Nothing could possibly go wrong at our meeting tonight.

Think again!!!

Administrative Professionals Workshop
September 18, 2013

South Carolina School Boards Association

Effective Meeting Management and Parliamentary Procedure

Today's Session will cover:

Fundamentals of Robert's Rules of Order

Agenda preparation

Tips on meeting minutes

Handling public input sessions

Six steps in making motions

Handling amendments to those motions

The 10 most used motions

Anything else you want to talk about

Boards in conflict

The three most common reasons boards to are in conflict:

1. Board members not "staying on their page"

2. Forgetting that individual board members have no authority

3. Ineffective and chaotic board meetings

Biggest obstacles to effective board meetings

1. Limited Time

2. Misplaced priorities

3. Disregard for basic parliamentary protocols

4. The staff

5. The public

6. Board members themselves

Most Common Protocol Mistakes School Boards Make

- Allow surprises
- Understanding what the chair's role is …
    and is NOT
- Forget that your board is a corporate board
- Forget to demand proper respect and protocol by all board members, staff, and guests
- Forget that board member conduct sends messages to your community

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The reasons may vary, but many times…

We have met the enemy and he is us!!

Pogo Comic Strip
Walter Kelly, 1971

Effective Meeting Management and Parliamentary Procedure

Basic Principles of Robert's Rules of Order

- One thing at a time, one person at a time, one time per meeting

- Discussions must be germane to the pending question

- No interruptions

- All decisions of the chair may be appealed

- Silence Implies Consent

- Right to know what will be discussed

- Everyone is equal (including the chair)

- Over and under dedication to Robert's Rules can be disastrous

- Majority rules – usually

How formal should your meetings be?

In small boards (less than 12), most Parliamentary Rules apply, but certain modifications permitting greater flexibility and informality are commonly allowed.

Robert's Rules of Order
10th edition
Page 9, Line 21

Some informality is acceptable ... *but not much!!*

- Speak only after being recognized
- Some limits on debate are good
- Chair may make motions and vote .. cautiously
- Motions to close debate should be allowed
- Motions should be seconded
- Keep discussions prior to a motion to a minimum
- Liberal use of "unanimous consent"
- Consent agendas

At least once a year ...

- Review Board operations section of your policy manual

- Adopt an annual schedule and agenda

- Discuss "the basics" of how the board will handle:
  - agenda setting
  - minutes
  - public comment
  - motions
  - role of the all staff members

Our Town School Board Meeting Self-Assessment
Date: _____

Agenda was developed according to policy	Yes	No
The agenda reflects only our governance role	Yes	No
Public input was properly carried out	Yes	No
Staff recommendations were routinely sought	Yes	No
Motions were handled properly	Yes	No
Respect to all was given at all times	Yes	No
Our meeting lasted two hours or less	Yes	No
Board members should be proud of our meeting tonight	Yes	No

It All Starts Here ...

Setting the Agenda

Know the quorum count necessary to conduct business

For a meeting to start:
1. **The scheduled hour must have arrived**
2. **A quorum is present**

If both conditions have been met, get started. Don't hold up the meeting once a quorum is established.

You must know what constitutes a quorum

Basics about meeting

When and how is a meeting called to order?

Is meeting room set-up is important?

What is your role in the agenda preparation?

Can a member participate by phone?

Where are meetings held and where can they not be held?

Where and when must meetings be posted?

Regular, Special, Emergency meeting

Rules of Debate

- Right to speak twice
- Maker of motion speaks first
- Limited to 10 minutes at a time
- All debate must be related to the pending motion
- Debate can be limited, extended, or closed with a 2/3 vote
- Address remarks to and through the chair
- Avoid using names and questioning motives

The agenda is a map

A map to follow throughout the meeting

- Is meant to:
  - Inform members, staff and the public of issues to be discussed
  - Is meant to be "limiting" in nature
  - Should not be added to the night of the meeting

- Developed by the superintendent & chair

The agenda ...

