

NEW PARLIAMENTARIAN TRAINING

Bruce Bergman, Ninth District Parliamentarian

THE STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW TO SURVIVE!

AGENDA

Basic responsibilities and role

Key Dates – the Parliamentarian Duty Timeline

Socialization of bylaws

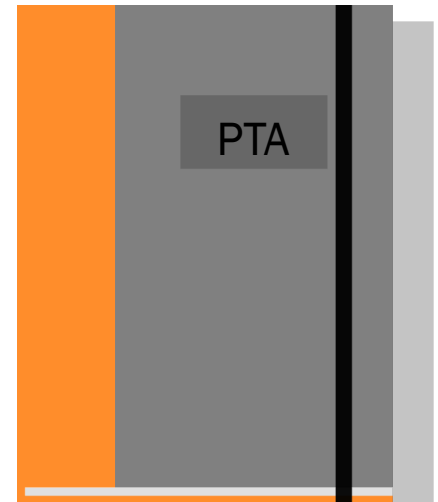
The Nominating Committee

Election of Officers

Reviewing bylaws for changes, and how to amend your bylaws

Misconceptions about Committees

Rules and Robert's Rules of Order



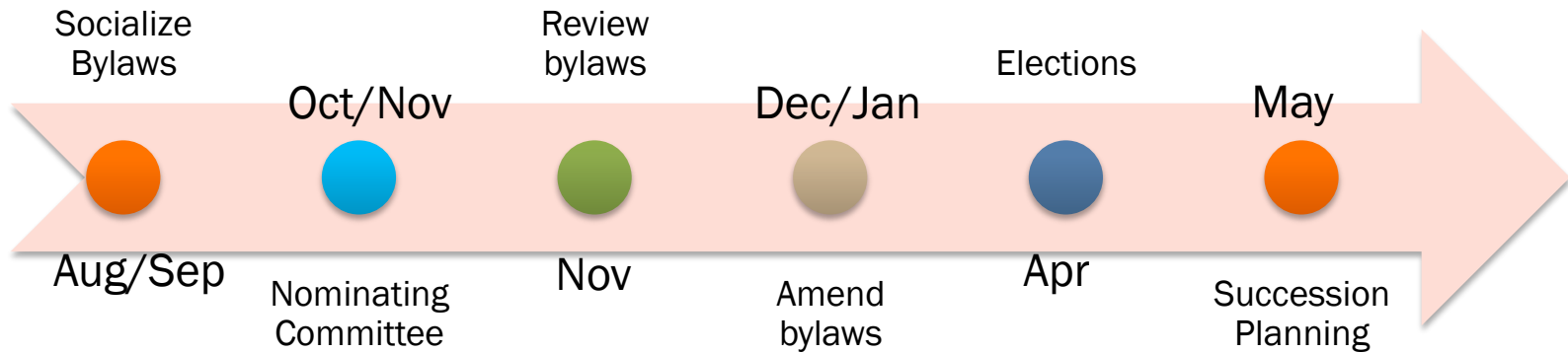
YOUR ROLE

- As a Parliamentarian, your **primary** responsibility is to assist the President in the smooth operation of your organization, by following PTA rules and procedures, following the bylaws, and in application of basic parliamentary practice.
- Your **secondary** responsibility is to help your organization hold efficient, effective board meetings and Association meetings.
- Finally, you will aid in making sure several key activities occur each year:
 - Nominating Committee elected and working
 - Elections held
 - Review, and potential amendment of, the bylaws
- Your role is advisory in nature; you do not “decide” or “rule” on anything. The final decision on any action always resides with the chairperson.



KEY DATES - TIMELINE

You will do a stellar job if you meet your key dates!



Start Early!



