

Parliamentary Procedure



for Grange Members



Foreward

There are many excellent books and resources on Parliamentary Procedure. However, this booklet is written specifically for Grange members. Throughout the booklet you will find quotations from the *National Grange Digest of Laws*. These passages are indented, in italics font, and are followed by a number in parenthesis [for example, (13.17.2)]. That number refers to the section and paragraph of the National Digest (2014 Updated Edition) where it is located.

Other references for this booklet are:

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

Spotlight on You the President, A leadership Handbook by the National Association of Parliamentarians

Parliamentary Motions – Quick Reference

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Why Do We Use Parliamentary Law?

Parliamentary law is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and for the group to reach a decision.

Section 1.3.6 of the Constitution of the National Grange says:

Roberts Rules of Order (Revised) is considered standard authority in this country, and is adopted as such on all parliamentary matters not included in the Parliamentary Code.

Parliamentary law is based on common sense and courtesy. It seems technical because a special vocabulary has been developed for it. If you know the vocabulary, the rules are easy to grasp.

The purpose of Parliamentary Law is to:

1. Enable members to transact business efficiently.
2. Protect the rights of each member.
3. Preserve a spirit of harmony within the group.

Five basic principles of Parliamentary Law:

1. Only one subject may claim the attention of the group at a time.
2. Each motion is entitled to full and free debate.
3. Every member has rights equal to every other member.
4. The will of the majority must be carried out while the rights of the minority are preserved.
5. The personality and desires of each member should be merged for the good of the organization.

According to section 10.5.2 of the National Grange Digest of Laws:

The right to make rulings as to parliamentary law is vested solely in the Masters of the various Granges of the divisions of the Order. Provided, however, that such rulings shall conform to the Parliamentary Code as adopted by the National Grange."

But Henry Martyn Robert, who first published his catalog of parliamentary law in 1876, was a reasonable man:

In enforcing the rules there is need for the exercise of tact and good sense. It is usually a mistake to insist upon technical points, as long as no one is being defrauded of his rights and the will of the majority is being carried out. The rules and customs are designed to help and not hinder business.

Grange Order of Business

The Grange has a specific order of business for regular business meetings. However, members, by majority vote, may change the order in which business is conducted.

1. Opening the Grange.
2. Roll call of officers.
3. Reading records of last meeting. A motion to adopt the minutes is not needed. After the minutes are read, the Master/President asks "Are there any corrections?" Pause. "If not, they stand approved as read." If there are corrections, the wording is, "The minutes are approved as corrected."
4. Proposals for membership.
5. Balloting for candidates.
6. Conferring degrees.
7. Reports of standing committees.
8. Reports of special committees.

Usually reports of standing committees are information only, but a special committee often makes a recommendation that the Grange take action or spend money. Members need to discuss and vote on the committee's proposal. In the Grange a motion to adopt the report is not required:

The report of a committee is properly before the Grange for discussion and action without the necessity for a motion to adopt. The Master will announce, "The report of the committee is now properly before you. Are there any remarks?" At the termination of discussion the Master will call for the vote as follows: "All in favor of adopting

the report of the committee will manifest it by the voting sign of the Order.” (13.1.1)

Members can vote to amend the committee’s report.

The report of any committee may be altered or amended, adopted or rejected, as determined by a majority of the Grange. (13.1.3)

9. Report of Grange Services: benefits and insurance.
10. Communications. The Secretary should read all mail received but especially any that requires a decision.
11. Have the reports to the Pomona and State Granges been duly and promptly made?
12. Bills and accounts.
13. Unfinished business. Any business previously begun but not completed. The Master/President should say “Under unfinished business the first item it...” to put the business back on the floor.
14. New business. The Master/President should announce “New business is now in order. Is there any new business?”
15. Is any member sick or in distress?
16. Lecturer’s program.
17. Suggestions for the Good of the Order.
18. Reading and adopting the minutes. (Optional)
19. Closing the Grange.

A motion to adjourn is never in order in the Grange. (13.6.1)

Motions

A motion is a proposal that the group take certain action.

Main Motions propose that a Grange take a position or action. They can be introduced only when no other business is pending. Only one main motion can be considered at a time. Members must dispose of a main motion before considering another main motion or other business.

