

## LET'S TALK SENSE

During a business meeting, Deliberative Assemblies use many words, which seem to have a special meaning and purpose. It is essential for a participating member to understand the purpose and proper use of these parliamentary terms. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is the resource for the definition and proper use of the following parliamentary terms.

**Deliberative Assembly** – A group of persons which meets to determine by full and free discussion courses of action to be taken by the whole group.

**Assembly** – Members of a society actually assembled for the transactions of business. These two definitions describe most of the organized groups or societies.

**Meeting and Session** – These two words are used interchangeably yet each has its own definition.

**Meeting** – An assembly of members gathered for a time during which they do not separate longer than for a short recess.

**Session** – A meeting or a series of connected meetings devoted to a single order of business, program, agenda, as in a convention.

**Quorum** – This is an important term – it refers to the number of members entitled to vote, who must be present in order for the business to be legally conducted.

**Vote** – A vote, which is the will or preference of the members of an assembly, is used to approve or defeat or temporarily dispose of a pending question. Members are expected to express their preferences many times during a business meeting. Through the use of debate and a vote, the minority is heard and the majority rule.

**Majority** – A majority is the direct approval or disapproval of more than half of the members present and voting.

**Minority** – A minority are those members who do not concur with the views of the majority of the members.

**Pending** – A motion which has been stated by the Chair and is under consideration by the assembly is a pending question.

**Motion** – A motion is a proposal by a member that certain action be taken by the Assembly. A motion becomes a question when it has been stated by the Chair.

**Chair** – The term Chair refers to the presiding officer. "The Chair" comes from meetings, when the Leader sat on the only stool or chair in the center of a circle of members sitting on the floor. The Leader was known as the Chairman.

**Order of Business** – Is the schedule of business to be considered.

**Agenda** – An agenda is an outline of the order of business for use by the chair in conducting a meeting.

**Bylaws** – A document, adopted by a society, which contains the basic rules for governing the society.

**Standing Rules** – Are adopted rules, which are related to the details of the administration of a society rather than to parliamentary procedure.

**Minutes** – A written record of the proceedings of a deliberative Assembly.

**Parliamentary Law or Procedure** – Rules and customs governing deliberative assemblies of widely differing purposes and conditions.

**Ruling** – A decision made by the presiding officer.

**Parliamentarian** – One who is knowledgeable about parliamentary rules and procedures; one who advises on matters of parliamentary procedure.

This mini-list of words and phrases related to Parliamentary Procedure could be increased by a study of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

These Parliamentary words will guide one through a meeting in the same manner that a vocabulary of a few foreign words give assurance to one traveling within a foreign country.

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