

4-H Volunteer Leaders' Series

Conducting Meetings

Basic Parliamentary Procedure

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When your club or group comes to a meeting, they will need someone to be in charge. The person who presides at a 4-H club is the president. The president may be referred to as chairman or chairperson.

Presiding at Meetings

The main responsibility of the president is to conduct meetings properly. Everyone has the right to speak. For every member to have the right to speak, the president must insist that people have permission to speak. If everyone talks at once, no one will be heard and nothing can be decided. A good president guides his/her group in making decisions. He or she leads the group in orderly discussion to reach conclusions the majority agrees upon. A good president is faithful to his or her duties, understands the problems the group is discussing and has the leadership ability to guide the group to a decision.

Directing Meetings

The president should direct the business of the meeting in an orderly manner. There are "Parliamentary Rules" which help groups to conduct business. It is important that the president understands these rules.

Parliamentary procedure gives each member the right way to make a motion, to second a motion and to amend a motion. *Robert's Rules of Order* is the oldest and most

recognized set of rules on the ways to conduct business meetings. The rules were first printed in 1876 by General Henry M. Roberts of the Engineering Corps, United States Army. If you will follow these rules, they will help keep your group orderly and help you reach decisions with less confusion. If your president is fair in using these rules, both the majority and minority in your clubs and groups will be heard and respected.

The size of the group will usually determine how strictly the rules are followed. In larger groups, it will be necessary to follow the rules very carefully. Small, informal groups will need to use only the basic rules for making motions, seconding motions and amending motions.

Making Motions

A motion is a formal way of getting an idea, proposal or plan of action before a group. Motions are part of the orderly way of conducting a meeting. Motions call for discussion and action by the group.

How a motion is made and handled by the group:

A. Addressing the chair

The member wishing to present an item of business, discuss a motion, ask a question or give information related to the subject must first address the presiding officer. The member will say "Mr. President" or "Mr. Chairman" or



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“Madame President” or “Madame Chairman” or use a special title if he or she has one, but never use a personal name.

In small, informal groups, the person who wants to be recognized will not need to stand to address the Chair. In large, formal groups, the person wanting to speak will need to rise, give his or her name and any other identification necessary so the Chair will know who is speaking. The correct way to address the Chair is, “Mr. or Madame Chairman, (your name).”

B. Chair recognizes speaker

The president will recognize the person by calling his or her name or by saying, “The Chair recognizes the person in the front row.” After the person is recognized, he or she is free to speak.

C. Motion is made

The person recognized by the Chair makes a motion by saying, “I move that Saturday be set as the time for our 4-H party.” “I move” are the proper words to use in presenting a motion or item of business.

D. Motion is seconded

All ordinary motions must be seconded. This is to show the group that two people want the subject discussed. A motion should receive a second soon after it is made. If it does not receive a second, the motion is dead and cannot be acted upon by the group. The member wishing to second the motion does not have to be recognized by the Chair. In small groups, the member wishing to second the motion does not need to stand but says, “I second the motion” or “I second it.” In large, formal meetings, it is proper to stand and say, “Mr. Chairman or Madame Chairman, I second the motion.”

E. Motion is restated

Before a motion is voted on by the group, the Chair will restate the motion and then ask, “Are you ready for the question?” The motion is restated so that everyone understands before they begin discussing.

F. Motion is discussed

After the president has restated the motion, it is open for discussion. Any member of the group has the right to discuss the motion after they receive permission from the president to speak. All discussion must be about the motion or the

speaker can be ruled out of order by the president. An example of each step in the proper way to present a motion follows:

Tom Rushing: (rising) “Mr. President, Tom Rushing.”

Chairman: “Mr. Rushing.”

Mr. Rushing: “I move that our club set the last Saturday in the month as Community Clean Up Day.”

Mr. Young: (without rising) “I second the motion.”

Chairman: “It has been moved and seconded that our club set the last Saturday in the month as Community Clean Up Day. Is there any discussion?”

G. Motion is voted on

After the members have discussed the motion, the president “puts the motion to a vote.” The president will say, “Is there any further discussion?” The motion is then voted upon. Both the affirmative (aye) and negative (no) votes must be taken. The president will say, “All those in favor of the motion (the motion is repeated) say ‘Aye.’ All those opposed say, ‘No.’”

If the vote is close, the president may call for a count. The Chair will then ask members to stand or raise their hands and count them.

H. Results are announced

After the vote has been taken, the president will then announce the results. The president may say “The ‘ayes’ have it, and the motion is carried,” or “The ‘nos’ have it, and the motion is lost.” Once the results have been announced by the president, the group can deal with another motion or other matters of business.

Respecting One Another

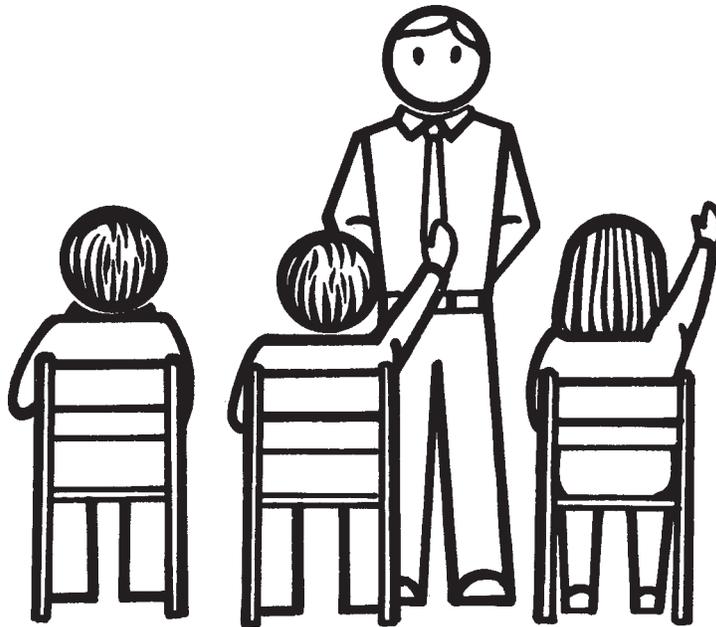
In addition to knowing how to make and amend motions, there are some rules of courtesy members should follow in every meeting.

1. Only one subject or item of business can be before the group at one time. No new item of business can be introduced or discussed until the one being discussed is voted on.

2. Every member of the group has an equal right to speak and be heard.
3. The will of the majority must be carried out, but the rights of the minority must also be protected.
4. Every member has the same rights as any other member. Every member can introduce a motion, debate a motion and vote on a motion.
5. The business and discussion should follow good rules of courtesy. Before you speak, you should receive permission from the Chair. Do not talk to other members when someone else has the floor.

Things To Do

1. Invite a person to your group to speak on parliamentary procedure. Ask the person to speak on making and disposing of motions, ways to amend motions and the various kinds of motions. Make out a simple test after the talk and let the members take the test. Afterwards, have a club discussion on what has been learned.
2. Plan a mock meeting in which members of your group rotate in presiding. Appoint someone as parliamentarian (an adult leader); then let members of the group practice making motions. In this way, you can have fun while you sharpen your skills in both presiding over a meeting and making motions.



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