

# Advanced Parliamentary Procedure

Wisconsin Counties Association Webinar

May 3, 2021



## Today's Objectives

1. Understand some basic terminology from RONR.
2. Take the “mystery” out of RONR.
3. Make Andy look a little bit foolish when he is either incorrect or unable to answer a question.



## Five Types of Motions

- **Main Motions:** Introduce a unique, substantive proposal. A main motion which is not described in *Robert's Rules* is called an **Original Main Motion**.
- **Subsidiary Motions:** Assist the body in handling some other motion. A motion to amend the current motion is a subsidiary motion.
- **Privileged Motions:** Deal with immediately pressing questions that are not directly relevant to the motion being considered. For example, the motion to take a recess.
- **Incidental Motions:** Affect how the body considers the current motion, usually by enforcing or changing the rules of order. For example, the motion to suspend a rule is an incidental motion.
- **Restorative Motions:** Allow the body to reverse or reconsider the decision previously made on some other motion. For example, the motion to reconsider a main motion is a restorative motion.



## Subsidiary Motions

Subsidiary motions are secondary motions that help dispose of other motions during a meeting. There are seven subsidiary motions:

1. **Postpone Indefinitely:** This motion avoids uncomfortable decisions. Adopting this motion means that the body has agreed to not cast a vote on the motion to which this is applied. Requires a majority.
2. **Amend:** Amend is the most commonly used subsidiary motion. The motion to amend is used to offer a substantive change to the motion that is being considered. Requires a majority.



## Subsidiary Motions (cont.)

- 3. Commit or Refer:** This motion sends a motion to a committee, special or standing. That way, the committee can research or take some action, and report back at a later meeting. Requires a majority.
- 4. Previous Question:** The previous question is used to immediately end debate and vote on one or more of the motions being considered. Requires a two-thirds vote, since it affects the rights of members.



## Subsidiary Motions (cont.)

5. **Postpone Definitely:** This motion reschedules the consideration of the pending motion to another time during the present session or the next regular session. Requires a majority.
6. **Limit or Extend Limits of Debate:** This motion is used to change the amount of time members have to speak, the number of times they may speak, or to set a time to end debate. Requires a two-thirds vote.
7. **Lay On the Table:** This motion temporarily sets aside the pending motion in order to handle pressing business. If it is not taken from the table by the end of the next session, it dies. Requires a majority.



## Privileged Motions

Privileged motions are secondary motions that are used to address issues not directly related to the business or how it is conducted. There are five privileged motions:

1. **Call for Orders of the Day:** Used to keep the meeting on schedule with the meeting's agenda. This is required on demand of a single member. A two-thirds vote is required to reject this call.
2. **Raise a Question of Privilege:** Used when a member asks for consideration of a request or a motion relating to the rights of the body or some members. The chair rules whether it is a valid question of privilege, and if it is, either rules on the request or puts the motion before the body.



## Privileged Motions (cont.)

3. **Recess:** The motion to recess provides a short break in the proceedings. This allows the members to have some time to take care of personal business without disrupting the meeting. Requires a majority.
4. **Adjourn:** The motion to adjourn is a proposal to end the meeting. Requires a majority.
5. **Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn:** This motion sets the time for an adjourned meeting. This is used to schedule another meeting that is a continuation of the current one. Requires a majority.



## Incidental Motions

Incidental motions are motions that rise out of a current question at hand and must be taken care of before business can proceed. There are 15 incidental motions:

- 1. Point of Order:** A point of order is called when there is a breach of the rules and requires the issue be immediately considered. No vote is taken on this motion, the chair simply states the ruling .



## Incidental Motions (cont.)

2. **Appeal:** An appeal brings the chair's ruling into consideration by the Body. Majority required to overturn the chair's ruling.
3. **Suspend the Rules:** Used to temporarily set aside rules governing the body. Requires a two-thirds vote. This motion cannot be used to suspend any rules contained in ordinance.



