



# Sturgis Parliamentary Procedures:

**Purpose** of this guide is to give supervisors a basic understanding of the Sturgis Parliamentary Procedures which Conservation Districts operate under. Parliamentary procedure is easy to learn, because it is essentially fairness and common sense.

In 1987, supervisors voted to use the Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure as a guide for conducting business.

Every member of the CD should take the time to understand how to use parliamentary procedure. To learn more, see the Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, 4th Edition.

## **Parliamentary Procedure:**

- Is a code of ethics which is used to conduct business
- Is the rules and principles that are applied by the courts in deciding litigation involving procedure of organizations.
- It assures that majority rules.
- Is a tried and court tested way to carry out business.

## **Important principles** to remember:

1. **One thing at a time:** This may be the most important thing to remember. By addressing one motion at a time, you will avoid confusion on the business taking place. Discussion should be limited to the pending motion on the floor.
2. **Justice and Courtesy for All:** Everyone has their own opinion. A good chairman provides everyone with the same opportunity to express themselves freely and without interruption.
3. **Majority rules:** Practicing parliamentary procedure ensures that the will of the board will be accomplished.
4. **Rights of minority are protected:** Everyone has an equal chance and the freedom to be heard, propose motions, and vote:

## **Classification/Order of Precedence:**

- There are four classifications of Motions (in bold below), and a priority order is which motions must be proposed, considered and disposed of.
- Motions are acted on one at a time in reverse order of proposal, with the main motion acted on last.
- When a motion is being considered, only motions with higher precedence (see numbered motions below in order of precedence) may be introduced, lower precedence may not.
- Motions are to be considered in the following order of precedence.

**Privileged Motions:** Are motions to enable a member to secure an immediate decision that concerns the comfort, convenience, rights, etc. of a member, even though other business is pending. *“I move to take a 15 minute recess”*

- Adjourn
- Recess
- Questions of privilege

**Subsidiary Motions:** Are motions to modify a motion that is being considered by the board so that it will express more satisfactorily the will of the members. *“I move to amend the motion by inserting the word ‘three’ before the word ‘representatives’”*.

- Postpone Temporarily (or Table)
- Close debate (requires 2/3 vote)
- Limit debate (requires 2/3 vote)
- Postpone to a certain time
- Refer to committee
- Amend

**Note:** The correct way to bring a matter to an immediate vote is to obtain the floor and move to close debate. A common practice, however, is to call out “Question!” or “I call for question!” without obtaining the floor. This should not interrupt the speaker, or when others wish to speak. This action requires a two-thirds vote to terminate debate.

## Sturgis Cont'd:

**Main Motions:** Are motions by which a member may present a substantive proposal to the board for consideration and action. It is the basic motion of the transaction of business. *“I move that we apply for a 223 grant to fund the proposed demonstration project”*.

- Main Motions and restorative main motions (motions to amend a main motion that was approved previously)

**Incidental Motions:** Incidental motions arise incidentally out of the immediate pending business at any time and must be decided as soon as they arise, they present no problem of precedence. *For example, motions such a “motion to Appeal”, or “withdrawal of a motion”, Move to read a paer purely for informative purposes”*.

**How to Propose a Motion** is the formal statement of a proposal or question to an assembly for consideration and action.

1. A member rises and addresses the presiding officer.
2. Member is recognized.
3. A member proposes the motion (I move that ... )
4. Motion is Seconded (in CD regular or special business, **no motion may die from a lack of second**— all proposals, actions, business must be acted on.)
5. Presiding officer restates motion to the body (to ensure to the body the motion being proposed)
6. The motion is then open for debate. The Chair’s duty is to keep the subject clear, and insist that every supervisor be attentive to the business before the board. Once debate has concluded, then Question is called.

### **Did You Know:**

- Under Sturgis, the Chair maintains the right to vote.
- A motion requires a majority vote to pass.
- Where a motion would limit the rights of members, a 2/3 vote is required.
- Associate members can not vote.
- Board members who have a direct personal gain

may not vote.

- If the result of vote is a tie, motion fails to pass.
- Roberts Rules are often used synonymously and usually incorrectly for parliamentary procedure, and are difficult to learn and master.
- Seconding a Motion merely indicates that the member wishes the motion to be considered by the board; it is not necessarily an endorsement of the motion.

### **Basics of Parliamentary Procedure:**

- Don't get bogged down with details, Use common sense, have reference materials readily available, take notes, and practice!
- Take care of only one thing at a time.
- No business without a quorum. Individual Supervisors do not have the power to act independently. They are a member of a governing body and therefore may not speak or act for the body unless given specific authority by the body. An individual doing so will be individually responsible for their own actions.

Alice Sturgis considered principles more important than rules; she stressed the need to understand the “why” behind every procedure; and she held that when there is a conflict between common sense and archaic ritual, common sense should prevail.

