized by the principles of political or social equality for all, and identified by the concept that majority rules.

DILATORY MOTION. A motion made for the purpose of delaying or obstructing the business of a meeting or confusing the objectives of a meeting. Examples would be for one or more members to call a division when there is no reasonable doubt on the results of the voice vote, and rise to a point of order, or move to adjourn with the intent to obstruct or delay business.

DISBURSEMENT. The paying out of funds.

DISCHARGE A COMMITTEE. A motion to relieve a committee from the task it was assigned and return it to the assembly. The motion must be seconded, debate is allowed, and it may be amended. For adoption, it requires a two-thirds vote, or a majority vote with notice, or a majority vote of the entire membership if notice is not given. A speaker may not be interrupted to propose this motion. Debate may go into the merits of the question in the hands of the committee. Can only be moved when no other motion is pending.

DISCUSSION. The debate that follows after the chair has stated a debatable motion.

DISPENSE WITH THE MINUTES. To read the minutes at a later time than indicated in the agenda.

DISPOSE OF. To remove a motion from consideration by voting to adopt, reject, postpone, refer, or to table it.

DISPOSITION OF A MOTION. The action taken on a motion.

DISQUALIFY. To declare ineligible.

DIVISION OF THE ASSEMBLY. The motion that calls for a rising vote. It may be made between the time the negative vote has been cast and until the presiding officer states the question on another motion. A speaker may be interrupted, and it can be made without obtaining the floor by saying "Division!" A second is not required and debate and amendments are not allowed. It also does not require a vote. The chairman may also take a rising, counted vote. If a member wishes a rising, counted vote, a motion must be made, seconded, and adopted by a majority vote. The number of votes on both sides should be recorded in the minutes when a count is ordered or a vote is by ballot. Small groups may obtain a more accurate vote by a show of hands.

DIVISION OF A QUESTION. To separate a motion so that different parts may be considered individually. Each part must be able to stand separately as a complete motion after the division. The incidental motion must be seconded, is not debatable or amendable, and requires a majority vote to be adopted. A speaker may not be interrupted to propose this motion.

DOCUMENTS. Association documents may include bylaws, articles of incorporation, covenants and restrictions, and others as state statutes specify.

DOORKEEPER. A member who determines if individuals may attend a meeting by checking credentials and eligibility of persons entering a meeting.

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ELECTION. The selection of a person or persons by vote.

EN BLOC. (En bloc is a French term meaning "in a lump; as a whole") As a whole or group.

ENTERTAIN A MOTION. A request by the presiding officer for a formal motion from the assembly on a topic which has been discussed.

EXECUTIVE BOARD. Elected or appointed members who do the work for the membership between its meetings and exercise routine management of the organization as defined in the bylaws.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. A committee generally made up of an organization's officers as described in the bylaws.

EXECUTIVE SESSION. A meeting at which the proceedings are secret. Usually only designated members and guests are allowed to attend. A member may rise to a question of privilege to propose a motion to go into executive session. It requires a majority vote to be adopted.

EXHAUSTED. Means that any unexecuted part of the motion is no longer in effect after a specific time.

EX OFFICIO. "From the office" or "by virtue of the office." Bylaws frequently provide that the president shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee. The treasurer is often an ex-officio member of the finance committee.

EXPEL. To cut off from membership or attendance.

EXPULSION. The act of forcing out a member.

EXPUNGE. To delete from the minutes by drawing a line through or around the words to be removed from the record.

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FILE A REPORT. To submit a report to the secretary to be saved or stored for the organization.

FILIBUSTER. A practice when a United States Senator debates a question for hours, days, or even weeks. This lengthy debate, which is used to talk a question to death, can be ended by a two-thirds vote.

FISCAL YEAR. Financial year. This may differ from an organization's calendar year.

FIX THE TIME AT WHICH TO ADJOURN. A motion to adjourn at a specific time which is always a main motion.

