

# CalPERS Parliamentary Workshop

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# Practical Parliamentary Concepts

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1. Maintaining Meeting Flow
2. Rules on Cutting off Debate/Extensive Questions
3. Meeting Control
4. The Amending Process
5. Relaxation of the Rules

# Maintaining Meeting Flow – 1

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- Adopt agenda.
- Set some time milestones on the agenda.
- Set limits of debate on the agenda.
- Listen to committee report and then introduce a motion; or propose a motion directly from the agenda item.

# Maintaining Meeting Flow – 2

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- Adhere to debate protocol.
- Allow board members to clarify and debate motion first.
- Listen to public comments on the motion.
- Repeat motion before and after every vote.
- Take vote and announce vote results clearly.

# Rules on Debate – 1

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- Only 1 person speaks at a time and only after being recognized by the chair.
- Comments are always made through the chair without any side conversations.
- Comments confined to the pending question whether it is the main motion or the amendment.
- Alternate between pro and con speakers.

## Rules on Debate – 2

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- Board members must focus on proposing, amending, referring, or postponing motions, not on arguing or complaining.
- No one should speak a second time unless no one is seeking to speak their first time.
- A main motion should be proposed as soon as possible before debate.

## Rules on Debate – 3

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- Presiding officer can control debate:
  - Do you have anything to state that we have not heard?”
  - “Do you have anything to add specifically on the pending motion?”
  - “We have heard 3 in favor. Does anyone wish to speak against the motion?”
  - “Did you wish to amend/refer/postpone the motion?”

# Meeting Control – 1

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- Adhere to Robert's section on Decorum in Debate (p. 391-394) because rules protect rights:
  - Remarks confined to merits of motion;
  - Do no attack members' motive;
  - Do no speak adversely about prior motions;
  - Do not speak against your motion;
  - No long readings without board permission, etc.



# Meeting Control – 2

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- Adhere to Section 390 Breach of Order (Rules and Guidelines for the Conduct of Meetings):
  - Warn member guilty of breach of order;
  - Guilty party may be forced to yield the floor;
  - Chair may ask board if guilty party shall continue speaking;
  - Chair may have the objectional words noted by the secretary;
  - An apology may drop the matter or a penalty may be imposed.

## Meeting Control – 3

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- Adhere to Bagley-Keene Act on Discipline (i.e., willful interruptions GC11126.5; and criticism GC 11125.7).
- Adhere to Bagley-Keene Act on Debate (i.e., no self-identification GC 11124; also, public addresses the board directly and debate limits GC 11125.7).

# The Amending Process – 1

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- Three forms under Robert's  
(i.e., insert, strike, strike/insert - interactive),
- Drill: *“I move to amend by inserting ...”*
- Drill: *“I move to amend by striking ...”*
- Drill: *“I move to amend by striking ... and inserting ...”*

# The Amending Process – 2

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- **Amend by Substitution:**
- Drill: *“I move to substitute for the pending motion (or amendment), the following ...”*
- Debate and amend original motion
- Debate and amend proposed substitute
- Vote whether or not to substitute
- Debate and amend the winning version
- Final vote on the main motion (or amendment)

## The Amending Process – 3

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- **Divide the Question:**

- *“Move to buy a laptop and an iPhone for the secretary.”*
- Needs second; no debate; amendable; requires majority vote to adopt.

(Same topic; 2 standalone motions)

- *“Move to buy a laptop and pay the bills.”*
- This is a proper Demand

(Different topic; 2 standalone motions)

# The Amending Process – 4

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## Fill in the Blank:

Motion: *“That we spend no more than \$500.”*

- Chair may suggest it.  
*“The chair suggests creating a blank for amount.”*
- Member may move to insert a blank.  
*“I move to create a blank on the amount”*
- Motion may be proposed with a blank.  
*“I move to spend no more than \_\_\_\_\_”*
- Second required; not debatable; majority adopts.

# The Amending Process – 5

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## **First blank filler with a majority vote is adopted:**

- Vote Names (as proposed)
- Vote Money: Spend (high 1st), Accept (low 1st)
- Vote Places, Dates, Numbers (as proposed, or first vote on least popular, or largest, or farthest)
- No second required; debatable; just suggestions.

# The Amending Process – 6

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- **Amend by assumed motion:**

“If there is no objection, ...”

vs.

“The chair will entertain a motion to ...”

- **“Friendly Amendment”:**

- Not in order after the chair hands the motion to the board by stating, “It is moved and seconded to ...”



# Relaxing of the Rules – 1

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- Suspension of the Bylaws is never in order
- “Friendly amendment”
- “So moved”
- “If there is no objections, ...”
- Customs that do not violate any rule, motion, or statute
- Board size vs. congeniality level

## Relaxing of the Rules – 2

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- Robert's section on Procedure in Small Boards (p. 487-488). Formalities that may be relaxed:
  - Speaking without standing up;
  - No second needed;
  - No limit on times to debate;
  - Informal discussion allowed without a motion;
  - Vote allowed even if motion is not formally stated;
  - Chair may debate and vote, etc.

# Comments, Doubts, Rebuttals?

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