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Parliamentary Procedures

The JCI Manual on Meeting Procedures

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JCI Vision

“To be the leading global network of young active citizens.”

JCI Mission

“To provide development opportunities that empower young people to create positive change.”

About JCI

JCI is a membership-based non-profit organization of young active citizens ages 18 to 40 in more than 100 countries who are dedicated to creating positive change in their communities. Each JCI member shares the belief that in order to create lasting positive change, we must improve ourselves and the world around us. JCI members take ownership of their communities by identifying problems and creating targeted solutions to create impact.

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Parliamentary Procedures

This is your JCI guide to parliamentary procedures. It is designed to help you with the methods by which effective meetings are conducted and representative decisions can be reached in JCI.

Parliamentary procedure is advocated for, and practiced by, JCI Local and National Organizations throughout the world. There are many reasons for this.

Apart from the obvious advantages in leadership training and disciplined thinking which comes from concise debate and clearly led discussion, the introduction of parliamentary procedures gives an objective lesson in working democracy.

The advantages of parliamentary procedures include:

- Orderly meetings;
- Opportunities for all to be heard;
- Decisions by the majority;
- Protection for the minority.

There are many sets of rules or guides to effective action in meetings. Among these are *Robert's Rules of Order* used by Junior Chamber International and most National and Local Organizations.

Each is designed to permit free discussion and free decisions. This JCI guide on parliamentary procedures is generally based on *Robert's Rules of Order* (a copy of the book *Robert's Rules of Order* is available from the JCI Sales Department). The guide does not attempt to give a complete picture of parliamentary procedures, nor hope to cover every situation that can come up in a meeting. It will provide you with a good understanding of how proper meeting procedures can help your Local or National organization in conducting its meetings.



Edson A. Kodama
JCI Secretary General



The Number One Rule: Be Prepared

The leader or presiding officer should be well prepared before the meeting. Here is what he should do:

1. Draft an agenda – a list of matters to be discussed in the order in which they will be discussed.

Note: Sending the agenda to the members prior to the meeting is not only an invitation but also a way of motivating them to come to the meeting. Avoid having the same agenda every meeting. Make your agenda attractive.

2. Know in advance what to expect from reports and be sure everyone who is going to deliver a report is well prepared.
3. Arrange for the meeting place and be certain it is set up to enable you or the speaker to see all of those present so that no one is ignored in the meeting.

The presiding officer should have outlined – at least in his own mind, if not in writing – the general direction and purpose of each item on the agenda. Sometimes he may expect prolonged discussion (as to a budget for the year's expenses); but he should always have an idea to guide him, even though on many occasions the meeting will differ from the plan.

Being prepared, however, will permit him to guide the group rather than permit it to drift aimlessly. Thus this may help to increase the respect of those present not only for the protection of parliamentary law and democracy processes but also their efficiency and practicability.

Members, too, should prepare. Those who are to make reports should know what they would say. The report should be concluded with a motion or statement on what new action should be taken.

Those who introduce something new should prepare a motion and should organize their thinking in advance so that they can adequately explain what they propose and why.

Conducting the Meeting

At the exact hour named in the notice of the meeting, the presiding officer should call the meeting to order. He should determine that enough members (a quorum) are present to conduct the meeting, in case decisions have to be made. A quorum is usually a majority (more than half) of the members, unless the group provides otherwise in its rules.

In no case should the meeting proceed without the quorum. This requirement is designed to insure the group that its decisions will not be made by an unrepresentative minority.

Speaking Rights

Speaking is accomplished by obtaining the floor. One should rise and address the presiding officer. The one who should be recognized is the person who rises first after the floor has been yielded by the previous speaker. It is discourteous to raise your hand or stand while another person has the floor, and such a person does not, therefore, get the right to the floor next.

If more than one person properly requests the floor when debate is on, certain rules apply:

1. The maker of the motion is first even though the last to request the right to speak, so he can explain the motion.
2. No one gets a second chance until everyone who wishes to do so, has had one chance to speak.
3. The chairman should try to alternate speakers among all sides of an issue.



