

## PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURE

### PARLIMENTARY AND MEETING PROCEDURES:

- I. Meeting procedures include:
  - A. Submit excuses in WRITING to the Stated Clerk prior to the meeting.
  - B. If anyone intends to make a motion for amendment or substitution, please write it on the enclosed form and submit it the Stated Clerk through the Moderator as the motion is placed on the floor. Additional forms will be on the Stated Clerk's desk.
- II. POINTS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE (Based on Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised) (Note: The procedures below are furnished to you by Presbytery's Council in hopes that you will find them helpful to understand the way parliamentary procedure works in a Presbytery Meeting.
  - A. OBTAINING THE FLOOR
    1. Before a member of the governing body (g.b) may make a motion or speak in debate, he or she must obtain the floor (be recognized) from the moderator as having the exclusive right to be heard at that time.

EXCEPTIONS:

      - a. Call for Order of the Day
      - b. Call for Division
      - c. Call for a separate vote on several items
      - d. Parliamentary inquiry
      - e. Point of information
      - f. Point of order
      - g. Raise a Question of Privilege
      - h. Appeal of the Moderator's Ruling (requires a second)
    2. The moderator must recognize any members who seek the floor while entitled to it.
    3. To claim the floor, a member shall rise at his or her place when no one else has the floor and address the moderator.
    4. When two or more rise at about the same time, the one who rose first and addressed the moderator after the floor was yielded is entitled to be recognized first. EXCEPTIONS to rule of first to rise and address the moderator, if the moderator has not recognized anyone as yet:
      - a. The member who made the motion claims the floor and has not already spoken on the question.

- b. No one is entitled to the floor a second time in debate on the same motion as long as another member who has not spoken desires the floor. No member may speak more than twice on the same motion.
- c. In cases where the moderator knows that person seeking the floor have opposite opinions on the question (and neither a. or b. above applies) the moderator should let the floor alternate, as far as possible, between those favoring and opposing the measure.

The above EXCEPTIONS are called "claiming preference in being recognized." A person cannot rise to claim this if the moderator has recognized another member. If the moderator makes a mistake by raising a point of order, the moderator should immediately correct the error.

- B. BUSINESS IS BROUGHT BEFORE THE GOVERNING BODY by what is called a main motion. It is proposed by either (1) an agency of the g.b. (i.e. Division, Committee, Council or Commissioner) or (2) by an officer of the g.b. in line with specific duties (i.e. the Stated Clerk) or (3) by an individual member of the g.b. In the case of an agency, no second is required, all others require a second.
- C. A person should not discuss a motion before he or she makes it. A motion can be prefaced by a few words of explanation which must not become a speech; or a member can first request information, or a member can indicate briefly what he or she wishes to propose and can ask the moderator to assist in wording in appropriate motion. In general, however, when a member has obtained the floor for the purpose of a motion, he or she makes the motion immediately. Desired improvements can be made as follows in Item D.
- D. PROCEDURES BY WHICH A PROPOSAL IN A MAIN MOTION CAN BE IMPROVED UPON BEFORE ACTION IS TAKEN
  - 1. After the motion is made and before the moderator states that it is before the g.b, any member may quickly rise and with little explanatory comment informally suggest one or more modifications, which the maker can accept or reject as he or she wishes. This should usually be limited to minor changes on which there is unlikely to be a difference of opinion.
  - 2. After the moderator has stated that motion is on the floor for consideration, one of the following methods to improve the motion must be used:
    - a. The maker may ask for unanimous consent to modify the motion. If any member objects, the modification must be in the form of an amendment (see next section).

b. A motion to amend can be made by any member and must be seconded and is debatable. Motions to amend are made in one of the following ways:

- 1) To insert or to add words (or a paragraph)
- 2) To strike out words (or a paragraph)
- 3) To strike out and insert words
- 4) To substitute (by striking out an entire paragraph, section or a complete main motion and inserting something different). NOTE: There are special rules for a substitute that can be quite complicated. It is best to try to amend by using the strike/insert method.

Any one of the above motions to amend can themselves be subject to amendment, but this secondary amendment may not be further amended until it is acted upon. When a main motion is amended, it now becomes an amended main motion.

- 1) To be germane, an amendment must in some way involve the same question that is raised by the motion it which it is applied.
- 2) An amendment cannot introduce an independent question; but an amendment can be hostile to, or even defeat, the spirit of the original motion and still be germane.
- 3) An improper amendment would include one that merely makes the adoption of the amended question equivalent to a rejection of the original motion.

c. If proper recasting of the main motion will require time, the motion to commit can be used to refer the main motion to a committee.

d. If the general problem posed by a main motion might be better dealt with by an alternative measure which cannot be conveniently proposed as an amendment in the form of a substitute, a member speaking may urge rejection of the pending motion saying that if it is voted down, he or she will offer a different main motion in the same subject which can be described briefly. If the main motion is then voted down, the moderator immediately recognizes this member again for the purpose of making his or her alternative motion, even if another member rises to claim the floor first and addressed the moderator.

## SUMMARY OF PROCESS FOR MAIN MOTION AND AMENDMENTS

- A. Main Motion (made by an agency, officer of member of Presbytery)  
Floor is open to discussion and debate of A.
- B. Amendment to A. An amendment B to Main Motion A may proposed by any member of Presbytery. Discussion and debate must now focus on Amendment B.
- C. Amendment-to-Amendment B. An Amendment C. may be proposed to Amendment B. by any member of Presbytery. Discussion and debate must now focus on Amendment C. to Amendment B.

### The Amendment process stops here.

Sequence by which Presbytery proceeds to develop the motion:

- First: C. is discussed, debated, and accepted or rejected by vote.  
This determines content of B.
- Second: B. is discussed, debated and accepted or rejected by vote.  
This determines content of A.
- Third: A. is discussed, debated, and accepted or rejected by vote.  
This becomes the action of Presbytery.

- E. MOTION FOR THE PREVIOUS QUESTION ("Calling the Question")- result is to immediately close debate and the making of subsidiary motions (except the motion to Lay on the Table). This motion, which is usually stated, "I move the previous question" or "I move the previous question on all pending motions up to and including the main motion." The MEMBER MUST STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED BY THE MODERATOR before this motion can be properly before the g.b. Calls for the "Question" by members from their seats are not motions for the Previous Question and are simply informal expressions of individual members' desires to proceed to vote. These calls are disorderly if made while another member is speaking or seeking recognition. When the motion is properly made and seconded, it is not debatable and requires a two-thirds vote to pass. When it does pass, then a vote is immediately taken on the previous motion or motions.
- F. POINT OF ORDER - It is the moderator's responsibility to enforce the rules. Any member who believes he or she has noticed a case where the moderator is failing to do so can, at the time the breach occurs, call attention to it by making a POINT OF ORDER. The effect is to require the moderator to make a ruling on the question involved. The moderator may rule on the point of order, or if in doubt, may submit it to a vote of the g.b. In which case it is debatable.
- G. APPEAL - although it is the duty of the moderator to rule on all questions of parliamentary procedure, any two members by moving and seconding an appeal immediately after the moderator has ruled can require him or her to submit the matter to vote of the g.b. Generally, the appeal is debatable and the moderator may speak first and last. A majority or tie vote sustains the decisions of the moderator.