FIX THE TIME TO WHICH TO ADJOURN. The privileged motion designates the time before the next regular meeting for continuation of the present meeting to complete business or because of the absence of a quorum. It takes precedence over all other motions, requires a second, is not debatable, and can be amended as to the time, place, and date. A speaker may not be interrupted when proposing this privileged motion. If this motion is made when no business is pending, it is a main motion and may also be debated.

FLOOR. After a member is recognized by the presiding officer, he or she is "assigned the floor," and is the only member entitled to make a motion or to speak. When the member has finished speaking, the "floor is yielded."

FORUM. An assembly for the discussion of public affairs.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT. An amendment that is proposed that is thought to be acceptable to everyone in the assembly and is usually adopted by unanimous (general) consent.

FRIVOLOUS MOTION. Motions proposed that are not important. An absurd motion of "requiring all members to memorize **Robert's Rules Of Order Newly Revised**" is an example.

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GAVEL. Presiding officer's mallet. Usually used when there is a breach of order, to adjourn a meeting, and to signal a recess. Some organizations have their presiding officer tap the gavel to obtain attention, to give members permission to be seated, to call a meeting to order, and to indicate that members may rise.

GENERAL CONSENT. Adoption, with no objection, of a motion without voting on it. A vote must be taken if there is objection. This method is commonly used to approve the minutes; **UNANIMOUS CONSENT.**

GENERAL ORDER. The agenda or any subject placed on the agenda.

GERMANE. Closely related. Examples would be that an amendment must be germane to the main motion and debate must be germane to the pending main motion.

GOOD OF THE ORDER. Members may offer informal information to an assembly after new business.

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HEARING. A meeting of an authorized group to listen to the views of members or others on a specific subject.

HISTORIAN. A member who prepares a narrative account of an organization's activities.

HOSTILE AMENDMENT. An amendment that is opposed to the spirit or purpose of the motion to which it is applied.

HOUSE. An assembly.

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ILLEGAL VOTE (BALLOT). A vote which cannot be credited to any candidate or choice but which is counted in determining the number of votes cast for the purpose of computing the majority.

IMMEDIATELY PENDING QUESTION. The most recent motion stated by the chair when more than one motion is pending.

INCIDENTAL MAIN MOTION. A subsidiary, privileged, or incidental motion that is made while no other business is pending and, therefore, is treated as a main motion. This motion does not bring new business before the assembly. Some examples are: (1) *Recess*, when it specifies a future time or is proposed (2) *Refer* (3) *Amend* the bylaws (4) *Actions on the minutes* (5) *Adjourn*, when qualified (6) *Adopt* a committee recommendation when not related to a referred motion (7) *Suspend* a standing rule for the duration of the session.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS. A class of motions that arises out of the business being conducted at a meeting. They have no rank among themselves. Examples are an appeal and a point of order.

INDECORUM. Improper or disorderly behavior.

INFORMAL CONSIDERATION. A motion used to consider business that allows members to speak more than two times on motions. This motion requires a second, is debatable, and requires a majority to pass. A speaker may not be interrupted to propose this motion.

IN ORDER. Complies with accepted procedure. Does not conflict with national, state, or local laws or with the bylaws or rules of the organization or assembly.

INSTITUTE. A short, intensive series of lectures, discussions, etc., designed for a particular occupational group.

INVOCATION. A prayer.

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JOURNAL. The **MINUTES** of an organization.

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LAY ON THE TABLE. To "lay on the table" or "to table" a motion means to temporarily delay action on it because of more *urgent* business. This highest ranking subsidiary motion requires a second, is not debatable or amendable, and requires a majority vote to be adopted. It is proper, however, for the maker of the motion to lay on the table to state the reason for tabling it prior to proposing this motion. If this is not done, the chair can ask the maker to state the reason. A speaker may not be interrupted when proposing this motion and it cannot be qualified in any way. An example would be for the assembly to lay pending business on the table to allow a special speaker more time. This motion may not be used as a substitute for the motions to *Postpone Indefinitely* or to *Postpone to a Certain Time*.

