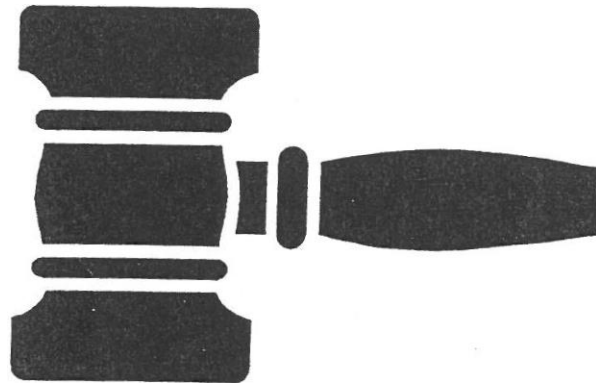


Parliamentary

Procedure



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PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

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Parliamentary Procedure

Workshop Session

To Workshop Leaders

-Workshop Preparation

-Suggested Formats

- On Rules
- On Motions
- On Committees

Parliamentary Procedure Workshop Session To Workshop Leaders

Parliamentary procedure offers a diversity of subjects for workshop-type training. This resource book covers three topics - Rules, Motions and Committees. Motions alone could be the basis for many hours of study and learning. Whatever topic is chosen, it can be developed in a stimulating way to ease the learning of such a complex subject. Although it is a complex subject, and even a little bit intimidating, the average member is interested and wants to learn more about it.

Workshop leaders are encouraged to prepare a light and humorous presentation with lots of audience participation to offset the weighty subject. Learning is much easier when humour is used. The in-depth study is better left to those who request it. Whether serious or humorous, the lessons to be learned are fair play, openness, communicating by both listening and speaking, and all the principles of a democracy. The object of the workshop is to make parliamentary procedure a little less confusing, along with improving leadership skills and decision-making.

Workshop Preparation

- Cover one or two points only, and allow plenty of practice time.
- Prepare the presentation by identifying your exact topic and approach; i.e., motion drill, questionnaire with discussion, mock meeting, etc.
- Set up the agenda and make copies of pages for hand-out.
- ACTS 6:1-6 can be used for an opening meditation in some cases. It describes a method of problem-solving and includes a committee, and perhaps an election.

Suggested Formats for Workshops or Training

On Rules

1. Use questionnaire and allot time for discussion and questions.
2. Compare the *Constitution & Bylaws* (C&B) and the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* “standing rules”). Choose one segment of the C&B, such as elections. Ask participants to discuss these in light of their knowledge on the subject. Are there any suggestions for amendments?
3. After giving an explanation of “standing rules”, ask participants to word a suggested rule and discuss its clarity of meaning.

On Motions

1. Make a rule at the beginning of the workshop that only the main motion and an amendment will be allowed, in order to concentrate on one or two motions. Come prepared with a motion, preferably a humorous one. Provide copies of the motion drill (appendices) and ask participants to act it out. Go over it at least twice, and then ask participants to go through a motion and an amendment on their own.
2. A mock meeting can be presented, showing the usual method of handling motions, followed by the correct method.
3. Have someone read a report, prepared ahead of time, with recommendations and ask another participant to make a motion to adopt the recommendation. Make the report a humorous one. Allow time for free discussion and amendments.
4. Use the questionnaire in the Appendix and allow discussion, or prepare some question and answer cards similar to those in the game of *Trivial Pursuit*.

On Committees

1. Use the questionnaire in the Appendix to stimulate discussion on the good and bad aspects of committees.
2. Evaluate the councils committee functioning by using a round-table discussion format. The leader feeds information on how committees should function and asks how it can work for your council. In evaluating, recognize the good points of the council's system but use constructive criticism where improvements can be made.
3. An orientation of officers is helpful if one can be arranged shortly after an election. Discuss responsibilities, meetings they are required to attend, and how the committee system works in their council. Make adjustments for your own requirements.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

To play a game of bridge, one must know the rules. To drive a car, one must know the rules. Nearly everything we do has rules or instructions, and attending meetings is no exception. There are rules for conducting and participating in meetings. Knowing these rules, and using them properly, can mean the difference between a satisfactory meeting and an unsatisfactory one. They will also help to make meetings run more smoothly. The rules for conducting and participating in meetings are called parliamentary procedure.

Originally, it was legislative bodies, or parliaments, that established rules of order to conduct their sessions effectively and democratically. When voluntary organizations became popular, they borrowed these rules to run their meetings but found them too complicated and too strict. They wanted rules whereby business could be conducted thoroughly, yet quickly, and without a lot of wrangling.

A man named Henry M. Robert, an American army engineer, accepted the challenge to develop a set of rules for voluntary organizations, in order to bring some order out of the chaotic state in which most meetings were conducted. He was mindful of the differences between legislative bodies and voluntary groups and acknowledged a need to retain the same democratic principles that were the basis of the parliamentary system of government. His interpretation of parliamentary procedure for voluntary groups was first published in 1876. Over the years, his basic rules have been developed and refined for modern decision makers. These rules are contained in the book, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

The rules of parliamentary procedure for both voluntary organizations and legislative bodies are based on the following democratic principles

- all members have equal rights, privileges and obligations
- decisions are made after full and free discussion
- majority rules
- minority must be heard
- good will must prevail
- concern for an individual's rights must be balanced with concern for the group as a whole

A Definition of Parliamentary Procedure

A set of rules to enable an assembly to conduct its business in an orderly and democratic way allowing its members to arrive at a decision of the majority as quickly as possible while avoiding conflict, yet being fair to all members.

The Catholic Women's League of Canada adopted *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* as its parliamentary authority in the 1983 amendment to its *Constitution & Bylaws*. Prior to that, *Bourino's Rules* were followed and, while both Rules are quite similar, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* contains more detailed information concerning rules governing voluntary organizations. In fact, it contains all the necessary information for organizations to function and to conduct their meetings. It describes the kinds of rules a voluntary organization needs to operate, how business is conducted at meetings, motions and how to use them, order of business, quorums, voting rules, decorum during discussion, reports, minutes, duties of officers and members, details on how boards and committees are established and function, how to start an organization, how to draw up and amend bylaws, how conventions differ from regular monthly meetings and procedures for discipline in an organization.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised was used as the authority for this booklet and will, therefore, serve as an introduction to some participants. For others, it may confirm their knowledge of the rules, or shatter some of the myths they may have about parliamentary procedure. It is hoped that it will be used to develop the communication skills needed for membership in any organization and, specifically, for participation at meetings.

This booklet mainly deals with just three areas of parliamentary procedure while touching on some others. A glossary of parliamentary terms and some charts and exercises are included. The three areas are:

RULES	the different kinds an organization may have and how they are adopted, amended and suspended
MOTIONS	their usage and form, how they are handled during a meeting, special rules on discussion of motions, voting, etc.
COMMITTEES	how they are established and structured, and how they function

These are the main tools of parliamentary procedure to enable members to participate fully. Proper use is essential.

Parliamentary procedure must be studied slowly and carefully. It is not a subject to rush through. Each step is logical and makes sense; however, the reasoning can be elusive at times. For more in-depth study, obtain a copy of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

HERE'S TO BETTER MEETINGS!

**Edith Mockler, Life Member
Registered Parliamentarian**

Parliamentary Procedure

SECTION I

Rules of an Organization

- **Constitution & Bylaws**
- **Standing Rules**
- **Rules of Order**
- **Standing Rules of a Convention**

Rules of an Organization

“A house is master of its own rules”

Organizations may adopt any rules they wish as long as they comply with the laws of the land and, in the case of the CWL, the laws of the church.

Each organization should have three sets of rules in order to function well. Each set serves a different purpose to the benefit of the members and the group. Firstly there is a constitution and bylaws for stability and uniformity, providing the foundation of the group. Secondly, there are standing rules to facilitate the routine operation and to provide some consistency and flexibility at the same time. Thirdly, there are the rules of order (the traffic rules) to prevent chaos during meetings and to provide satisfaction to those who know how to use them.

Following is more information on these three sets of rules, plus an additional set for those who attend conventions.

Constitution & Bylaws

An organization's most important set of rules is its *Constitution & Bylaws* and it supersedes all other rules. It is usually one document containing all the basic requirements of an organization's existence, however, in some organizations it may be two separate documents.

This document is the expression of the will of the members regarding how they want their organization to be structured and to function. It must include the name and objectives of the organization, along with articles on membership, officers, meetings, standing committees, executive board, parliamentary authority, the amendment procedure and any other matter deemed important enough to members that it should be difficult to change.

The rules contained in the *Constitution & Bylaws* are all the rules that the members of the organization believe are so important that:

- a. they must be changed/amended only when specific conditions have been met, such as previous notice to the members, and a two-thirds vote
- b. they cannot be suspended unless authority to suspend is written into them

It is the *Constitution & Bylaws* that provide for both the rights of members and any limitations on the power of the assembly. Every member should have a copy and become familiar with the rules if she is to take an active part in the organization.

Standing Rules (same as CWL *National Manual of Policy and Procedure*)

“Standing rules” are rules which relate to details of an organization’s administration. They are adopted when the need arises and they remain in effect until rescinded or amended. Generally speaking, “standing rules” are the policies and procedures necessary to carry out provisions of the *Constitution & Bylaws*.

Many organizations have their own name for “standing rules”. In the CWL, the term normally used is policy and procedures. Others may call them “Standing Orders” or “Regulations”. Whatever name is used, they are the rules relating to the administration of the organization.

