

Presiding officer: Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 1990 edition states that there are two officers necessary to conduct business in a deliberative assembly - a Presiding Officer and a recording officer known as a Secretary or clerk.

Duties: The duties of the Presiding Officer are to conduct the meeting, making sure the rules of the organization as well as parliamentary rules are followed. She must be acquainted with the bylaws, special rules of order and standing rules which have been adopted by the organization as well as the rules of order which is the adopted parliamentary authority. Copies of these documents should be close at hand. She should appoint a parliamentarian who has had some training in parliamentary procedure, not just because she has served in some office. The parliamentarian should be seated to her right (generally) with the Secretary to her left in business meetings. She should assign someone to make sure the room is set up properly, i. e. the flag to the right of the Presiding Officer, a lectern on which to put her papers, a microphone if needed, floor microphones if they are needed, enough chairs at the head table, etc. With the room set up properly, she should call the meeting to order with one tap of the gavel at the time designated. She should then put the gavel aside as she will not be using it until the meeting is adjourned. She consults with the parliamentarian when she is in doubt on parliamentary procedure or when the parliamentarian indicates unobtrusively that she wishes to consult with the Presiding officer. The parliamentarian does not speak in meetings unless requested to do so by the Presiding officer. She gives advice only, to the Presiding Officer and members of the organization. The Presiding Officer rules. After a ruling, if a member disagrees, the member has the right to appeal from the ruling of the Chair. Except for the motion to appeal on which the Chair (Presiding Officer) from the chair (position in the room) may speak, the Chair may not enter into debate unless she wishes to vacate the chair to the next ranking officer who has not expressed an opinion on the issue. Upon vacating the chair, she takes a seat in the audience and remains there until the vote is taken on that issue.

Motions: It is the duty of the Presiding Officer to call on members who have properly sought the floor, by rising, addressing the Chair, waiting to be recognized and then making a main motion. Not all motions, however, require recognition. After the member has stated the main motion, the Chair will need to wait until the motion has been seconded (not all motions require a second, however) and then the motion is stated by the Chair thus giving the motion to the assembly for action. Action need not always be by voting it up or down but the assembly may wish to dispose of the main motion temporarily by referring it to a committee or postponing consideration until a later time, perhaps in the same meeting or the next meeting. Motions on which there are too many questions, should be referred to a committee for study, by a motion properly made by a member, seconded and carried with a time for the committee to report back. At the time stated, the committee will report on the Agenda under the reports of Special Committees

(not unfinished business). If there is a quorum so that business may be transacted, but is a small group, not a representative one, the motion to postpone consideration until the next meeting can be made during the debate by a member who follows the procedure for recognition. If this motion is seconded and adopted, the Presiding officer will put this order (general) on the Agenda for the next meeting under unfinished business and general orders. To expedite business on issues which are clearly non-controversial, the Chair may wish to use unanimous consent (“If there is no objection, we will recess for ten minutes” or “If there is no objection, this motion will be referred to the Finance Committee”). If there is no objection, you recess or the motion is referred. If there is an objection, the Chair puts the motion to the assembly for action.

**Recording Officer:** The recording officer is called the Secretary or Recording Secretary if there is more than one Secretary. If this officer is not present, the Presiding Officer must hold an election for a Secretary pro-tem (usually done with unanimous consent: “If there is no objection, Mary Smith will serve as Secretary pro-tem”). The Presiding Officer does not have the right to appoint the only other officer Robert's says you must have. Should the Presiding Officer (usually the President) be absent, the bylaws probably address who will preside, the First Vice-President, Second Vice-President etc. down to the Recording Secretary who will call the meeting to order and the first item of business, the election of a chairman pro-tem.

**Duties:** The duties of the recording officer are to record the minutes, the official, legal document of the organization. If the minutes are recorded properly and adopted in the proper manner, the document may be used in a court of law. Therefore, minutes, in order to hold up as a legal document, must be written in a bound volume (book) with pre-numbered pages, all pages being accounted for. You may type the minutes and paste with rubber cement into the book. The minutes must be read from the volume at the meeting, not from other papers and then inserted later into the bound volume. If minutes are approved by a committee, a typed copy can be sent around. A duplicate of that copy will be in the minute book and that copy will be signed after review by the committee. Minutes are not the report of the Secretary and therefore will not contain any of her opinions as to the luncheon nor the speaker. The Secretary records what was done and not what was said. Certain items from a report will be recorded as what was reported by a certain committee chairman, such as number of new members, profit on a fund raiser, etc. The Secretary signs the minutes with her name and title only, **NOT RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED**. The Chair asks if there are any corrections (nothing else) to the minutes and if there are corrections, directs the Secretary to make them in the margin of the bound book by adding a name, deleting a name, changing a date or amount of money, initialing and dating them.

**OTHER OFFICERS:** Our organizations elect Vice-Presidents whose common duty is to preside in the absence of or take over should something happen to the President. We usually give these Vice-Presidents a position as chairman of a committee--this varies with organizations. A Treasurer is usually elected to collect and deposit the money and pay the bills upon authorization.

(August 2004)