Solving the Parliamentary Puzzle

Basic Parliamentary Procedure

State OHCE Leader Lesson

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Leader’s Guide

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Director, Tulsa County OSU Extension 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, leading to confusion and inefficiency. Parliamentary procedure provides a structured approach to handling discussions and making decisions, ensuring that everyone’s input is considered in an organized manner. By learning the basics of parliamentary procedure, attendees can improve their ability to contribute effectively to group discussions and come to consensual decisions in a more efficient and orderly fashion.

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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 understanding 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 11th 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 start 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 skill 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.