These rules are separate from the *Constitution & Bylaws* because they should be easier to adopt or amend than the *Constitution & Bylaws*. Standing rules can be suspended, which is something that the *Constitution & Bylaws* cannot.

Standing Rules

- may be adopted by a majority vote, the same as other ordinary motions adopted by an organization
- can be amended or rescinded by a majority vote with previous notice or by a two-thirds vote without previous notice
- can be suspended temporarily by majority vote
- must not conflict with the rules set out in the *Constitution & Bylaws*

These rules could be in booklet form with appropriate headings and readily available to members, especially the president and other officers. Care must be taken to update the booklet when new rules or amendments are made and to note in the margin the date of adoption.

NOTE 1 - Each council at every League level needs its own set of standing rules and these should be adopted by council members, unless authority has been given by the council to the executive.

Examples of standing rules for a parish council are

- setting the day and time of monthly meetings
- authority to purchase recurring gifts
- election procedure not specified in the *Constitution & Bylaws*
- amount of membership fee

Examples of “standing rules” at other levels are

- rules relating to the attendance of guests at meetings or conventions
- travel expenses for officers or executive members
- convention expenses

Rules of Order

“Rules of Order” refer to the rules of parliamentary procedure used to conduct the business of organizations. The two main purposes for “Rules of Order” are to ensure that business runs smoothly in a democratic manner, and to have a set of rules to resolve questions of procedure which may arise from time to time.

An organization may formulate its own “Rules of Order”; however, this is an arduous task. It is easier to adopt a set of rules already written and which are suitable for most organizations. A book, such as *Robert’s Rules of Order*, can be adopted through the *Constitution & Bylaws* as the parliamentary authority for the organization. If any of the rules in the book need to be modified, this can be done by adding “Special Rules of Order” to the organization’s *Constitution & Bylaws*.

When a group has adopted a book on “Rules of Order”, it is rarely necessary to make additional “Rules of Order”, however, the rules in the book can be modified, or added to, by using the same rules as amending the *Constitution & Bylaws*; i.e., “Rules of Order” can be adopted or amended by a two-thirds vote after previous notice has been given to the members.

Unlike the *Constitution & Bylaws*, “Rules of Order” can be suspended by a two-thirds vote. The *Constitution & Bylaws* can never be suspended.

The *Constitution & Bylaws* and standing rules take precedence over “Rules of Order” when there is a conflict. All members should have a working knowledge of the “Rules of Order”.

Standing Rules of a Convention

The Standing Rules of a Convention are a set of rules dealing with the conduct and administration of a convention. Convention business meetings have a very strict time limit so the rules need to reflect that reality. Limiting speeches is usually one rule of a convention. Others could involve seating arrangements and procedures to clarify voting.

Convention rules must be proposed and adopted at each new convention, even though they may be the same rules each year.

- for adoption, they require a two-thirds vote
- to amend or rescind required two-thirds vote or the vote of a majority of all the voting members registered
- suspension requires a majority vote

The Standing Rules of a Convention and the standing rules of an organization are not one and the same.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

SECTION II

MOTIONS

- **Steps to Introduce and Handle a Motion**
- **Classes of Motions**
- **Explanation of Order of Rank**
- **Main Motions**
- **Secondary Motions**
- **Motions with Special Characteristics**
- **Motions: Not Motions**
- **General Information about Procedures for Motions**

Motions

A motion is a proposal/suggestion presented to an assembly for its consideration and vote.

This part of the parliamentary procedure session provides the needed information on motions and how to use them properly. It explains the basic classes of motions and system of ranking, describes the steps to introduce and handle motions, lists all the motions with usage, form, rules and special notes, and includes general information on the different aspects of the process, such as voting and decorum during discussion.

Motions are a form of communication used by an assembly to hasten the business, make it flow smoothly, and provide members with an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. For the process to work well, members of the assembly must be knowledgeable about motions and when and how to use them.

Motions are needed so that meetings fulfil their purpose. Meetings, to put them in perspective, are an important part of the life of an organization, but are not one of its primary reasons for being. The primary reasons, or the goals and objectives, are achieved outside of meetings, as a rule. Meetings are a time to bring members together to talk about their common interests and to make decisions to foster the goals and objectives. Members want meetings that accomplish this without having to spend a great deal of time on endless discussion. A knowledge of motions is the answer.

A knowledge of motions helps to speed up discussion, which then leads to improved meetings. It will be noted in the Steps to Introduce and Handle a Motion that the motion is made first, then discussion takes place. This procedure ensures that members know the specific topic to address. Regrettably, the usual practice, especially in small assemblies, is to discuss a topic prior to wording a motion. This allows members to veer off in all directions during discussion and often results in long and disjointed meetings. To use the preferred method requires advance preparation for a general meeting, either by the individual introducing a motion or by the executive presenting a recommendation. Advance preparation always results in better meetings.

Observing the formalities for handling motions is also essential for better meetings. It keeps business moving and members on track. Some may think that this procedure is too formal for their council. Generally speaking, the larger the assembly, the more formality required. Smaller assemblies may want to be less formal. Being less formal is okay provided that good business practices are not sacrificed and the principles of democratic decision-making are heeded, especially those dealing with the rights of members. Whether formal or informal, efficient and effective meetings depend on members having knowledge and understanding of motions.

Steps to Introduce and Handle a Motion

1. The member rises, addresses the chair, “Madam president,” and waits to be recognized. The chair indicates in some way that the member may proceed.
2. The member presents the motion. “I move that”, or, “I move the adoption of the following resolution ...”
3. Another member must second the motion. She simply says, “Second”, and gives her name, if in a large assembly. If there is no second, the motion is not accepted.
4. The chair re-states the motion and opens it for discussion. “It has been moved and seconded that,” ... (repeats motion). The motion is now open for discussion.
5. Discussion takes place.
 - the member must be recognized by the chair before speaking
 - the mover has the opportunity to speak first
 - discussion must be relevant to the topic
 - all remarks must be addressed through the chair
 - secondary motions may be proposed at this time
6. The chair re-states the motion and puts the question. When it appears that no further discussion is desired, the chair asks if the assembly is ready to vote by saying, “The motion is ... (she reads it). Are you ready for the question?” Re-stating the motion clarifies for everyone what they are voting on.
7. The chair takes the vote.

“All those in favour of the motion, please raise your hand” or, “please stand.” “Those opposed, please raise your hand”, or, “please stand”. The chair makes a judgement on whether the motion is carried or defeated, or she may count a standing vote.
8. The chair announces the result of the vote. “The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted,” or “The negative side has it, the motion is lost (or rejected)”.
9. The chair gives instruction to carry out the motion, if applicable, and then introduces next item of business.

Example: “The motion is adopted; the treasurer will please write a cheque forThe next item of business is the picnic.”

NOTE: All motions are handled in this way with one variation. When a motion is not debatable or amendable, the chair, after stating the motion, proceeds immediately with taking the vote rather than asking for discussion.

Classes of Motions

Main Motions and Secondary Motions are the two basic classes of motions.
--

Main Motions - are the ones most familiar to us. They introduce business to the assembly. Usually, it is new business but sometimes it is business relating to a report or bringing back business that was adopted previously.

Only one main motion can be on the floor (pending) at one time. The pending main motion must be resolved in some way - either adopted, rejected or deferred - before another main motion can be introduced.

Secondary Motions - are all the other motions. These can be divided into two categories:

- motions that help resolve the main motion
- motions that help resolve procedural questions that may arise during the course of the business meeting

These motions are normally proposed while a main motion is pending, since they are used to help resolve the main motion and procedural questions. It is possible to have several secondary motions pending at the same time as the main motion. How to handle several motions at one time is explained further under Explanation of Order of Rank.

In the first category of secondary motions are motions primarily used to take action on the main motion. Occasionally, they are used in relation to other secondary motions.

The motions in this category have a strict order of rank or precedence. After many years of experience, it was found that this order is the fairest and most logical order to propose and dispose of these particular secondary motions. This list, in order of rank from highest to lowest, is as follows:

- to adjourn
- to recess
- to lay on the table
- to call for the previous question
- to limit or extend the limits of debate
- to postpone definitely
- to refer to a committee
- to amend
- to postpone indefinitely

In the second category of secondary motions are procedural motions. They have no set order of rank, which means they can be proposed at any time they are applicable. They must be dealt with before continuing with other business. Some examples of motions in this category are, to appeal the decision of the chair, to withdraw a motion, to vote by ballot.

Explanation of Order of Rank

(See also Appendices A & B)

The motions in the first category of secondary motions are listed from the highest to the lowest rank. If the main motion was included in the list, it would be #10, following #9, to postpone indefinitely. The main motion is lowest in rank because it can be introduced only when no other motion is pending.

After the main motion is proposed, secondary motions may be proposed but the nine with an order of rank are admissible only in that order from the lowest to the highest.

- A higher ranking motion is always admissible if a lower ranking motion is pending.
- A lower ranking motion is not admissible if a higher ranking motion is pending.
- When several of the nine motions are pending at one time, the highest ranking one must be voted on first.
- When only the main motion remains, it is again open for discussion and vote.

Another way of saying it is that they are proposed from the lowest to the highest and disposed in reverse order.

The motions with no rank (those in the second category) may be proposed at any time, when there is a requirement for them. They must be decided before continuing with the next pending motion.

Example 1: main motion is introduced
a motion to amend it is made
a motion to postpone definitely is made

The motion to postpone definitely must be handled first. If it carries, the main motion and amendment is postponed. If it is lost, the amendment is the pending motion and it is dealt with next. Then the main motion is pending and again opens for discussion prior to voting on it.

