Parliamentary procedure is the body of rules, ethics and customs governing meetings and other operations of clubs, organizations, legislative bodies and other deliberative assemblies.

In 1801 Thomas Jefferson published the first book on parliamentary law, *Manual of Parliamentary Practice*. Jefferson, in response to the publication of his guide, wrote, "The proceedings of Parliament in ancient times, and for a long while, were crude, multiform, and embarrassing."

In 1844 Luther Cushing, clerk of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, published the *Manual of Parliamentary Practice: Rules of Proceeding and Debate in Deliberative Assemblies*. The manual soon was known as "Cushing's Manual." It was the first sourcebook on parliamentary law that spoke to the procedural needs of the many growing voluntary societies in the United States.

Eventually parliamentary law was being used at all levels of government, yet the rules for deliberative assemblies had not yet been modified for use by smaller organizations. Henry Martyn Robert, an army engineer, took about the task of making such a modification. Though originally conceiving of a work of less than twenty pages, General Robert's "manual" eventually encompassed over two hundred pages and was published as *Robert's Rules of Order* in 1876. By 1915 more than one half a million copies of the guide were in print and soon Robert's manual would become a standard for deliberative assemblies everywhere. Today, there are over 4.5 million copies of *Robert's Rules of Order* in print. (Scott A. Lukas http://www.lamission.edu/das/ParliamentaryProcedure.html#Origins)
**ROLES OF THE BOARD & MEMBER PARTICIPANTS**

**BOARD CHAIR or MAYOR**
- The Board Chair or Mayor/President is the presiding officer and is responsible for running the meeting; if the Chair is absent or has to recuse himself the Vice Chair or Mayor Pro Tem serves in the position.

**ATTORNEY (if applicable)**
- Is the parliamentarian; all procedural questions should be directed through the Chair to the Attorney.

**SECRETARY or CLERK**
- A person should be appointed to keep minutes and official records.

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**ORDER OF THE MEETING**

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Invocation
- Pledge (if a flag is present)
- Agenda Approval
- Unfinished Business, formerly Old
- New Business
- Adjournment

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**QUORUM**

A quorum is the minimum number of members necessary to hold a meeting to conduct business (most times it is a majority of the board).
PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MAIN MOTION

Mark Massey

Obtaining and Assigning the Floor

- A member raises their hand when no one else has the floor.
- The Chair recognizes the member by name.

HOW THE MOTION IS BROUGHT BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY

Mark Massey

- First, you obtain the floor (get recognized by the Chair/Mayor).
- Second, you make your motion (make a proposal).
- Third, you wait for a second (another member expresses support for discussion on the motion, but don’t necessarily agree with it).
- Fourth, the Chair/Mayor restates your motion.

WHEN CONSIDERING THE MOTION

Mark Massey

1. Members can debate the motion.
2. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor.
3. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor.
4. Debate must be confined to merits of the motion.
5. Debate can be closed only by order of the assembly or by the chair/mayor if no one seeks the floor for further debate.
WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS

- Listen to the other side
- Focus on issues, not personalities
- Avoid questioning motives
- Be polite

CONSIDERATION OF THE VOTE

CHAIR PUTS THE MOTION TO A VOTE
- Chair asks if anyone wishes to speak
- If no one rises, he/she proceeds to take vote
- Calls for the vote, say “Aye” those in favor or say “Nay” if opposed
- Anyone abstentions? (when asked by the Chair) should say “Aye”.

CHAIR ANNOUNCES THE RESULT OF THE VOTE
- The Chair announces if the motion carries or fails

AMENDING A MOTION

If it becomes necessary to amend a motion...
After recognition, move the motion is amended:
- with the following words...
- Striking out the following words...
- Striking out the following words and adding...
ACTION OPTIONS FOR AN ITEM BEING CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD
- APPROVE
- AMEND
- REFER TO A COMMITTEE
- POSTPONE DEFINITELY
- POSTPONE INDEFINITELY
- TABLE

COURTESIES FROM BOARD MEMBERS
- Arrive at all meetings on time and be prepared.
- Address the Chair as “Madam Chair or Mr. Chair” and “Mayor.”
- Do not speak during the meeting without being recognized by the Chair or Mayor.
- Only one member speaks at a time.
- Willingly accept the decision of the Body.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?
For this exercise, we will have a mock meeting.
Participants will include members of the board – Chair, Vice Chair, Attorney, Secretary and other member participants.
The item of discussion is on approval of the fiscal year budget.
What questions would you ask about the budget?
What information would you need in order to make a cohesive decision?
Apply what you’ve learned and go through the process of voting. At the end, explain how your group made their decision.
“Success all depends on the second letter.”