

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

To participate effectively in the proceedings of the Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council annual meetings, each voting member needs to be familiar with the fundamental rules of parliamentary procedure. These rules enable the members to transact business with the least possible friction, with expediency and efficiency, and in a manner fair to all. The minority, as well as the majority, are enabled to express their views, to make motions, and to vote.

The parliamentary rules followed by Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council are *Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised)*.

MAIN MOTIONS

A main motion introduces a new item of business. Until this is disposed of, no other *main* motion may be considered, as there can be only one *main* motion pending at a time. The making of a motion comes first; discussion follows.

The steps relating to the handling of a main motion are:

1. The motion is introduced by a delegate.
2. Any member may second the motion if needed by calling out, "I second the motion."
(Committee motions do not require a second.)
3. The chair states the motion by repeating it.
4. The chair then asks for discussion, giving the maker of the motion the first opportunity to speak (thereafter, insofar as possible, the chair alternates between those in favor and those against).
5. A member may, during the discussion and when recognized by the chair, introduce a subsidiary, incidental, privileged, or certain other motion.
6. The discussion at all times must relate to the immediately pending question.
7. After the discussion or as it appears appropriate, the chair asks, "Are you ready for the question?"
8. The chair repeats the question, calls for the affirmative vote, and then calls for the negative vote.
9. The chair announces the result of the vote. If the vote is on any motion made subsequent to the main motion, the discussion is directed to the next ranking motion until there has been a decision concerning the main motion.

NOTE: *Business Proposals.* Business proposals for consideration by the council may be submitted in writing by any member of the council to the chair for consideration by the board of directors. The board of directors shall determine whether such proposals relate to matters which should properly be acted on by the council. Any such proposals shall be submitted 15 days prior to the board of directors meeting at which the agenda for the annual meeting is set.

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

Subsidiary motions are those that modify or delay action on the main motion. Such motions are in order while the main motion or a motion of lower rank is still pending (in the debatable stage) and must be voted on before the main motion. Subsidiary motions have a definite order of precedence from the lowest to the highest. The lowest in rank yields to motions that are higher in rank. If several subsidiary motions are pending at one time, the vote is taken first on the motion with the highest rank, then on the motion next lower in rank, etc.

There are five subsidiary motions as follows (listed from lowest to highest ranking):

1. POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

The purpose is to reject, or kill, the main motion. The form is, "I move to postpone indefinitely the motion that..." It requires a second, is debatable, cannot be amended, and requires a majority vote. Only an affirmative vote can be reconsidered.

2. AMEND

"Amend" is used to change the wording of a motion. The form is, "I move to amend the motion by..." It requires a second, is debatable, can be amended, requires a majority vote, and can be reconsidered.

The ways to amend are: insert, strike out, strike out and insert, add, and substitute.

An amendment to the main motion is called a primary amendment. An amendment to the primary amendment is called a secondary amendment. Only these two degrees of amendments are permitted. A primary amendment must relate to the main motion. A secondary amendment must relate to the primary amendment. Only one primary amendment at a time or one secondary amendment at a time can be pending. As soon as the amendments are disposed of by vote, another of the same class is in order.

NOTE: "These bylaws may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of members of the council present and voting at any meeting of the council provided that the proposed amendment shall have been reviewed by the board of directors and shall have been included in the notice of the meeting." (GSVSC Bylaws, Article XV)

3. LIMIT OR EXTEND DEBATE

It is sometimes desirable to limit or extend the time a question may be discussed. The purpose of this motion is to change the adopted rules of debate. The form is, "I move that the debate on the pending motion be limited to..." or "be extended to..." This motion can be applied to one

or more pending motions. It requires a second, cannot be debated, can be amended, requires a two-thirds vote, and can be reconsidered.

4. PREVIOUS QUESTION

The object of this motion is to close debate at once. The form is, "I move the previous question." This motion requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, requires a two-thirds vote, and cannot be reconsidered after a vote has been taken under it.

If adopted, discussion and amendments are halted, and the vote is taken immediately on the pending motion or on ALL pending motions if so stated by the mover.

5. LAY ON THE TABLE

The object of this motion is to delay action temporarily, usually in order to attend to more urgent business. The form is, "I move to lay the question on the table." It requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, requires a majority vote, and cannot be reconsidered.

CERTAIN OTHER MOTIONS

1. TAKE FROM THE TABLE

This motion is used to bring a tabled question back before the assembly. The form is, "I move to take from the table the question..." It requires a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, requires a majority vote, and cannot be reconsidered.

2. RECONSIDER

The purpose of this motion is to bring a question already acted upon before the assembly again so that the vote may be changed. The form is, "I move to reconsider the vote on..." It requires a second, is debatable when the motion to be reconsidered is debatable, cannot be amended, requires a majority vote, and cannot be reconsidered. This motion must be made by one who votes with the prevailing side. It must be made on the day on which the vote to be reconsidered was taken or on the next succeeding business day.

