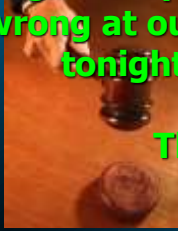


Nothing could possibly go wrong at our meeting tonight...



Think Again

Municipal Association of SC  
Annual Meeting  
July 14, 2016

Helen T. McFadden, JD, PRP  
843-372-0717  
P O Box 8, Cades, SC 29518

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If you haven't felt this way at a council yet... you will



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### Governmental bodies in conflict

The four most common reasons for conflict at council meetings:

- Council members not "staying on their page"
- Forgetting that individual council members have no authority
- The chair not doing his/her job
- A disregard for proper meeting protocol and basic meeting management techniques

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The reasons may vary,  
but many times...

We have met the enemy  
and he is us!!

Pogo Comic Strip  
Walter Kelly, 1971

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## Basic Principles of Robert's Rules of Order

- Balancing efficiency with fairness
- One thing at a time - discussions must be germane
- No interruptions and no surprises
- Simple majority rules-usually
- Silence implies consent
- Everyone is equal (including the Mayor!!)
- An individual council member is secondary to the council as a whole

**The Bottom Line**  
The sole purpose of a council meeting is to determine the collective will of the majority

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## The Chairman

All animals are equal,  
but some animals are more  
equal than others

Animal Farm  
George Orwell  
1945

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## Role of the council Chairman

**The council chair must be in control ...  
but not be controlling.**

- Don't allow surprises
- Treat all fairly
- Earn the council's confidence and trust
- Be sensitive to timing & mood
- Prevent confusion
- Demand proper conduct

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## Common protocol tools to make the chair's job easier

- Speak only after being recognized
- Some limits on debate are good
- Chair may make motions and vote .. cautiously
- Motions to close debate should be allowed
- Motions should be seconded
- Keep discussions prior to a motion to a minimum
- Liberal use of "unanimous consent"
- Consent agendas
- Controversy requires a high level of formality

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## Common mistakes made by chairs

1. The chairman dominating the body
2. Improper handling of motions
3. Forget to manage the pace of the meeting
5. Discussion on multiple issues at same time
6. Poor agenda planning
7. Adding items to the agenda (now prohibited)
8. Allow member to speak without recognition
9. Allowing discussions without a pending motion
10. Allowing too much informality

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## Formality versus informality

Some informality is acceptable...  
but not much!!!

High level of controversy  
requires  
High level of formality

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**Robert's Rules**  
simply helps you find  
the balance between  
efficiency and  
democracy

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## Parliamentary Tools that Support Efficiency

- Properly planned agendas
- Using a Consent Agenda
- Reconsideration and other “re-do” motions
- Close Debate
- Postpone or table a motion
- Refer to committee
- Using “without objection” instead of motions
- Being repetitive to assure clarity

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## Public participation during Commission meetings

- A public attendance law ... not a public participation law – not required by law
- Have sign-up procedure and other “rules”
- Consider limiting comments to agenda items
- Time limit – stick to it
- Comments limited to issues – not individuals
- Don’t debate the public during the meeting
- Establish follow-up procedures

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## Effective meeting management starts long before the meeting starts

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## The agenda ...

- Consent agendas
- Be careful of an agenda item called “general comments by members”
- The agenda belongs to the council, not the chair or staff
- Adding items to the agenda the night of the meeting no longer allowed (*Lambries v. Saluda County council*)

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## A word about minutes

- date, time, place and members present
- all motions and their disposition
- discuss how to record the votes of individual members
- members (including chair) should vote or abstain
- minutes are a record of what was done by the council, not what was said by individuals

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## A few time-savers

- Please state your motion prior to discussion
- Without objection, we will ...
- The chair making a motion can save time...  
but do so cautiously
- Are you ready to vote?
- Your comments are out of order at this time
- What is the pleasure of the group
- Postponing consideration can save time

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## Adopting Motions

Everything starts with a motion

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**Six steps to adopt a motion ..  
and each one is extremely important**



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**Adopting a Motion**

- Step 1 **Member makes a motion**
- Step 2 **Member seconds**
- Step 3 **Chair states the question**
- Step 4 **Members debate**
- Step 5 **Members vote**
- Step 6 **Chair announces the vote**