LECTERN. A reading desk with a slanted top.

LEGAL VOTE. A vote cast by a member of an organization who is entitled to vote.

LIMIT OR EXTEND LIMITS OF DEBATE. A motion to control the number or length of speeches. The subsidiary motion requires a second, is not debatable, can be amended, may be reconsidered, and requires a two-thirds vote to be adopted. A speaker may not be interrupted to propose this motion. If this motion is made when no business is pending, it is a main motion and may be debated. However, it still requires a two-thirds vote for adoption.

LOST MOTION. A motion rejected by a vote of the assembly.

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MAIN MOTION. A statement of proposed action or desired opinion presented for consideration and decision. A main motion must be seconded, is debatable and amendable, and requires a majority vote to be adopted. They may only be proposed when no other motion is being considered. A speaker may not be interrupted to propose a main motion. Try to include what, when, where, how, and who when phrasing a main motion.

MAJORITY, EXTRAORDINARY. More than a majority.

MAJORITY REPORT. The report of a committee. It is also called the "committee report."

MAJORITY VOTE. More than half the votes cast by persons entitled to vote, not counting blanks or abstentions. If there are 60 votes cast, a majority is 31 votes.

MAKING A MOTION. The formal act of proposing a motion for the consideration of the group.

MASS MEETING. An open meeting for a special reason of a group of people with a common interest.

MEETING. A single gathering of persons or members of an organization, usually for the purpose of transacting business.

MEMBER. An individual who has joined an organization and has all the rights, duties, and responsibilities that membership requires.

MINORITY REPORT. A report prepared by those not concurring with the majority report.

MINORITY VOTE. Less than half the votes cast.

MINUTES. The official record of what is done at a meeting; a **JOURNAL**. At each regular meeting, the secretary reads the minutes of the previous regular meeting and any special or adjourned meeting held in the meantime.

MINUTES, LITERAL. Verbatim minutes. All discussions, secondary motions, makers and seconders of motions, and all motions whether adopted or lost are recorded and included in the minutes.

MINUTES, PARLIAMENTARY. Minutes that include all items listed in an organization's parliamentary authority, plus additional items required by its rules.

MNEMONIC. Assisting or intending to assist memory; of or relating to a memory device or code.

MONITORS. Persons who are assigned to count ballots or votes; **TELLERS**.

MOTION. A proposal at a meeting that certain action be taken or certain views about a subject be expressed by the assembly. The words "motion" and "question" are used interchangeably.

MOTION, LOST. A motion rejected by vote.

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NAY. A negative vote.

NEGATIVE VOTE. A vote against the question being considered.

NEW BUSINESS. New matters presented for consideration to the assembly.

NO. Negative vote.

NOES. The members of an assembly voting "no" when a vote is taken by voice.

NOMINATION. To choose a person as a candidate to fill an office or other elected position.

NOMINEE. A person who has been nominated.

NOTICE. An official announcement informing the members of an item of business that will be introduced at the meeting. An example would be a

notice of an amendment to the bylaws; see **PREVIOUS NOTICE**.

NULL AND VOID. Not having a specific legal force or effect.

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OBJECTION TO CONSIDERATION OF THE QUESTION. A motion to immediately stop consideration of an original main motion. It must be made before there is any debate or any subsidiary motion has been stated by the chair. Also, may interrupt a speaker until debate has begun on the "objectionable" motion or a subsidiary motion has been stated by the chair. This motion does not require a second and is not debatable or amendable. A two-thirds vote is required to adopt it. It cannot be applied to incidental main motions.

OBTAINING THE FLOOR. The process of obtaining formal recognition from the presiding officer to speak or offer a motion. The member rises and addresses the chair by an official title and then waits until the chair recognizes the member by name, title, nodding, or some other sign. When this procedure is completed, the member "has the floor".

OFFICER. One who has been elected or appointed to hold an official position in an organization.

OLD BUSINESS. See **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**.