- Putting the agenda together

- Once published – no changes

- Be careful of "board member comment

Bottom line –
The agenda belongs to the members – not the chair and definitely not the superintendent

Standard Order of Business

- Minutes
- Reports of officers and standing committees
- Reports of special committees
- Special Orders
- Unfinished Business & General Orders
- New Business

Questions About Your Agenda

At your very next board meeting clarify:

- Who is responsible
- Adding items to agenda – don't do it!!
- When is agenda final
- Meeting time limit (what happens if that hour arrives)
- Consent Agenda
- How much discussion freedom superintendent and staff have

A Word About Minutes

- Minutes are legally binding once approved

- Minutes record actions of the board and not words of individuals

- Approval indicates the minutes accurately reflect actions of the board

- Must be available within reasonable time

- The "I didn't mean it" request from a board member

What to include in minutes

- date, time and place of meeting

- members present & absent

- a record of all votes taken with vote indicated

- each member's vote when requested

- summary of comments but not a transcript

- other information requested by a member

What to Leave Out of Minutes

- opinion or interpretation of secretary
- judgmental or flowery language
- motions that are withdrawn
- name of person seconding the motion
- language of reports (use attachments)
- transcript-style writing

Public participation during board meetings

- A public attendance law ... not a public participation law – not required by law
- Have sign-up procedure and other "rules"
- Consider limiting comments to agenda items
- Time limit – stick to it
- Comments limited to issues – not individuals
- Don't debate the public during the meeting
- Establish follow-up procedures

Handling motions and amendments

All actions of the board begin with motions

Adopting a motion

Step 1   A member makes a motion
Step 2   A member seconds
Step 3   Chair states the question
Step 4   The members debate
Step 5   The members vote
Step 6   The chair announces the
            vote and "next steps"

Step 1 – Making motions

- **Motions in writing to avoid confusion**

- **Member must be recognized by chair**

- **When motion poorly worded, chair has the option to assist in clarifying**

- **Chairs CAN make motions - cautiously**

- **Get a motion on the floor quickly**

Step 2 – Seconding the motion

- **Only implies a member wishes to hear discussion**
- **If no second - what then?**
- **Some items do not require a second**
- **No need for recognition for seconds**
- **Misunderstandings about seconding**

Step 3 – Chair states the motion

- **Formally places motion before members**
- **Transfers ownership to the full group**
- **Chair restates the motion during debate**
- **Chair reminds group if straying from question**
- **After this step, the group must do "something" with the motion**

Step 4 – Members debate

- **Maker of motion speaks first**

- **Debate focus on immediate pending question**

- **You must be recognized to speak**

- **Members who have not yet spoken recognized before other members given a second chance to speak**

Step 5 – Members vote

- **Repeat motion before voting**

- **Handling abstentions**

- **Tie vote is a lost vote**

- **Common types of voting**
  - **General consent**
  - **Voice voting**
  - **Show of hands**
  - **Role call**

Step 6 – Announcing results

- **Announce outcome of vote - give number of those in favor, those opposed, and those who abstain**

