

# 12 POINTERS TO USE AT YOUR MEETING

## Basic Rules Of Parliamentary Procedure

Most of the situations that arise at a meeting are covered in the following examples. Using these as a guide, anyone can participate efficiently at their squadron's meeting.

### THE MOTION

Basic step in getting action started. First, raise your hand for recognition, assuming no one has the floor. When recognized, rise and say, "**Commander, I move that we.....**" and state your motion.

Make a motion when you want to take some action as a group: to send a letter, to instruct a committee to spend money, hold a picnic, or have a special meeting for some purpose.

### THE AMENDMENT

Amendments are offered in the same way as motions. An amendment is made when you agree substantially with the motion that is on the floor, but want some changes before it is adopted. For example, a motion has been made to have a picnic on July 14, but that's a difficult day for some to attend. However July 15 would be a better day. You agreed to the picnic, just the day was wrong. Amend by saying "**Commander** (wait to be recognized) **I move to amend the motion by striking out 14th and inserting 15th.**" You can amend a motion by striking out, adding to, or change the wording as long as it is germane, i.e. closely related to the subject.

### AMENDING THE AMENDMENT

Just as a motion may be amended, an amendment may also be changed in the same way. As with the first amendment that related to the motion, the second amendment must relate to the first amendment. Confused? See example.

As **July 15th** was the first amendment to the motion, to have a picnic, the second amendment must relate to date, **July 15th** and not the picnic. Example, ".....to have a picnic July 15, starting at 10:00 AM". Don't expect another amendment to follow, Two amendments at one time is the limit

### SPEAKING ON MOTIONS OR AMENDMENTS

The author of the motion has the privilege to speak first and last. However as the maker, you can speak only in favor of the motion. You may vote against your motion. This does not apply to the second of the motion. He may speak or vote either in favor or against the motion. A second does not show support, only agrees it should be debated.

Remember, speak on the merits or demerits of the issue and do not resort to questionable parliamentary tactics. This will keep a friendlier atmosphere at your meetings.

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### HOW TO END DEBATE

**"Commander, I Call for the Previous Question."** This is procedure for ending debate after any member who wishes to speak has had opportunity to do so. Every Main Motion is a question, should we take this action, i.e...**to have a picnic on July 15 at 10:00?** To call for the previous question is saying, let's stop the debate and start voting on the last motion(s).

After a second is acquired, the vote is taken on **whether or not we should stop the debate or continue, NOT ON THE MAIN MOTION!** If two thirds (2/3) of the votes are aye, the debate is stopped and a vote then is on the motion (or motions) next. However, **"to Lay on the Table"** could still be moved (see next item) if the voting on the motion(s) has not been started.

As you can end debate, you can also, under this heading, limit or extend the time of debate for each member, or the debate itself. All of which need a 2/3 vote with no discussion to the merits of this motion.

### TABLE THE MOTION

To postpone an issue, (take temporarily out of discussion) make a motion **"to Table the Motion....."**. This is not debatable, needs a second, and passes with majority vote. Its purpose is not to kill the motion, but to temporarily set it aside while a more important matter is brought to the attention of the body. It should be brought back to the floor after the more important business has been completed. Same rules apply to bring the motion "off the table" as applied to put it there. If you wish to postpone the issue for a certain amount of time, say next meeting, **"Postpone to a certain day"** would be the proper motion.

### VOTING

After making the motion and debating, there comes a time when you will vote on the motion. It is important to know what counts and what does not when the votes are being tallied. The most common of all voting methods is a voice vote. The Chair decides which side had the most votes by sound. This should not be used when there are non-voting members present.

Any voting member who doubts the accuracy of the Chair's call, may request a **"Division of the House"**, a second is not required, nor a vote taken. The Chair then should stop and ask for the vote again by the showing of hands or members standing. If the member(s) is still not satisfied with the Chair's judgment, they may motion for a **"Roll Call"** vote. No member alone can request this, (such as the case with "Division of the House"), but needs to be seconded and a show of hands of at least 20% in the affirmative for a Roll Call vote. At this point you can tally with the Secretary. A Roll Call vote should only be used when you are sure that the Chair has miscalled the vote, and never for harassment.