Example 2: a main motion is introduced
a motion to refer the main motion to a committee is made
a motion to amend the main motion is made

The chair must state that the motion to amend is not admissible at this time. The motion to refer is of higher rank so it must be dealt with first. If it carries, the motion goes to a committee. If it is lost, the chair should ask the member if she still wants to propose an amendment. If she does, then the motion to amend can be proposed and dealt with. If the answer is no, then the main motion is pending.

Motions to recess and adjourn are of the highest rank. They may be proposed at any time, regardless of what other motions are pending, and must be dealt with immediately.

The motions described on the following pages cover nearly every situation encountered at meetings.

The Main Motion is first on the list, followed by the nine Secondary Motions with an order of rank, starting with the lowest. Procedural motions are then described, followed by motions that bring back business adopted previously. Finally, there is the last set of motions which, as you will note, are not the usual type of motion.

Main Motions

USAGE: To introduce business to the assembly

- it may be brand new business
- it may be business that relates to other business, such as reports
- it may be business that relates to motions previously adopted; e.g., to rescind

FORM:

- new business, e.g., I move that we buy a typewriter for the secretary.
- business that relates to other business; e.g., I move to adopt the recommendations in the report of the membership committee.
- business that relates to motions previously adopted; e.g., I move that we rescind the motion concerning the picnic scheduled for next Sunday.

RULES:

- allowed only when no other motion is pending
- must be seconded
- may be debated
- may be amended
- needs a majority vote, unless a specific rule requires more than a majority

Special Notes:

1. The well-known rule that states, “Only one motion is allowed on the floor at one time”, applies only to main motions. The pending main motion must be resolved by adoption, rejection or deferment, before another main motion can be presented to the meeting.
2. While a main motion is pending, any number of secondary motions may be presented. This means that a motion to amend, to postpone the main motion, to recess, or any other motion, may be introduced while there is a main motion on the floor.
3. The motion to ratify is a main motion with all the requirements listed above. To ratify is to approve an action that has been taken without prior approval, such as emergency action by the executive.
4. Resolutions are main motions that are written in a more formal style than ordinary motions. Usually, they are longer and more complex. They come in two parts: **First**, the WHEREAS clause(s), which state the reasons for the resolution

Second, the RESOLVED clause(s), expressing the group's opinion or request

The rules for handling resolutions are exactly the same as for main motions. The resolved clauses are amended first, then the whereas clauses.

5. Confusion between some main motions and some secondary motions may arise because of a similarity in wording.

Examples: to amend; to commit; to limit debate; to postpone; to recess; to adjourn

If no other business is pending, they are main motions. If a main motion is pending, they are secondary motions.

Secondary Motions

To Postpone Indefinitely

USAGE: This motion is used to kill a main motion when voting on the main motion may cause embarrassment to the group.

FORM: I move that this motion be postponed indefinitely.

- RULES:
- must be seconded
 - may be debated and debate may go into the merits of the main motion
 - may not be amended
 - needs a majority vote

Special Notes:

1. If this motion is adopted, the main motion is defeated (killed). For this reason, debate on this motion may include debate on the main motion.
2. If there are amendments to the main motion, or any other secondary motions on the floor, they must be voted on before dealing with this motion.
3. This is a rarely used motion, but handy to know about if a main motion is proposed that members believe would cause embarrassment in voting either for or against it.

To Amend

USAGE: During discussion of a motion, a member may wish to change the motion in some way to make it more acceptable.

FORM: Depending on the action desired, use one of the following:

- I move to amend the motion by adding the words, "..."
- I move to amend the motion by inserting the words, "... between ..." and "... (Specify the exact place for inserting the words).
- I move to amend the motion by striking out the words, "...", after the word "... and before the word, ..." (Specify the exact words to be struck).
- I move to amend the motion by striking out the word, "..." and inserting the word, "..."
- I move an amendment by substituting the following paragraph for the (second) paragraph on the (first) page

- RULES:**
- must be seconded
 - may be debated
 - may be amended; e.g.; an amendment to the amendment (see Special Notes)
 - needs a majority vote

Special Notes:

1. Adopting an amendment does not mean that the main motion is adopted. After a vote is taken on the amendment, a vote must be taken on the main motion.
2. The same holds true for an amendment to the amendment. Adopting an amendment to the amendment does not mean that the amendment is adopted, or that the main motion is adopted. The amendment to the amendment is voted on first, then the amendment, and finally the main motion. (You will be happy to hear that three amendments at one time are not allowed but after one is voted on, another may be introduced.)
3. A member may vote for an amendment and against the main motion. Even if a member is against a main motion from the beginning, it is wise to show a preference for amendments, in case the motion is adopted.
4. An amendment must be closely related (germane) to the motion, that is, it cannot change the entire meaning of the motion.
5. To amend the *Constitution & Bylaws* is a main motion, not to be confused with this secondary motion.

To Commit or Refer to a Committee

USAGE: It is wise to refer the main motion to a committee:

- when discussion seems to be taking up too much time and an immediate decision is not necessary
- when the matter needs more consideration
- when action by a group is appropriate

FORM:

- I move that this motion be referred to a committee. (If adopted, it will be necessary to name the committee and give them instructions.)
- I move that this motion be referred to the membership committee and that a report be brought to the next meeting.
- I move that a committee of three, appointed by the president, be established to study this motion and report back at the March meeting.

- RULES:**
- must be seconded
 - may be debated, but debate is limited to the merits of referring the motion to a committee

- may be amended, but amendment is limited to the type of committee or to the instructions given to the committee
- needs a majority vote

Special Notes:

1. A committee may be asked:
 - to investigate a matter and report the findings
 - to consider a matter and bring back recommendations
 - to take some action
 - or some combination of these
2. Instructions should include the name of the committee, when it should report, and other specific details, such as if money is allotted.
3. At a convention, a motion may be referred to a committee with instructions to take some action or even to report the following year.
4. See also the special section on committees.

To Postpone Indefinitely

USAGE: This motion may be used if:

- a member feels there is not enough information available to make a knowledgeable decision
- one wishes to consult informally with others before making a decision
- a member knowledgeable on the topic is absent
- attendance is poor

FORM: I move to postpone this motion until the next meeting (or until later in this meeting)

- RULES:
- must be seconded
 - may be debated, but debate is limited as to why the motion should be postponed
 - may be amended only in regard to the time to which it should be postponed
 - needs a majority vote

Special Notes:

1. If the motion to postpone is lost, discussion of the main motion continues until a decision is reached.
2. If the motion to postpone is carried, the main motion and any amendments are deferred until the time decided for postponement. When this time arrives, either later in the same meeting or at the next meeting, the item automatically goes on the agenda under “unfinished business”.
3. When meetings are held weekly or monthly, a motion may be postponed only from one meeting until the next meeting. It may be postponed again and again, if that is the wish of the members. If it is not brought up at the next meeting, it may be re-introduced at another time.

4. When meetings are held only once a year, such as annual conventions, a motion cannot be postponed from one convention to the next one. A convention is defined as a single business session with several meetings, therefore, a motion may be postponed from one meeting to another meeting in the same convention but cannot be postponed beyond the end of the last meeting of the convention. The motion may be re-introduced another year.
5. Adopting a motion to postpone simply obligates the chair to bring back the main motion at a certain time. If members want the subject to be studied closer, and recommendations brought back, the appropriate motion to propose is to refer to a committee.
6. A motion to postpone is not necessary prior to a recess. Business automatically continues where it left off, when the meeting resumes.

To Limit or Extend Limits of Debate

USAGE: When time is short and/or discussion is repetitive, or if more time is needed for discussion, there are three ways to set time limits:

- by setting the length of time each speaker may speak
- by setting the length of time for discussion
- by setting the time when discussion will close and the vote is taken

FORM:

- I move that a limit of one minute per member be set for discussion on this motion, or I move that each speaker be allowed to speak for 20 minutes on this motion.
- I move that discussion on this motion be limited to 15 minutes.
- I move that discussion on this motion stop at 2 p.m. and the vote be taken

RULES:

- must be seconded
- may not be debated
- may be amended
- needs a two-thirds vote because, if adopted, it restricts the basic rights of members to full discussion

Special Notes:

1. *Robert's Rules of Order* allow each speaker 10 minutes for discussion of each motion. This rule may be changed either by this secondary motion during a meeting or by a standing rule of the group. Convention standing rules usually limit the time.
2. The chairperson of the meeting may not limit or close discussion on her own but may suggest that discussion has gone on long enough.

Previous Question (to close debate)

USAGE: A member may propose this motion:

- when discussion has gone on for a long time, or
- when it is the wish that no further amendments be made

FORM:

- I move the previous question, or, I move that debate be closed and a vote taken.

- RULES:**
- must be seconded
 - may **not** be debated
 - may **not** be amended
 - needs a **two-thirds vote** because it interferes with the rights of members

Special Notes:

1. If adopted, this motion closes discussion and the vote is taken immediately.
2. If a two-thirds vote is not obtained, the discussion on the motion continues.
3. A motion to close discussion may be proposed for all debatable motions.
4. Often, members call out, “Question, question”, indicating that they are ready to vote. In effect, they are proposing this motion in an informal way. If there are still some who wish to speak at this time, the chair must allow them to speak or else ask that a motion to close debate be made formally.

To Lay on the Table

USAGE: This motion is used to temporarily set aside the pending motion, while another matter that is more urgent is taken up.

