



RWCSDC Leadership Training

1/6/2024

Parliamentarian

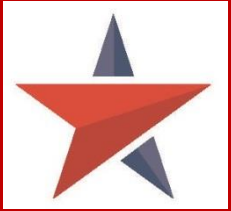
by Mary Anne Wentink



Parliamentarian -- History

What and Why?

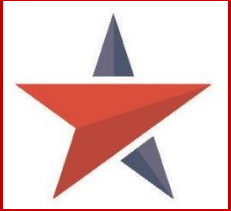
(A short history)



Parliamentarian -- History

In the beginning,
when you wanted
to join a spirited
discussion....





Parliamentarian -- History

Next there was the "talking stick"...

Historically the most common method for maintaining general civility, virtually every culture adopted some variation wherein the current holder of the "stick" was the only person allowed to talk within a gathering until he/she surrendered the stick to another individual.

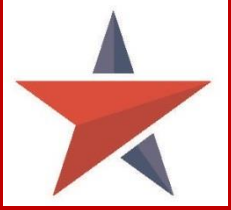


Parliamentarian -- History

And then there came Parliament....

From tribal assemblies to royal advisors to modern legislatures, and, by extension, to any meeting of assembled individuals concerned with governing a country or a simple organization, rules have evolved to control the conduct of those meetings so that:

- Everyone works from the same set of rules
- Every authorized individual has an equal chance to speak
- Order, fairness and comity can be maintained.



Taken together, these rules are called:

Parliamentary Procedure

(Hence the term Parliamentarian)

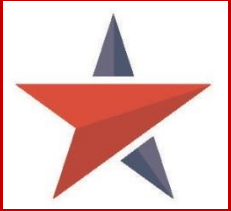


Role of the RWC Parliamentarian

The RWC Parliamentarian should:

1. Know the rules under which the RWC organization is operating
2. Advise the RWC organization president and other organization members concerning the rules under which the club is operating

Please do note: The RWC Parliamentarian is not charged with enforcing the rules...her's is only an advisory role.



Parliamentarian -- Rules

What Are the Rules?

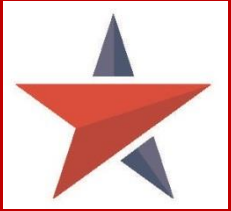


Parliamentarian -- Rules

Robert's Rules of Order

In 1876, Henry Martyn Robert (a U.S. Army officer) created a manual based on the U.S. Congress rules and practices to help volunteer organizations control their meetings. Now in its 12th Edition (dtd 2020), it has become the recognized authority for the proper conduct of meetings throughout the United States. RWC recognizes this authority.

**Every Club,
Every Would-Be Parliamentarian,
*Should Have a Copy of this Manual***



Parliamentarian -- Rules

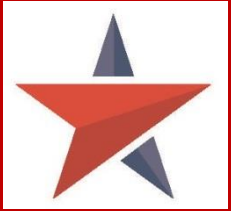
RWC Bylaws

As inclusive as it is, *Robert's Rules of Order* does not cover every contingency. Every organization needs to establish rules governing its own management: e.g., identifying its purpose, membership, executive committee, meeting schedules, and elections. These rules are known as the organization's Bylaws and are legally required to open a bank account for the organization. Bylaws are generally assumed to have priority over any general rules as stated in Robert's Rules of Order but should never be in direct violation. Any change to the Bylaws requires pre-notice to the organization's membership and a 2/3 vote of those voting members in attendance at the time of consideration.

Every RWC Club,

Every Would-Be RWC Parliamentarian,

Should Bring a Copy of the Club's Bylaws to Every Meeting

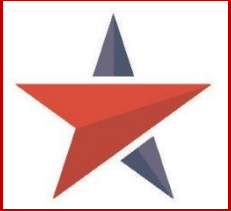


Parliamentarian -- Rules

RWC Standing Rules of Order

An organization's Bylaws should be general and non-specific in certain areas, esp. those likely to change frequently such as a club's dues, specific meeting dates, Executive Committee spending limitations. These specific rules are set up separately as the club's Standing Rules of Order. Changes to these rules typically require a majority vote of members in attendance.

