Parliamentary procedure is a tool for transacting business accurately, justly, and expeditiously. It is a means for arriving at a majority opinion—fairly, correctly and in a minimum amount of time.

Business is brought to a meeting through motions, which must be seconded and thrown open for discussion. There can be only one motion before the house at a time, EXCEPT certain motions, called subsidiary motions, used for the purpose of disposing of the motion before the house without taking a direct “yes” or “no” vote. Such motion is to TABLE, or REFER TO A COMMITTEE, or to POSTPONE TO A DEFINITE TIME.

Routine Matters: May be disposed of by general consent. (The presiding officer handles them by saying, “if there is no objection…”)

Reports: Committee chairs move the acceptance of the committee’s report and recommendations. Officers do not move the acceptance of their own reports.

Adjourn or Take a Recess: Is in order at any time (not debatable, majority vote). The business interrupted is the first order upon returning.

Incidental Motions or Requests: May interrupt business temporarily. They are:
– Point of Order: calls to the attention of the assembly that something is being done contrary to the rules (convention rules, bylaws or Parliamentary Procedures).
– Point of Information: requests information of some sort.
– Appeal from the Decision of the Chair: may be made by any member who wishes to express disagreement with the decision of the presiding officer (debatable, majority vote and a tie sustains the chair).
– Motion to Withdraw: may be made by anyone to have a motion before the house withdrawn (not debatable, majority vote or general consent).
– Question of Privilege: general or personal, requests affecting the comfort or convenience of the assembly or one of its members and may be made at any time (no vote required).

Suspension of the rules is a motion to set aside a rule temporarily (not debatable–2/3 vote). Nothing in the bylaws can be suspended.

Motions to Use for Certain Purposes

To modify or amend: Motion to amend is a means of perfecting a motion by adding, eliminating or substituting works, phrases or paragraphs (debatable, amendable, majority vote). Move to refer to committee (debatable, amendable, majority vote).

To defer action: Move to postpone to a definite time (debatable, amendable, majority vote). Motion to table can be made when any other subsidiary motion is before the house (not debatable, not amendable, majority vote).

To suppress or limit debate: Call for the previous question or move that discussion be cut off (not debatable, amendable only as to time, 2/3 vote). Move to extend has same qualifications.

To consider a question: Motion to reconsider a motion which has been voted upon. This second time the motion must be made by the one who voted on the prevailing side and must be made the same day or next day (debatable, majority vote). Motion to rescind annuls a motion or action which has been taken (debatable, amendable as to the portion to be rescinded, 2/3 vote). Motion to take from the table is a motion to bring back to the assembly a motion which as been tabled (not debatable, not amendable, majority vote).

Key points:
– Majority is more than half of the legal votes cast.
– Two-thirds is more than 2/3 of the legal votes cast.
– Plurality is used in elections. The person who receives more votes than any other candidate is elected by plurality vote.
– The presiding officer is the only officer authorized to decide a question of order or with the power to make rulings.
– The parliamentarian assists the president and members in rulings on point of order and in answering parliamentary inquiries.
– Once the quorum is set, it holds for the remainder of the meeting.