### APPROVING THE MOTION

As the manners of voting are discussed, so should the requirement for approval of the motion. Usually it is a **"Majority of those Present and Voting"** in the affirmative. A majority is considered as the whole number over 50% of the sum of "aye" (yes) and "no" votes, i.e. 25 total votes, needs at least 13 to pass. Abstentions do not count for anything in this type of voting. It is as if the voter, who abstained, was not there.

Another form, but rarely used, is **"Majority of those Present"**. In this type, **abstentions do count**. If you have a meeting of a 100 voting members present, 50 vote "Aye" and no one votes "No", the motion still did not pass because you needed 51 Aye votes for approval. If you didn't vote "Aye", then a vote not casted is a "No" vote.

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Generally this type of voting is reserved for Constitution\Bylaws changes, or to fill a vacancy on an important board. "Majority of those Present" method is considered undesirable because it denies the member the right to stay neutral.

### **POINT OF INFORMATION**

There will be times when all this parliamentary jargon will seem a little confusing. If so, you may "**Rise to a Point of Information**". It is your right to ask the Chair, (presiding officer) a question about the motion or something else that is confusing to you. To give information is also under this heading. Something in the motion may need clarifying but you do not wish to debate, just give the information. It works both ways.

### **POINT OF ORDER**

"**Commander, I Rise to a Point of Order.**" Now here is an action you can take to interrupt the speaker, chair or whenever it is necessary. The chair should ask, "**What is the member's Point of Order?**" Most of the time you'll just get a blank stare waiting for you to proceed. State your objection, then the chair will say whether it is well taken, (agrees) or not well taken (disagrees). The decision must be made before any business is to continue. If the chair's ruling is not to your liking, see next section.

### **APPEAL THE DECISION**

When you disagree with the ruling, (decision) by the chair, either against you or somebody else, you may appeal to the body. This is if it was a judgement call and not a Bylaw (or similar) violation. The appeal must be called right after the ruling was made and a second is needed.

An opportunity to state your reasons for the appeal will be given. The chair will have time likewise, and questions might be asked from the body. You will need a majority of votes against the chair's decision to uphold your appeal, i.e. "**Shall the decision of the Chair stand?**" A tie vote will be in favor of the chair. Note: Since appeals tend to delay the meeting, and are not enjoyed by the members, it should be used only when the ruling was of such importance that you could not, in good conscience, allow the decision to stand.

In short, there are six subsidiary motions that can be applied to a main motion. All require a second, and all but one need a majority vote, **the exception is #2 Previous Question**, (end, limit or extend debate) which is 2/3's. Most are debatable, except the first two (To table & Previous Question). When there is no debate you should call for the vote after the second. "**All in favor of the motion** (state it) **say Aye, those opposed say no.**" The chair announces the results.

The subsidiary motions have rank over each other. One of a lower rank can not be moved while a higher rank is on the floor. The rank is high #1, to lowest #6.

1. **To Table** (Lay it on the Table, or take from)
2. **Previous Question** (end, limit, or extend debate)
3. **Postpone to a Certain Time** (i.e. next meeting)
4. **Refer to Committee** (planning, entertainment, etc.)
5. **Amendment to the Motion** (or amend the Amendment)
6. **Postpone Indefinitely** (way of finding out who is for or against the motion)

## **12 POINTERS TO USE AT YOUR MEETING**

All of the above apply to the main motion. Learn to use them and you will have a good working knowledge of parliamentary procedures to utilize at any future meeting.

The items covered in this article are in general terms and slight variations might be involved to more specific cases.

For easy reading:

### **Parliamentary Procedures At A Glance**

by O. Garfield Jones

Published by Penguin Group

For more detail information

### **Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised**

Henry M. Roberts

10<sup>th</sup> Edition

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Revised: May 15, 2000  
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