



---

## **Parliamentarian Job Duties – A Vital Job for an Effective Board**

The Parliamentarian is responsible for the procedures of the meeting and making sure the Board follows the rules the Organization has set for themselves. They should know the Constitution and Bylaws inside and out and be ready to allow and not allow decisions and discussions based on the rules written in those documents. They should also know the rules of the installation and make sure board members are tracking the requirements the organization has and who must fulfill the requests.

The Parliamentarian works for the President directly and should keep the meeting going in the right direction. They track who has “the floor,” when a vote is needed, who is up next to speak, but also should jump in and redirect discussion that has gotten out of hand or if someone has the floor for too long. The President can work with the content while the Parliamentarian works with the procedures of the meeting itself.

Basic rules to follow:

- a. The basic job of the Parliamentarian is to keep the President and the club out of trouble and always following the rules of procedure.
- b. Request that people raise their hand and only speak when called upon. This helps to keep discussions calm and controlled. The Parliamentarian should be the person to call on people to speak and help them understand they only can have about 2 minutes to share their concern.
- c. Make sure everyone understands Robert’s Rules of Order. For a topic to be discussed that is not already on the agenda, someone must make a motion, then someone else has to second the motion (So time is not taken up by one person who is passionate about something, but no one else shares this opinion). Once the topic has a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, THEN it can be discussed by the board. The initial person should be given the chance to put forth their thoughts, then others can share. The Parliamentarian will then let people share in turn and decide when to cut off discussion and when to call for a vote. If the expectation is that you will always follow these guidelines, then there is no cause to conduct your meetings in any other format.
- d. Parliamentarians should know how many people need to be present for a quorum and how many people are needed to have a vote pass.

The Parliamentarian chairs two different committees within the year.

1. The Nominating Committee:
  - a. This committee is to help recruit and select the elected board positions for the next year. They usually form up in December in order to start the recruitment process at the beginning of the new year. Your bylaws should clearly state who should serve on the



committee. It is usually an executive board member, regular board member and at least 2 general members.

- b. While the goal of the committee is to find qualified people to run for the elected positions, they should also work hard to recruit from the entire population of people they serve – the more diverse your board ends up being, the more diverse and effective your Club will be. Be sure to look for people who represent all aspects of your organization and not just the people who have always been there.
  - c. Your Nominating Committee should have a step-by-step SOP so that everyone understands the rules and procedures to follow when working on your board slate. It should include due dates for the process so that everyone has a chance to contribute, apply or nominate people for the positions available.
2. The Constitution and Bylaw review committee.
- a. These documents are required to be reviewed every two years and updated with the Private Organization office on your installation.
  - b. As you go through your board year, it is a good idea to constantly make notes about things within your governing documents that may need to be looked at during your bi-annual review. Having a printed copy with post-it notes on hand makes it easy to track potential changes and make suggestions on the exact page where the change might need to be addressed.
  - c. If you find something that needs to be changed right away, then you must follow the process listed in your constitution when you want to make changes. There is usually a motion and 2<sup>nd</sup> to make the changes, it gets passed by the board, then it must go to the general membership to get ratified with a 50% pass rate. There tends to be a timeline that must be followed to allow these changes.
  - d. Your C&B committee should have the required members listed in your bylaws and you should have an approved SOP that gives the committee instructions on how to operate.