



approach

ETHICS WEEK 2021  
REAPPROACHING ETHICAL VALUES



PARLIAMENTARY  
EFFICIENCY

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or

YOU Can Make Your Meetings  
Shorter

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# “Documents of Authority” / “Rules of a Society”

(Arranged in order of authoritative hierarchy:)

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- applicable primary law (e.g., statutes/regulations)
- the organization’s charter or articles of incorporation
- by-laws or a constitution
- special rules of order
- standing rules of order
- a parliamentary manual adopted as the body’s parl. authority
  - (or, in the authority’s absence or silence, *common* parliamentary law / *general* parliamentary law)
- **custom**

# General consent/unanimous consent (U.C.)

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A good chair will anticipate when an action is not controversial and therefore does not merit any extra parliamentary maneuver beyond

“Without objection . . .”

# Seconds

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- Deliberative bodies should avoid hyperformality over seconds.
- Don't identify or record members who second a motion.
  - (For one thing, motive may be ambiguous.)
- If at least two members show interest in calling up a motion (such as when it's moved by a committee or by at least two individuals), you don't need to worry about the formal "second"—you've *got* your second implicitly.
- Absence of a second is not a fatal misstep.
  - For example, if a vote is taken on a motion, it's already too late to raise a point of order (and, in any case, such a point of order should fail because a second is already implied by *multiple* members having voted).



# Speaking without Recognition

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- Seconds
- “I doubt the vote” (i.e., “Division!”)
- Points of order, privilege
- Appeals
- Objection to general consent/unanimous consent
- Hold an item off of consent agenda

# Miscellaneous

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- No affirmative abstentions
- Hypercourteous repetition
  - “It’s Moved by Committeemember Archer, Committeemember Baker, Committeemember Charles, Vice-Chairperson Douglass . . . .”
- You don’t need a *motion* to adjourn
  - If at the end of the agenda, Chair should just ask for U.C.
- You don’t need a “call to order” as an express “item # 1” in the agenda.
  - There may be several calls to order during a meeting (following recesses, disruptions, *etc.*), and they are all equally important.
- RONR, DCMR quotations re hypertechnicality

# Advance Notice

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**--D.C. public bodies are required to include their agenda in their meeting notices.**

D.C. Official Code § 2–576(5) (section 406(5) of the Open Meetings Act (“Each meeting notice shall include the date, time, location, and planned agenda to be covered at the meeting.”)); *accord* 3 D.C.M.R. § 10409.2.

--And that may be a good idea for your private body (charity, association, union...) too.

--Wise to pre-release full text of resolutions

(resolution = a formal motion, printed, often with “whereas”-style preamble)



# Holding a *virtual* meeting (Zoom, WebEx, etc.): How do we adjust our procedures?

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A remote meeting is just a meeting. It's still perfectly legitimate,  
... if otherwise lawful:

properly noticed, roll-call votes (3 D.C.M.R. § 10409.7(d)), *etc.*  
--even in “normal” (non-pandemic) times

... so don't waste time on hyperlegalism.

--*E.g.*, you don't need to, *e.g.*, pass a standing order or by-law  
allowing yourselves to meet virtually, let alone state on the record some  
provision to justify your meeting.

“So...what are some other parliamentary maneuvers we DO have to follow?”

For some examples (this list is not exhaustive):

Any procedure that’s prescribed by legislation, regulation (or other supervening authority such as an umbrella body’s rules)—like, possibly your method of electing directors or officers.

Minutes should use a consistent level of formality/detail. They don’t have to transcribe every point of debate, but they should be predictable in form no matter how complex/simple, or divisive/unanimous the adoption of, a motion was.

Let everybody have a chance to speak in debate before going around a second time.

Treasurer’s reports often need regular/annual auditing, and this probably can’t (and shouldn’t be waived). Specific law might vary depending on your jurisdiction and any umbrella organization.



...and, “movant’s privilege”

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RONR: No “movant’s privilege,”  
no unilateral “friendly amendments”

—RONR (12th ed.) § 12:91, p. 150

# Acknowledgments / Incidental Sources:

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I consulted:

- James Lochrie, *Meeting Procedures: Parliamentary Law and Rules of Order for the 21st Century* (The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2003)
- Blog, Bethany Prykucki, *No Need To Record that “Second,”* MICH. STATE UNIV. EXTENSION (Sept. 19, 2017), *available at* [canr.msu.edu/news/no\\_need\\_to\\_record\\_that\\_second](http://canr.msu.edu/news/no_need_to_record_that_second)
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# Contact Information

- Please direct your follow-up questions and other inquiries to:
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