Subsidiary Motions may be applied to a main motion for the purpose of amending it, delaying action on it, handling its consideration, or disposing of it. Examples include motions to amend, postpone definitely or indefinitely, refer to a committee, and lay on the table. See "Types of Motions: Subsidiary Motions" for an explanation of each.

Privileged Motions relate to the rights or privileges of the Grange or its members rather than to particular items of business. Privileged motions temporarily set aside the main motion on the floor. They are of such urgency that they are entitled to immediate consideration. Examples include to a call for the orders of the day and raise a question of privilege. See "Types of Motions: Privileged Motions" for an explanation of each.

Incidental Motions are made in response to situations that may arise during consideration of a main motion. The name, "incidental," was chosen because they arise incidentally. Examples include point of order, appeal from a decision of the chair, parliamentary inquiry, and division of a question or of the house/Grange. See "Types of Motions: Incidental Motions" for an explanation of each.

Bring Back Motions return a question to the floor for further consideration and action. Examples are to take from the table, reconsider, and rescind or amend a motion previously adopted. See "Types of Motions" for an explanation of each.

Progress of a motion

1. A member stands and addresses the presiding officer.

No motion can be made unless the mover rises and addresses the Chair. (13.2.1)

The traditional wording is, "Worthy Master." However, if your Grange uses the alternative title of President, you would say "Mr. President" or "Ms. President."

2. The member is recognized.

The Master/President recognizes the member by name or a nod. After being recognized, the member is said to "have the floor" and is the only member entitled to introduce or discuss a motion.

3. The member proposes a motion.

A motion is always introduced in the form, "***I move that***" followed by a statement of the proposal. Explanatory remarks are **not** permissible either prior to or immediately following the formal proposal of the motion. All discussion must wait until after the chair states the motion and calls for discussion.

4. Another member seconds the motion.

Another member, without rising and addressing the chair, may say, "***I second the motion.***" The member may or may not subsequently vote for the motion. Seconding simply says that the member thinks the motion should be discussed.

If no one seconds the motion, the chair may ask, "Is there a second?" If there is none, the chair may declare, "The motion is lost for want of a second."

5. The Master/President restates the motion and calls for discussion.

When a motion has been proposed and seconded, the Master/says, "It has been properly moved and seconded

that (restates the motion)... Is there any discussion?"

6. Members discuss the motion.

- The proposer of the motion has the right to speak first to explain why he/she made the motion.
- Each member who wants to speak should rise, address the Master/President, and be recognized before speaking.
- Normally, the first person who seeks recognition is entitled to speak.
- *When two or more members rise at the same time, the Master shall allow the floor to the one farthest from the Chair; providing however, that the Master shall prevent the abuse of the rule. (Section 13.4.3)*
- *No member shall be allowed to speak more than once to the same question, unless by consent of the Grange, except the members introducing the question, who may speak twice; but this shall not prevent his/her speaking every time the same subject is presented in the form of a different question. (13.3.1)*
- The chair should recognize a member who seldom speaks in preference to one who frequently claims attention of the group.
- If the opinions of members are known regarding the motion, the chair should alternate between those favoring it and those opposing it.
- Discussion must be confined to the question that is "on the floor."
- *All offensive language, personal allusions, or discourteous conduct must be scrupulously avoided, and any member using exceptional words in debate must be at once called to order,*

- *and not permitted to proceed without consent of the Grange. (13.4.4)*
- *No member shall interrupt another while speaking. (13.4.2)*
- *If a motion is complex, the Master/President or two members (requestor and a second) may ask that the motion be put in writing before consideration. (13.2.2)*
- *A motion can be withdrawn by the mover, with the consent of the second, before the Master restates it and calls for discussion.*

The Master may announce; "Unless there is objection, the motion will be withdrawn." If there is objection, the Grange shall determine by vote. (13.2.2)

7. The Master/President puts the motion to a vote.

Whenever deliberation upon any question appears to be closed, the Master shall rise and say, "Is the Grange ready for the question?" If no one rises, it is presumed discussion is closed. (13.19.2)

In the Grange, the voting sign is used. The Master/President says, "All in favor of the motion (state the motion) make known by the voting sign of the Order." And, "Hands down, all those opposed signify by the same sign."

