

# BASIC PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

## FOR 4-H CLUBS

BY ALLISON KOSTO, BROADWATER COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT



Parliamentary procedure can serve as an effective tool to making a meeting run efficiently and orderly. The structure is designed to protect the rights of the minority while allowing the majority to rule. Using parliamentary procedure can be as simple or as complicated as needed to fit your organization or group. This publication offers basic information for using parliamentary procedure in your club. The resource that serves as the guide to parliamentary procedure is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

Remember some of these concepts when using parliamentary procedure:

- Ideas and activities are presented in the form of a Yes/No motion to be voted on which forces a decision.
- Everyone can only discuss or talk once until everyone has had an opportunity to discuss. No one can talk for a second time until everyone has gone once.
- Members must be recognized by the President before they can speak.
- Only one main motion or idea can be presented at a time.



Motion	What it does...	What you say...	2nd	Amendable (can you change it)?	Debatable (can you talk about it)?	Vote Required
Main Motion	The main idea or activity for the group to vote on.	I move to...	YES	YES	YES	Majority
Amendment	Change parts of the main motion	I move to amend the main motion by striking ... (and/or adding ...)	YES	YES	YES	Majority
Refer to a Committee	Gives the motion to a committee to research and discuss the topic.	I move to refer the main motion to a committee of ...	YES	YES	YES	Majority
Postpone to next meeting	Moves discussion and voting on the motion to the next meeting	I move to postpone the main motion to the next meeting.	YES	YES	YES	Majority
Table	Sets the motion aside while more pressing business is attended to.	I move to lay the main motion on the table.	YES	NO	NO	Majority
Call the Question	Indicates that a member is ready to vote on the motion or on all pending motion.	I call the question or I move the previous questions.	YES	NO	NO	2/3
Division of the House	Calls for counting revote on the main motion.	Division	NO	NO	NO	Revote
Take a recess	Provides for a break in the meeting to get up and stretch or use the facilities.	I move to take a recess.	YES	YES	NO	Majority
Limit or Extend Debate	Sets a limit on the amount of time to debate on a topic or extends that time.	I move that debate be limited to...	YES	NO	YES	2/3
Adjourn	Ends the meeting	I move to adjourn.	YES	NO	NO	Majority

## Main Motions

should be asked for three times.

### Eight Steps to a Motion

1. Obtain the floor—Member rises or raises his/her hand and waits to be recognized before speaking.
2. Recognition by the President—Permission to speak is granted to the member by announcing the member's name.
3. Make the motion—Member states the motion saying "I move ..." (NEVER say "I motion that" or "I so move").
4. Motion is Seconded—Another member seconds the motion. If there is no second, then the motion fails.
5. President Restates the Motion—Only the president can formally place a motion before the group. The president repeats the motion by stating, "*It has been moved and seconded that...*" Once stated by the chair, it cannot be changed or withdrawn without consent of the members.
6. Debate or Discussion—After restating the motion, the President will ask, "*Is there any discussion?*". The maker of the motion has the right to speak first. Discussion must be related to pending motion. The maker of the motion may vote against the motion, but may not speak against it. Discussion should be asked for three times before proceeding to a vote.
7. Vote—After discussion concludes, the President will ask for a vote. The motion should be restated and then the vote asked for. Always ask for a negative vote no matter how unanimous the affirmative vote may appear.
8. Results—The president must announce the results of the vote by stating if it passed or failed and then the effect of the vote.

### Example Main Motion

Member receives recognition from President to make motion.

Member: "*I move that we...*"

President: "*It has been moved that we..., is there a second?*"

Another member: "*I second the motion.*"

President: "*It has been moved and seconded that we..., is there any discussion?*"

Discussion proceeds. Members must be recognized by the president before speaking. Once the discussion stops, the president can ask for vote. Discussion

President: "*We will now proceed to vote to ... All in favor of please say aye. All opposed say nay.*"

President: "*The motion passes/fails, we will ...*"

---

## Amendments

### Amending Motions

An amendment changes the motion in the discussion phase. A motion can be amended by either (1) striking out a word or phrase, (2) inserting a word or phrase or (3) striking and insert a word or phrase.

### Example Amendments

Main Motion: "*I move that our 4-H club will have a club project tour followed by a family BBQ.*"

1. Striking Out a Word or Phrase: *I move to amend the motion by striking out the words "followed by a family BBQ".*
2. Inserting a Word or Phrase: *I move to amend the motion by inserting the "at Bob's house" at the end of the motion.*
3. Striking and Inserting: *I move to amend the motion by striking out "a club project tour" and inserting "a pool party".*

Once a motion for an amendment is made and seconded, discussion follows on the amendment only. A vote is need to pass the amendment. Then the discussion will move back to the main motion.

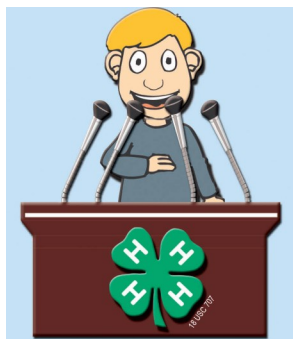
If the amendment passes, then discussion follows on the motion as amended. For example, if Amendment #1 above passed the main motion would become "*I move that our 4-H club will have a club project tour.*" Discussion would be on the project tour alone and not the family BBQ. If the amendment does not pass then the discussion moves back to the original main motion.

### Amending Amendments

It is possible to amend an amendment using the same concept. Example Using Amendment #3 Above: *I move to amend the amendment to inserting "at the park" after pool party.*

Amendments must be voted on before the main motion. Amendments to Amendments must be voted on before the original Amendment. The main motion can be voted on after all amendments are addressed.