OPPOSED. Against the adoption of the pending question.

ORDERED. Directed by a vote of the assembly. Moved or resolved.

ORDER OF BUSINESS. The adopted schedule of business for a meeting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY. See **CALL FOR THE ORDERS OF THE DAY**.

ORIGINAL MAIN MOTION. A motion proposed to introduce a new subject to the assembly.

OUT OF ORDER. A motion or procedure that violates the rules of an organization.

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PANEL. Speakers are usually arranged on either side of the panel chairman. Those with similar views are placed together. The audience can usually ask questions.

PARLIAMENTARIAN. A consultant who advises the officers, committees, and members on matters regarding parliamentary procedure.

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY. The book adopted by an organization to provide the rules for the conducting of business and the rights of members not stated in the Constitution, Bylaws, Special Rules of Order, or Standing Rules. An example is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY. An investigation directed at the presiding officer to determine the proper course of action as it relates to parliamentary procedure. An example would be to ask, "Is there some way we could stop debate on the motion on the floor immediately?" A member may rise to a parliamentary inquiry without being recognized by the chair and may interrupt a speaker if the matter requires immediate attention. A second is not needed, and debate and amendments are not allowed. There is not a vote on this motion because the presiding officer usually answers the inquiry.

PARLIAMENTARY LAW. Established rules of parliamentary procedure. See **PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE. A system of rules used to conduct business in an orderly fashion. See **PARLIAMENTARY LAW**.

PENDING. The term used to refer to a motion under consideration.

PER SE. A Latin term meaning "by itself".

PERSONAL PRIVILEGE. A question raised by a member which concerns the health, safety, rights, or integrity of the member or the assembly.

PLATFORM. The expanded form of a resolution setting forth views, aims, and aspirations of an organization.

PLURALITY VOTE. A vote of one or more than the number received by any other candidate or issue in a group of three or more. If one member receives 10 votes, another member 12 votes and one other member 8 votes, the member who received 12 votes has the plurality vote.

PODIUM. A platform upon which one stands.

POINT OF INFORMATION. A request made to the chair to obtain information about the business at hand, not to parliamentary procedure. If the question is directed at the speaker, the time used is deducted from the time allowed to speak on the particular motion. This is why the presiding officer should ask the speaker if he/she wishes to answer the question. Members are not allowed to carry on a debate or discussion with each other. A speaker may be interrupted to propose this motion if the matter requires immediate attention. A second, debate, amendments, or a vote are not allowed.

POINT OF ORDER. An incidental motion drawing attention to an infraction of parliamentary rules. This motion should not be raised on minor irregularities if no one's rights are being invaded or no real harm is done. It may be proposed when another member has the floor, does not require a second, is not debatable or amendable, and is ruled upon by the presiding officer. If the presiding officer does not want to make a ruling on a *Point of Order*, it may be submitted to the assembly and is decided by a majority vote.

POLICY. The opinions, philosophy, or practices that are adopted by an organization.

POLL. Place where voting is held.

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY. A motion used to reject or kill a main motion for the remainder of the session. This subsidiary motion must be seconded, is debatable (debate can go into the merits of the main motion to which it is applied) and unamendable, and requires a majority vote to be adopted. A speaker may not be interrupted when proposing this motion.

POSTPONE TO A CERTAIN TIME (OR DEFINITELY). A motion used to delay action on a motion to a specific time. A question cannot be postponed beyond the next regular meeting. The subsidiary motion must be seconded. It can be debated, but debate cannot go into the main question. It can be amended to include the time of postponement. It requires a majority vote to be adopted, and a speaker may not be interrupted to propose this motion. A motion made to postpone an event or action previously scheduled when no business is pending is a main motion, and has the same rules except it requires a majority with notice; or two-thirds; or majority of the entire membership to be adopted.

PREAMBLE. One or more prefaces to a resolution, each usually beginning with the word "whereas" States the reason for a resolution; the introduction.

