

# Parliamentary Procedure in Action

SCENE: SQUADRON MEETING

PARTICIPANTS: SQUADRON BRIDGE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

MEM = MEMBERS

CDR = COMMANDER

EXO = EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SEO = SQ. EDUCATIONAL OFFICER

AO = ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

SEC = SECRETARY

TRE = TREASURER

RUL = RULES COM/CH

IND = INDIVIDUAL MEMBER

MOD = MODERATOR

**MOD:** The purpose of this skit is to provide a practical demonstration of parliamentary procedure in a typical squadron meeting. The scene is a regular monthly general membership meeting. It will illustrate important applications of parliamentary procedure in an effort to keep from spreading bad procedural habits from one administration to the next. For information on conducting your meetings, please refer to the "Operations Training Program" section entitled, "Conducting a Meeting." Squadron bylaws referred to in the skit are the current "Model Bylaws for Squadrons of United States Power Squadrons ®" (24 January 2000). RONR refers to "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 10th ed." (October 2000).

Anyone present during this demonstration who wishes to ask a question about the content of the skit, please follow the normal procedure of being recognized or gaining the floor by rising (or raising your hand), address the Commander (or Moderator) without interrupting others, and after recognition, ask your question. All participants are to stand when reporting or speaking, except to second a motion or to voice vote.

It is my pleasure to ask the Commander to open the meeting.

CDR: (Rising) The regular general membership meeting of the \_\_\_\_\_  
Sail and Power Squadron will come to order. (Raps the gavel one time.)  
The Executive Officer, Lt/C \_\_\_\_\_ will lead us in  
the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.  
Please rise and face the flag.

EXO: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America ...

CDR: Please be seated. Thank you.

Lt/C \_\_\_\_\_, Secretary, is there a quorum present?

SEC: Yes, Commander, a quorum is present.

CDR: Thank you.

If there is no objection, the chair will vary the order of business as may be necessary to expedite the meeting. (Pause to listen.) Since there is no objection, it is so ordered.

Issued by: Leadership Development Committee

Issue Date: August 2009

## Parliamentary Procedure in Action

The next item of business is the approval of the minutes of our last general membership meeting. The minutes have been distributed to all members. Are there corrections to the minutes? (Pause to listen.) Since there are none, they are approved.

**MOD:** Here are two examples of the use of unanimous consent. The approval of the minutes of the previous general membership meeting is good usage and one that should be used in your meetings. Please note that the single word "corrections" is simpler and recommended rather than the often said, "additions, deletions or corrections." If there are corrections, the chair would say, "Are there further corrections?" (Pause to listen.), and then, "If there are no further corrections, the minutes are approved as corrected." Changing the order of business at the discretion of the chair is another example of the use of unanimous consent that will allow a smooth flow of business, even under unusual circumstances. Please note that the Commander paused to listen before saying, "Since there are none." in both examples.

**CDR:** The next item of business is the Commander's Report: Since the previous general membership meeting your Commander has attended the first business meeting of the Sundance Power Squadron subsequent to its being chartered. The Squadron is well organized and efficiently operated. In addition, your Commander has chaired the regular Executive Committee Meeting held last week. Are there any questions? (Pause) That concludes your Commander's report.

**MOD:** Please note that the Commander's report, like most reports, contained information only and does not need to be accepted by a vote taken by the members. Please note that the Commander did not use the pronoun, "my", but used the third person when saying commander's report. A presiding officer does not use personal pronouns, like "I" or "my", but speaks only in the third person.

**CDR:** We will now hear the report of the Executive Officer, Lt/C \_\_\_\_\_

**EXO:** All duties are current. One matter has come to light, which might be clarified by a parliamentary inquiry. The matter, Commander, deals with an "ex officio" member of a committee. By a provision of the squadron bylaws the Executive Officer is an "ex officio" member of all committees in that department. Several questions have been asked at one of our committee meetings. First, must an "ex officio" member be counted in determining if a committee quorum is present? Second, and of equal importance, does an "ex officio" member of a committee have a vote on that committee?

**CDR:** In answer to your first question, an "ex officio" member of a committee is not counted in determining a quorum. As to your second question, an "ex officio"

## Parliamentary Procedure in Action

member of a committee does have a vote in that committee's deliberations and decisions, as well as making motions and entering into debate.

EXO: Thank you, Commander. That concludes my report.

**MOD: Both of the Executive Officer's questions have been answered properly by the chair. The more complete description of an "ex officio" member is found in RONR (10th ed.), p. 466-467. Please note that the Executive Officer did not make a motion or recommendation at the end of the report. When there is a motion or recommendation at the end of the report, the assembly acts on the recommendation or motion.**

CDR: We will now hear the report of the Educational Officer, Lt/C \_\_\_\_\_

SEO: Thank you, Commander. Our Assistant Educational Officer called me yesterday and advised me that his employer is transferring him out of the area. He will be unable to continue serving as my assistant. Henry Jones has agreed to serve as my assistant for the remainder of this watch. I move that we elect Henry Jones to be Assistant Educational Officer for the rest of this watch.