1 – SOCIALIZE BYLAWS

- Very few members actually read – and understand – their bylaws
- It's very important that each officer knows...
 - How your organization operates (dues, who is on executive board)
 - Positions, responsibilities and duties of each officer
 - Key dates (audit, elections, meetings)
 - Important numbers (quorums, counts, executive board)
- Spend at least 10-15 minutes at an Aug/Sep meeting to read all roles out loud
- Distribute information about the makeup of the executive board and quorums
- Review committees and dates (more shortly)
- Use “**New Officer FAQ Worksheet**” to share important highlights



2 – GET NOMINATING COMMITTEE ROLLING

- Article V (Section 3, primarily)
- You are only helping the Nominating Committee get organized
- Committee is elected at an Association meeting, two months prior to elections
 - *This is why you need to get things moving in the Oct/Nov timeframe*
- Members cannot have served on last year's committee
- Principal and Teacher Representative are advisory only
- President may not participate in this committee
- Your bylaws specify how many members to elect, and rules for eligibility
- Alternates only attend/serve if someone drops out
- Everyone serves until the election occurs
- Parliamentarian only convenes, helps elect chair, reads duties, then leaves





NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- Group goal: provide a good slate of nominees for election
 - Diverse candidates
 - Willing and able to serve (time commitments)
 - Understands responsibilities
 - Works well with others
 - Has the best interest of the kids and schools at heart
- Everything is done in private session and must remain confidential forever
- If more than one candidate is available, committee elects by majority
- Able and willing to reconvene if a candidate drops out
- Prepares a report, signed by everyone
- Delivers report to Association at least 30 days prior to elections

TIMEOUT! AREN'T I OVERLOADED?

There is a natural and convenient flow to your Parliamentary activities...

Once the Nominating Committee is on their way, and you've helped them get started and explained their task, you can move on (*unless elected as a member*).

While the Nominating Committee is working, you assist in meetings, answer any questions, and generally be helpful.

Use this time to consider if your bylaws are current, and if changes are needed.

This leads us to the next task, in sequence...





3 – REVIEW BYLAWS

- Reviewing bylaws is important because most organizations change over time, and bylaws should always reflect your **current operating practices**.
- Best to review each year, and give a hard look every 2-3 years after changes
- You are not *required* to change them, but you will probably want to do so
- Can be done by yourself, by appointment of President, or by committee
 - Committee approach is great if there are a lot of changes, or if any of the changes are politically sensitive.
- **You are answering such questions as...**
 - Does my unit operate this way now in each meeting?
 - Is the list of officers current and effective?
 - Should our dues be changed?
 - Are changes in committees more evident now?
 - What have been recent pain points for our organization?





WHY START IN THE FALL?

- The typical processing and review time is anywhere from 3-10 weeks
- All actions must be ratified in your executive board and Association meetings
- How often does your Association meet? Work backwards from when you want your new bylaws to be effective. Subtract 8 weeks (average). Now find previous executive board meeting. Must have changes proposed by THAT date. (yes, it's crazy)
- Your organization cannot elect officers to new roles, or collect at new dues rates, in the expectation that the bylaws will be amended and adopted! This is another key reason why you need to start early. September is a good month.



BYLAWS REVIEW BASICS

1. Assert that the bylaws need to be changed. Decide WHAT needs to be changed.
2. Prepare changes in eBylaws (recommended)
3. Present to executive board and have motion to propose amendments be adopted
4. Prepare all cover materials and send to **COUNCIL**. Wait...
<http://helpdesk.parliamentarypro.com>
5. Once approved by Council, District and State Parliamentarian, receive them back
6. Schedule or hold Association meeting, make motion to amend, and then adopt
7. Sign, return one copy, and distribute copies to all officers

4 – AMEND BYLAWS

- Read the “preparation instructions” at the start of your bylaws
- You may use fill-in bylaws, or even Spanish/English dual bylaws
- In general, stick to the stock structure of the bylaws as much as possible
- Things with “**” and “***” can’t be changed
- Many items have caveats, explained in preparation instructions (e.g., quorums)
- **USE eBYLAWS!** (<http://capta.org/pta-leaders/services/ebylaws/>)
- Guides you through what can easily be customized. Enforces many caveats.
- If you can’t print out a Final Copy, then it probably won’t get approved
- Prepare (1) cover sheet, (2) changes sheet, (3) signature pages, (4) fee
- Must send to Council first (unless Out of Council)





UPON RETURN...