Speaking rights:

- **Speaking rights:** Is not usually in order until the presiding officer indicates who is entitled to speak.
- **Speaking rights:** Follows the making of a motion. If a report is presented, its reading precedes a motion. Following the motion, the reader of the report has the first opportunity to speak.
- **Speaking rights:** Are limited in order to give everyone an opportunity to speak. The group can impose more or less restrictive rules. At a General Membership Meeting, each person should have from one to 3 minutes to speak, depending on the number of members interested in speaking, the time available and the importance of the issue discussed.
- **Speaking rights:** Can be stopped altogether by a motion. But this motion requires a two-thirds majority of those voting, so that a bare majority cannot prevent discussion and the minority can be heard.

The Motion

The motion is the means whereby the group takes action. It is a statement of what is to be done and how it is to be accomplished. It should be carefully worded to prevent misunderstandings. The wording should clearly channel discussion to the important aspects of the proposal.

The motion is made by stating, “I move that the . . . (name of the Local Organization) . . . (add what is to be done, by whom, when, how financed, etc.).”

Normally, it should be seconded. This means the seconding person believes the motion should be discussed. On occasions, the purpose of a seconder is to ensure that the matter is at least of sufficient interest to be presented to the group, and thus the seconder prevents one person from wasting the group’s time by presenting an issue that nobody wants to discuss.

It is done by merely stating, without rising, “I second the motion.” If, however, the type of minutes kept by the group requires the seconder’s name to appear in the record, he should stand to facilitate recognition. Parliamentary law is designed to insure that the group considers only one motion at a time. This prevents confusion and speeds action, and it is the presiding officer’s duty to remind the group constantly which action is the main topic.

However, the requirements of getting a job done – and preventing a small but vociferous minority from keeping a group in session or wasting time on inconsequential matters – demand that certain motions receive precedence. These have specific objectives which deserve early consideration by the group and are listed in order in the Chart on Parliamentary Procedure Motions at the end of this guide.

When these motions are made, they immediately become the pending problem of the group and must be decided first. It is important to remember that only the motion with precedence is then before the group, even though any number of subsidiary, incidental, or privileged motions are, so to speak, on the floor.

Confusion will not result if the presiding officer keeps the group well informed and explain what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen next.

Types of Motions

The use of parliamentary forms over a period of time has resulted in the establishment of certain terminology which itself has specific parliamentary meanings. The terms often vary as to the group using them.

MAIN MOTION

A motion to accomplish a part of the activities of a group. Examples are to adopt a project, approve a budget or report, create a committee, approve an appointment, etc. All other motions are, in a way, procedural, while the main motions gets the work done. This is true even though some other motions, like a motion to adjourn, are at times technically considered main motions.

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS (Amendments, refer to a committee; lay on the table, etc.)

A motion generally designed to facilitate action on a main motion, a motion subsidiary to the main motion. Examples include motions to debate, amend, refer to a committee, lay on the table, etc.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS (Point of order, suspension of the rules, etc.)

These motions are incidental to the consideration to the topic discussed and accomplish certain parliamentary purposes. Examples are questions of order and appeal, suspension of the rules, objection to consideration of a question, etc.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS (Fix time of next meeting, adjourn meeting, recess, question of privilege, point of information, etc.)

A motion is privileged in the sense that with it, at certain times, goes the distinction of an immediate—or at least an earlier—decision in regard to the subject matter to which it relates, rather than to the subject matter of another motion, which may have been on the floor.

LAY ON THE TABLE

A motion to delay, to an indefinite time, consideration of a main motion by taking it figuratively from the floor, where action can be taken, and lying it on the table, where action cannot be taken. This helps to allow more time to consider the problem, yet does not set a definite time for reconsideration.

TAKE FROM THE TABLE

A majority of voters who tabled the motion can later figuratively take the motion from the table and put it on the floor for discussion. When this is done, the motion comes back to the floor in the same condition as it went on the table (with the same wording).



Sample Meeting

OPENING THE MEETING

The presiding officer is the elected president of the organization.

President: *"Fellow members and guests, will you please sit down; the meeting will come to order."*

President: *"I would like to invite (name of a member) to recite the JCI Creed and state the JCI Mission and Vision. Please stand up in respect."*

Member: The member recites the JCI Creed and states the JCI Mission and Vision while everyone else stands in respect and listens.

President: *"Thank you (name of the member). Secretary, please proceed with the roll call."* The Secretary calls every member of the organization and lists the ones attending the meeting.

Secretary: *"President, ____ members are present."*

President: *"Thank you (name of Secretary). We received information from the following members who cannot attend and would like to be excused from this meeting."* The President reads the names and officially excuses them from attending the meeting.