FORM: I move to lay the motion on the table, or I move that the motion be laid on the table.

- RULES:**
- must be seconded
 - may not be debated
 - may not be amended
 - needs a majority vote

Special Notes:

1. If the motion to lay on the table is adopted, the motion is set aside and may return only after a motion, to take from the table, is made and adopted.
2. There are time limits for the motion remaining on the table. If it isn’t taken from the table before the end of the next regular meeting, it dies. At a convention, if it isn’t taken from the table before the end of the convention, it dies.
3. This motion is often used to kill a main motion when the proper motion to use is to postpone indefinitely.
4. If the motion being presented includes a time to bring the motion back, for example, “I move to lay this motion on the table until the next meeting,” then it should be treated as the motion to postpone definitely. By using the latter motion, postponed business can be scheduled for the next meeting, without waiting for another motion to bring it back.

To Recess

USAGE: This motion may be used when there is need for a break and when no recess is scheduled.

FORM: I move that we recess for (10) minutes.

- RULES:**
- must be seconded
 - may **not** be debated
 - may be amended only regarding the length of the recess
 - needs a majority vote

Special Notes:

1. When a recess has been scheduled on the agenda, it is not necessary to move to recess. The chair just announces that the time for recess has arrived.
2. A motion to recess can be made even when a main motion is pending. When the recess is over, the business carries on from where it left off. A motion to postpone, or to lay on the table, is not necessary.

To Adjourn

USAGE: As long as a time is set for the next meeting, a motion to adjourn, or close the meeting may be made at any time, whether or not business is pending.

FORM: I move that the meeting adjourn.

- RULES:**
- must be seconded
 - may **not** be debated
 - may **not** be amended
 - needs a majority vote

Special Notes:

1. When a time for the next meeting has not been set, for example, at a convention, to adjourn is a main motion and must be treated as such.
2. When an agenda schedules a time to adjourn, and that time comes, the chair may just announce the fact - no motion is required. A motion is required, however, to go beyond the allotted time.
3. At a regular meeting, when all of the business has been completed, the chair, after asking for any further business and having no response, may declare the meeting adjourned.
4. It is not in order when someone is speaking.

The following motions have no special order:

Procedural Motions

Appeal the Decision of the Chair

USAGE: The chair has the duty to make necessary rulings in regard to procedures but, if any two members wish to challenge the ruling, the chair must submit the matter to the assembly for a decision

FORM: I appeal the decision of the chair.

- RULES:**
- must be seconded
 - may be debated
 - may **not** be amended
 - needs a majority or a tie vote to sustain the decision of the chair

Special Notes:

1. The appeal must be made at the time of the ruling.
2. The chair may vote to create a tie in order to sustain the decision.
3. There is no appeal from the decision of the assembly.
4. Members should appeal the decision of the chair rather than criticize her ruling. It may be in the best interests of the group to have the situation decided on by the assembly rather than the chair.
5. Simply put, an appeal is a disagreement with the chair and, if a member feels it is serious, she should not hesitate to appeal.

Objection to Consideration of the Question

USAGE: This motion is used when a member feels a proposed main motion may do harm to someone

FORM: I object to consideration of this motion.

- RULES:**
- requires no seconder
 - requires no debate
 - requires no amendment
 - needs a **two-thirds** vote **against** consideration

Special Note:

This motion must be offered before any discussion on the motion in question has begun.

Consideration by Paragraph

USAGE: Usually, a motion adopting a series of paragraphs or articles, such as bylaws, is handled by opening each separate paragraph for discussion and amendment; only after each one has been dealt with satisfactorily, the vote is taken on the package.

If this is not being done, a member may propose a motion requesting that it be done. The reverse is also proper; i.e., a member could propose a motion to deal with the whole package at once, when the chair is handling it paragraph by paragraph.

FORM: I move that we consider this document by paragraph, or, I move that we consider this document as a whole.

This can be handled by general consent but, if anyone objects, a formal motion is necessary.

- RULES:
- must be seconded
 - may **not** be debated
 - may be amended
 - needs a majority vote

Suspend the Rules

USAGE: The rules can be suspended when they interfere with an action that members of the assembly wish to take. One exception is the *Constitution & Bylaws*, which can never be suspended unless they provide for their own suspension.

FORM: I move to suspend the rules and change next month's meeting to the second Sunday at 3 p.m. (This involves an ordinary "standing rule".)

- RULES:
- must be seconded
 - may **not** be debated
 - may **not** be amended
 - needs a majority vote for ordinary standing rules; needs a two-thirds vote for special rules of order, such as those relating to parliamentary procedure

Special Notes:

1. Rules contained in the *Constitution & Bylaws* of an organization can never be suspended as they protect the basic rights of individual members, however, the bylaws may legally provide for their own suspension.
2. It is wise to include in a set of rules the method by which they can be amended and suspended.
3. Where there is obvious agreement that a rule should be suspended, the chair may use general consent to do so. If one person disagrees, a vote must be taken.

Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn

USAGE: When there is not enough time at a regular meeting to finish some important item of business, the members are asked to fix a time for another meeting **before the next scheduled meeting**.

The motion may be proposed while another motion is pending, and even after the motion to adjourn has been adopted.

FORM: I move that when we adjourn, we meet again at 2 p.m. tomorrow.

- RULES:
- must be seconded
 - may **not** be debated

- may be amended
- needs a majority vote

Division of a Question

USAGE: When a motion concerning one subject contains several parts and each part can be dealt with separately, a motion to divide the question may be made.

FORM: I move that the motion be divided so that the question of be considered separately.

- RULES:
- must be seconded
 - may **not** be debated
 - may be amended
 - needs a majority vote

Special Note:

When one motion is made to adopt several different resolutions, these must be divided on the demand of one member.

Motions re: Nominations

USAGE: Whenever a decision needs to be made re nominating procedures, a motion may be required.

FORM: of wording, depending on requirement:
 “I move to nominate the committee members by ballot,”
 or, “I move to re-open nominations”,
 or, “I move to close the nominations”.

- RULES:
- must be seconded
 - may **not** be debated
 - may be amended
 - needs a majority vote, **except, the motion to close nominations needs a two thirds vote**

Special Note:

The bylaws may regulate nominations, in which case some of these motions are not required.

Motions Re: Voting

USAGE: Whenever a decision needs to be made regarding voting procedures, a motion may be required.

FORM: Examples of wording, depending on the requirement

- “I move to have a ballot vote for this motion”, (bylaws usually require a ballot for elections, in which case no motion is required), or, “I move that the vote be counted”, or, “I move to re-open the polls”, or, “I move to close the polls”.

- RULES:
- must be seconded
 - may not be debated
 - may be amended
 - all need a majority vote, **except the motion to close the polls needs a two thirds vote**

To Withdraw a Motion

USAGE: The maker of a motion may have a change of mind about her motion and wish to withdraw it.

FORM: “I ask permission of the assembly to withdraw my motion.”

Usually, the chair says, “If there is no objection, the motion will be withdrawn.” If there is no objection, a motion, asking that permission to withdraw be granted, may be made by another member.

- RULES:
- requires no second
 - no debate
 - no amendment
 - needs a majority vote

Special Note:

When a motion has been withdrawn, it is as if it had never been made and, therefore, may be proposed again at the same meeting.

Motions with Special Characteristics

These must be put in a special category because of certain aspects that make them different from ordinary Main Motions.

To Take from the Table

USAGE: This motion proposes to bring back to the assembly a main motion that has been LAID ON THE TABLE.

FORM: “I move that we take the motion re...from the table.”

- RULES:
- may be proposed only when no other business is pending
 - must be seconded
 - may **not** be debated
 - may **not** be amended
 - needs a majority vote

Special Notes:

1. This motion must be made either at the same meeting as the motion to LAY ON THE TABLE or before the end of the next regular meeting. If the motion is not presented within these time limits, the motion that has been laid on the table dies.
2. When a motion is taken from the table, it has the same status as when it was laid on the table; for example, if it is a main motion with an amendment proposed, but not voted on, then the amendment would be pending.

Rescind or Amend Something Previously Adopted

USAGE: This motion is used when the desired action is to cancel or amend an order or a motion adopted previously.

FORM: “I move to rescind the motion which authorized the purchase of a typewriter for the secretary”;
or, “I move to amend Standing Rule #3, by changing the time of the meeting from 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.”

- RULES:
- may be proposed only when no other motion is pending
 - must be seconded
 - may be debated
 - may be amended
 - needs either a two-thirds vote without previous notice,
 - or, a majority vote with previous notice,
 - or, a majority of the entire membership.

Note: Rescinding or amending “special rules of order” and the *Constitution & Bylaws* requires both previous notice and a two-thirds vote, unless the C&B provides otherwise.

Special Notes:

1. Any member may propose these motions, and there is no time limit for making them.

2. Action that has already been taken, as a result of an adopted motion, cannot be rescinded. If only part of an order has been carried out, the remaining part may be rescinded or amended.

To Discharge a Committee

1. This motion is used when a special committee has not reported within a reasonable length of time, or when the members of the assembly wish to take a matter out of the hands of a committee and deal with it themselves.
2. The rules for this motion are similar to the motions TO RESCIND OR AMEND SOMETHING PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED.
3. It is not necessary to move TO DISCHARGE A COMMITTEE when a special committee has completed its work, because it is discharged automatically.

Reconsider

USAGE: If a decision on a motion was made too quickly or if further information causes someone to want to give an adopted motion further consideration, this motion may be proposed by someone who voted on the prevailing side.