IND: I second the motion.

CDR: It is moved and seconded that Henry Jones be elected the Assistant Educational Officer for the rest of this watch. Discussion?

EXO: (Rising) Commander, I rise to a point of order. CDR: State your point of order.

EXO: Is not the motion contrary to the provisions of our Squadron Bylaws? Section 11.2 requires that, prior to election; the qualifications of a candidate for the office of Assistant Educational Officer must have been approved by the National Educational Officer's Designee. The required approval has not been secured.

CDR: Your point is well taken. The motion to elect Henry Jones is out of order. The chair instructs the Educational Officer to follow the correct procedure and present the approved candidate's name for nomination at the next opportunity.

SEO: Yes, Commander. That concludes my report.

CDR: Thank you.

**MOD: The chair has ruled correctly. The SEO's motion illustrates the type of mistakes that may be made by officers with insufficient training. Incidentally, the National Educational Officer designates the District**

## Parliamentary Procedure in Action

**Educational Officer (DEO) to approve the qualifications of candidates for SEO and Assistant SEO in their respective districts. Please note that the chair said the motion was out of order, not the SEO was out of order. (By the way, any knowledgeable voting member could have raised the point of order, not just an officer.)**

CDR: We will now hear the Administrative Officer's report, Lt/C\_\_\_\_\_ .

AO: The Operations Training Committee recommends, as does the National Leadership Development Committee (ex Operations Training Committee), that all bridge officers take OT if they have not done so in the past five years. This is most important considering all the growth and changes being made in USPS, and to keep our leadership current with all phases of the operation of the organization. In accordance with this recommendation, the OT Chairman has scheduled an Operations Training Program in a timely fashion prior to our annual election and Change of Watch.

Therefore, on behalf of the OT Committee, I move that our Nominating Committee require all Bridge Officer nominees to have taken the OT Program sometime in the last five years prior to our annual election and Change of Watch.

CDR: The question is on the motion that our Nominating Committee requires all Bridge Officer nominees to have taken the OT Program sometime in the last five years prior to our annual election and Change of Watch. Is there any discussion? The Administrative Officer may speak to the motion first.

AO: I urge the membership to vote in favor of this motion for the success of our squadron.

CDR: Is there further discussion? (Pause) Since no one else is seeking the floor, the question is on the motion that our Nominating Committee require all bridge Officer nominees to have taken the OT Program sometime in the last five years prior to our annual election and Change of Watch. All in favor say "Aye".

MEM: Aye.

CDR: All opposed say, "No"

IND: No.

CDR: The ayes Bridge Officer nominees to have taken the OT Program sometime in the last five years prior to our annual election and Change of Watch. For your information, successful completion of the OT Program now requires a minimum of eight hours of instruction.

## Parliamentary Procedure in Action

**MOD:** This was a good example of a report properly prepared and delivered. It is important to note that the motion was at the end of the report. The report was properly acted upon by the chair. A motion coming from a committee does not need a second. The chair and the assembly disposed of the motion promptly.

**CDR:** We will now hear the report of the Secretary, Lt/C \_\_\_\_\_

**SEC:** All affairs in the department are current. National Headquarters has made pre-printed envelopes available for use by the Squadron at a reasonable price. I move we purchase a supply of the pre-printed envelopes from National Headquarters.

**IND:** Second.

**CDR:** It **is** moved and seconded that we purchase a supply of pre-printed envelopes from National Headquarters. Is there discussion on the question?

**SEC:** ( Rising) Commander.

**CDR:** You have the floor, as the maker of the motion, to speak to it first.

**SEC:** Using the pre-printed envelopes will be more accurate and legible, and save a lot of time for the publisher.

**IND:** (Rising) Commander.

**CDR:** Yes, you have the floor.

**IND:** I move to amend the motion by adding, "providing the budget is not exceeded."

**AO:** Second.

**CDR:** An amendment is made and seconded. The amendment before you is to add, "providing the budget is not exceeded." If the amendment is added, the main motion will read: We purchase a supply of pre-printed envelopes from National Headquarters, providing the budget is not exceeded. Discussion? (Pause to listen.) Since there is none, the question before you is on the amendment to add, "providing the budget is not exceeded." All in favor of the amendment say, "Aye".

**MEM:** Aye

**CDR:** All opposed to the amendment say, "No".

## Parliamentary Procedure in Action

MEM: (Silent)

CDR: The ayes have it; the amendment is adopted; the amended motion before you is that, "We purchase a supply of pre-printed envelopes from National Headquarters, providing the budget is not exceeded." Is there discussion on the amended motion? (Pause to listen.) Since there is none; the question is on the adoption of the amended motion that "We purchase a supply of pre-printed envelopes from National Headquarters, providing the budget is not exceeded." All in favor of the motion say, "Aye".