PRECEDENCE (pronounced **pre-see-dence**). The rules of rank or priority which govern the proposing, consideration and disposing of motions. An example is that the motion to adjourn has precedence over an amendment.

PRECEDENT. A decision or a course of action which serves as a future ruling in determining similar cases.

PREFERENCE IN RECOGNITION. When a motion is opened for debate, normally the first member who rises and addresses the chair is recognized over others. However, certain members have preference in recognition and must be recognized by the chair (even if they were not the first to rise) if they; made the motion and have not yet debated; have not debated the motion at all; have only debated the motion once; or are on opposing sides and have not debated.

PRESENT. Those members who are physically in attendance at a meeting.

PRESENT AND VOTING. Those members who cast a legal vote, in contrast to those members who abstain from voting.

PRESIDENT. The presiding officer chosen by election or appointment; the **CHAIR** or **CHAIRMAN**.

PRESIDING OFFICER. The officer conducting the meeting; the **CHAIR** or **CHAIRMAN**.

PREVAILING SIDE. The winning side which may be either the affirmative or the negative.

PREVIOUS NOTICE. Notice of proposed action made either as an announcement or in writing, a specified time in advance of the meeting at which it is to be considered; **NOTICE**.

PREVIOUS QUESTION. To "move the previous question" is to demand a vote to stop debate so that a vote can be taken on the pending motion. Also used to prevent the making of subsidiary motions except the motion to *Lay on the Table*. It may be applied to include a consecutive series of motions. The subsidiary motion requires a second, is not debatable or amendable, and requires a two-thirds vote to be adopted. It cannot be reconsidered after a motion it covered has been voted on. A speaker may not be interrupted when proposing this motion. This motion may be applied to a motion that is not debatable but is amendable. If the previous question is adopted in this case, it prevents amendment.

PRIMARY AMENDMENT. An amendment that applies to the main question; first degree amendment.

PRIORITY. See **RANK OF MOTIONS**; **PRECEDENCE**.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR. Permission given an individual only to attend the meeting. No other rights are granted.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS. A class of motions concerned with the rights of members. They take precedence over all other motions. Examples are to adjourn, to recess, and to call for the orders of the day.

PROCEDURAL MOTIONS. Motions that consider questions of procedure and not substantive proposals as do main motions.

PRO. For; on the affirmative side; as, to argue *pro* and con.

PROPRIETY. A sense of what is proper or fitting.

PRO TEM, PRO TEMPORE. (Latin term meaning "temporarily") Acting as an officer. For example, the vice president may temporarily act as the presiding officer.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE. The committee at a convention that plans and proposes the order of business for the convention.

PROVISO. A statement attached to bylaws, but not part of them, that prescribes certain temporary rules for their implementation.

PROXY, GENERAL. The agent may vote as he/she pleases on the proposal at hand.

PROXY, LIMITED. The agent is legally bound to cast the vote as marked on the limited proxy; **RESTRICTED PROXY**.

PROXY VOTING. When one person officially allows another person (the agent) to vote for him/her.

PUTTING THE QUESTION. Putting the motion to a vote by the presiding officer.

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QUALIFIED. To limit or modify a motion in some manner by adding words. The motion "I move the previous question" is **UNQUALIFIED** and applies only to the immediately pending motion. However, if it is made in the form "I move the previous question on all pending questions," it obviously applies to all pending motions that are on the floor and is called a **QUALIFIED MOTION**. Another example is to qualify the motion to adjourn by adding a time if it is made as a main motion when no business is pending such as, "I move we adjourn in ten minutes". The **UNQUALIFIED** privileged motion is "I move to adjourn". A **MAJORITY VOTE** can also be qualified. Some organizations use phrases such as "a majority of those present" and/or "a majority of the entire membership" in their bylaws.

QUASI COMMITTEE. (Quasi is a Latin term meaning "resembling") The assembly acts like it is in a committee so that a matter can be considered informally, with the regular presiding officer acting as chairman. The motion requires a second, is debatable and amendable, but may not interrupt a speaker. A majority vote is required to adopt it.