Every RWC Club,
Every Would-Be RWC Parliamentarian,
Should Bring a Copy of the
RWC Club's Standing Rules of Order to Every Meeting



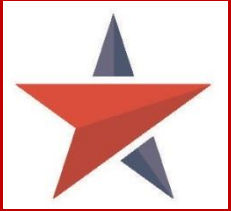
Parliamentarian -- Rules

RWC Special Rules of Order

For special occasions such as a RWC Convention, the typical order of the day might not apply. Rather than set a new, perhaps contradictory set of rules in the club's Bylaws or Standing Rules of Order, the club may establish a set of Special Rules of Order for the occasion.

Do note: These Special Rules of Order should be:

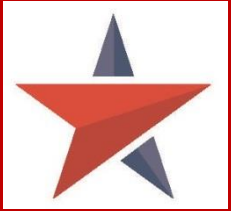
- Published before the occasion in which they're to be activated
- Voted on as the first order of business at the occasion
- Adopted only on a 2/3 votes of the voting members in attendance or on a majority vote of all members. (RRO 2:22).



Parliamentarian -- Rules

Rules Summary

- RWC recognizes four types of rules:
 - *Robert's Rules of Order* (current edition: 12th)
 - RWC Club Bylaws
 - RWC Club Standing Rules of Order
 - RWC Club Special Rules of Order
- The RWC Parliamentarian
 - Should have direct access to *Robert's Rules of Order* and know how to find things within it
 - Hold copies of the club's Bylaws and Standing Rules of Order and be familiar with their requirements
 - As needed, be thoroughly familiar with any proposed Special Rules of Order

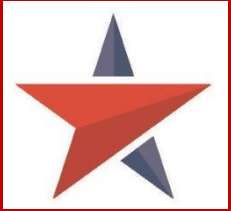


Parliamentarian -- Examples

A Few Examples...

Anyone flipping through *Robert's Rules of Order* is immediately impressed by the level of detail contained therein. We cannot hope to discuss these rules in depth, much less address individual club Bylaws or Standing Rules of Order in this presentation. For example, *Robert's Rules of Order* lists 98 specific rules concerning motions. What we can do today is address a few general concepts such as:

- How to make and amend a regular motion
- A second is required when...
- Raising a point of order or request for information
- How to interrupt, stop or defer debate.

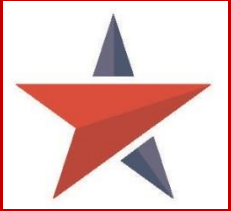


Parliamentarian -- Examples

How to Make and Amend a Regular Motion

- A regular motion is a request for consideration for an action or expenditure by the voting members of a meeting
- Motions may only be made by attending members who have the Voice* (as determined by club's Bylaws) at a meeting and who are recognized by the presiding officer
- Motions should always be in the form of a complete sentence or paragraph. The famous "so moved" is not proper
- If the motion is more than a few words long, separate written copies of the motion should be provided to the club President and Recording Secretary
- Following the motion and second (if given) the presiding officer should restate the motion prior to opening debate and again (as amended, if necessary) at the conclusion of debate before the actual vote.

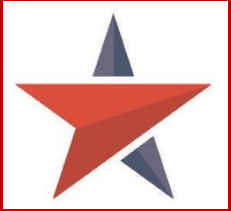
*Voice – member's authorization to speak at a meeting of the organization. Different rules might apply for different types of meetings. For example, a RWC Club President has the Voice (right to speak) at an RWCSDC Board of Directors meeting but may only speak at a RWCSDC Executive Committee meeting if a recognized member of the Executive Committee or with the express permission of the RWCSDC President and/or Executive Committee.



