



# Conducting a Business Meeting:

## The Agenda, Motions and Decorum

Kay Allison Crews, PRP, CP

# Kay's Rule of Order

Members Have a **RIGHT**  
to an Efficient Meeting!



# What is an Agenda?

- Agenda:
  - List of meeting activities
  - In order to be taken up
  - May include specific items of business to be discussed
  - May, but is not required to, include specific times for one or more activities.



# The Agenda in a Regular Meeting

- MRS SUN
- Minutes
- Reports (Officers & Standing Committee Chairman)
- Special Committee Reports
- Special Orders (things required by the Bylaws)
- Unfinished Business
- New Business



# Minutes

- Can be preceded by opening ceremonies and rituals, if that is part of the custom of the organization
- Minutes can be read, or a committee can be appointed to approve the minutes



# Reports of Officers and Standing Committee Chairmen

- Officers report first
- Officers report by rank
- Standing Committees report after the officers
- Reports are not usually “adopted” - although the report may end with a motion, which is taken up at that time



# Special Committee Reports

- Called on in order appointed (and only if they have something to report)
- Called on if they have been instructed to report on that day



# Special Orders

- Confusing concept
- Items required by the Bylaws to be done at a specific meeting
- Items of business moved to be taken up at a specific date or time





# Unfinished Business

- Formerly known as “Old Business”
- Includes:
  - The item being discussed at the time the last meeting adjourned
  - Any Unfinished Business from the previous meetings
  - Items postponed until this meeting
- Should not be called for if there is none



# New Business

- Members can bring up new business here in the form of a motion
- Items on the table may be brought from the table
- All business should be presented in the form of a **motion**, and not discussion



# Standard Characteristics of Main Motions

- Lowest ranking motion - cannot interrupt a speaker or report, or consideration of another motion
- Must be seconded
- Is amendable
- Is debatable
- Requires a majority vote



# Handling Motions

- 6 Steps to Handling a Motion

Member makes a motion	Debate
Another member seconds the motion	Chairman puts the question
Chairman states the question	Announce the results



# Making a Motion

- Rise or seek the attention of the Chairman
- Once recognized, state your name and other identifying information
- State your motion
  - WRITE IT DOWN
- Must be seconded
  - Seconder need not rise or be recognized
- “I move that....”
  - “Second”



# Stating the Question

- The Chairman restates the question
- Should exactly match the Maker's language (or seek his permission to change)
- Ownership of motion changes
- "It has been moved and seconded that...  
Are you ready for debate?"



# Debate

- Members are recognized (called on) by the Chair and granted the right to speak
- The maker of a motion has the right to speak to it first (but is not required to do so)
- Limits on debate, if established by the body, must be followed (default in RONR: each member may speak two times per day to each question for ten minutes per speech)



# Debate

- Debate should rotate between pro and con
- Debate must be directed to the Chair
- Debate may not go into the motives or personalities of other individuals





# Frequently Used Motions

- **Amend:** Changes the wording of the motion
- **Commit:** Appoints a smaller group to study the issue
- **Postpone to a Certain Time:** Postpones further consideration of the motion
- **Previous Question:** Ends debate and moves directly to a vote
- **Recess:** A brief break
- **Adjourn:** Closes the meeting



# Amend

- A motion to change - in an editorial sense
  - the wording (or even the intent) of the main motion.
- Types of amendment:
  - Insert (within the motion) or add (at the end)
  - Strike out word(s) or even whole sentences or paragraphs
  - Strike out and insert - a combination of the two



# Commit

- A motion that sends the main motion to a smaller group for further study or action
- Key points to consider with a motion to commit:
  - Standing or special committee?
  - Are they authorized to do something other than study and report back?
  - When is their report due?
  - Do they need a budget?



# Postpone to a Certain Time

- A motion that delays further action on the pending question(s) until a certain time, or after a specific event has occurred.
- Items may be postponed to no later than the next regular meeting (business quarter rule)
- “I move that further consideration of this issue be postponed until 2:00”



# Previous Question

- A motion to end debate and amendment, and immediately move to a vote
- Because it limits the rights of members to debate, it requires 2/3 vote for adoption
- Can be applied to the immediately pending question, or all pending questions
- Is undebatable



# Recess

- A request to take a brief pause in the meeting
- Not debatable, but amendable as to the amount of time of the recess
- Usually handled by unanimous consent



# Adjourn

- A motion to end the current meeting
- Not debatable or amendable
- Usually handled by unanimous consent, or the Chair assumes the question
- “If there is no further business to come before the Assembly, the meeting is adjourned.”



# Putting the Question to a Vote

- The Chairman restates the question
  - Exactly as the maker made it (as amended)
  - This is the version of the question that goes in the minutes, if they are all different
  - “Are you ready for the question? The question is that....”





# Announcing the Results of the Vote

- Four steps:
  - Which side “has it”
  - If the motion is adopted or lost
  - What action will be taken as a result of the vote
  - Call for the next business in order
- “The Ayes have it, the motion is adopted, and the Treasurer will pay \$100 in symposium expenses. Is there any further business to come before the meeting?”



# Decorum

- Address all debate to the Chairman
- Avoid using a member's name
- Avoid speaking against your own motion
- Be seated during an interruption by the Chairman



# Decorum

- Confine debate to the merits of the pending question
- Refrain from speaking adversely on a prior action that is not pending
- Refrain from attacking a member's motives
- Be courteous



# Review

- The Agenda
- Standard characteristics of motions
- Steps to Handling a Motion
- Rules of Debate
- Decorum in a Meeting



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# Questions?

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