The Master/President scans the members to see if a majority are showing the voting sign; an exact count is not required.

However, if the vote appears to be close, the Master/President may say: "The chair is in doubt. Those in favor of the motion please rise." The Assistant Stewards will count those standing. "Be seated. Those opposed, rise." The Assistants will count and report the totals.

8. The Master/President announces the result of the vote.

The chair concludes the motion by saying, "The motion is carried; therefore (state the *intent* of the motion)." Or if a majority voted in the negative, "The motion is lost." As soon as the vote has been announced, another motion is in order.

How may a motion be amended?

The purpose of the motion *to amend* is to modify a motion that has already been presented in such a manner that it will be more satisfactory to the members.

Methods of amending

1. **By adding or inserting** a word, phrase, sentence, or section to the motion that it did not originally contain.
2. **By striking out** a word, phrase, sentence, or section from the original motion.
3. **By striking out and inserting in its place** some other word, phrase, sentence, or section.

The most important principle to understand in connection with any form of the motion *to amend* is that an amendment “may be hostile, but it must be germane.”

“Hostile” means opposed to the spirit and aim of the motion to which it is applied.

“Germane” means having direct bearing upon the subject matter of the motion; that is, relevant, or relating to it.

So an amendment may be opposed to the actual intent of the original motion and, in fact, nullify it, but if it relates to the same subject matter, it is germane.

Types of amendments

1. **Amendment of the first rank** is an amendment to a main motion.
2. **Amendment of the second rank** is an amendment to an amendment. The amendment to the amendment must modify and relate directly to the amendment and NOT to the main motion.

No amendment beyond that of the second rank is possible. It is never in order to propose more than one amendment of each rank at one time. To amend two separate and unrelated parts of a main motion requires two amendments of the first rank. The first must be voted upon before you make the second.

It is possible, however, to have *a main motion*, one amendment to the motion (*amendment of the first rank*), and one amendment to the amendment (*amendment of the second rank*) on the floor at the same time.

Until the amendment of the second rank has been voted upon, no other amendment of the second rank is in order. Until the amendment of the first rank has been voted upon, no other amendment of the first rank can be proposed.

Order of voting on amendments

Amendments are voted upon in inverse order; that is, the amendment of second rank is disposed of first.

1. Discussion is held and the vote taken upon the amendment to the amendment (amendment of second rank).
2. After that vote, discussion is called for and the vote taken upon the amendment to the motion (amendment of the first rank).
3. After that vote, discussion is held upon the main motion as *amended* and a vote is taken upon it.

An amendment once adopted cannot be further amended, except by reconsideration. (13.14.2)

Types of Motions

Subsidiary Motions

Lay on the table

The purpose is to set aside an item of business temporarily to consider more important business. The member says, "I move to lay this matter on the table."

A motion to lay on the table may be made to temporarily postpone a pending question— that is to lay on the table until some other question is disposed of— after which the subject may be taken from the table again. (13.10.1)

If a motion to lay on the table is decided in the affirmative, the main question, with all the motions pertaining thereto, is removed from before the Grange. To lay an amendment upon the table carries with it the question proposed to be amended. A majority vote decides. (13.10.2)

Call for the previous question

The purpose is to close debate on the motion on the floor. The member says, "I move the previous question."

No debate should ever be allowed upon the previous question after it is properly demanded. (13.11.2)

If the motion passes with a two-thirds vote, the Master/ President immediately puts the motion on the floor to a vote, even if members are waiting to speak. If the motion fails, discussion on the motion on the floor can continue.

If the member says, "I move the previous question on all pending business" votes will be taken on amendments and then the main motion without discussion on any of them.

Commit or refer to a committee

The purpose is to have a committee research or clarify an issue and report back at a subsequent meeting. The motion should specify how many should serve on the committee, how they are to be selected, and what power the committee will have.

Postpone definitely

The purpose is to postpone a matter until a specific time. "I move to postpone this matter until the next regular meeting."

Postpone indefinitely

The purpose is to dispense with the motion without taking a vote on it. "I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely."

