



# Solving the Parliamentary Puzzle

## Basic Parliamentary Procedure

### State OHCE Leader Lesson

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### Leader's Guide

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**Time needed to teach lesson:** up to 1 hour,  
depending upon the length of discussion

**Lesson Focus & Description:** Parliamentary procedure can be intimidating to some people, either because they lack basic knowledge or they simply lack experience using it. This lesson is designed to illustrate the importance of the basic principles of parliamentary procedure and is a starting point in solving the parliamentary puzzle.

#### Lesson Objectives:

- Understand the importance of following parliamentary procedure to run an effective meeting
- Recognize the basic principles of parliamentary procedure
- Recognize the importance of and the proper development of an agenda
- Identify the steps involved in processing a motion
- Identify and understand the use of various methods of voting

#### Materials Needed:

Lesson plan with instructional objectives  
Computer, PowerPoint file, projector and screen or  
Flip Chart made from PowerPoint Slides  
Handouts 1 through 5 for each participant  
Pencils or Pens  
Optional: Flip Chart Paper & Markers or Dry Erase/Chalk Board

#### Materials Enclosed:

Solving the Parliamentary Puzzle PowerPoint presentation with note pages  
Handout 1 – “What bugs you?” cards  
Handout 2 – Basic Principles of Parliamentary Procedure  
Handout 3 – Agenda Development  
Handout 4 – Steps in Processing a Motion  
Handout 5 – Voting Methods

**Preparation:** Study the lesson and make sure you have all materials needed, especially handouts for each participant and pencils.

#### Background

Meetings often become stressful and chaotic when a group is attempting to make a decision based on consensus. Multiple individuals are attempting to discuss at the same time. Oklahoma State University, U. S. Department of Agriculture, State and Local governments cooperating. Oklahoma State University in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal and state laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures."

time while others sit in the back of the room and are disengaged from the topics being discussed. Ineffectively run meetings result in arguments among participants, poor decisions being made, and people leaving the meeting feeling confused and frustrated. A basic understand of parliamentary procedure leads to organized meetings and positive decision making experiences for participants.

Parliamentary procedure is an organized method of running effective meetings. The use of parliamentary procedure provides a way of conducting business in a fair and democratic manner. The purpose is to help a group of decision makers accomplish their goals. The most commonly used parliamentary authority is *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised*, which is now in its 11<sup>th</sup> edition, and provides an in depth description of procedures used in conducting meetings. There are numerous other parliamentary authorities. An organization should state in its Bylaws which authority they have designated to govern the business of their organization.

### **Instructors Notes**

- If you will be using the PowerPoint presentation to share this lesson, set up the laptop and LCD projector prior to the state of the program and test the equipment to be sure it is working properly. For a low-tech option, print the PowerPoint slides and use as a flipchart.
- Welcome the group and complete the “Interest Approach” activity described below to begin the lesson.
- Utilize the talking points found on the notes pages of the PowerPoint presentation to guide you during the presentation.

### **Interest Approach** (*To be completed at the beginning of the lesson*)

As participants enter the meeting room, hand out 1 or 2 “What bugs you?” cards to each participant. On each card they should answer the question, “What bugs me most about meetings is...”. After the group completes the cards, if time allows, discuss individual responses. Ask for volunteers to provide their responses and use the flip chart and markers to record responses or simply have participants tape their cards to a piece of newsprint paper. In most cases, you will get responses such as: one person dominating the discussion, arguments among the group, everyone talking at once, disorganization, lengthy meetings, etc. If these responses are not achieved, probe the group to come up with them. Explain to the group that most of the things that bug them about meetings can be overcome by knowing and applying basic parliamentary procedure.

### **Application**

Parliamentary Procedure is based on proven methods that have worked for hundreds of years. Whether you are a leader or a participant in a meeting, having a basic understanding of parliamentary procedure will make the meeting run more smoothly and you will feel as if you accomplished your goals. Having a working knowledge of parliamentary procedure is a vital skills that is used in a wide range of meetings, including OHCE, school boards, neighborhood associations, professional associations, county fair boards, 4-H clubs, and many more.