

A Small Parliamentary Handbook for Those Who Desire One

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Assisting the moderator will be our parliamentarian, Mr. Marvin Rudnitsky, Esq. The parliamentarian will be on the platform with the moderator but is available on request to provide assistance to delegates. The parliamentarian will consult with you if you need assistance in offering a motion. The parliamentarian is available during the business session and both are available before and after sessions.

SPEAKING DURING THE SESSION

Voice on the floor of the plenary of the Penn Central Conference is limited to delegates, and those designated voice without vote. In order to be recognized, a participant must come to a microphone. In addition to the microphones on the platform, which will be used for the presentation of reports and new business, there are microphones in the delegate area with colored signs:

Green: for speaking in favor of the question before the house.

Red: for speaking in opposition to the question.

White: for offering an amendment or other normal subsidiary motion known as procedural motions.

Yellow: for a Point of Order or other incidental or privileged motions.

A youth-page is stationed at each of these microphones to signal the Chair when someone wishes to speak.

HOW BUSINESS IS INTRODUCED

In the opening plenary session, the Standing Rules and Agenda are adopted. Thereafter, they may be changed or suspended only by a 2/3 vote or by "general consent." Other items, including new business if any, may be introduced by title only.

SETTING THINGS IN MOTION

On Friday afternoon, there will be a hearing on each of the resolutions, between the hours of 4:00 and 5:00 P.M. Please consult the agenda to find the times and locations for hearing of resolutions you are interested in.

On Friday evening, all resolutions will be introduced by title and one person representing the makers of the motion may speak to that resolution. Delegates will then be given the opportunity to vote on whether they wish to consider a particular resolution. Only those resolutions that receive a majority vote on Friday evening will be considered on Saturday at plenary.

At the appropriate time during the Saturday morning plenary, the resolutions will be called for in order. Debate begins when the Moderator states that "the question is before the house." At this point, the green and red microphones will be used alternately and debate will proceed in accordance with time limits and other provisions stated in the Standing Rules. While a Main Motion is under consideration, it may be modified by moving TO AMEND (white microphone). By "striking out" and/or "inserting" words, or by "substituting" new wording for the entire motion.

An amendment requires a second and a majority vote. Please note that the Moderator will not entertain a motion to amend until there has been opportunity for two speeches in favor of the main motion and two in opposition. Any substantive amendment should be delivered to the platform in writing at once. It is permissible to move to "amend the amendment," but it gets terribly confusing and is not recommended.

By the way, you need not go to a microphone or be recognized by the Chair in order to second a motion. A "second" simply indicates that there is someone besides the mover who wishes to have the motion considered. If there isn't, the motion would only waste time and is best allowed to die quickly "for lack of a second."

KEEPING THEM MOVING

There are several other motions that may be made while the main motion and amendments are pending in order to expedite the flow of business. The “Subsidiary Motions” (use the white microphone) follow specific rules of precedence. Here are the common ones, in ascending order of precedence:

1. **TO REFER** to a committee or other body. Seldom used at Conference Annual Meeting, since time is short.
2. **TO POSTPONE** to a certain time. Again, seldom used at Conference Annual Meeting because of the short duration. No question may be postponed to the next Conference Annual Meeting because it will be a new body.
3. **TO LIMIT OR EXTEND DEBATE** requires a 2/3 vote (or “general consent”) because it waives the established limits.
4. **TO CLOSE DEBATE** (“Previous Question”) requires a 2/3 vote. At Conference Annual Meeting, applies only to the immediately pending question, not to a series of motions.

(Note: The motion to lay on the table, which requires only a majority vote, may not be used for the purpose of closing debate and will normally not be needed in Conference Annual Meeting business.)

There are also some “Incidental Motions” (yellow microphone) that have less definite rules of precedence. The common ones are:

1. **POINT OF ORDER**. Used when a member thinks the rules of the Conference Annual Meeting are being violated. Chair rules.
2. **TO CALL FOR A DIVISION OF THE HOUSE**. At Conference Annual Meeting this means a counted vote and may be ordered by a majority vote of the delegates.
3. **TO DIVIDE THE QUESTION**. Breaking up a motion into parts to be voted upon separately. Each part must be able to stand alone. Requires a second and a majority vote.
4. **TO APPEAL THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR**. Overrules the chair’s decision. Requires a second and a majority vote.
5. **TO SUSPEND THE RULES**. Requires a second and a 2/3 vote.
6. **TO RECONSIDER**. Reopens a matter previously decided. Must be made by one who voted with the prevailing side. Requires a second and a majority vote to reconsider the question.

Finally, there are a few “Privileged Motions” which may interrupt the pending business. They are: **CALL FOR THE ORDER OF THE DAY**, **RAISE A QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE**, take a **RECESS**, and **ADJOURN**. These are made from the yellow microphone after checking with the Floor Parliamentarian.

A NOTE ABOUT ACTIONS ON THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Proposed changes in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Church must be circulated to all delegates well in advance of Conference Annual Meeting. Therefore, amendments from the floor will be in order only if they are within the “scope” of the advance proposals—generally the underlined portion of the circulated text.

AND A LAST WORD

We hope that this introduction to parliamentary procedure will help you understand how Conference Annual Meeting does its work and how you, as a delegate, may participate fully and constructively. Please remember, however, that this is just a general summary. The Standing Rules and Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, are the only official guidelines, and they contain many specific rules that apply in particular circumstances. Please feel free to ask the Parliamentarian if you are puzzled by something or wish further guidance.