FORM: "I move to reconsider the vote on the motion re the typewriter purchase. I voted on the prevailing side."

or, "I move that we reconsider the vote on the amendment that was adopted in the motion re the typewriter. I voted in favour of the amendment."

- RULES:
- may be made only by a member who has voted on the prevailing side, which means a member who voted in favour if the motion was adopted or who voted against if the motion was lost
 - must be seconded (anyone may second it)
 - may be debated, if the motion proposed to be reconsidered is debatable
 - may not be amended
 - needs a majority vote

Special Notes:

1. **There is a time limit to make this motion.** It may be proposed only at the same meeting that the motion to be reconsidered was adopted. **At a convention**, it may be proposed at a meeting on the same day or on the following day.
2. When the motion to be reconsidered cannot be taken up immediately, it may be taken up later in the same meeting or at the next regular meeting. At a convention, it must be taken up before the end of the convention.
3. When the motion is open for reconsideration, it has the same status as it was just previous to voting.
4. A motion cannot be reconsidered if action has been taken on it.
5. Discussion on the motion TO RECONSIDER may go into the merits of the motion to be reconsidered.
6. In a committee, a motion to reconsider; may be made at any time and any number of times. It can be made by someone who voted on the prevailing side or by someone who

voted who did not vote at all. It requires a two-thirds vote if all the members who voted on the prevailing side are not notified that the reconsideration will be moved.

Motions: Not Motions

The following list is classified as motions in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, however, they are requests or reminders and the usual rules of motions do not apply to them as:

- no second is required
- they may **not** be debated
- they may **not** be amended
- **no** vote is taken

In some cases, they may interrupt the speaker but courtesy should be kept in mind at all times.

Usage, form and Special Notes follow.

Point of Order

USAGE: The chair is responsible for ensuring the rules are being followed. When a member notices an infraction of the rules, she may wish to make a POINT OF ORDER.

FORM: “I rise to a point of order”, or just “point of order.”
The chair asks the member to state her POINT.
The member states her point, and then sits down.
The chair rules on whether or not the point is well taken.

Special Notes:

1. The POINT OF ORDER must be made at the time of the infraction. Later, it is not valid, unless it involves the bylaws or other ongoing rules of the organization.
2. The chair, if she wishes, may seek advice from the parliamentarian or others, or, she may ask the assembly to decide on the POINT OF ORDER.
3. When making her ruling, the chair should state her reasons and these should be recorded in the minutes.
4. POINTS OF ORDER should not be made on minor infractions as it irritates the members and serves no useful purpose.

Parliamentary Inquiry

This is simply a request for information on the proper procedure needed to take some action during the business meeting.

Point of Information

This is a request for information about the business that is being discussed. This may interrupt a speaker.

To Call For the Orders of the Day

USAGE: When the agenda is not being followed or the time for some special order has arrived and the chair is not aware of it, a member may give this reminder.

FORM: “I call for the Orders of the Day.”

Special Notes:

1. It may interrupt a speaker and the member need not wait to be recognized by the chair.
2. It must be enforced at the call of one member.
3. If members wish to change the Order, a motion to do so should be proposed and a two thirds vote is required.

To Raise a Question of Privilege

USAGE: When a situation arises that affects the privileges of members, such as discussion of a sensitive issue when non-members are present **or**, if there is too much noise to hear the speakers.

FORM: “I rise to a question of privilege.”

Special Notes:

1. May interrupt a speaker in an emergency, and the member need not wait to be recognized by the chair.
2. These situations are usually handled informally without the need for a motion. They are ruled upon by the chair, unless there is a question to decide. In that case, a motion is made and a vote taken.

Division of the Assembly

When a member wishes to have a vote re-taken, she may CALL FOR A DIVISION. The chair must take the vote again, by a rising vote.

To ask for a counted vote, a member must make a motion and have it adopted. The chair, on her own, may verify a vote by counting.

General Information About Procedures for Motions

Introduction of Motions at a Meeting

1. Chair decides who speaks first if more than one person rises to speak at the same time.
2. A motion must be worded clearly and precisely so that there is no guesswork when action is taken later. A written motion handed to the president assists her in stating the exact wording of a motion prior to voting and provides the secretary with a copy for writing correct minutes.
3. A motion is seconded to ensure that more than one member is interested and wishes to discuss the subject. The seconder does not have to agree with the proposal. If by chance a second is not heard, but discussion starts, it is not important to ask for a second then, as it is obvious that more than one person is interested in the subject.
4. A motion proposed by a committee of more than one person does not need a seconder. It is assumed that at least two members of the committee want to present the motion.
5. Until a motion is stated by the chair, the member presenting it may change the wording or even withdraw it. Once stated by the chair, it becomes the property of the assembly and permission of the assembly is needed to change or withdraw it.

Decorum During Discussion or Debate of a Motion

1. The purpose of discussion is to air various points of view on the topic enabling members to make a good decision. Members have the right to know all the details of a topic before voting on it.
2. Members must be courteous at all times; attacking the motives of other members must be avoided.
3. All remarks must be addressed through the chair; talking across the floor one member to another causes the meeting to become unruly and out of control.
4. Discussion must pertain to the pending business; discussion on a main motion must pertain to the topic. Discussion on an amendment must pertain to the amendment. After the amendment is decided, discussion on the main motion may resume.
5. A member wishing to read a long article must ask permission of the assembly to do so.
6. A member may not speak against her own motion, but she may vote against it. If she has a change of view, she may ask permission of the assembly to withdraw it.
7. Each member has the right to speak at least once to a motion. A member may be allowed to speak a second time when all others who wish to speak have spoken.
8. Discussion of a motion must not be allowed after the vote is taken, unless a Motion To Reconsider is made.
9. The chair must show impartiality by not entering into the discussion of motions. If she wishes to express her views, she must ask the president-elect or a vice-president to chair the meeting during discussion on the motion and until after the vote is taken on it. Leaving the chair is not required when the president reads her annual report or conducts an election, even when she is running for an office. (Note: chair of a committee may speak freely.)
10. The chair should try to alternate speakers for and against the motion when the subject is controversial.
11. The chair may not limit or close discussion except by order of the assembly with a two-thirds vote (Previous Question Motion). She may suggest that discussion has gone on long enough but as long as any member wishes to speak, she must allow it.

Voting on Motions

1. Methods of voting:

- voice vote or show of hands
- counted vote - members usually required to stand
- ballot vote - for secrecy

2. Definitions of types of votes

- majority - more than half the votes cast
- two-thirds vote - at least two-thirds of the votes cast
- plurality - largest number of votes for one candidate or item when there is a choice of three or more - not necessarily a majority

3. A majority is the requirement for all motions, unless the *Constitution & Bylaws* or rules of order state otherwise.
4. As a general rule, a two-thirds vote is required when the motion restricts or takes away the rights of members.
5. The chair calls first for the affirmative vote and then for the negative vote. Members must be allowed to express their negative vote even if the affirmative vote is almost unanimous.
6. A member may change her vote up until the time the chair announces the results. After that, her vote can only be changed with the permission of the assembly.
7. Members have the right to abstain from voting on a motion, and should abstain if there is a conflict of interest. In this case, they may request that the minutes show that they abstained. Abstentions are not counted in the result of a vote, unless the requirement for voting is based on the number of members present, rather than the number voting.
8. The chair may vote if the count is close enough that her vote will affect the results. She may vote to break a tie, to make a tie, or she may abstain. She may vote at the same time as other members in a ballot vote.
9. In announcing the results of a vote, the chair gives the count, if it was a counted vote.
10. General consent may be used to approve a motion which is routine, as it could save a little time. For general consent, the chair says, "If there is no objection, (pause), the motion is approved." If there is objection, a motion is proposed and a vote taken after discussion. Minutes are usually handled by general consent.

Miscellaneous

1. A motion that has been lost cannot be introduced again at the same meeting, or, if applicable, at the same convention. It may be introduced again at another meeting or convention. There are exceptions to this in regards to secondary motions.
2. Improper motions are ones that conflict with the *Constitution & Bylaws* or with the laws of the country. Also, improper are motions that conflict with past motions which are still valid. If improper motions are adopted, they are null and void.
3. Motions that were postponed or laid on the table and not brought back to the assembly by the end of the next monthly meeting, may be introduced again at another meeting.
4. A financial report is not adopted - only an audited statement is adopted. Financial reports are filed for reference.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

SECTION III COMMITTEES

- **Standing Committees**
- **Special Committees**
- **Committee Functioning**
- **Relationship between Committees and Executive**

PARLIAMENTARY TERMS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDY

Committees

“Meetings are too long/too boring,” is an often heard lament. Do you see this as a problem with your CWL council? If so, how well are your committees (including the executive) working? Are special projects assigned to special committees? Do you know how to use committees to make them the effective tool they are meant to be?

Committees can be another effective tool used for the benefit of both the organization and the members. They can increase the efficiency of the organization and decrease the frustrations of the members. Much of the preliminary work for a meeting should be done by committees, as well as the work involved afterwards in carrying out the decisions made at a meeting. During the meeting itself, committees give their reports and recommendations. They do not afflict the meeting with their committee discussions to the annoyance of the rest of the members. Well-functioning committees result in council meetings that are stream-lined and efficient.

When committees function well, the work of the council can be spread out so that no one is overburdened. Committees allow more members to become involved and are an ideal training ground for new members. Individual members are provided an opportunity to practice leadership skills, learn how to work with others and how to plan ahead. They get to know each other better, as well as learn more about the organization or about topics under study. The members benefit while accomplishing the goals of the organization.