## Incidental Motions (cont.)

4. **Objection to the Consideration of a Question:** Objecting to the consideration of the question is used to prevent an original main motion from being considered and discussed. Requires a two-thirds vote.
5. **Division of a Question:** This motion is used to separate one motion into two or more motions to be considered separately. It can only be applied to main motions or amendments. Requires a majority.



## Incidental Motions (cont.)

6. **Consider By Paragraph (Seriatim):** Used to separate a lengthy motion into parts for debate and vote on each piece separately before a vote on the whole. Requires a majority.
7. **Division of the Assembly:** Used to question the result of a voice vote. This is required on demand of a single member.



## Incidental Motions (cont.)

8. **Motions Related to Method of Voting and the Polls:** These motions are used to propose a vote be taken by ballot, roll call, or counted standing vote. It also includes motions to open or close ballot polls. These typically require majority votes, but there are a few special cases that require two-thirds votes.
9. **Motions Related to Nominations:** These motions designate a method for taking nominations or open or close nominations. These typically require majority votes, but there are a few special cases that require two-thirds votes.



## Incidental Motions (cont.)

- 10. Request to Be Excused from a Duty:** A member may make this motion to shed oneself, or another member, of a compulsory obligation of membership or office. Requires a majority.
- 11. Parliamentary Inquiry:** Used to pose a question about parliamentary rules. There is no vote as the chair answers the question or refers it to another member.



## Incidental Motions (cont.)

- 12. Point of Information/Request for Information:** Used by a member wanting information about the pending motion. There is no vote, the chair answers the question or refers it to another member.
- 13. Request for Permission to Withdraw or Modify a Motion:** This is used by the maker of a motion to withdraw or change a motion. If it has already been stated by the chair, a majority is required. If it has not yet been stated, the maker can withdraw or change their motion without permission.



## Incidental Motions (cont.)

- 14. Request to Read Papers:** This motion is a request to read something to the body. Requires a majority.
- 15. Request for Other Privilege:** Used to make any request not defined by another incidental motion, such as a member requesting to speak or make remarks when no business is pending. Requires a majority.



## Restorative Motions

Restorative motions are motions made to bring a motion back into consideration or change the decision, usually as a result of the body changing its mind on the matter or new information being available. There are five restorative motions:



## Restorative Motions (cont.)

1. **Rescind:** Also known as repeal, this motion is used to nullify an adopted resolution, motion, section, or paragraph. Requires a majority with previous notice, or a two-thirds vote. (OML considerations...)
2. **Amend Something Previously Adopted:** This motion is similar to rescind, except it amends the adopted motion rather than nullifying it. Requires a majority with previous notice, or a two-thirds vote. (OML considerations...)



## Restorative Motions (cont.)

3. **Reconsider:** This motion allows the body to bring back into consideration a motion previously voted on, during the same session. This can only be made by someone who voted on the winning side of the original motion. Requires a majority.
4. **Take from the Table:** This motion is used to bring a motion previously laid on the table back into consideration. Requires a majority.
5. **Discharge a Committee:** This motion proposes to take a matter out of a committee's hands and allows the body to deal with the motion. Requires a majority with previous notice, or a two-thirds vote. (OML considerations...)



## Questions Submitted in Advance

- Someone uses public comment period for personal attacks on County Employees, Department Heads or County Supervisors.
- Someone uses it to promote unfounded alternative treatment methods or controversial websites.
- What about clapping, cheering disruptive behavior during public comment?
- Any thoughts on restricting comments to agenda items only for County Board meetings and/or Standing Committee meetings?
- Should disagreements with County policies be more properly addressed through Supervisors to be brought forward appropriately?



# Attribution

<https://slidetodoc.com/parliamentary-procedure-advanced-guide-disclaimer-this-parliamentary-procedure/>



## Questions and Comments



## Need Additional Resources?

- UW-Madison Division of Extension Local Education  
608-262-9961
- von Briesen & Roper, S.C.  
414-287-1570
- Wisconsin Counties Association  
866-404-2700

