



# Notes on Parliamentary Procedure

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## ***What is Parliamentary Procedure?***

It is a system of order by which members of an organization agree to conduct business. In TFRW, Parliamentary Procedure includes TFRW's Bylaws and the most current version of Robert's Rules of Order.

## ***Why Use Parliamentary Procedure?***

Three good reasons are:

- Provides order – similar to traffic signs, stoplights and laws for meetings. (*And we all know can happen when we ignore traffic laws!*)
- Makes meetings run smoothly when everyone is in agreement, and allows the group to come to decisions fairly when issues are bitterly contested (*of course, we all know this never happens in any of our clubs*).
- Assures everyone is treated fairly:
  - That the majority prevails
  - That the minority has an opportunity to be heard
  - That the absent members' rights are protected.

## ***Why are Your Club's Bylaws Important?***

- The bylaws are sort of like a contract between the members and the club.
- Your club's bylaws cannot be in conflict with TFRW's bylaws. If you aren't sure if there's a conflict, contact Jo Konen, TFRW Vice-president of Bylaws, and ask her to take a look at your bylaws.
- Bylaws should include the rules, which your club regards as so important that they must not be quickly or easily changed, and which cannot be suspended.
- Follow your bylaws. If you don't like one of your bylaws, or a bylaw prevents the group from doing something it wants or needs to do, you cannot ignore the bylaw. Your only recourse is to amend the bylaw. Amending a bylaw takes time, and that is a good thing. Governing documents must not be changed on a whim.
- Two things are usually required to amend a bylaw:
  - Advance notice that a vote on the bylaws is going to be taken, which includes exactly what change is being proposed.
  - A favorable two-thirds vote of the members present. (Remember a vote cannot be taken if a quorum is not present.)

## **To Do!!!**

1. Read and become familiar with your club's bylaws. If you've read them before, you might want to reread them as a refresher.
2. Know what your club's quorum is. If your bylaws don't specify how many members constitute a quorum, then by default, it is a majority (51% or more than half) of the entire membership. (Note that associate members do not count toward a quorum.) Your club must have a quorum of the membership present before any votes can be taken.
3. It is a good idea for each club to have a copy of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* (10<sup>th</sup> Edition is the most current at this time). You can find it at most bookstores.
4. In my opinion, the best parliamentary procedure book for a club president is *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, IN BRIEF* by Henry M. Robert III, and others. It is a concise guide authorized by Robert's Rules Association. I've seen this book at Barnes & Nobles and Hastings.

*Here are some questions to help you learn. You'll need to look in your club's bylaws for the answers.*

1. My club's quorum is \_\_\_\_\_ % of \_\_\_\_\_ (choose one below).
  - a. Its full membership
  - b. Those present at the meeting
  - c. My club doesn't have a quorum defined in its bylaws.
2. A quorum for any meeting of my club's Board of Directors is \_\_\_\_\_ % of the voting members of the Board.
3. How much notice must be given to your membership that a bylaws change is going to be voted on?  
\_\_\_\_\_. My club's bylaws require a \_\_\_\_\_ vote of the active members present to amend the bylaws.