The following information and procedures are adapted for the CWL from *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*. They are guidelines to assist your council in setting up committees and using them as effectively as possible. The parish council was in mind at the time of writing but almost all the material could refer to councils at other levels. In some cases, reference is made to other levels.

Definition of a Committee

A committee is one or more persons elected or appointed to carry out an on-going function of an organization or a special task assigned by members at a meeting.

Kinds of Committees

Standing committees are permanent committees established by the members in the *Constitution & Bylaws* and remain in existence until changed by the bylaws.

Special committees (ad hoc) are temporary committees established by the members at a meeting to perform a specific task and no longer exist once the task is completed.

I Standing Committees

In the CWL, the standing committees were chosen as the most effective way to fulfill the aims and objects of the League and also involve as many members as possible.

Establishment of and Regulations for Standing Committees

The *Constitution & Bylaws* provide for the standing committees by including:

- a. the names and sub-headings of each committee (found in the article on Standing Committees)
- b. how the chairperson and members are selected (chairpersons are officers of the council and are elected as officers. A standing committee is assigned to each chairperson after the election. Chairpersons may appoint their own committee members - see article on Duties of Officers)
- c. their term of office (found in the article on Eligibility, Nominations and Elections)
- d. when a report is required (At parish level, a chairperson reports monthly, if she has something to report and prepares an annual report as a summary of the year's work under her standing committee. At other levels, chairpersons prepare their report for the convention. At each level, a copy of the reports is sent to the chairpersons at the next level.) (see articles on Duties of Officers and Meetings, Conventions and Quorums)

How Duties of Standing Committees are assigned

In addition to the general duties specified in the C&B, an outline of the possible activities of each standing committee can be found in the *Executive Handbook*. This may be purchased from the CWL national office and each chairperson should have a copy of the section dealing with her standing committee. Specifically, a committee may be assigned a project involving its sphere of activity:

- by the adoption of a motion suggested by the members
- by proposing their own ideas for the members approval
- at the suggestion of chairpersons at other levels

Sub-committees of Standing Committees

The standing committees in the C&B are divided into sub-headings, which are the sub-committees. A chairperson may appoint a sub-committee chairperson to take charge of each sub-committee. These sub-committee chairpersons make up the membership of the committee. They are chosen by each new chairperson when she assumes office and their term usually coincides with that of the chairperson. Reporting on the sub-committees is done at the general meeting by the chairperson.

II Special Committees

In the CWL, it is often necessary to appoint a special committee to take on a special task. Special committees should not be assigned a task that falls under the responsibilities of a standing committee, unless there is a clearly understood reason for it.

Establishment of and Regulations for Special Committees

Special committees are decided on by the adoption of a motion by the members at a regular meeting. The motion to establish the committee should include:

- the number of members to serve on it
- who is authorized to appoint the members

- clear instructions as to what is expected of the committee
- when the committee is required to report back to the meeting

Read on to find out more about these points.

Examples of Motions Establishing Special Committees

1. I MOVE THAT a special committee of five members, appointed by the president, be established to consider the need for, and possibility of, purchasing new kitchen equipment for the parish hall and that they report back to the regular monthly meeting in March with recommendations
2. I MOVE THAT a special committee of seven members, appointed by the president, be established to arrange for, and carry out, the necessary tasks to host the diocesan convention in May; that a budget be presented for adoption at the October meeting, and that reports be given to the monthly meetings.

Selecting Members for a Committee

A committee to consider or investigate a matter should have a sufficient number of members to ensure that all points of view are considered. For most committees, five to seven members are sufficient. An uneven number is suggested to avoid tie votes. It is also suggested that members with different views be chosen. Each brings her own unique character with her special contribution to the team effort. By considering all angles, the committee may reach a workable solution.

A committee to take action will require only as many members as necessary to complete the task. It should include only members who are in favour of the action.

Who Should Appoint the Committee and the Chairperson?

Usually, the president is asked to appoint the committee but it could be the members at the meeting establishing the committee, or nominations and elections could be held to choose it. The chairperson of the committee is usually designated when appointments are made. If the chairperson is not named, the committee may choose someone from among their number. Whoever appoints a committee also has the responsibility later of choosing someone to fill a vacancy if the need arises.

Instructions to the committee must be clear:

- they may be asked to consider a matter and report on it
- they may be asked to investigate and report back with recommendations
- they may be asked to investigate and take action on behalf of the council
- they may be asked to take action on a matter as instructed by the council
- they should also include whether or not money will be available for the task

When Does the Committee Report?

If possible, the motion should include when the committee must report. Depending on the

purpose of the committee, it may be just once or it may be monthly. When the final report of a special committee is given, the committee automatically dissolves. No motion is necessary.

Sub-committees of a Special Committee

A special committee may have sub-committees, if they are necessary to complete the assigned task efficiently. They are chosen from among the committee members. As for a standing committee, the chairperson reports to the meeting on the work of a special committee. She may assign this to another member for a good reason.

Special Committees in the C&B or Other Sets of Rules

The C&B may also provide for special committees to carry out specific tasks. Examples are the nominations and elections committee and the committee on amendments to the C&B. The “standing rules of a convention” may provide for a resolutions committee just for the convention or a committee to approve the minutes. These are not standing committees in that they do not perform an ongoing function, but they are included in the C&B or other rules because, when the committees are appointed, there are specific requirements for either the members or the committee.

III Committee Functioning

The foregoing describes how standing and special committees come about, how members are selected and instructed, the need for sub-committees, etc. This section will describe the general functioning of both types of committees.

The following guidelines and information are meant to assist councils and committees to set up a workable procedure to use for the smooth functioning of their committee system.

1. **Announcing of Names** - The names of the members appointed to committees should be announced to the membership as soon after their appointment as possible.
2. **Informing Committee Members** - Members of the committee must be made aware of exactly what is expected of them. All necessary papers or other documents; must be available to them so they can carry out their task properly.
3. **Calling a Meeting** - The chairperson of the committee sets a suitable time for a meeting and informs all members of the committee, including the ex officio members. If the chairperson of a special committee does not call a meeting within a reasonable length of time, any two members of the committee may call a meeting.
4. **Quorum**- A quorum for a committee meeting is a majority of the members, unless another size is fixed. The ex officio members are not counted in determining the quorum.
5. **Ex Officio Members** - Ex officio members have all the privileges of ordinary members; i.e., the right to make motions and vote, however, they have none of the responsibilities. They are not obligated to attend meetings and not counted in determining the quorum. The president is an ex officio member of all committees except the nominations and elections committee.
6. **Conducts at Meetings** - Committee meetings, unless they are large committees of 20

or more, are conducted less formally than meetings of the general membership.

- The chairperson conducts the meeting and should use a prepared agenda, as at a regular meeting.
 - The chairperson may wish to take notes herself or may ask another member to act as secretary to take minutes.
 - The chairperson is allowed to take part in the discussions, to make motions and to vote.
 - There are no time limits on discussion, which ensures that the subject receives more attention than is possible at a regular meeting.
 - General consent may be used more freely.
 - For important or controversial matters, a formal vote should be taken.
 - Motions may be reconsidered as often as necessary.
7. **Reports** - Committees must report to the membership at the appropriate time during a council meeting. On the agenda, standing committee reports usually are listed after the secretary's and treasurer's reports. Special committee reports are listed under Unfinished Business.
- reports are usually prepared and read by the chairperson
 - it should be concise, yet contain all necessary information
 - monthly reports are usually for updating the members but may include recommendations
 - an annual report of standing committees and a final report of a special committee should have more details, such as:
 - its name or what it was asked to do
 - names of committee members
 - specific tasks undertaken
 - how work was carried out, if it is important that this be known
 - any conclusions/recommendations agreed upon by a majority of committee members
 - signature of chairperson and, in some cases, signatures of the members
 - a copy of the report is given to the secretary and a copy kept in the chairperson's file
8. **Action on Reports** - Reports submitted for information are simply filed after they are read, although members may ask questions about them. They are hardly ever moved for adoption by the council. If a council adopts a report, it means that they agree with every word in it. The only time this is done is if the report were to be made public.
9. **Recommendations in a Report** - If recommendation are included in a report and the council wishes to take the action stated in the recommendations, then a motion must be made clearly stating the action. This motion is treated the same as other motions, that is, discussion and a vote to determine if the majority approves. Unless a recommendation arising from a report is put in the form of a motion, it remains simply a suggestion with no obligation to carry it out. Sometimes, recommendations are written in the form of resolutions for presentation to the meeting or convention.

Minority Report - Occasionally, some of the committee members, especially if it is a study or research committee, may not agree with the conclusions of the majority of the committee members. These members may prepare their own report and ask that it be read at a meeting, or they may wish to state their views orally to the meeting. This is appropriate as long as the remarks are confined to their views on the topic and do not go into personalities and what may have happened during the committee meetings.

IV Relationship Between Committees and Executive

In the CWL, the executive meeting is an important step in committee functioning. It is an opportunity for the executive, which includes the chairpersons of standing committees, to coordinate the efforts of all committees in order to avoid duplication and overlapping. The well-conducted executive meeting is a good experience in committee functioning from both sides. It acts both as an assembly that makes decisions and as a committee that makes recommendations.

As an assembly, the executive meets to plan projects and policy for the council. Part of this planning entails hearing and discussing the reports and recommendations of the standing committees. Then, a decision has to be made. The executive decides what to present to the general membership for their approval. As a committee, the executive does not make the final decision; they prepare the information and recommend to the general meeting their preference. The members at a business meeting make the final decision.

