

Parliamentary Law

THE PRESIDING OFFICER'S ROLE IN MEETINGS

1. Chair chosen for skill: " The presiding officer of a large assembly should never be chosen except for his ability to preside"
2. Chair's duty to stand: Unless disabled, the chair should stand to preside, she need not stand during reading of minutes, or when someone else is at podium.
3. Proper Use of Gavel
 1. To attract attention and call a meeting to order
 2. To maintain order and restore it when breached (Rap the gavel once, vigorously)
 3. To be handed over to successors in office or officiating officers at ceremonies (Always extend the holding end)
 4. To be laid aside at all other times.
DO NOT Lean on it, juggle or play with it, use it to challenge or threaten, use it to emphasize remarks.

How to Control Meetings

If assembly is slow to respond to the call to order or becomes unruly in the course of the meeting you strike firmly ONCE with the gavel and command "Will the members take their seats immediately, or "The Chair will state that business cannot commence unless there is quiet" It is the duty of the chair to preserve order and she can use the Conductress to assist if necessary.

Individual Members

Never shout or command members to Sit Down or say you are out of order. That is bad manners. Speak in the third person: The member will

be seated. The member is obstructing the business of the meeting and he will please be seated at once.

Never ignore a member who rises to claim the floor.

It is your duty to attempt to attend to each claim and then be able to control it .Use this: the chair can recognize but one member at a time, the chair recognizes “Sister A” all others please be seated.

Or: The chair will not overlook anyone; the members are requested to cooperate and be patient until their turn comes.

Members departing from the question: If the person does not speak on the pending question or departs from speaking to it, the President may rap the gavel and command: The Chair will respectfully ask the member to confine her debate to the pending question.

When the chair debates: When presiding, the presiding officers of the main body may not propose motions or second them or debate them if anyone objects, unless they surrender the chair. Committee chairman CAN do all these things without surrendering the chair. When the president takes the floor in the main body and speaks on a motion, he does not resume presiding until the question on which he spoke has been disposed of and is no longer pending before the body.

On the other hand, the presiding officer is within his rights to shed light on a motion, to inform the members of the status or effect of a question, or to enlighten the assembly on facts within her knowledge to spur the assembly to action. You should be fair and impartial to all.

Generally when two or more rise to debate, the first one to rise and address the chair first goes first. All should have opportunity to be heard.

Out of order and not in order: A motion which cannot be entertained at all is ruled as out of order when proposed, a motion which cannot be entertained at the time it is proposed is not in order.

In my opinion the most important:

Members are supposed to know their rights and must not be sleeping on them at meetings and conventions. If wrong procedure results in illegal action, unless points of order are raised while the action is pending to prevent it, sound sense allows it to stand as legal after adjournment.

That means you can do anything that your member body allows you to do. If they do not call you on it at the meeting, afterwards is too late.