

# Parliamentary Procedures & Running Great Meetings

Tiffany Jackson, Director of Membership Services



## Our Topics Today

- Getting Started
  - Agenda/Consent Agenda
  - Role of the Chair
- Voting
- Meeting debate, Point of Order & Appeal
- Motions & Amendments



## Disclaimer

- The material in this presentation is based on the principals and practices of parliamentary procedure
- We are not attorneys, nothing in this presentation constitutes legal advice



## Kick Off

Turn to someone you are sitting by and discuss the most inappropriate or out of line issue you have ever seen in an meeting.

*Doesn't have to be an School Board meeting*



## Anyone Want to Share?



## On Your Own

- Go To YouTube
- Search “Most Outrageous Government Board Meeting Ever”



## Why Parliamentary Procedures?



## Is a Meeting Needed?



## Setting the Agenda

- Board members should know how to add items to the agenda
- Agendas are clear, prepared by leadership
- Public knows when/where they can provide input and the guidelines for providing input
- Action items are clear
- Agenda inline with Board Standards
- Do not need to vote to approve the agenda, but many do
- Requires 2/3 vote to change the agenda



## Agenda vs Consent Agenda

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any type of item, relevant to the jurisdiction of the board, can be on the agenda</li> <li>• Items can be discussed and debated</li> <li>• Follows order of business</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only items which are routine, and non-controversial can be on the consent agenda</li> <li>• Items must be pulled to be discussed or debated</li> <li>• If items are pulled, they get placed on the regular agenda either immediately after the consent agenda, or at its proper place in the regular agenda.</li> </ul> |
|--|--|



## The Role of the Chair

- The chair is the most important, and at the same time least important person at the table.
- Works with the Superintendent to prepare the agenda
- Calls the meeting to order
- Establishes quorum
- Stick to the 'orders of the day' or agenda
- Recognizes others to speak
- Ensures equity amongst all members of the board
- **"Firm but ruthless!"**



## It's the Little Things

- What is the role of the chair vs members of the School Board
- What does the chair need to conduct a successful meeting?
- Where people sit matters
- Who is at your board table?





## Unanimous Consent

- Form of voting – a type of "fast track"
- Very efficient for minor procedural matters
- Board Chair suggests something, and if you agree, REMAIN SILENT. Silence means consent.
- If you disagree, say "OBJECTION"
- Board Chair then knows that everyone does not agree, and abandons the fast track to use the regular method



## Language Tip

Without  
objection

If there is no  
objection...



What's Different If You Have  
Someone Participate  
telephonically/on video?

Every vote MUST be role call







## Making Motions

For school boards, a main motion is the usual and customary way to start the action of discussion and decision making.

- Step 1 – Member makes a motion
- Step 2 – Member seconds a motion
- Step 3 – Chair states the question
- Step 4 – Members debate
- Step 5 – Members vote
- Step 6 – Chair announces the vote



## Step 1, Member Makes Motion

- It should be **in writing** if at all possible
- It should be **clear** and unambiguous. Don't say "I move what he just said" or "So moved"
- It should be phrased in the grammatical **positive**
- It must comply with the **bylaws** and the **procedural** law of the land
- You may only have **one main motion** at a time

I move that...



## Facilitating the Discussion Once a Motion is on the Floor

- Make sure everyone gets a chance to talk
- "Okay, what I'm hearing is this... is that correct?"
- Track who has spoken and who is next in line to speak
  - No one allowed to speak twice until everyone has had the opportunity to speak once
  - Having vice-President sitting by the President to assist with tracking this
- Members should speak to the chair, NOT to another member
- It is a kind of "SONAR" everything pings back and forth between the chair and the members
- This depersonalizes issues and improves clarity of discussion



## Speaking Chart

Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	Etc
Pete							
Mike							
Katie							
Barb							
Dana							
Marie							
Tillie							



## Facilitating the Debate Once a Motion is on the Floor

- Discussion is NOT a conversation it is 'debate' and has its own rules
- Be clear of your position when speaking to a motion
  - I speak in favor of the motion, or I speak in opposition to the motion...
- Beware of conversations that drift down the bunny trail
- No such things as a friendly amendment
- After debate, Chair states the motion before asking for the vote

I speak in support of the motion because...