At parish level, where meetings are held monthly, it is proper and wise to allow the members to make the final decisions. At diocesan, provincial and national levels, the executive may be given authority to make some final decisions.

At diocesan, provincial and national levels, the executives are larger in size - a board of directors, really. They are much larger than at parish level. The members may live great distances apart, making it expensive to hold meetings. It is usual for the C&B to authorize an executive committee or an administrative committee, which would be a smaller group, made up of the officers, with some of the responsibilities of the full executive. Where these are in place, they act much like the parish executive, coordinating the efforts of the chairpersons/officers and bringing their recommendations to the full executive meeting. In the case of the parish executive, they bring their recommendations to the general meeting.

The general business meeting of a council is a good indicator of how well committees (including the executive) are operating. All will be evident when reports and recommendations are presented and when the follow-up work for past decisions has been carried out. If the preliminary work has been done, the meeting will run smoothly and, much to everyone's delight. Smooth running meetings indicate that the committee system is functioning as it should.

Parliamentary Terms

ABSTAIN: to refrain from voting

AD HOC COMMITTEE: a special committee assigned a specific task, and is automatically discharged when the task is completed

ADOPT/ACCEPT/AGREE TO: when referring to recommendations, or a report, these words are similar in meaning

AGENDA: itemized list of topics to be dealt with at a meeting

AMEND: to modify or change the wording of a motion; also, to change a constitution

ASSEMBLY: people meeting to transact business

BALLOT: method of voting, a secret vote

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS (C&B): basic rules of an organization

CHAIR: person presiding at a business meeting

DISCUSSION or DEBATE: statements or views expressed prior to voting on a motion

GENERAL CONSENT: adopting a motion without taking a vote; when there appears to be agreement on a routine motion, the chair may say, "If there is no objection, the motion is adopted": no vote is taken; also, Unanimous Consent

GERMANE: relevant to the topic under discussion; an amendment must be germane to be allowed

LAY ON THE TABLE: a motion requesting that the main motion be laid aside while other more urgent business is taken up

LIMIT DEBATE: a motion requesting that time for discussion be lengthened or shortened

MARJORITY VOTE: more than half the numbers of votes cast by the members present and voting, not counting abstentions

MOTION: a suggestions/proposal presented to the assembly for their consideration and decision

ORDER OF BUSINESS: the prescribed format of a business meeting, usually set out in the rules of organization

PARLIAMENTARIAN: person well-versed in parliamentary procedure and other rules of the group and able to advise and guide the chairperson through business meetings

PENDING: a motion is pending when it has been stated by the chairperson and is open for discussion; when it has been temporarily deferred or permanently decided, it is no longer pending.

PLURALITY VOTE: the largest number of votes for one candidate when there are three or more choices

POINT OF ORDER: a call made when a member thinks the rules of the organization are not being followed at meetings

POSTPONE: to defer a motion or action to a later time

PRECEDENCE: the rank of motions, which designates the order in which they will be introduced and/or voted on

PREVIOUS NOTICE: a legal requirement for certain motions; e.g., the motion to amend the bylaws requires Notice; Notice may be given at the previous meeting or at the call of the meeting, unless otherwise designated by rule

PREVIOUS QUESTIONS: a motion requesting that an immediate vote be taken on the main motion without further discussion

QUESTION: another term for a motion under discussion

QUORUM: number of members required to be present at a meeting for action taken to be valid; usually, a majority unless specified otherwise in C&B

RATIFY: a motion asking the assembly for formal approval to validate an action already taken on their behalf

RECONSIDER: a motion to consider the vote a second time on an adopted motion

RESCIND: a motion to annul a previous motion or decision

RULES OF ORDER: rules adopted by an organization to help in the conduct of business

RULING: the official decision of the presiding officer or the chairperson on parliamentary and procedural matters

STANDING COMMITTEE: a committee with ongoing duties and provided for in the *Constitution & Bylaws*

STANDING RULES: rules of an ongoing nature dealing with the administrative matters of an organization; “*standing rules*” of a *Convention* are a separate set of rules

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: business that has not been completed at one meeting and is held over until the next one

Recommendations for More Study

Robert, Henry M.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th Edition

De Capo Press, September 2011

For in-depth study, the following organizations offer correspondence courses in parliamentary procedure. They also have a catalogue of items for sale, including books, teaching guides, cassettes, etc. on parliamentary procedure. Please contact them for more information.

National Association of Parliamentarians

313 South Main Street

Independence, MO 64050

Tel: (816) 853-3892

www.parliamentarians.org

American Institute of Parliamentarians

618 Church Street, Suite 520

Nashville, TN 37219

aipparl.wildapricot.org

<i>APPENDIX A</i>	<i>MOTION CHART</i>
<i>APPENDIX B</i>	<i>SUMMARY OF MOTIONS</i>
<i>APPENDIX C</i>	<i>MOTION DRILL; Main Motion and Amendment</i>
<i>APPENDIX D</i>	<i>MOTION DRILL Amend and Postpone</i>
<i>APPENDIX E</i>	<i>MOTION DRILL Bringing Back a Postponed Motion</i>
<i>APPENDIX F</i>	<i>QUESTIOINNAIRE ON RULES</i>
<i>APPENDIX G</i>	<i>QUESTIONNAIRE ON MOTIONS</i>
<i>APPENDIX H</i>	<i>QUESTIONNAIRE ON COMMITTEES</i>

Appendix A

MOTION CHART
(for commonly used motions)

MOTION	WORDING	SECOND DEBATE	AMENDABLE	VOTE	NOTES
ADJOURN	I move to adjourn	sec	not deb	maj	Privileged; immediate consideration
RECESS	I move to recess for 5 min.	sec	not deb	maj	Privileged; immediate consideration
LAY ON TABLE	I move that the motion be laid on the table	sec	not deb	maj	Lays aside a motion when more urgent business arises
PREVIOUS QUESTION	I move to close debate	sec	not deb	2/3	If adopted, vote taken immediately
LIMIT/EXTEND DEBATE	I move to limit debate to 30 minutes	sec	not deb	2/3	May change length of speeches or length of debate
POSTPONE DEFINITELY	I move to postpone the motion till next meeting	sec	deb	maj	Motion postp'd only till next reg. mtg. Convention: till end of conv. Only
COMMIT/REFER	I move to refer this motion to a committee	sec	deb	maj	Motion includes instructions to cmte. Deb. Confined to merits of referring
AMEND	I move to amend this motion by...	sec	deb	maj	Deb. Must be relevant to amendment
POSTPONE INDEFINITELY	I move to postpone this motion indefinitely	sec	deb	maj	Deb. May go into merits of main motion. Kills main motion.
MAIN MOTION	I move that...	sec	deb	maj	Moved when no other buisn. Pending
TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE	I move to take from the table the motion re...	sec	not deb	maj	Time limit: nxt reg. mtg or end of conv.
APPEAL	I appeal from the decision of the chair	sec	deb	maj	Must be made when chair rules
SUSPEND RULES	I move to suspend rule and	sec	not deb	2/3	Undeb. If pending motion is undeb. Bylaws may never be suspended
OBJECTION TO CONSIDERATION	I object to consideration of this question	no sec	not deb	2/3	In order only until debate on Main Motion begins
DIVISION OF QUESTION	I move to divide the motion and	sec	not deb	maj	Separates motion of possible/desirable
RECONSIDER	I move to reconsider the vote on the motion re...	sec	deb	maj	Must be made by member who voted on prevailing side
POINT OF ORDER	Point of Order	no sec	not deb	no vote	Ruled on by chair; may interrupt spkr
POINT OF INFORMATION	Point of Information	no sec	not deb	no vote	May interrupt, if important

Reference: *Robert's Rules of Order newly Revised*

Summary of Motions

(to accompany Motion Chart)

Main Motions

- Main Motions introduce business to the assembly.
 - new business – “I move that we have a picnic”.
 - business that relates to other business “I move the adoption of the recommendations of the membership committee.”
- Main Motions need a second, are debatable, are amendable, require a majority vote and can be reconsidered.
- Main Motions can be introduced only when no other business is pending; they rank lowest in the order of motions.

Secondary Motions

- Secondary Motions have two functions:
 - to help resolve the main motion
 - to resolve procedural problems that arise during the course of the business meeting
- Some of these have a definite order of rank (see Motion Chart). Others have no special order. They are admissible when applicable. The requirements for these motions vary with each motion.
- Secondary Motions may be introduced while a main motion is pending but must be decided before further consideration of the main motion.
- Any number of Secondary Motions may be ending at one time.

Motions with an Order of Rank

Through experience, the ranking of motions has evolved into the fairest and most logical way of handling these motions. As shown on the chart, the Main Motion is at the bottom of the list. It is the lowest in rank because it can only be introduced when no other business is pending.

- After the Main Motion is introduced, the Secondary Motions may be introduced, but they are admissible only if they are introduced in the order of rank from the lowest to the highest.
- A higher ranking motion is always admissible if a lower ranking motion is pending.
- A lower ranking motion is not admissible if a higher ranking motion is pending.
- When several Secondary Motions are pending at one time, the highest ranking one is voted on first.
- After all have been dealt with, the Main Motion is voted on.
- Privileged Motions (recess and adjourn) are of the highest rank and are always admissible; they must be decided immediately.

Motions with No Special Order

These motions relate to procedures and are in order when applicable. When proposed, they must be decided before other business can resume.