President: *"Legal Counsel, could you please confirm the quorum and state the votes needed for simple majority and two thirds?"*

Legal Counsel: *"President, we have (or don't) quorum and the votes required for simple majority are (number of votes) and for two thirds (number of votes) votes."*

President: *"Thank you (name of the Legal Counsel)."*

President: At this point the President makes his/her **opening remarks**, a short speech welcoming everyone and wishing success in the discussions.

President: *"As stated in the agenda, the purpose of this meeting is to . . ."* The President states the purpose of the meeting.

President: *"The next point is the adoption of the agenda. Is there a motion to adopt the agenda as distributed?"*

Member I: *"President, I move to adopt the agenda as distributed."*

Member II: *"I second the motion."*

President: *"Are there any objections or amendments to the agenda?"* At this point members may add items to the agenda and each item proposed must be approved by the majority.

President: *"I assume you are now ready to vote, all those in favor of the adoption of the agenda as distributed (or amended), raise your hand."*

President: *"Thank you, the agenda is adopted as distributed (or amended)"*

REPORTS

President: *"The next order of business is the report of (title) as to (subject of the report) by (name of the person)."*



- Member:** Reads the report or presents main points from it and closes with a motion to act on the report as the report requests. Some examples:
- "President, I move this report to be received and filed."* No action is required by the group other than to acknowledge receipt of the report.
- "President, I move this report to be approved and that the organization (describe specific group action contemplated)."*
- "President, I move this report to be approved and the committee be authorized to spend \$_____ for the project."*
- "President, I move this report to be approved and the committee be authorized to continue its study of this subject."*
- "President, I move this final report be received and the committee discharged with the thanks of this organization."*

MOTIONS

A motion can be the result of a report or it can be made under New Business, Old Business, etc.

- President:** *"(name of the person) is recognized."*
- Member:** *"President, I move (describe what the organization is to do)." Example: "I move we allocate \$300.00 for a Senatorship application for the new president."*
- President:** *"It has been moved that (repeats the motion). Is there a seconder to this motion?"*
- Member:** *"I second the motion."*
- President:** *"It has been moved and seconded that (repeats the motion). Any discussion?"*
- If no seconder is received, the President says, *"The motion dies for lack of seconder. Next order of business."*

AMENDMENTS

Amendments are not always necessary, but if someone wishes to change a motion, yet not negate it, he may move the adoption of an amendment. This can be done at any time during the discussion.

- Member:** (After having been recognized), *"President, I move to (describes what changes he wishes to make in the wording of the motion)."*
- Example:** *"I move that we substitute the word 'outgoing' for the word 'new'," (thus providing the Senatorship after the President has completed his term.)*
- President:** *"It has been moved that (repeats the amendment). Is there a seconder to this amendment?"*
- Member:** *"I second the amendment."*
- President:** *"It has been moved and seconded that we amend the main motion to (repeats motion). Any discussion on the amendment?"*

If no seconder is received, the President says:



President: *"The amendment dies for lack of a seconder. Any further discussion on the main motion?"*

In discussion on the amendment, the person who moved its adoption is recognized first, if he desires the opportunity to speak. The President should limit the discussion to the question of adoption or rejection of the amendment and not to the whole question proposed by the main motion.

The amendment can be further amended, and more amendments can be offered, but at any one time only the main motion, the amendment, or the amendment to the amendment, can be on the floor.

VOTING

After discussion has been completed, the vote should be taken. First a vote is taken on the amendment to the amendment (if any); then the vote is taken on the amendment (as either amended or as originally presented, depending on the previous vote); and finally on the main motion (as either amended or as presented, depending on the previous votes.)

President: *"A vote will now be taken on the motion that (repeats the amendment)."*

The Chairman should explain the effect of the adoption or rejection of the amendment on the main question and advise the members of the effects of a "yes" or "no" vote.

"All in favor, please rise (or say yes)." Such is done. "All opposed, please rise (or say no)." Such is done.

Votes must always be called in this order: First the ones in **favor**, then the ones **against**, and then the **abstentions**. Abstentions don't count as votes. For example, if there are 20 members in the meeting and 6 vote in favor and 5 against and 9 abstain from voting, the motion carries because more people voted in favor.

"The amendment is adopted (or defeated) by a vote of ____ to ____." If tally is made.

