



**Nothing could possible
go wrong at our meeting
tonight...**

Think Again

**SCSBA Chairmen's Workshop
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**If you haven't felt this way
at a board meeting yet...
you will**



School boards in conflict

**The four most common reasons
school boards are in conflict:**

- **Board members not “staying on their page”**
- **Forgetting that individual members, including chairs, have no authority ... unless authority is given to them by the rest of the board**
- **A chairman not doing his/her job**
- **A disregard for proper meeting protocol**

**The reasons may vary,
but many times....**

**We have met the enemy
and he is us!!**

**Pogo Comic Strip
Walter Kelly, 1971**

Basic Principles of Robert's Rules of Order

- Balancing efficiency with fairness
- One thing at a time - discussions must be germane to a pending motion
- No interruptions and no surprises
- Simple majority rules-usually
- Everyone is equal (including the chair)
- An individual is secondary to the board as a whole
- Silence implies consent

The Bottom Line

The sole purpose of a meeting is to determine the collective will of the majority in a fair and efficient manner

The Chairman

**All animals are equal,
*but some animals are more
equal than others***

**Animal Farm
George Orwell
1945**

Role of the Board Chair

**The board chair must be in control ...
but not be controlling.**

- Don't allow surprises
- Treat all fairly
- Earn the board's confidence and trust
- Be sensitive to timing & mood
- Prevent confusion
- Demand proper conduct

Common protocol tools to make your job easier

- 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**
- Controversy requires a high level of formality

Common mistakes made by chairs

1. The chairman dominating the body
2. Improper handling of motions
3. Forget to manage the pace of the meeting
4. Discussion on multiple issues at same time
5. Poor agenda planning
6. Allow surprises..adding items to the agenda
7. Allow member to speak without recognition
8. Allowing discussions without a pending motion
9. Allowing too much informality
10. Allowing negatively worded motions

**What is the status
of the hearing?**

**What is the status of
the main motion?**

**6 of 7 voting
3 "yes" and 3 "no"**

**What would a
"no" vote mean?**

**What does a "yes"
vote mean?**

Main Motion

**I move that we not accept the
recommendation of the Superintendent**

**Supt.
Recommends**

**I recommend that that a hearing not be
granted to teacher XYZ**

Formality versus informality

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

**High level of controversy
requires
High level of formality**

**Robert's Rules of Order
simply help you find
the balance between
efficiency and
democracy**

Parliamentary Tools that Support Efficiency

- Properly planned agendas
- Using a Consent Agenda
- Reconsideration and other “re-do” motions
- Close Debate
- Postpone or table a motion
- Refer to committee
- Using “without objection” instead of motions
- Being repetitive to assure clarity

Parliamentary Tools that Support Democracy

- All decisions of the chair may be appealed
- All board members are equal (including the chair) unless given authority
- Only the board as a whole has authority
- Advance notice of items to be discussed
- Board meetings must be held in public... they are not meetings of the public

Public Input Policies Should Be Clear

- Have sign-up procedure
- Limit comments to items on agenda
- Time limit – stick to it
- Comments limited to issues
- Don't allow response
- Establish follow-up procedures

**Effective meeting
management starts long
before the meeting starts**

The agenda ...

- Consent agendas
- Be careful of an agenda item called “general comments by members”
- Be careful about indicating “action” items versus “information” items
- Adding items to the agenda the night of the meeting allowed, but a very bad idea (*Lambries v. Saluda County Council*)

A word about minutes

- date, time and place of meeting
- board members present
- all motions and their disposition
- discuss how to record the votes of individual members
- members (including Chair) should vote or abstain
- record of what was done, not what was said

Minutes are critical

- Minutes are legally binding once approved
- Minutes are a record of actions of the board and not of an individual
- Everyone's job to ensure the minutes accurately reflect actions of the board
- The "I didn't mean it" council member

A few time-savers

- Please state your motion prior to discussion
- Without objection, we will ...
- The Chair making a motion can save time...
but do so cautiously
- Are you ready to vote?
- Your comments are out of order at this time
- What is the pleasure of the group
- Postponing consideration or tableing can save time

Adopting Motions

**Let's see how to handle the
adoption of motions ...**

**with a few detours
along the way**

Adopting a Motion

There are six steps for adopting a motion.

Step 1 **A member makes a motion**

Step 2 **A member seconds a motion**

Step 3 **The chair states the question**

Step 4 **The members debate**

Step 5 **The members vote**

Step 6 **The chair announces the vote**



A common pitfall ... handling of amendments

- A motion to amend modifies main motion, requires second & is subject to debate & is amendable
- Three types of amendments..strike, delete, or strike and delete
- Main motion limited to an amendment and an amendment to an amendment
- Amendments limited to immediately pending motion and must be germane
- Friendly Amendments