---



## Running a Club Business Meeting

### Order of Business

- Call to order (President)
- Pledge of Allegiance & 4-H Pledge
- Roll Call (Secretary)
- Secretary's Report/Minutes (Secretary)
- Treasurer's Report (Treasurer)
- Correspondence (Secretary)
- Committee Reports
- Unfinished Business (President)
- New Business (President)
- Adjournment



### Sample Club Meeting

#### Call to Order & Pledges

President: *"This meeting will now come to order. (rap gavel twice) Will Mary please lead the Pledge of Allegiance and Matt the 4-H Pledge." Pledges are recited. "Will the secretary please call roll?"*

#### Roll Call

Secretary: *"As I call roll, will each member stand and tell the club about the progress of one of your 4-H projects since the last meeting?"* Roll call is completed. (There are many different ways of answering roll. Use your imagination and record it in secretary's book.)

#### Secretary's Report/Minutes

President: *"Will the secretary now read the minutes from the last meeting?"*

Secretary: Read Minutes

President: *"Are there any corrections or additions to the minutes?"* Pause. *"If not, they stand approved as read."* (If there are changes, the president should ask the secretary to make the necessary changes and then state *"The minutes are approved as corrected."* A motion and vote is never needed for approving minutes.)

#### Treasurer's Report

President: *"We will now have the Treasurer's Report."*

Treasurer: Announce balance on accounts as well as expenditures since the last meeting.

#### Correspondence

President: *"The secretary will now read club correspondence."*

Secretary: Read any letters, thank yous, etc. that they club may have since the last meeting.

#### Committee Reports

President: *"Will Tom, the chairperson of the Community Service Committee, please report."*

Chairperson: Can report on any of the committee's progress as well as bring any committee motions to the main group. The President should proceed with the motion just like during the business portion of the meeting.

#### Unfinished Business

President: *"We will now proceed to unfinished business. The first item of business is the science experiment we plan on conducting at the next meeting."*

The club will make motions and discuss the issue as necessary. Then move on to the next agenda item.

Before moving to New Business the President should ask, *"Is there any other unfinished business?"*

#### New Business

President— *"If there is no more unfinished business, we will move on to new business. The first item of business is planning a club holiday party. Does any one have a motion to do a club holiday party?"*

The club will proceed on with the motion and discussion as well as the remaining agenda items.

President— *"Is there any other new business?"*

#### Adjournment

President— *"If there is no other business, we need a motion to adjourn the meeting."*

Member— *"Mr. President"*

President— *"Yes, Sue"*

Member— *"I move that we adjourn today until our next meeting on January 1st at Beth's house."*

Another member— *"I second."*

President— *"It has been moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting. All those in favor say aye." Group response. "All those opposed say nay." Group response. "The motion is passed. We will meet on January 1st at Beth's house."*

## Club Officers

### President

Being president of a club is an honor and serves as the leader for all of the membership of the club. Responsibilities of the president should include working with the club leader to prepare the agenda, arriving early to meetings, leading the group in activities, and keeping order during meetings. Being president can, at times, be challenging, but it also can be a very rewarding experience. Below are a few techniques to use at club meetings.

### Use of Gavel

- One Tap— Follows announcement of adjournment, passing a motion or to seat members.
- Two Taps—Calls the meeting to order.
- Three Taps—Signals all members to stand on the third tap.
- Series of Taps—Restore order in meetings. For example, if discussion strays from main motion.

### Ways to Vote

- Voice Vote—Most commonly use “all in favor of the motion say aye” and “all opposed say nay”.
- Standing Vote—Members stand so their votes can be counted.
- Show of Hands—Members raise their hands so their votes can be counted.
- Ballot—President and helpers hand out slips of paper, so members can write down their vote. Commonly used in elections.
- Roll Call—Members vote one at a time as their names are called.
- Honor System—Members close their eyes and vote by raising a hand.

### Vice-President

The primary responsibility of the Vice-President is to replace the President if he/she is absent by running meetings. In some groups the Vice-President also is the chairperson on committees.

### Secretary

The Secretary has a very important job in club meetings. He/She must keep track of all minutes as well as correspondence for the club and write any correspondence on behalf of the club. It is the secretary's

job to keep minutes at each meeting and turn in the Secretary's Book at the end of the 4-H year. The minutes should be record of what is done, not what is said. They should contain:

- Date & Place of Meeting
- Names of members and visitors present
- Approval of previous minutes
- All reports and what was done about them
- All motions with the name of the person who made them and whether the motion was carried or lost. Name of the person who seconded the motion is not important.
- New committee members formed and members on committees
- Time the meeting was adjourned
- Time and place of next meeting
- Any programs, refreshments or recreation that happened after the meeting



### Treasurer

Another important office in the club is the Treasurer. The Treasurer works closely with the club leader to manage funds and keeps financial records for the club including balancing accounts, tracking expenses and income, and reporting at each meeting. The Treasurer needs to turn in a report at the end of the 4-H year.

### Other Youth Officers

Your club may also have a variety of other officers. Each officer is important to the function of the club and has unique responsibilities. Here are some examples of other officers:

- Caller
- Recreation Leader
- Community Service Chair
- Historian
- Reporter
- Recruitment/Membership Chair

*The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Montana State University and Montana State University Extension prohibit discrimination in all of their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital and family status. Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jill Martz, Director of Extension, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717.*



#### **For more information contact:**

Allison Kosto,  
Extension Agent  
406-266-9242  
[Allison.kosto@montana.edu](mailto:Allison.kosto@montana.edu)

MSU Extension, Broadwater County  
417 Broadway  
Townsend MT 59644