"The motion now before the group is (repeats the main motion as amended if amendment passed). Is there any further discussion?"

Discussion is permitted on the main motion after the vote on the amendment. After the discussion is closed, the Chairman then says:

"There being no further discussion, we will vote on the main motion that (repeats main motion as amended, if such is the case, with a short statement as to the effect of a "yes" or "no" vote.)"

"All in favor, please rise (or say yes)." Such is done.

"All opposed, please rise (or say no)." Such is done.

President: *"The main motion is adopted (or defeated) by a vote of ____ to ____." If tally is made.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

With today's technology, minutes can be done during the meeting and circulated electronically or read at the end and then amended, discussed, voted and approved.

President: *"After finishing all items on the agenda, before closing the meeting we will vote on the minutes. Secretary, please circulate (or read) the minutes."*

Secretary: Reads the minutes or makes a motion to dispense with reading if all received electronic copies.



President: *“Are there any corrections or objections to the minutes as read (or distributed)?”*

If the President feels that everyone agrees with the minutes, a formal motion to approve the minutes followed by amendments to correct can also be used as proper procedure, although it is usually not needed.

If objections are raised, sometimes all present will agree to change without a formal motion. Otherwise, a formal motion and vote to correct are required.

President: *After all corrections have been decided by motion or without a motion: “If there are no (further) objections, the minutes are approved as read (or as distributed).”*

President: *“Thank you! Our next meeting will be held here in two weeks at the same time. Are there any other announcements at this point?”*

President: *“If not, I request a motion to adjourn the meeting. Moved by (name of the person) and seconded by (name of the person). All in favor to adjourn the meeting please say “**adjourn**”. Thank you, the meeting is adjourned.”*



Sample Agenda

JCI Downtown - General Membership Meeting

Purpose of the meeting:

1. 20:00 Opening Exercises
 - a. Call to order
 - b. JCI Creed, Mission and Vision
 - c. Roll Call
 - d. Apologies
 - e. Chairman's Opening Remarks
 - f. Purpose of the meeting
2. 20:05 Certification of a quorum
3. 20:06 Adoption of the Agenda
4. 20:10 Reports from the Board members on major issues
5. 20:15 Committee Reports (discussion and approval of major projects' reports)
6. 20:30 Old business (Tabled from previous meetings)
 - a.
 - b.
7. 20:35 New business (Motions)
 - a.
 - b.
8. 20:35 Guest Speaker or Program (If no project reports and discussions are expected)
9. 21:15 Approval of the minutes
10. 21:25 Announcements and vote of thanks
11. 21:30 Adjournment.



Chart of Parliamentary Motions

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS	Requires Second	May be Amended	May be Debated	Require Vote	May be Reconsidered	May Interrupt Speaker
1. Fix time of next meeting	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No	No
2. Adjourn meeting	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
3. Recess	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No	No
4. Question of privilege	No	No	No	Chairman	Yes	Yes
5. Point of information	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS	Requires Second	May be Amended	May be Debated	Require Vote	May be Reconsidered	May Interrupt Speaker
6. Lay on the table	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
7. Previous Question	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes	No
8. Limit debate	Yes	Yes	No	2/3	Yes	No
9. Postpone to a certain time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
10. Refer to a committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
11. Amend	Yes	Yes	(1)	Majority	Yes	No
12. Postpone indefinitely	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
MAIN MOTIONS	Requires Second	May be Amended	May be Debated	Require Vote	May be Reconsidered	May Interrupt Speaker
13. Main motion for general business	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
14. Take from the table	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
15. Reconsider	Yes	No	(2)	Majority	No	Yes
16. Rescind	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
17. Make special order of business	No	No	No	2/3		Yes
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS	Requires Second	May be Amended	May be Debated	Require Vote	May be Reconsidered	May Interrupt Speaker
18. Suspend rules	Yes	No	No	2/3	No	No
19. Withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Majority	Yes	No
20. Object to a consideration	No	No	No	2/3	Yes	Yes
21. Point of order	No	No	No	Chairman	No	Yes
22. Appeal from Chairman's decision	Yes	No	Yes	Chairman or Majority	Yes	Yes
23. Division (verify a voice vote)	No	No	No			Yes
24. Roll call	Yes	No	No	Majority		Yes

(1) Only if the motion to be amended is debatable.

(2) Only if the motion to be reconsidered is debatable.

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