Confusion between some main motions and some secondary motions may arise because of a similarity in wording.

Examples: amend; commit; limit debate; postpone; recess; adjourn.

When a Main Motion is under consideration and one of these motions is proposed, it is a **Secondary Motion**.

When no other business is pending and one of these motions is proposed, it is a **Main Motion**.

Motion Drill: Main Motion and Amendment

Meeting of Our Lady's Parish Council

President: Thank you, Mrs. Green, for the report on community activities. Are there any comments from the members?

Mrs. Rose: (after being recognized by the chair) Madam president, the report recommended that we support the girl's ball team. I move that we spend \$100.00 and buy 10 sweaters with our name on them for the team members.

Member: Second.

President: It has been moved and seconded that we spend \$100.00 and buy 10 sweaters with our name on them for the team members. It is open for discussion.

Mrs. Rose: Mrs. Green said that the team needs sweaters and we could advertise our council at the same time. It may bring us new members.

Mrs. Kelly: (after recognition) Recently, I was involved with another group that purchased sweaters with names on them and they cost \$20.00 each. So, I move to amend the motion by striking out \$100.00 and inserting \$200.00.

Member: Second.

President: It has been moved and seconded that the motion be amended by striking out the figure of \$100.00 and inserting \$200.00. Is there any discussion?

Mrs. Brent: (after recognition) Madam president, we just had a very successful craft sale and one of our objectives is supporting community activities. We can afford \$200.00, so I fully agree with the amendment and the motion.

Mrs. Pool: (after recognition) I think that \$200.00 would be better spent on making repairs to the parish hall. Then we could do more fund raising. I'm against spending any money on the ball team.

Mrs. Water: (after recognition) Madam president, I think there is going to be a special drive to repair the church. I feel it is important to encourage community activity and this is a good way, since it is needed.

President: (when discussion is finished) If there is no more discussion, I will take the vote.

The vote is for the amendment to strike out \$100.00 and insert \$200 in this motion. It means that we will spend \$200 if we agree to buy sweaters. All those in favour of the amendment? (nine members vote)

All those against the amendment? (three members vote)

The majority voted for the amendment. The amendment is adopted. Is there any further discussion on the motion, which now reads, “that we spend \$200.00 to buy 10 sweaters with our name on them for the girl’s ball team.” (pause)

If there is no further discussion on this motion, we will vote. The motion you are being asked to vote on is, “that we spend \$200.00 to buy 20 sweaters with our name on them for the girl’s ball team.”

All those in favour of the motion? (eight members vote)

All those against the motion? (five members vote)

The majority are in agreement. The motion is carried. Would Mrs. Green and her committee please order these sweaters, and the treasurer is directed to write out a cheque for \$200.00. The next item of business is the picnic.

Motion Drill: Amend and Postpone

Meeting of the Beaver Historical Society

- President: Is there any other business for this meeting?
- 1st Member: Madam president.
- President: Yes, Mrs. Gray.
- Mrs. Gray: Madam president, I move that we use the beaver symbol on all our letterhead.
- 2nd Member: Second.
- President: It has been moved and seconded that we use the beaver symbol on all our letterhead. The motion is open for discussion.
- Mrs. Gray: (after receiving recognition from the president) Madam president, we are called the Beaver Historical Society and I think we should use the beaver on our letterhead.
- Mrs. Pink: (after receiving recognition) Madam President, I move to amend the motion by adding the words “and envelopes” to the motion.
- 3rd Member: Second
- President: It has been moved and seconded to amend the motion by adding “and envelopes” to the motion. Any discussion on the amendment?
- Mrs. Pink: (after recognition) Madam president, if we are going to put the beaver on the letterhead, we should have it on the envelopes too.
- Mrs. Blue: (after recognition) Madam president, I move to postpone the motion until the next meeting.
- 4th Member: Second.
- President: It has been moved and seconded to postpone the motion until the next meeting. Any discussion on the motion to postpone?
- Mrs. Blue: (after recognition) Madame president, the club’s artist is not here tonight and I

would like to hear her views on this matter before voting on it. The motions should be postponed until we hear from her.

5th Member: (after recognition) Madam President, we should not use the beaver symbol because it (president interrupts)

President: Your comments seem to be on the main motion. We are now discussing the postponement. You may speak later. Is there any further discussion on the motion to postpone? If there is no further discussion (after waiting a few seconds) the motion is to postpone the motion re: the beaver symbol on letterhead until the next meeting.

All those in favour of postponing? (nearly all hands go up)

All those against postponing? (two hands are raised)

The majority voted in favour; the motion is postponed along with the amendment. Is there any other business for this meeting?

Motion Drill: Bringing Back a Postponed Motion

Meeting of the Beaver Historical Society

President: Time for unfinished business. At the last meeting, a motion was postponed. It reads as follows, “That we use the beaver symbol on all our letterhead.” There was an amendment to add the words, “and envelopes.” The motion is back and discussion is on the amendment.

Mrs. Gray: (after being recognized by the chair) Madam president, I would like to repeat my reasons for making the motion. Because “beaver” is in our title, I feel we should use the beaver as symbol on our letterhead, but I don’t like the idea of putting it on envelopes.

Mrs. Pink: (after recognition) Madam president, I made the amendment because I think our letterhead and envelopes should match. I like the idea.

President: It was mentioned at the last meeting that it would be good to have the opinion of our artist. Mrs. Gold, would you give us your views?

Mrs. Gold: I think it is a terrific idea and the beaver should go on both the letterhead and the envelopes.

President: Is there any further discussion on the amendment? (after waiting a few seconds) We will vote on the amendment to add “and envelopes” to the motion.

All those in favour of the amendment? (10 people raise their hand)

All those against the amendment? (three people raise their hand)

The majority voted in favour. The amendment is carried. The motion now is “that we use the beaver symbol on all our letterhead and envelopes.” Is there any discussion?

Mrs. Teal: (after recognition) Madam president, we should not use the beaver symbol on our stationery because the Wildlife Society uses it and it would not be appropriate. It may even be illegal.

Mrs. Gray: (after recognition) I thought they discarded that symbol and have a new one.

Mrs. Blue (after recognition) Madam president, I think we should find out for sure before we

take this step. I move that we refer this motion to the laws committee and ask that they report back at the next meeting regarding the legality of this action.

1st Member: Second

President: It has been moved and seconded that this motion be referred to the laws committee and that they report the legalities of this action at the next meeting. Any discussion on this motion to refer?

Mrs. Gold: (after recognition) It would be very expensive if we went ahead with this and then couldn't use the stationery.

President: Any other discussion? (pause) Then we will vote on the motion to refer the matter to the laws committee to report back next meeting.

All those in favour of referring it to a committee? (12 people vote yes)

All those against referring it to a committee? (three people vote no)

The majority is in favour. The motion is referred to the laws committee who shall find out the legalities of this move and report at the next meeting. Next item of business is the picnic.

Questionnaire: On Rules

1. A *Constitution & Bylaws* article states that the president-elect shall be responsible for the standing committee on membership. A council wishes to suspend this rule and allow the president-elect to chair another committee instead. Is it allowed to suspend this rule?
2. A standing rule (policy and procedure) of a council states that monthly meetings shall be held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30p.m. At a general meeting, one of the members mentioned that the next meeting night is the same night as a special event for which many of the members had tickets. She suggested changing the meeting night.

Can the members at that meeting change the meeting for the following month?

Is it necessary to use the motion to suspend the rule?

Suggest wording for a motion to change the night.

3. A council feels that every member attending a convention should have a vote at the convention business meeting.

Where would you look to find out if this is allowed?

If it is not allowed, how would you go about changing the existing rule?

4. “Standing rules of a convention” state that each speaker is limited to two minutes for discussion on a motion. *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised* allows each member to speak for 10 minutes during discussion of a motion.

What length of time should the president allow for each speaker?

5. Is the authority for adopting a *Constitution & Bylaws* given to the general membership or the executive?
6. Is it the general membership or the executive who adopt Standing Rules (policy and procedure)?
7. Where would you look to find out what the rules are for making a motion to reconsider an adopted motion?

Questionnaire: On Motions

What motion would you propose if:

1. Questions about the topic of the main motion are not being answered to your satisfaction and the member who is knowledgeable on the topic is not in attendance.
2. You want to change something in the main motion.
3. The main motion under discussion involves spending a large sum of money, yet very little is known about the subject and it is not clear if there is a true need.
4. Discussion has become heated and there seems to be an impasse as far as any agreement is concerned.
5. Discussion has been going on a long time and members seem to be repeating each other's points.
6. You have just received some new information about a motion that was adopted earlier in the meeting; you had voted in favour of it and now this information causes you to change your mind and you feel other members may change their minds too.
7. You want to suggest that the meeting might be changed.

Questionnaire: On Committees

1. What is the main difference between a standing committee and a special committee?
2. Do you recall any other differences?
3. Should the president be invited to attend committee meetings?
4. The president is an ex officio member of all committees except the Committee.
(fill in the)
5. Should a council make a motion to adopt a report of a committee?
6. What should be done about recommendations in a report?
7. Is it necessary to take minutes of a committee meeting? How would it help?
8. Should committee minutes be read at a general meeting?
9. May the chairperson of a committee enter into the discussion of ideas or motions at committee meetings or must she remain impartial? Discuss.
10. The following motion was adopted at a general meeting:

“I move that a committee be established to study the need and desire for youth activities in the parish.”

What details need to be settled about this committee before going on to other business?



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