Parliamentarian -- Examples

How to Make and Amend a Regular Motion – Its Parts

1. A member with the right of “Voice” stands or otherwise signals desire to be recognized by the presiding officer
2. Presiding officer recognizes speaker
3. Member makes motion (now known as the main motion)
4. Presiding officer repeats motion and may ask for a second. If a second is provided, presiding officer opens debate
5. Member who originally made motion (the “maker”) is allowed to begin the debate
6. Just prior to and during debate a member may stand to amend the main motion. If amendment is agreed to by maker of the main motion prior to the start of debate, main motion is amended then debated as amended. If debate has begun before the amendment is offered, amendment is treated as a subsidiary motion and must be debated and voted on before the main motion can be readdressed and voted on. Note: a subsidiary motion must specifically address changes to a motion on the floor.
7. Presiding officer repeats motion (as amended where applicable) and asks for a vote.



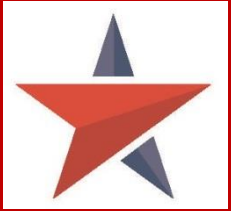
Parliamentarian -- Examples

A Second is Required When...

A second is used to determine whether or not the assembly wants to consider the motion in question. Seconds were initially designed to save time in such situations where a single individual wants to force debate of an issue of no interest to the other members. Only one second is ever needed. Once a second is given, the presiding officer is expected to open debate and carry the measure to a vote. Contrary to common opinion, a second is not always required. Some situations where it is not:

- Conduct of regular business such as a motion to approve the minutes
- Some specialized motions used to control debate

Note: Habit being what it is, most presiding officers always ask for a second and get it. Should the president fail to get a second and choose to continue with the regular agenda, maker of the motion may claim a point of order asking for a determination as to whether or not a particular motion requires a second. This is one occasion where the parliamentarian might need to consult his/her copy of *Robert's Rules of Order* Table of Rules Relating to Motions.

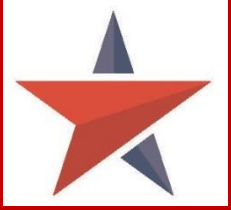


Parliamentarian -- Examples

Raising a Point of Order

All meeting attendees with a Voice have the freedom if not an obligation to question the organization's conduct *in regard to the organization's own published rules*.

- This question is formally considered a point of order and is addressed in RWC as “Point of Order, Mme. President” followed by a description of the specific rule being broken and how.
- Upon such a point being raised, the RWC Parliamentarian should review the rule in question and give an opinion regarding the validity of the concern to the assembly where raised

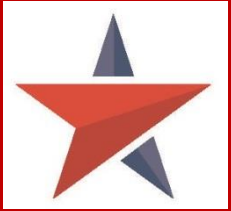


Parliamentarian -- Examples

Raising a Request for Information

During the course of any meeting, issues can become confused within debate. All meeting attendees with a Voice have the right to ask for clarification.

- This question is formally considered a Request for Information (previously called a Point of Information) and is addressed in RWC as “Request for Information, Mme. President” followed by a specific statement describing what needs clarification.
- This rule should not be misused as a means of extending debate by the maker’s insertion of his/her opinion on the matter currently being debated. If the maker begins to expound an opinion, the RWC Parliamentarian may interrupt to demand maker to specify a question or sit down.
- The RWC President answers question and/or identifies another individual to answer question.

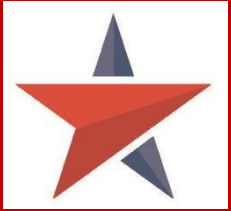


Parliamentarian -- Examples

How to Interrupt, Stop or Defer Debate

Parliamentary procedure recognizes numerous methods for controlling debate. Here are some of them:

- Point of Personal Privilege: Debate mentions some member by name. Member requests time to join debate to address those remarks. (May also be used to address a matter of personal comfort – room too hot, for instance.)
- Move to Recess (for/until specific time): Motion, if passed, recesses meeting in accordance with stated time.
- Move to Adjourn: Motion, if passed, adjourn the current meeting until the next scheduled meeting of the organization.
- Move to Table: Motion, if passed, immediately closes debate without a vote on the issue on the floor. (Assembly is never required to open it again.)
- Move to Defer (for/until specific time): Motion, if passed, defers debate on the current issue until a specific time. (Assembly is required to open it again.)
- Move the Previous Question – Alternately, “Call the Question”: Motion, if passed, stops debate on whatever question is being considered and initiates an immediate vote on the issue being considered.