A motion to indefinitely postpone cannot be amended. (13.15.1)

Privileged Questions

Take a recess

The purpose is to take a short intermission during the business meeting. "I move to recess for ten minutes."

A motion to take recess is privileged if the recess is to take effect immediately, and can be amended only as to length of time of recess. A motion to take a recess at a future time is not privileged by a main motion. If privileged, a two-thirds vote is required; otherwise a majority vote decides. (13.7.1)

Question of privilege

The purpose is to request immediate action relating to rights or privileges of the members. "I rise to a question of privilege. We can't hear the speaker with the window open. Can we close the window?"

A member raising a question of privilege need not wait to be recognized, but upon receiving the Master's attention will say, "Worthy Master, I rise on a question of privilege affecting the Grange." or "I rise on a question of personal privilege." The Master directs him/her to state the question and then decides whether it is one of privilege or not. Two members may appeal this decision. The Master may decide that the question is one of privilege, but not of sufficient importance to interrupt the speaker. (13.8.1)

Call for orders of the day

The purpose is to interrupt discussion to deal with a time-specific agenda item. "I call for the orders of the day."

A call for the orders of the day requires no second and is a demand that the Grange turn to the consideration of a time-specific agenda item. (13.9.1)

Incidental Motions

Suspend the rules

The purpose is to allow action not possible under the rules.

A Grange may suspend any rules adopted to govern its procedure by a two-thirds vote provided that such suspension does not conflict with its Constitution or By-Laws, or those of the State or National Grange, and provided that such rule is not designed to protect absentees or minorities. A motion to elect by acclamation or to instruct the Secretary to cast the ballot is not in order because it suspends the rule protecting the minority of one from exposing his/her vote. (13.16.1)

Question or point of order

Any member has the right to call attention to what he/she believes is a violation of parliamentary rules. "I rise to a point of order."

Parliamentary inquiry

Members should ask the Master/President, or parliamentarian, for guidance on procedures about which they are uncertain.

A parliamentary inquiry, if pertinent to the pending business, is always in order. (13.5.2)

Appeal the decision of the Master/President

If the Master/President makes a ruling that a member disagrees with, he or she has the right to rise and say, "Worthy Master, I appeal from the ruling of the chair." Another member must second the appeal. The Master puts the question to the members, who then decide whether to sustain the ruling.

"Shall the decision of the Chair stand as the decision of the Grange?" This question is debatable, and may

be participated in by the Master. (13.21.2)

Call for a division of the house/Grange

The purpose is to secure an accurate counted vote. "I call for a division of the house."

The result of the vote in this case will be arrived at by those voting in the affirmative rising and standing until they shall be counted by the Assistant Steward and Lady Assistant Steward as tellers, then resuming their seats, then those voting in the negative will rise to be counted. The tellers will report each count to the Master, who will announce the results. (13.17.2)

Call for a division of the question

The purpose is to separate a motion into parts.

Any member may call for a division of the question when it contains two or more distinct points. (13.20.1)

"I move to divide the question by considering first that we donate \$100 to the 4-H and then that we donate \$100 to the FFA."

Bring Back Motions

Take from the table

The purpose is to bring to the floor a motion that had been laid on the table. "I move to take from the table the motion to fund our annual scholarship." This motion is not debatable and requires a majority for adoption. A motion may be taken from the table only until the end of the next meeting. Otherwise the motion dies.

Rescind

The purpose is to allow members an opportunity to reverse an affirmative vote on a motion.

Any action taken by the Grange ... may be rescinded by a majority vote, provided notice has

been given at a previous meeting (or in the call if a special meeting), or it may be rescinded without notice by a two-thirds vote, or by a vote of the majority of the entire membership. (13.23.1)

Reconsider

The purpose of a motion to reconsider is to allow members to take another look at a decision they made. "Having voted on the prevailing side, I move to reconsider the motion"

When any question has been decided, either affirmatively or negatively, it is permitted for any member who voted with the majority to move a reconsideration at the same meeting. A majority decides. It is debatable only if the question to be reconsidered is debatable. If, however, the subject upon which the vote was taken shall have been announced by authority and gone out of possession of the Grange, a motion to reconsider will not be in order. (13,22.1)

Copies of this booklet may be ordered from:

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