QUESTION. The business before the assembly; the motion after it has been placed by the presiding officer before the meeting for action. The terms

"question" and "motion" are used interchangeably.

QUORUM. The minimum number of members who must be present at a meeting to transact business legally. A quorum is a majority of all members unless the bylaws state otherwise. This requirement provides protection against unrepresentative action. The presiding officer is included in determining a quorum if the chair is a member.

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RAILROADING. To force a motion through so rapidly that members do not have a chance to use their parliamentary procedure rights; **GAVELING** through motions.

RAISE A QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE. A motion to secure immediate action that involves the comfort, convenience, rights, or privileges of the assembly or an individual. It does not require a second, it is not debatable or amendable, and the presiding officer makes the ruling. A speaker may be interrupted to propose this motion if it is an urgent matter. Examples are to adjust the ventilation, to adjust the loudness of the public address system, or to make an important announcement.

RANK OF MOTIONS. Priority. A listing of motions by a certain order; **PRECEDENCE.** **RATIFY.** To make previous action taken authentic; to **APPROVE.** When made as a main motion, it may not be made when a member has the floor, must be seconded, is debatable, amendable, generally requires a majority vote for adoption, and can be reconsidered. Debate may go into the merits of the main motion to which it is applied.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES. See **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

RECEIPT. A written record of money received.

RECESS. The privileged motion asks for a short intermission of an assembly immediately when another question is pending. It requires a second, is undebatable, requires a majority vote to adopt it, and can be amended as to the length of time to recess. If it is made while no question is pending, it is a main motion and is debatable.

RECEIVING. To allow an assembly to hear a report from a group such as a committee.

RECOGNIZING A MEMBER. The chair acknowledges and grants a member the right to speak. See **PREFERENCE IN RECOGNITION.**

RECOMMENDATION. A proposal usually made by a committee for taking action or expressing an opinion on a subject.

RECOMMIT. To refer to a committee again for consideration.

RECONSIDER. A motion used to ask for a new vote on a motion. This motion is in order when another motion is pending and may interrupt a member assigned the floor only *before* the member begins speaking. Can only be made on the day the motion to be reconsidered was adopted and by a member who voted on the prevailing side. It is debatable if the motion that is being reconsidered is debatable, must be seconded, is not amendable, and requires a majority vote to be adopted. Debate can go into the merits of the motion to which it is applied. In a convention of more than one day, it can be made on the same day or the next day after the original vote was taken.

RECONSIDER AND ENTER ON THE MINUTES. A special form of the motion to *Reconsider* that allows two members to suspend action on a main motion until the next meeting.

RECOUNT. To count the vote again.

REFER. To send a motion to a committee. See **COMMIT.**

REGULAR MEETING. The stated recurrent business sessions of a permanent society. The scheduled meeting of an organization.

RENEW A MOTION. To place a motion that was not adopted on the floor.

REPORT. An account, usually in writing, of the study or work conducted by an officer or a committee.

REPEAL. See **RESCIND.**

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION. An incidental motion used to seek information relating to pending business. A speaker may be interrupted to propose this motion.

RESCIND (REPEAL, ANNUL). To cancel an adopted action or vote. This motion can be proposed up until the time action is taken on the motion to be rescinded. This motion must be seconded, debate is allowed, it is amendable, and it requires a two-thirds vote to be adopted. Debate can go into the merits of the motion to which it is applied. A speaker may not be interrupted when proposing this motion. If notice is given, a majority vote is required. Without notice, a majority of the entire membership is required for adoption. Can only be moved when no other motion is pending.

RESIGNATION. A formal notice, usually written, relinquishing an office, a position, or membership in an organization.

RESOLUTION. A formally phrased main motion; the recommendation for action (main motion) in a committee or board report.

RESTORATIVE (RESTORATORY) MOTION. Motions that restore consideration of a motion already acted upon. Examples are to reconsider, to take from the table, to rescind, and to discharge a committee.

