

The Art of Presiding

- Presiding is more of an art than a science.
 - Qualities of a good presider.
 - Impartiality
 - Courtesy
 - Common sense
 - Humor
- Types of meeting
 - Assembly - membership meeting
 - Board meeting
 - Small board (12 or less) meeting
 - Committee meeting
- Terms
 - Podium is a raised platform or dais
 - Lectern is a reading desk or stand that may be on the floor or set on a table.
- Methods of Voting
 - Voice vote
 - Show of hands
 - Raise voting cards
 - Rising vote
 - Rising vote and count
 - Ballot
 - Unanimous or general consent

Before the Meeting

- Know your organization's bylaws, operating policies and other rules.
- Have past minutes.
- Prepare an agenda with the Secretary.
- Prepare a script (more about that later).
- Have knowledge of parliamentary procedures.
- Have a competent parliamentarian who will be seated next to you during the meeting.
- The chair makes rulings not the parliamentarian.
- If you anticipate having to appoint a committee, have possible members in mind.
- Decide what materials you should have at the lectern. (gavel, agenda, script, past minutes)
- Make sure the room is set up the way you want it and the equipment (projectors, screen, microphone are where you want them and they are working.

During the Meeting

- Call the meeting to order on time.
 - Several minutes before time to start, ask the members “please” be seated.
 - At the announced starting time, start the meeting with one rap of the gavel
 - Indicate type of meeting, name of organization, date, time, place and the chair and secretary are present
- Start through the agenda
 - Say, “The next item of business is” or “The next business in order is”
- Officers’ and Committee Reports
 - If the report does not have any recommendations to be acted on by the assembly, the chair acknowledges the report has been presented
 - Reports with recommendations are stated as motions by the committee chair and acted on as a regular motion. They do not need a second
- Motions
 - The chair recognizes someone. (Show hand, rise)
 - The member states the motion. If the motion is fairly long or complicated, it should be written out. Prevents “Fuzzy Motions.” Do not accept, “so move” or “I make a motion to that effect.”
 - The motion is seconded (the seconder may speak out) If no second, the chair says, “Is there a second.” If there is none, the motion is not before the assembly.
 - The chair states the motion (This puts the motion before the assembly.) What the chair states is what is before the assembly. If it is misstated, the maker of the motions should correct the chair
 - The chair asks, “Are you ready for the question?” or “Is there debate? (or discussion?)”
- Debate or discussion
 - The chair should:
 - recognize the maker of the motion first.
 - encourage those speaking to indicate if they are speaking for the motion or against the motion.
 - try to alternate between the pros and the cons. If everyone is speaking for the motion, the chair can ask if anyone wants to speak against. If there is no one, go on to the vote.
 - monitor the right of members to speak two times to a motion. When the chair sees someone who wants to speak a second, he should ask if anyone wants to speak before recognizing the individual to speak a second time.
 - provide the opportunity for every member to speak up to ten minutes each time they speak to a motion. This privilege can be

- modified by the assembly.
 - enforce that discussion is germane to the question before the assembly.
 - be alert to whether actions are appropriate at any occasion. If they are not, they should be declared the action “not in order” or “out of order.”
 - insure that all of the discussion is through the chair and not between the members.
- Putting the Question
 - When it appears there is no more discussion, the chair restates the question and says, “Those in favor say Aye”
 - “All of those in favor say Aye”
 - “All in favor say Aye”
 - “As many as are in favor say Aye”
 - Then say, “Those opposed say No”
- Announce the Result
 - Voice vote – “The ayes have it and the motion is adopted.”
 - “The noes have it and the motion is lost.”
 - Rising vote– “The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted.”
 - “The negative has it and the motion is lost.”
 - Counted vote–“There are 32 in the affirmative and 30 in the negative. The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted.”
 - “There are 29 in the affirmative and 33 in the negative. The negative has it and the motion is lost.”
 - Two-thirds– “There are two thirds in the affirmative and the motion is adopted.”
 - “There is less than two thirds in the affirmative and the motion is lost.”
 - Announce what will happen as a result of the vote.
- End the meeting
 - Adjourn at a specified time in the agenda
 - Adjourn by motion and second by members
 - Adjourn by unanimous consent
 - Be sure to announce, “The meeting is adjourned.”

Small Boards and Committees

Business is conducted with less formality in small boards and committees.

- Members are not required to obtain the floor, to make motions or speak and may do so from their seat.
- Motions need not be seconded

- There is no limit to the number of times a member may speak to a motion.
- Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.
- The chair need not rise while putting the question
- The chair can make motions, speak in discussion and usually vote on all questions.

Preparing a Script*

Types of Scripts

- Platform book – Word-for-word script for the presider of a convention
- Contains procedural (business meeting) and nonprocedural material (introductions, ceremonies, presentation of awards, etc.)
- Partial script – Script for procedural or nonprocedural activities.
- Script Cards – Cards with the proper wording for specific motions.

Odds and Ends

- ❖ Use the third person when addressing the assembly. (“The chair, Your President”)
- ❖ The chair stands at the lectern while presiding. If a member is give the floor, the chair sits down or steps away from the lectern. The chair does not turn over the meeting to anyone.
- ❖ The chair does not respond to debate.
- ❖ The chair may speak to a motion but must step down and join the members until the motion is disposed of. He says, “The Vice-president will assume the chair.”
- ❖ A motion should precede discussion.
- ❖ At recess, state the time to return, not “return in 10 minutes.”
- ❖ During elections, the chair presides even if a candidate.
- ❖ Friendly amendments are frowned upon by Robert – Possible solution, unanimous consent.

References

Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 10th Edition

Guide for the Presiding Officer, 3rd Edition, Joyce L. Stephens

**Scripts: A Parliamentary Tool*, Mark Schilansky, National Parliamentarian, Vol 63, First Quarter 2002

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