

12 Running Effective Meetings

WHAT IS PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE?

Parliamentary Procedure is the rules and procedures a group uses for the efficient running of meetings in order to arrive at a decision that binds the group.

Parliamentary Procedure is the parliamentary authority a group chooses to follow and it is known as your Special Rules of Order. Effective Trustees understand the Special Rules of Order that govern their Board meetings.

Special Rules of Order are based upon:

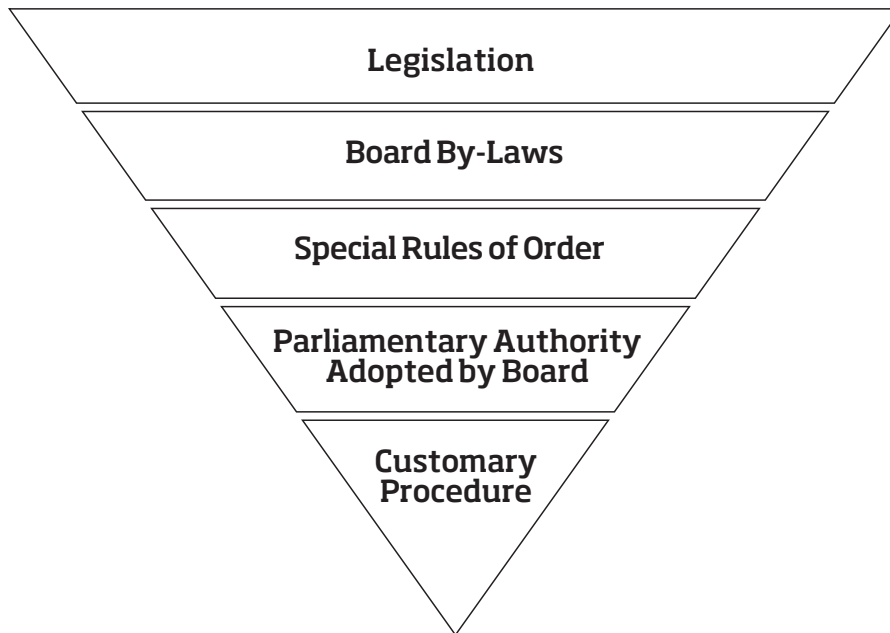
- The will of the majority. In other words, the majority rules on voting.
- The right of the minority to be heard (Accomplished through debate).
- Protection of the rights of absentees (Providing attendees information about the meeting so they can decide whether or not to vote and if not, what took place).
- Fairness.
- One question at a time and one issue at a time should be considered by the group.

As a Trustee, you must uphold the implementation of any board resolution after it has passed (even if you were in the minority).

Hierarchy of Rules

School Boards are governed by laws, by-laws, rules, policies and procedures. As a trustee, you need to know how to apply these items and in what order of precedence.

This graphic demonstrates the Hierarchy of Rules you must follow. Legislation (*The Education Act*) takes precedence over Board By-Laws, and so on.



For example, there might be a conflict between Legislation (*The Education Act*) and Board By-Laws regarding the rules for creating a quorum. You must follow the rules outlined in the Legislation, not the Board by-laws or Special Rules of Order.

Parliamentary Authorities

There are many published Rules of Order and they generally follow similar procedures. Here are some examples:

BOURINOT'S RULES OF ORDER. Based on Canadian parliamentary law. More informal and less detailed than other examples and leaves more discretion to the Chair to make rulings.

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER. Based on American Senate rules. Very detailed and covers every conceivable issue that could arise during a meeting.

THE STANDARD CODE OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE BY ALICE STURGIS. Based on Robert's Rules of Order, but is simpler and can be used as an alternative.

LEARNING TOOLS

Understanding the terminology and procedures contained in the Rules of Order will result in more productive meetings. Books are available to help you understand Robert's Rules. Some Boards conduct orientation sessions for new trustees that discuss basic rules. Other boards may have a staff member present at meetings who can answer procedural questions.