RISING VOTE. A vote taken by asking members to stand if they are in favor of the action, and then asking those who are opposed to stand, with the chair judging which side prevails. Usually used for a motion requiring a two-thirds vote for adoption.

ROLL CALL. Calling the names of members or delegates to verify their attendance.

ROLL CALL VOTE. To place into record how members voted by calling out the name of each member and asking how each one voted.

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER NEWLY REVISED (ABBREVIATED "RONR"). A manual dealing with parliamentary procedure.

RONR. Abbreviation for *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

ROSTRUM. A stage for public speaking or a raised platform upon a stage.

ROUND TABLE. A meeting for conference or discussion.

RULES COMMITTEE. The committee at a convention that writes and presents a set of standing rules for the convention.

RULES OF ORDER. Written rules of parliamentary procedure which govern an organization.

RULING. The official decision of the presiding officer.

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SECONDARY AMENDMENT. An amendment applied to a primary amendment. An amendment to a secondary amendment is not permitted.

SECONDARY MOTIONS. Subsidiary, Privileged, and Incidental Motions.

SECONDBLE. A motion that requires a second in order to be considered.

SECONDER. A member of the assembly who seconds a motion.

SECONDING A MOTION. A "second" indicates that a member, in addition to the one proposing a motion, is interested in having the motion considered. The member who seconds a motion (the "seconder") does not have to vote in favor of the motion. The member states, "I second the motion," "I second it," or "second" without rising or being recognized by the presiding officer. "Thirthing" a motion is not proper. A motion is still adopted if it is made, and considered and carried without being seconded.

SECRETARY. The clerk or recorder of the minutes; the **CLERK.**

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS. An individual who helps preserve order at a meeting as directed by the presiding officer.

SESSION. A meeting or series of meetings (as in a convention) with a single order of business, agenda, or program.

SHOW OF HANDS. Voting in a small group by allowing members to indicate their preference by raising their hands. The affirmative vote is taken first and then the negative.

SINGLE SLATE. A list of offices and candidates which has the name of one candidate for each office.

SPEAKER. One who has begun to address the assembly after obtaining the floor.

SPECIAL (SELECT, OR AD HOC) COMMITTEE. A committee created for a particular purpose that continues its existence until the work is completed and a final report is given. At a meeting, special committees are usually called on in the order they were appointed. A motion arising out of a report is taken up immediately.

SPECIAL MEETING. In contrast with a regular meeting, a meeting called for a particular purpose that is stated when the meeting is called.

SPECIAL ORDER. Motions postponed by two-thirds vote to a special time to the category of special orders at the next meeting.

SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER. Particular rules for conducting business that an organization makes for itself. They usually modify the parliamentary authority. They are adopted after notice by a two-thirds vote (or without notice, a majority vote of the entire membership). Two examples are to design a different order of business and to adopt a rule allowing members to speak five minutes (instead of ten) on debatable motions.

STANDING COMMITTEES. Permanent committees which should all be named in the bylaws. Examples would be a Program Committee, a Finance Committee and a Membership Committee. At a meeting, standing committees are usually called on in the order listed in the bylaws. A motion arising out of a report is taken up immediately.

STANDING RULES. Rules an organization makes for itself related to its administration rather than to parliamentary procedure. Examples would be that speakers must use a microphone and the setting of meeting times. Adopted or suspended by a majority vote without previous notice at any business meeting.

STATING THE QUESTION. Restatement of a motion (question) by the chair after it is proposed by a member.

STATUS QUO. (Latin term meaning "as is") The existing state.

STATUTES AND ORDINANCES. Laws enacted by state and local governments.

SUBCOMMITTEE. A committee selected by the parent committee to study and investigate certain matters.

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS. A class of motions which help dispose of a main motion. They take precedence over the main motion but are outranked by **Privileged Motions**. Examples are an amendment and a referral.