Parliamentarian -- Summary

- Parliamentary rules govern the conduct of meeting to assure comity and fairness.
- The role of the RWC Parliamentarian is to:
 - Know the specific rules governing your club (the club's Bylaws, Standing Rules of Order, and Special Rules of Order where applicable)
 - Know how to use *Robert's Rules of Order* to find the rules not covered by your club's specific rules and interpret those rules. (Parliamentary rules are extremely detailed and complex. Professional parliamentarians need to complete extensive courses for their certification. RWC does not currently require certification for its parliamentarians.)
 - Advise the presiding officer as needed or requested. (Remember, the presiding officer always has the option to ignore your advice.)

Again, the RWC Parliamentarian is charged with knowing the rules that apply to the RWC club (or where to find them) and advising the RWC president of same. Although some knowledge of parliamentary procedure is necessary, it is assumed that most RWC organizations will not encounter situations requiring the services of a certified parliamentarian. If such situations develop, RWC recommends the club consult with the RWCSDC Parliamentarian and/or hire the services of a certified parliamentarian.



Parliamentarian – Some Suggestions

The RWC Parliamentarian should:

1. Bring a copy of the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, the club's Bylaws and the club's Standing Rules to every club meeting.
2. Be familiar with the most common motions and when and where they can be used
3. Attend every club meeting where business is being conducted
4. Hold a position on the club's Bylaws Committee and act as an advisor to the club's Nominating Committee
5. Remember Parliamentarian is an advisory position only. The club president has the authority to decide whether or not to take any advice given.



Parliamentarian – A Short Glossary

Motion: a request for a specific action or expenditure to be voted on by the current assembly. Simple motions typically require a second.

Parliamentarian: a person charged with advising (at need or request) the presiding officer concerning the rules of the organization

Parliamentary procedure: the rules governing the conduct of an organization – within the U.S.A., typically based on the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*

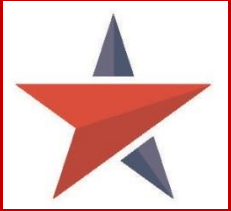
Privileged Motion: a request for immediate action that should not be delayed, including points of personal privilege, requests for information, motions to table, defer, recess and adjourn. These typically do not require seconds.

Required Majority: the number of votes needed to pass a motion. This differs on the type of motion being considered: for example, a regular motion normally requires a 50%+1 vote for passage; special votes such as Bylaw amendments typically require a 2/3 vote for passage. Details subject to rules as stated in *Robert's Rules of Order* and the local club's Bylaws.

Robert's: a common reference to *Robert's Rules of Order*

Second: an announcement that a voting member of the assembly other than the maker of the motion wishes to consider the maker's motion.

Voice: the privilege granted to speak at a meeting or assembly



Parliamentarian – Recommended References

1. ***Robert's Rules of Order, 12th Edition:*** Henry M. Robert III, Daniel H. Honemann, Thomas J. Balch, Daniel E. Seabold, and Shmuel Gerber. ***This is the authoritative reference.***
2. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised in Brief:* Henry M. Robert III, Daniel H. Honemann, Thomas J. Balch, Daniel E. Seabold, and Shmuel Gerber. Discusses particular situations and describes how to use the full *Robert's Rules of Order*.
3. *Robert's Rules for Dummies*, C. Alan Jennings. A more detailed summary of what to do and when in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*. Author emphasizes his work is not a substitute for that document.

The above publications are available at most booksellers including Amazon. You may also find a number of free references on the internet. Just search on “Robert's Rules of Order”.