- Review, and address, any notes made on your bylaws
- Prepare for next Association meeting

-OR-

schedule a “special meeting” of the Association with 30 days notice.

- At the Association meeting, make a motion to adopt “*en masse*” all amendments
- Majority adopts if given 30 days notice, or 2/3 adopts if less than 30 days notice
- President and Secretary sign all copies
- One copy gets returned to District
- Distribute new copies to all officers. Originals go to President, Secretary, Parliamentarian, and electronic or paper copies go to everyone else interested.
- Remember, there is a fair amount of waiting during all of this...



5 - ELECTIONS

- Elections are usually held in March or April (Article V, Section 6)
- Election meeting is an Association meeting
- Secretary should have a way to identify who are valid PTA members
- A quorum must be obtained, or else the elections cannot be held
- President has a script to follow:
 - President announces elections
 - Asks Parliamentarian to read relevant passages (see CAPTA Toolkit)
 - Asks for Nominating Committee report to be read
 - Conducts elections, office by office, until new officers are elected
- New officers take office in _____ (usually July) – See Article V, Section 7





IMPORTANT ELECTION NOTES

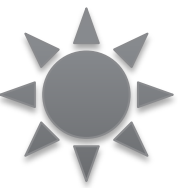
1. Even though there is a Nominating Committee report, we must still ask for nominations from the floor.
2. Candidates must meet eligibility requirements (member, term limit, etc)
3. If there is more than one candidate for any office, a vote must be taken, and majority elects. If tied, re-ballot until a majority is obtained.
4. If requested by anyone, the vote can be taken by ballot. In this case, *YOU* should be prepared to assist the President, who will likely be freaking out. 😊 President has a list of procedures in the CAPTA Toolkit. Tellers and votes must be tracked.
5. *"If there are no objections, and since there is only one candidate for each office..."* is a great way to keep it simple. Objections = vote individually or ballot.
6. An office *can* remain vacant, but it's bad practice to do so. **If a unit does not have a President, Secretary and Treasurer, they cannot legally write checks, make decisions, or perform business!** They may be subject to Council or District help.



6 – SUCCESSION PLANNING

- Really, this is about bringing closure to your term
1. Make sure that any bylaws changes are seen through to completion. If they carry over to the next year, ensure new Parliamentarian knows what to do.
 2. Help any officers or committee chairs in structuring their motions, or making motions to accomplish their tasks.
 3. Provide all incoming officers with an electronic or paper copy of the bylaws, and encourage them to read them. Especially their duties and responsibilities.
 4. Get all your paperwork done and sent to the Historian/President/Someone
 5. If you are continuing in the next term, sit down and decide what you want to accomplish next time around. In particular, any bylaws changes, so you can start super early.

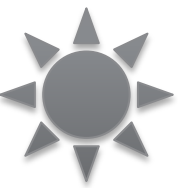




EXTRA CREDIT: COMMITTEES

- My personal experience has been that there is a lot of misunderstanding of committees among PTA's. In particular, a careless use of the term "chair."
- There are three basic types of committees or groups:
 - Standing Committees
 - Ad-hoc or Special Committees
 - Non-committees, or "teams" as most refer to them
- Your Standing Rules (last page of bylaws) will list all Standing Committees
- President appoints all chairs of committees (special and standing)
- Your officers include the chairs of Standing Committees. ONLY.
- Special Committee chairs are NOT included in executive board meetings, they cannot make motions, cannot debate, and cannot vote.





STANDING COMMITTEES VS. SPECIAL

This is an important distinction, because it not only affects your quorum, but it tells you who can participate in executive board meetings.

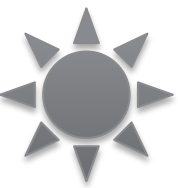
Many people believe that if they are a committee chair (of any kind), that entitles them to attend, make motions and vote in executive board meetings. Not true!

Standing Committees exist forever, and are chaired constantly

Special Committees must be constituted every new term/year. At the end of the term, they are automatically discharged. Special Committees have chairs that are appointed by the President, just like Standing Committees. That's where the similarities end.

