



PARLIAMENTARIAN GUIDE 2021--2022

The Parliamentarian is a consultant who advises the President, other officers, committees and members on procedure. She, as a rule, should be seen and not heard. Her role during a meeting is advisory since parliamentary law gives the chair alone the power to rule on questions of order and discussions. She should be seated next to the President in order to quietly call her attention to any errors or violations affecting the rights of members. She should assist with keeping the presiding officer on track with motions and discussions.

- 1. She need not be an elected officer and is appointed by the president.**
- 2. When requested to do so, she is to give advice to the president or any member when a question about proceedings may affect the rights of any member or do potential harm to the organization.**
- 3. She must be able to perform her/his duties with complete impartiality; therefore, the parliamentarian may not make motions, participate in debate, or vote on any question except in the case of a ballot vote if she is a voting member. The parliamentarian rarely speaks unless offering expert advice on meeting procedures.**
- 4. The parliamentarian is akin to an official in a sports game; she know the rules (bylaws, standing rules and parliamentary procedure) and quietly assures that everyone plays by the rules (abides by the rules of parliamentary procedure).**

5. They are to provide impartial guidance and impartial expert advice on questions regarding the proper procedures for conducting the meetings of the organization. A qualified and impartial parliamentarian helps achieve the confidence and trust of members.

Parliamentary procedures exist to facilitate efficiently conducted meetings that protect the rights of members. The fundamental principles of parliamentary procedure are:

- 1. Fairness of process and courtesy for all.**
- 2. Only one thing at a time--speaker, motion, or action.**
- 3. The majority rules.**
- 4. The minority must be heard.**
- 5. Each proposition is entitled to a full and free debate.**
- 6. The purpose is to facilitate action, not to obstruct it.**

The basic and most common tools for a Parliamentarian and President are the Unit and Department Constitution, Bylaws and standing rules. These rules, by which meetings are formally conducted, are used by governments and businesses alike to ensure that formal meetings run in the most effective manner possible.

Per the national ALA Constitution & Bylaws, all ALA meetings will be conducted using Parliamentary procedure based on *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 11th Edition*.

Parliamentary Procedure follows a fixed order of business for conducting meetings:

1. Call to Order

2. Roll call to establish a quorum (your laws should provide the number needed to make a quorum). If you don't have this in your Bylaws a majority of the entire membership constitutes a quorum.

3. Reading and approval of the minutes, etc. (The minutes are approved; the Treasurer's report is NOT APPROVED but placed on file for audit. The audit report is accepted as well as reports of officers and committee chairman. Resolutions and changes to the Constitution and Bylaws are adopted.

4. Members should express themselves in the form of motions.

Duties of the parliamentarian before a meeting:

Review the agenda with the president to be familiar with the business and possible procedural problems that may arise. Review and know the bylaws and standing rules of the organization. Work with any committee members who request assistance in preparing reports for the meeting.

Duties of the parliamentarian during a meeting:

- 1. Arrive early to counsel as needed and remain after the meeting for further counsel.**
- 2. Have a copy of the governing documents at the meeting.**
- 3. Keep track of the motions to assist the presiding officer.**
- 4. Be as inconspicuous as possible.**
- 5. Provide advice when requested, and communicate with the president tactfully and discreetly.**
- 6. Remain impartial, and be prepared to cite references if needed.**
- 7. During a convention, the duties of the parliamentarian include those listed for meetings. Should also be prepared to advise convention committees on topics such as resolutions, credentials, rules, and elections. Review the script with the presiding officer, and stay focused, steady, patient, and fair.**

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE PARLIAMENTARIAN

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. **BE IMPARTIAL** – The parliamentarian is much like an official in a game. She is to be impartial and makes sure everyone plays by the rules. Similarly, as the official does not play the game, the parliamentarian does not exercise the same rights as a member. She does not make motions, debate, or vote, except by ballot.
2. **KNOW THE RULES** – Just as a referee must know the rules of the game, a parliamentarian must know the rules of the organization and of the parliamentary authority. As the size of the group increases, so must the depth of knowledge of the parliamentarian. A department parliamentarian must know and understand bylaws, standing rules, and parliamentary procedure much better than a unit parliamentarian.
3. **PRESIDENT’S APPOINTMENT** – the president appoints the parliamentarian for her knowledge and skills, not as an honor or special appointment for a friend. The parliamentarian should be someone reliable and trusted to provide accurate advice for everyone on both sides of an issue. The president and parliamentarian should have a good working relationship.
4. **VARIED ROLES** – the parliamentarian has a variety of duties before and during meetings with members, committees, officers, and boards. The goal is for the business to be handled properly and smoothly.
5. **DUTIES BEFORE A MEETING** – Review the agenda with the president to be familiar with the business and possible problems that may arise. Review the bylaws and standing rules of the organization. Work with any committee members who request assistance in preparing reports for the meeting.
6. **DUTIES DURING A MEETING** – Preparatory work before the meeting should reduce the work necessary during the meeting. The parliamentarian should arrive early to counsel as needed. Have a copy of the governing documents at the meeting. Keep track of the motions to assist the presiding officer. Be as inconspicuous as possible. Provide advice when requested and communicate with the president tactfully and discreetly. Remain impartial and be prepared to cite references if needed. Be available after the meeting for further counsel.
7. **DUTIES FOR A CONVENTION** – The duties of the parliamentarian for a convention include those listed for meetings. Also be prepared to advise convention committees such as resolutions, credentials, rules, and elections. Review the script with the presiding officer. Stay focused, steady, patient, and fair.

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY – Any organization requires rules of operation. The most important should be the hardest to change. Typically these include a Corporate Charter, Constitution and/or Bylaws, Rules of Order such as “Robert’s Rules” and Standing Rules. The Charter, Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules

8. Are written specifically for a given organization. Those rules take procedure in governance. On matters not specifically addressed in those documents, the Rules of Order specified in the Bylaws are the parliamentary authority. This is usually the most recent edition “Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised”. A parliamentarian should spend time studying these rules.
9. **HELP MEMBERS LEARN** – During your year of service as parliamentarian also consider working with members to educate them in parliamentary procedure. This can be as you counsel them in their roles or teach lessons to further develop their knowledge and skills.
10. **DEVELOP YOUR KNOWLEDGE** – Good parliamentarians are always learning their craft. Invest in your knowledge. Resources are available through Emblem Sales, through parliamentary associations, and online.

Resources Available through Emblem Sales at emblem.legion.org

1. National Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules (also available on the Auxiliary’s website at www.ALForVeterans.org);
2. “Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 11th Edition or 12th Edition or In Breif” (also available on the internet at <http://www.robertsrules.com/>);
3. Parliamentary Procedure Booklet.

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