SUSPEND THE RULES. To suspend rules that are not in conflict with the constitution or by-laws or with the fundamental principles of parliamentary law, an organization "suspends the rules that interfere with" the proposed action. These usually require a two-thirds vote to be adopted. The incidental motion must be seconded and is not debatable or amendable. A speaker may not be interrupted when proposing this motion. An example would be to suspend the rules governing the order of business in order that a guest lecturer may speak. Another example would be to approve the minutes of a meeting without having them read. A majority vote is required to suspend a standing rule such as setting the time that meetings are to begin.

SUSTAIN. To preserve or uphold a ruling.

SYMPOSIUM. A meeting for the discussion of a particular subject.

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TABLE. See **LAY ON THE TABLE.**

TAKE FROM THE TABLE. A motion to bring back a tabled motion. Can be proposed (after the interrupting business is disposed of and there is no question pending) either at the same session the motion was tabled or at the next session if the organization meets at least quarterly. The motion must be seconded and is not debatable or amendable. It requires a majority vote for adoption and cannot interrupt a speaker when it is proposed. Can only be moved when no other motion is pending.

TELLERS. Persons who are assigned to count ballots or votes; **MONITORS.**

TICKET. A list of candidates for election.

TIE VOTE. Same number of votes. A motion receiving a tie vote is lost since it did not receive a majority of the affirmative votes.

TREASURER. An elected officer who is the custodian of an organization's funds.

TREASURER'S REPORT. The financial report of an organization.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE. Two out of three of the votes cast. A two-thirds vote is achieved when there is at least twice as many votes on the prevailing (winning) side as on the losing side. For example, if there are 10 affirmative votes cast and 5 negative votes cast, there is a two-thirds affirmative vote.

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UNANIMOUS CONSENT. Adoption, with no objection, of a motion without voting on it. A vote must be taken if there is objection. This method is commonly used to approve the minutes; **GENERAL CONSENT.**

UNANIMOUS VOTE. A vote when no one dissents.

UNCLASSIFIED MOTION. Motions that bring a question again before the assembly. An example is reconsider.

UNDEBATABLE MOTION. A motion on which debate is not allowed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS. Business that is carried over from the previous meeting. Includes motions that were postponed or not completed prior to adjournment of the previous meeting. The expression "Old Business" should be avoided.

UNQUALIFIED. See **QUALIFIED.**

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VACANCY. An office or position which is unoccupied.

VACATING THE CHAIR. Temporarily relinquishing the chair.

VICE-CHAIRMAN. A member who is next in authority to the chairman.

VIVA VOCE VOTE. (Viva voce is a Latin term meaning "by word of mouth") Taking a vote by voice.

VOICE VOTE (VIVA VOCE). Saying "Aye" (affirmative vote pronounced as "I" or "Eye") or "No" (negative vote) when the motion is put to a vote by the presiding officer.

VOTE. A formal expression of the will, opinion, or preference of the members of an assembly in regard to a matter submitted to it.

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WARRANT. A written authorization for the payment or receipt of money.

WITHDRAW A MOTION. A member who proposes a motion can withdraw it only *before* the motion has been stated by the chair. The chair does not need permission from the member who seconded the motion. Other members can also ask the maker of the motion to withdraw it before it is stated by the chair. After being stated by the chair, the assembly must approve of a withdrawal by general consent or a majority vote after a second. If the person who makes the withdrawal request is the maker of the original motion, the request to withdraw requires a second. A member may interrupt a speaker to propose the motion to withdraw.

WORKSHOP. Often called a clinic. Deals with one subject. Audience participation is encouraged.

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YEA OR NAY VOTE. Yes or no vote that is used in roll call voting.

YIELD. Give way to. A pending question yields to one of higher rank. An example would be that a main motion would yield to an amendment because the amendment has a higher precedence or ranking.

YIELDING THE FLOOR. The speaker giving up his/her time by sitting in order that another may speak.

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Parliamentary Procedures Glossary. Dunbar, Shane D. The Parliamentary Procedure Instructional Materials Center. n.d. English.