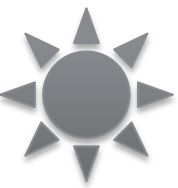
Every other “team” or “program” that is not a Standing Committee or Special Committee is just that: a team or program. I recommend use of the term “Coordinator” as well.

This is one of the reasons why you should review and amend bylaws regularly!



HOW DO YOU ADDRESS INCLUSION?

- Remind EVERYONE that every volunteer plays an important part in making the PTA work, and that their efforts are recognized and appreciated.
- Standing Committees should be key groups that need oversight, financial watch, frequent reporting, or prioritized access to the board.
- Special Committees should be created every year if the task is important and recurring each term. **President invites them to attend meetings as appropriate.**
- Coordinators and teams are usually one person roles, or one-shot events that don't require much assistance. Those should report through the appropriate officer in charge or volunteers or programs.
- If your organization feels more say is needed, you can amend a Standing Rule to allow greater inclusion.
- **The bottom line is that no one is being EXcluded; there are just proper procedures that need to be followed. Everyone is still important to the organization's success.**



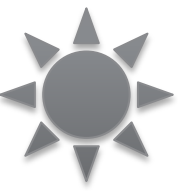
ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

1. Go out and get a copy of “*Robert’s Rules In Brief*”
2. If you like this kind of stuff, get a copy of RONR, 11th Edition. It’s fun!

There are some basic principles in play:

- The right of the minority to be heard
- The right of the majority to decide
- One person, one vote
- Efficient, effective meetings
- Follow an agenda, have consistent rules for operation
- Common sense and equality are paramount





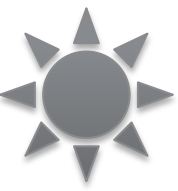
BASIC MOTIONS

1. Someone obtains the chair's notice, at an appropriate point in a meeting
2. A motion is made
3. A second is heard. Does not indicate assent; only that it's worth hearing.
4. The chair restates the motion and calls for debate
5. Debate ensues, in an orderly and controlled fashion
6. A vote is taken. The majority decides.

"I move that we hold a book fair this spring." (second)

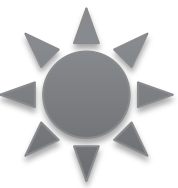
"It's been moved and seconded that we hold a book fair this spring. Is there any discussion?" (discussion) (motion is repeated)

"All those in favor, say aye. All opposed, say no." (a decision is made)



OTHER TYPES OF MOTIONS

- 90% of what you encounter will be the basic motion
- Amendments to motions are next most common. Handle amendment first, then if adopted, treat the original motion as if it were rewritten. If an amendment fails, then no change to original motion.
- Ratification implies support. Executive boards should use this to show support for decisions by President (especially appointing chairs). “I move to ratify...”
- “Call the question” does not immediately end debate. Requires a second, and a 2/3 vote to stop debate. If 2/3 not achieved, debate continues. If 2/3 achieved, then the chair calls for an immediate vote on the motion.
- Recess, lay on the table [until ____], refer to a committee, and so on. Robert’s Rules In Brief is a great tool for knowing which motion has precedence, and how to handle each one.



REMEMBER YOUR ROLE

- As a Parliamentarian, you are there to assist the President. They can call upon you at any time for private advice on procedures. You make recommendations.
- *The President (chair) always makes the ultimate ruling. You never do.*
- You can help anyone with the crafting of their motion, or in proper procedures
- Anyone can ask for your help or assistance, even during a meeting
- If the membership wishes to question a ruling, they do so directly to the chair
- A meeting should never be so formal as to be confusing or misleading. There are clear exceptions to formality, and common sense should be used at all times.
- It's okay to take time out to check your bylaws or RONR
- It's okay to say you don't know, or don't understand something
- It's okay to seek help from Council or District

QUESTIONS?

How to reach me:

email: parliamentarian@ninthdistrictpta.org

website: <http://helpdesk.parliamentarypro.com> ← Help Desk for you!

phone: 858-829-2456

