Parliamentary Procedure: Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions

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Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions:

_Purposes of Parliamentary Procedure_

- Express the will of the Majority
- Handle one item of business at a time.
- Conduct business as efficiently and expeditiously as possible.
- Protect the rights of the minority, absentees and individual members.
Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions:

*Minutes Require a Motion to Approve*

- Minutes should be read aloud at the meeting unless they have been distributed physically or electronically in advance.
- Minutes should be kept permanently and passed from secretary to secretary in successive years or terms.
- Minutes are open to inspection by the membership when the secretary is given reasonable notice.
Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions:

*Minutes Require a Motion to Approve*

0 Minutes of the Immediately Past as well as other unapproved minutes of previous meetings should be approved in order.

0 Corrections are taken by the chair and unless these corrections are challenged, they stand.

0 No limitation backward to correcting minutes.

0 After all corrections have been taken the chair announces the minutes are approved as corrected without a motion.
Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions:

A Second is Always Required and Should be Recorded in the Minutes

- The requirement of a second is for the chair’s guidance as to whether he should state the question on the motion. Its purpose is to prevent time from being consumed by the assembly’s having to dispose of a motion that only one person wants to see introduced.

- Contrary to popular belief, the name of the seconder should not be recorded in the minutes only that there was a second. Of course this rule has variations depending on custom and special rules of order.
Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions

A Second is Always Required and Should be Recorded in the Minutes

- A second does not necessarily mean that a member is in favor of a motion only that they want to see it come before the meeting.
- A motion that is debated and then it is discovered that there was no second or one that passed without a second is still valid because no member objected at the time.
- Motions such as Object, Division, Point of Order etc do not require a second.
Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions:

Formal Procedure Must be used in Small Boards

- In small boards and committees, most parliamentary rules apply, but certain modifications permitting greater flexibility and informality are commonly allowed. A small board is less than 12.
  1) Members may raise a hand instead of standing and remain seated while speaking or making motions.
  2) Motions need not be seconded.
  3) There is no limit to the number of times a member may speak on a debatable motion.
Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions:

Formal Procedure Must be used in Small Boards

4) Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no main motion is pending.

5) When a motion is perfectly clear to all present, a vote can be taken without a motion being introduced.

6) The chairman need not rise when putting a motion to a vote.

7) The chairman may, without yielding the chair, vote, debate and make motions.
Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions:

_A Committee or Officer Report Requires Approval or a Motion_

- No Action is required on these items unless it is an annual report or the Board member or Standing Committee Chair introduces a motion or another member moves a motion related to the committee or board report.

- Reports of Officers except annual reports are for informational purposes only no action is required unless the officer introduces a motion.
Committee Reports do not require a second if they introduce a motion because a majority of the committee voted for it.

When the committee reports only a recommendation, the motion is in exactly the same state as when it was referred except if a postpone indefinitely was applied to the main motion the postponement dies.
A Committee or Officer Report Requires Approval or a Motion

- A special committee usually has a motion that has been referred to it for action or research.
- If the committee reports with amendments or other motions, any amendments that were pending when it was referred are disposed of before the committees’ amendments are introduced.
There should be no discussion on the floor if a motion has not been made.

Without properly stating a motion at the time it was made, there is usually confusion about what the actual motion is.

Although the chair can assume a motion, it is much clearer for a member to make and the chair to restate a motion.

The motion maker believes it saves time when in reality it only creates confusion among the assembly.
Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions:

*Table a Motion is Used to Kill it or Postpone It*

0 The purpose of the motion to Lay on the Table is to temporarily set aside a pending question when a matter of immediate urgency arises.

0 Once the urgent matter is over, the group can then resume the matter that was tabled.

0 Because the motion to Lay on the Table is undebatable and only requires a majority vote, it should not be used to get rid of a matter.

0 Lay on the Table should be ruled out of order if the evident intent is to kill or avoid dealing with a measure.
Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions:

When Someone calls for the “Question” debate is over

- “Question” is not necessarily a motion however, Previous Question may be used to stop debate and the making of secondary motions.

- Previous Question does require two-thirds vote making sure that that is the will of the assembly to stop debate.
A common error is receiving or accepting the Treasurer’s Report by a vote. This in effect endorses and approves the treasurer’s report as being accurate and the assembly accepts all of the actions of the Treasurer.

Again, if the treasure reports, it is for informational purposes only.
Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions:

Parliamentary Procedure wastes too much time

- One of the primary purposes of Parliamentary Procedure is to conduct business efficiently and effectively.
- Use of Parliamentary Procedure avoids redundancy and repeating procedures actually saves time.
- Even if slightly more time is used, ensuring that the will of the majority is expressed is important.
Top Ten Meeting Misconceptions:

Meetings and Minutes are Designed to Disseminate Information

- Meetings are designed for making decisions not passing out information. A member should attend a meeting to express their vote and try to sway their fellow members to their school of thought.

- Minutes are a record of what was DONE at a meeting not a record of what was said. If a member does not attend a meeting they certainly don’t need a transcript of the meeting.
Do’s of a Chairman

0 The chairs duty is to expedite business and remain neutral much like a referee.
0 Practice makes perfect.
0 Adopt the agenda so that it must be conformed with.
0 Be courteous but firm.
0 Restate all motions clearly and loudly so all can hear as many times as necessary.
0 Assist members with the framing or knowledge to accomplish a parliamentary task.
Don’ts of a Chairman

0 Allow discussion of a topic without first receiving a motion except in very small boards or committees.
0 Chair should never engage in debate or take or appear to take a position on a topic without vacating the chair except in small boards.
0 Chair should only vote, when their vote will affect the outcome to maintain impartiality and except in very small groups.
0 Allow members with more knowledge to take advantage of those with less.
Electronic Meetings

2. Procedures for electronic meetings

A. The president, or upon the request of three executive board members, or a committee chair, may call for an electronic meeting.

B. Electronic meeting minutes shall be approved at the next board meeting or by a minutes approval committee before the next executive board meeting.

C. The president, secretary or committee chair shall schedule a conference service line, and provide to all participants an electronic meeting notice that includes the time of the meeting, and access information needed to participate.

D. Members shall announce themselves at the first opportunity after joining the electronic meeting.
E. Members who leave the electronic meeting prior to adjournment shall announce their departure before disconnecting.

F. The presence of a quorum shall be established by roll call at the beginning of the electronic meeting and on the demand of any member.

G. To obtain the floor, a member shall address the chair and state his or her name.

H. Members may not submit motions in writing during the electronic meeting, but are entitled to make motions orally. Members may, however, submit motions in writing to the secretary at least 24 hours prior to the electronic meeting. The secretary shall send any such pre-submitted motions by e-mail to all members in advance of the electronic meeting.
Electronic Meetings

0 I. All votes taken at the electronic meeting shall be taken by roll call. Business may also be conducted by unanimous consent.

0 J. Each member is responsible for his or her connection to the conference call; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member’s individual connection prevented him or her from participation in the electronic meeting.

0 K. The chair may disconnect or mute a member’s connection if it is causing undue interference with the electronic meeting. The chair’s decision to do so, which is subject to an undebatable appeal that can be made by any member, shall be announced during the meeting and recorded in the minutes.