- **Announce any appropriate "next steps"**

Amending Motions can lead to chaos

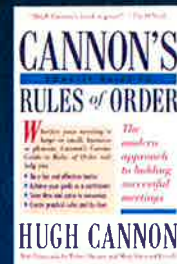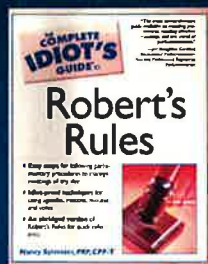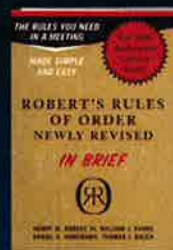### A "must learn" skill for everyone
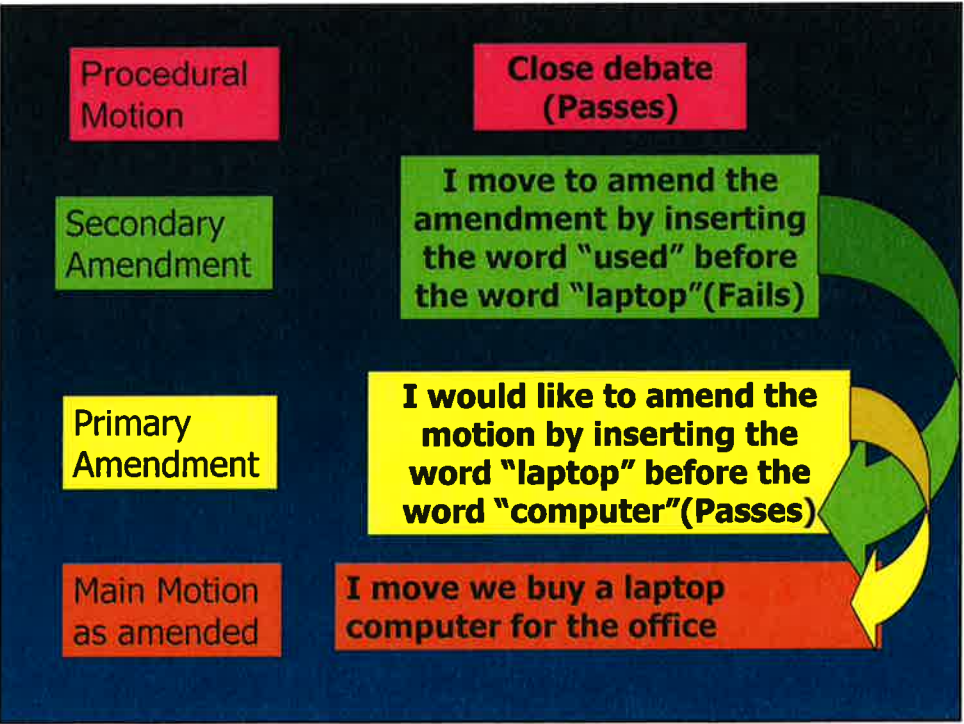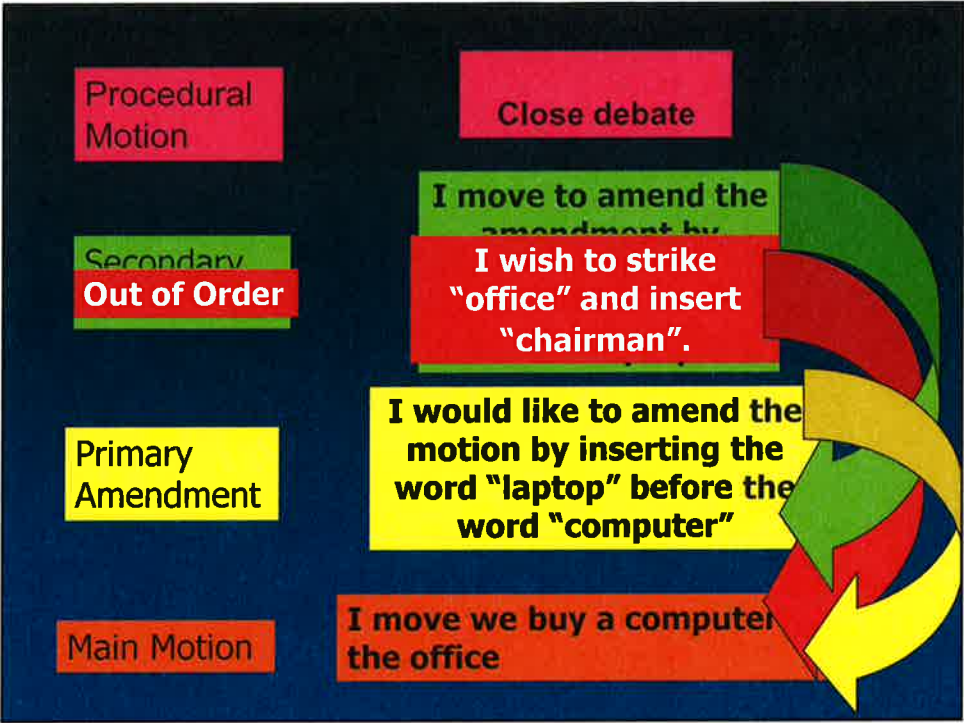
"Must-Know" motions

1. Adjourn
2. Recess
3. Lay on the table
4. Close Debate
5. Limit or extend debate
6. Postpone to a certain time
7. Refer to Committee
8. Secondary amendment
9. Primary amendment
10. Main motion

Recommended Reading