**You must know if
motions are
germane and the
proper order in
handling multiple
motions all pending
at the same time**

Procedural
Motion

Close debate

Secondary
Out of Order

**I move to amend the
amendment by**

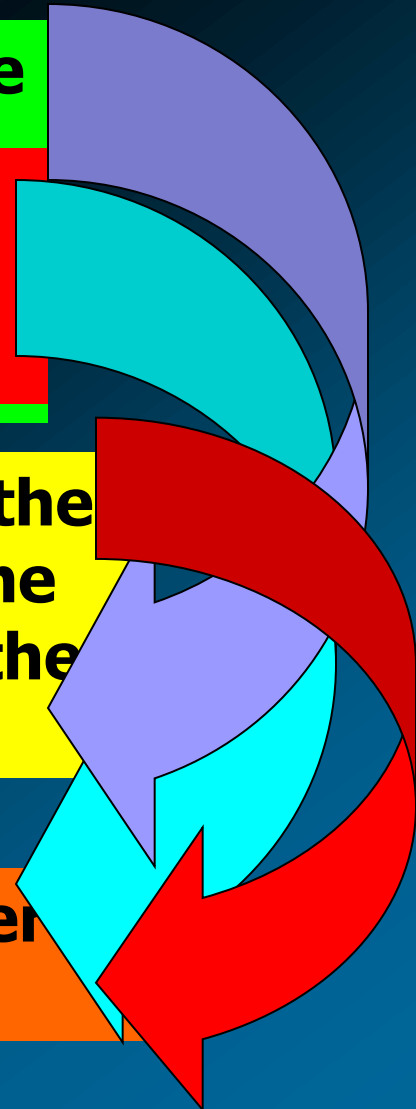
**I wish to strike
“office” and insert
“chairman”.**

Primary
Amendment

**I would like to amend the
motion by inserting the
word “laptop” before the
word “computer”**

Main Motion

**I move we buy a computer
the office**



Procedural
Motion

**Close debate
(Passes)**

Secondary
Amendment

**I move to amend the
amendment by inserting
the word “used” before
the word “laptop”(Fails)**

Primary
Amendment

**I would like to amend the
motion by inserting the
word “laptop” before the
word “computer”(Passes)**

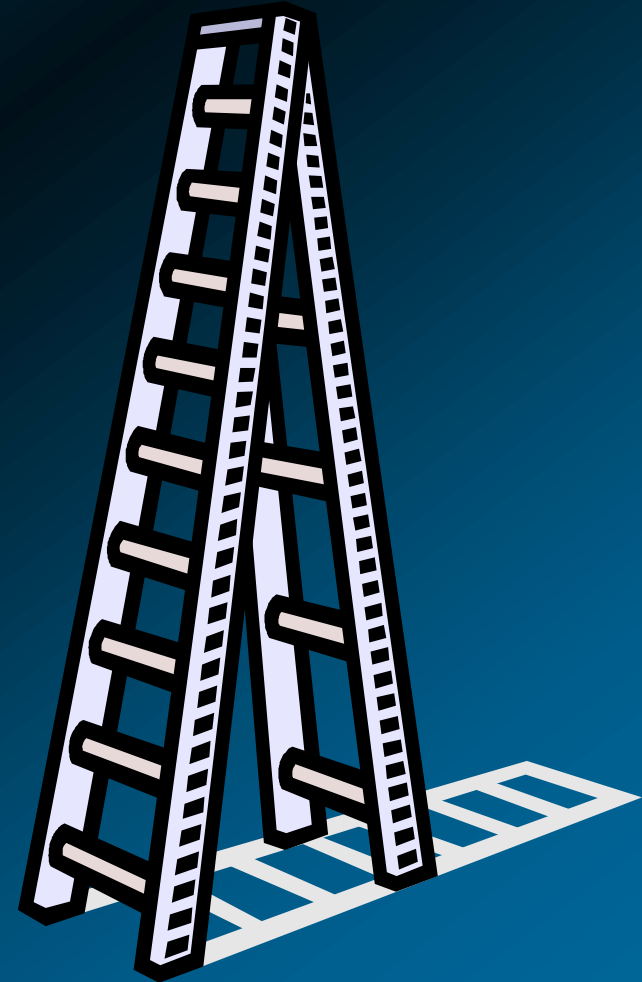
Main Motion
as amended

**I move we buy a laptop
computer for the office**



The 10 “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



**Specialty Motions
Make
All the Difference**

Motions to Control Debate

- Set Limits on Debate
- Close debate on immediately pending motion (2/3 vote)
- Close debate on all pending motions (2/3 vote)

Procedures to Protect Rights

- Point of Order
- Appeal the decision of the Chair
- Point of information
- Parliamentary inquiry

Motions to Delay Actions

- Refer to committee
- Adjourn
- Postpone to a definite time
- Object to consideration (2/3 vote)
- Recess
- Lay on the table

Motions to Vary Procedures

- Suspend the rules
- Division of the question
- Consider by paragraph

Re-Do Motions

- Reconsider
- Rescind
- Amend item previously adopted

Simplified Chart of Parliamentary Motions

| Motion | Debatable | Amendable | Vote |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Adjournment | no | no | majority |
| Recess | no | yes | majority |
| Lay on the table | no | no | majority |
| Close debate | no | no | 2/3 |
| Limit/Close Debate | no | yes | 2/3 |
| Postpone definitely | yes | yes | majority |
| Refer to committee | yes | yes | majority |
| Amend amendment | yes | no | majority |
| Amend main motion | yes | yes | majority |
| Main motion | yes | yes | majority |

Simplified Chart of Procedural Motions

| Motion | Debatable | Amendable | Vote |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Point of order | no | no | none |
| Inquiry | no | no | none |
| Object to consideration | no | no | 2/3 |
| Roll call | no | no | none |
| Appeal decision of chair | yes | no | majority |
| Divide question | no | yes | majority |
| Suspend rules | no | no | 2/3 |

Points to Ponder

- You've carefully thought out all the angles.
- You've done it a thousand times.
- It comes naturally to you.
- You know what you're doing, it's what you've been trained to do.
- Nothing could possibly go wrong, right?

Think Again!