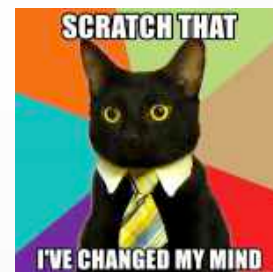
## NO INTERRUPTING!

- When a member has the floor they have the right to speak until they have completed their comments
- Interrupting is **ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN**
- Members may not interrupt each other, and chair may not interrupt members
- Exception – Point of Order when essential



## More Points

- You can't speak against your own motion, but you can vote against it
- If you've changed your mind, you may ask permission to withdraw the motion
- Remember, the motion belongs to the group at this point



## Eight Steps to Process A Motion

1. **Member makes motion**
2. Another member second motion
3. **Chair states motion**
4. Members debate and/or amend motion
5. **Chair restates motion and calls for vote**
6. Members vote on motion
7. Chair states results of vote, whether motion passes or fails, and what happens next as a result of the vote
8. Chair states next item of business



## Four Ways to Amend

1. Add or insert words
2. Strike out words
3. Strike out words and insert words in their place
4. Substitute (tricky!)



## Process Amendment

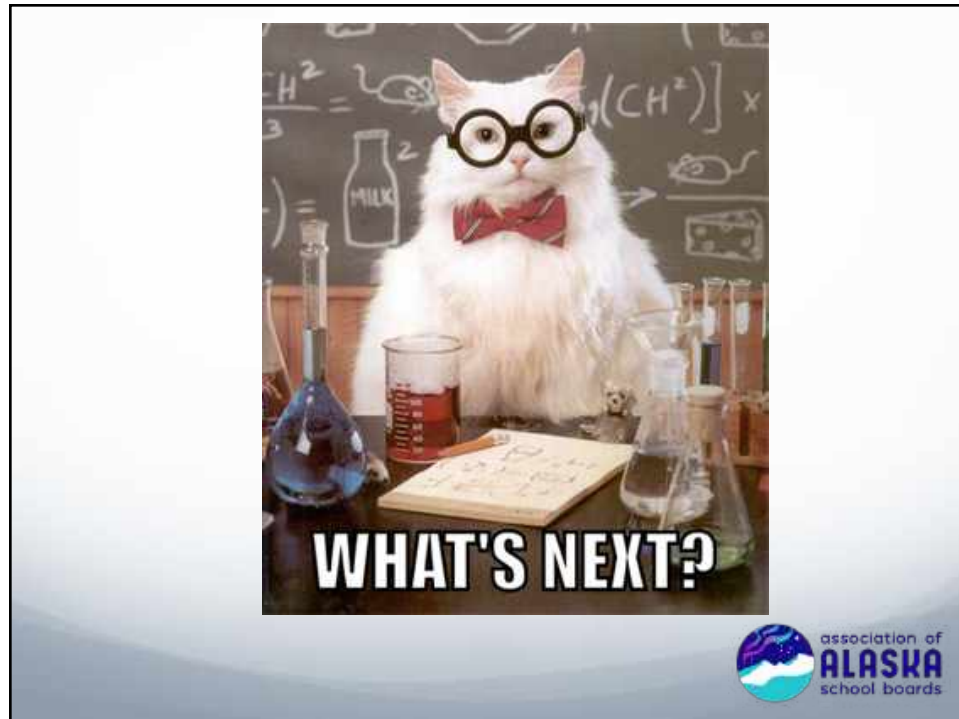
- The amendment is processed using the same eight steps that we just saw for a main motion



## Voting

- Chair repeats the motion
- Chair says, “All those in favor say ‘aye’, all those opposed say ‘no’”
- Chair announces results of vote, whether motion passes or fails, and what will happen next as a result of the vote
- Chair announces next item of business





## What MUST Happen After a Vote

The Chair must:

- State the result of the vote
- State if motion passes or fails
- State what happens next
  - The Principal/Lead Teacher will follow up on this/work on implementation, etc
- Move on to next item of business
  - The next item of business is...