3. RESCIND

When an assembly wishes to annul action previously taken and it is too late to reconsider the vote, use the motion to rescind. Any member may make this motion. There is no time limit (provided no subsequent action or implementation has occurred). The form is, "I move to rescind the action on the motion..." It requires a second, is debatable, can be amended, and requires a two-thirds vote (or a majority vote if notice of rescinding was given at the previous meeting). An affirmative vote to rescind cannot be reconsidered.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS

Incidental motions are pertinent to, take precedence over, and must be decided before the pending question. Some also originate out of business that has just been pending. Some of the incidental motions and those most used in conventions follow:

1. POINT OF ORDER

This motion is used to call attention to a breach of the rules, does not require a second, and can even interrupt a speaker. A point of order must be made at the time the breach occurs. The form is, "I rise to a point of order." The chair asks that the point be stated, and the member replies. The chair decides the point.

2. APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR

An appeal can be made from any decision of the chair but only at the time the ruling is made. A second is required. The form is, "I appeal from the decision of the chair." The chair states the point at issue. An appeal is debatable when the pending question is debatable. The chair puts the question as, "Shall the decision of the chair be sustained?" A majority vote or a tie vote sustains the chair. There is no appeal from the decision of the assembly.

3. DIVISION OF A QUESTION

The motion to divide a question can be applied only to main motions and amendments. If a motion has several parts, each one capable of standing alone if the others are taken away, it can be divided into two or more parts. Then each part is voted on separately. The exact method of dividing must be specified in the motion. The form is, "I move that the question be divided into..." The motion to divide is not debatable, may be amended, requires a majority vote, and cannot be reconsidered.

4. DIVISION OF THE ASSEMBLY

After the chair has announced the result of a vote (taken by voice or show of hands), a member who does not agree may, without obtaining the floor, say, "I call for a division." The chair then takes the vote again, asking the affirmative and the negative to stand. This does not require a second and cannot be debated, amended, or reconsidered. A majority vote is required to order the vote to be counted or taken by ballot.

5. PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

When a member wants to inquire about a motion to use or wants information about the law or a motion, the member says, "I rise to a parliamentary inquiry." The chair answers the inquiry. The inquiry should be pertinent to the pending business.

6. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

A request for information must be pertinent to the pending business. The form is, "I rise for information." If information is desired of the speaker instead of the chair, the form is, "I would like to ask the speaker a question." All remarks, questions asked, and answers given should be addressed through the chair, as members cannot directly address each other in assembly. If the speaker consents to answer, the time consumed is taken out of the speaker's time. A request for information must be stated in the form of a question. It cannot be used as a means of debate. It may also be used to make a point of information but must always be put in the form of a question.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS

Privileged motions, although not related to the pending question, are motions that need special attention and take precedence over the motions.

The category most likely to be needed is “Raise a Question of Privilege.” Questions of privilege concern the rights and privileges of the assembly or of a member, such as: a report being read that cannot be heard; a speaker who cannot be heard; discomfort of members with respect to heating, lighting, ventilation, seating, noise, disturbances, etc.; the conduct of any individual present; or the accuracy of published reports.

The form is, “I rise to a question of privilege affecting the assembly,” or “I rise to a question of personal privilege.” It does not require a second, is not debatable, cannot be amended, and is decided by the chair. (The decision can be appealed, and then a majority vote is required. The appeal is not debatable and cannot be reconsidered.)

If a question of privilege requires immediate attention (such as when a speaker cannot be heard), the member may interrupt the speaker. If the question does not require immediate attention, the member cannot interrupt the speaker.

PARLIAMENTARY POINTERS (Quick Reference)
A Mini-Guide to Most-Used Motions

MOTION	WHEN USED	YOU STATE BY SAYING	MAY INTERRUPT SPEAKER	SECOND NEEDED	DEBATABLE	AMENDABLE	VOTE NEEDED TO PASS
MAIN MOTION	To introduce a proposal to the assembly	You state by saying, "I move that..." or "I move to..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
AMENDMENT	To change a motion before the house	"I move to amend this motion by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION	To request information	"I rise to request information on..."	If urgent	No	No	No	No vote
TO POSTPONE INDEFINITELY	To kill a motion	"I move we postpone this matter indefinitely."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
REFER TO COMMITTEE	When further study is desired; also for action	"I move we refer this matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
POINT OF ORDER	To call attention to an error in procedure	"I rise to a point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote (chair rules)
QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE	To register a complaint concerning the comfort or well-being of a person or the assembly	"I rise to a question of privilege."	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules
PREVIOUS QUESTION	To end debate and bring the matter under discussion to a vote	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
APPEAL RULING OF CHAIR	To call a vote on a ruling made by the chair	"I appeal from the chair's decision."	Yes	Yes	Yes, if original was	No	Majority
RECONSIDER	To reconsider the vote on a matter already decided	"I move we reconsider the vote on the motion to..."	For record only	Yes	No	No	Majority
PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY	To inquire about a motion	"I rise to a parliamentary inquiry."	Yes	No	No	No	Not voted on; responded to by chair
LIMIT OR EXTEND DEBATE	To change the adopted rules of debate	"I move that the debate on the pending motion be limited to..." or "be extended to..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds