Parliamentary Procedures

Some organizations choose to use parliamentary procedure to facilitate an effective meeting. Here are the basics to use as a guide.

Five Basic Principles of Parliamentary Procedure:
1. Only one subject may claim attention of the assembly at one time.
2. Each proposition presented for consideration is entitled to full and free debate.
3. Every member has rights equal to every other member.
4. The will of the majority must be carried and the rights of the minority must be preserved.
5. The personality and desires of each member should be merged into one: the organizations.

Motions:
The proper way for an individual to propose that the group take a certain action is by “making a motion.” The following is the process for handling a motion:
1. Obtaining the floor
   - Wait until the last speaker has finished.
   - Rise and address the Chairman by saying, "Mr. Chairman, or Mr. President."
   - Wait until the Chairman recognizes you.
2. Make your motion
3. Another member will second your motion or the Chairman will call for a second.
   - If there is no second to your motion it is lost.
4. The Chairman states your motion
   - The Chairman will say, "It has been moved and seconded that we ..." thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
   - The membership then either debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
5. The Chairman announces the result of the vote.
6. The floor is now open for another motion.

Voting on a Motion:
The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the by-laws of policy of your organization. There are several methods used to vote by most organizations, such as:
   - By Voice -- The Chairman asks those in favor to say, "aye," those opposed to say "no." Any member may move for an exact count.
   - By Roll Call -- Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person's vote is required.
   - By Ballot -- Members write their vote on a slip of paper, this method is used when secrecy is desired.

Parliamentary Procedure is the best way to get things done at your meetings. But, it will only work if you use it properly.
   - Allow motions that are in order.
   - Have members obtain the floor properly.
   - Speak clearly and concisely.
   - Obey the rules of debate.
   - Most importantly, BE COURTEOUS.