MEM: Aye

CDR: All opposed, say, "No".

MEM: (Silent)

CDR: The ayes have it; the amended motion is adopted. We will purchase a supply of preprinted envelopes from National Headquarters, providing the budget is not exceeded.

**MOD: This was an example of a report of an individual containing a main motion at the end. It required a second to be stated to the assembly by the chair. The main motion was amended properly and the amended motion was adopted. Budget and quantity questions could have been asked through the chair to the Treasurer to be included in the final amended motion. It could have been subject to all of the subsidiary motions that apply, such as amendment to the amendment, referred to a committee, postponed until a certain time, etc.**

CDR: We will now hear the Treasurer's report, Lt/C\_\_\_\_\_

RUL: (Rising) Commander, I rise for a question of order.

CDR: What is your question?

RUL: As I mentioned to you before the meeting, I must leave early. May I give the Rules Committee report now?

CDR: Yes, present the report of the Rules Committee.

RUL: The Rules Committee has copies of the current bylaws and proposed amendments on the sign-in table in the rear of this room. Please pick up your copy as you

## Parliamentary Procedure in Action

leave. They will be available also at our next monthly general membership meeting, at which the vote will be taken on the proposed amendments to our bylaws.

**MOD:** The Commander already had the members' unanimous consent to be able to vary the order of business as necessary.

CDR: Thank you. We will now hear the Treasurer's report, Lt/C \_\_\_\_\_

TRE: I am pleased to report that the revenues and expenses for the year to date are within the budget. All orders for educational materials have been received and all invoices have been paid. Our total bank balance, including savings and checking, is \$ xx,xxx.xx. A detailed report for the period is available on the sign-in table in the rear of the room.

CDR: Are there any questions for the Treasurer? (Pause to listen.) Since there are none, the Treasurer's report will be filed for review. Are there any bills to be presented to the Treasurer? (Pause to listen.) Since there are none, Thank you, Lt/C \_\_\_\_\_

IND: (Rising) Commander, I rise for a parliamentary

inquiry. CDR: Yes, what is your inquiry?

IND: I thought we had to approve the treasurer's report.

CDR: The treasurer's report is an unaudited monthly statement that is never approved by the squadron. The squadron only adopts the Auditor's Annual Report.

**MOD:** This is to point out that the report of the Treasurer is never approved, even though it may have been audited. Even at the annual meeting the treasurer's report is only received and the chair goes on to the Audit Committee's Annual Report. The adoption of that report has the effect of relieving the Treasurer of the responsibility for his office during the period covered by the report, except in case of fraud. At times, the Auditor's Report may recommend changes in the method of bookkeeping, or the way the Squadron's funds are invested. In this event, the Auditor's Report should set forth the recommendations at the end of the report in the form of a motion for action by the assembly. Here, as with other main motions, the motion is subject to applicable amendments. Finally, the assembly adopts the Auditor's Report.

Following the standing and special committees' reports the next usual agenda items in order are Special Orders, Unfinished Business and General Orders, then New Business. In some squadrons this is followed by a time

## Parliamentary Procedure in Action

for Good of the Order, which is a little like brainstorming. Announcements, including the date, time and location of the next general membership meeting, usually complete the meeting.

Please note that when calling for the voice vote the Commander always asks for the affirmative vote first by saying, "All in favor, say, Aye." Then says, "Those opposed say, No," which is recommended, Do not say, "Those opposed, same sign." The Commander never calls for abstentions, however, if a member having a conflict of interest may obtain the floor and announce their abstention on those grounds for inclusion in the minutes.

The only times that any other Officer calls for or announces the results of votes is when the Commander temporarily vacates the chair to debate a motion and remains out of the chair until the motion has been resolved.

When a two-thirds vote is required, a rising counted vote is recommended. When ready to adjourn the Commander should use unanimous consent.

**CDR:** Is there further business to be brought before this assembly? (Pause) Since there is none, this meeting is adjourned." (Raps the gavel once.)

**MOD:** A new procedure in Robert's is when the chair needs a brief interruption in the meeting, without declaring a recess. The chair should use unanimous consent by saying, "Without objection, the meeting will stand at ease." Unlike a recess, members remain in their places. Quiet conversations may take place until the chair calls the meeting back to order. RONR (10th ed.) p.80.

Once again, I refer you to the Operations Training Program for additional information, recommendations and guidelines for conducting your meetings. Are there any questions?

Please keep in mind that all the Bridge Officers and participants were reading a script in this demonstration. We thank you-

**MODIFIED FROM THE USPS OT COMMITTEE PARLIAMENTARY  
PROCEDURE INDOCTRINATION SKIT (9/97 & 2/0)**

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8 August 2009