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**Improper Handling of  
Amendments**

- Amendments modify the previous motion
- Three types of amendments .. strike, delete, or strike and delete
- Main motion - an amendment - and an amendment to an amendment
- Amendments limited to immediately pending motion and must be germane
- What is a "friendly amendment"

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# You Must Know if a Motion is "IN ORDER"

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## Adopting main motions and amendments

Let's see how to handle the  
adoption of motions ...

with a few detours  
along the way

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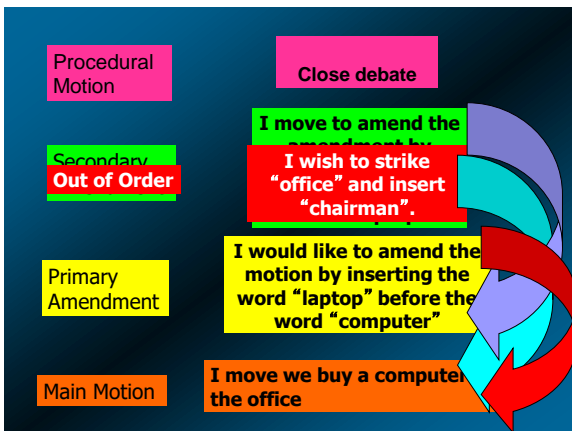
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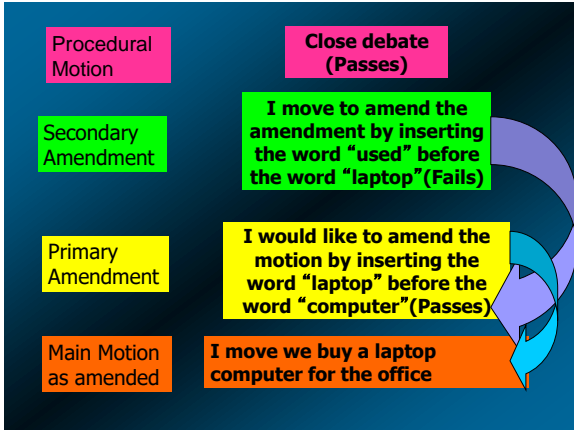
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## The 10 "Must-Know" Motions

1. Adjourn
2. Recess
3. Lay on the table
4. Close Debate
5. Limit or extend debate
6. Postpone to a certain time
7. Refer to Committee
8. Secondary amendment
9. Primary amendment
10. Main motion




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## Specialty Motions Make All the Difference

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## Motions to Control Debate

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- Set Limits on Debate
- Close debate on immediately pending motion (2/3 vote)
- Close debate on all pending motions (2/3 vote)

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## Procedures to Protect Rights

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- Point of Order
- Appeal the decision of the Chair
- Point of information
- Parliamentary inquiry

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## Motions to Delay Actions

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- Refer to committee
- Adjourn
- Postpone to a definite time
- Object to consideration (2/3 vote)
- Recess
- Lay on the table

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## Motions to Vary Procedures

- Suspend the rules
- Division of the question
- Consider by paragraph

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## Re-Do Motions

- Reconsider
- Rescind
- Amend item previously adopted

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## Simplified Chart of Parliamentary Motions

Motion	Debatable	Amendable	Vote
Adjournment	no	no	majority
Recess	no	yes	majority
Lay on the table	no	no	majority
Close debate	no	no	2/3
Limit/Close Debate	no	yes	2/3
Postpone definitely	yes	yes	majority
Refer to committee	yes	yes	majority
Amend amendment	yes	no	majority
Amend main motion	yes	yes	majority
Main motion	yes	yes	majority

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## Simplified Chart of Procedural Motions

Motion	Debatable	Amendable	Vote
Point of order	no	no	none
Inquiry	no	no	none
Object to consideration	no	no	2/3
Roll call	no	no	none
Appeal decision of chair	yes	no	majority
Divide question	no	yes	majority
Suspend rules	no	no	2/3

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## Points to Ponder

- You've carefully thought out all the angles.
- You've done it a thousand times.
- It comes naturally to you.
- You know what you're doing, it's what you've been trained to do.
- Nothing could possibly go wrong, right?

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## Think Again!



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