## Pulling the Board Back to the Agenda

- Bring the conversation back to the issue at hand:
  - “I understand this is important, but the issue at hand right now is...”
  - “We have a lot of important work to get through today, let’s work to stay on topic, and get through this.”
- Work to make sure all opinions are heard, not just repeated
  - “we have heard the same sentiments a few times now, is there anything new to contribute to the conversation?”



## Inappropriate Remarks





## Fundamental Guidelines

- Courtesy and respect are required
- It is basic principle of parliamentary procedure that debate must be “germane” (relevant) to the topic at hand
- Certain kinds of remarks are inappropriate because they are not relevant to the discussion
- During the meeting, Board Members have a duty to be polite to their colleagues, staff, and everyone else
- This is part of their fiduciary duty of obedience to the goals of the organization



## Personal Remarks

*The measure, not the member, is  
the subject of debate.*

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12<sup>th</sup> ed., 43:21



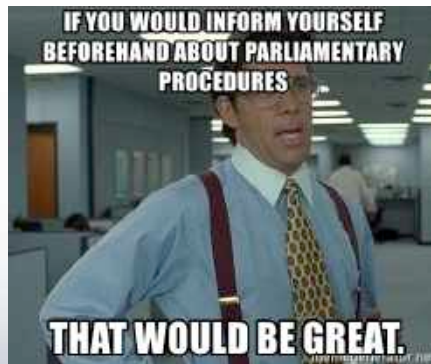
## Language Tip

*Members will kindly keep their remarks strictly to the topic under discussion*



## YOU are IT!

There are no parliamentary police



## Wait! Wait! What Should I Say?

<b>BIG MISTAKES</b>	If you are the Chair say...	If you are a member speaking about another member say...	If you are a member speaking about the chair, say...
Speaking twice in a row	Members are reminded that no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.	Point of order... The member has spoken twice while others are waiting to speak	Point of order... The chair does not have the right to dominate the discussion, but must speak in turn.
Not seeking recognition	Members will kindly seek recognition before speaking	Point of order. Members must seek recognition before speaking	[not applicable]
Speaking directly to another member	Members will kindly address remarks to the chair	Point of order. Members are supposed to speak to the chair	[not applicable]
Interrupting another person	Members will kindly refrain from interrupting one another	Point of order. Interrupting is not allowed	Point of order. The chair does not have the right to interrupt a member.



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## Wait! Wait! What Should I Say?

<b>INAPPROPRIATE REMARKS</b>	If you are the Chair say...	If you are a member speaking about another member say...	If you are a member speaking about the chair, say...
Personal remarks	Members will refrain from making personal remarks	Point of order. Personal remarks are not allowed.	Point of order. Personal remarks are not allowed
Insulting language, vulgarity, attacks	Insulting or vulgar language is not allowed at our meetings	Point of order, the language used by the member is insulting/vulgar	Point of order, the chair is using insulting/vulgar language.
Inflammatory language	Inflammatory language is not allowed	Point of order, that remark is inflammatory	Point of order, that remark is inflammatory



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## Great Resources

- Subscribe to Jurassic Parliament free monthly newsletter
- Subscribe to the Jurassic Parliament free blog for weekly insight, tips, and inspiration
- Mastering Council Meetings by Ann Macfarlane
- [www.jurassicparliament.com](http://www.jurassicparliament.com)
- Email any time, [tjackson@asb.org](mailto:tjackson@asb.org)

