

# The Florida Parliamentarian

*Let All Things Be Done Decently and In Order*

## Mark Your CALENDAR

**September 5-8**  
NAP Convention  
Westgate Las Vegas,  
Las Vegas, NV

**October 18-20**  
FSAP Fall Meeting and  
Henry M. Robert's Day  
Embassy Suites  
Brandon, FL

## FSAP ANNUAL MEETING

The FSAP annual meeting was held on May 16, 2019 at the Embassy Suites in Brandon, FL. Thirty-six members and guests were in attendance.

All the bylaw amendments presented were adopted. The updated version of the bylaws is now available on the website.

The members elected new officers for the 2019-2021 term of office:  
President: Henry Lawton, PRP  
First Vice-President: Helen Popovich, PRP  
Secretary: Elizabeth Cogswell  
Treasurer: Karen Price  
Since there was no candidate nominated by the nominating

committee or from the floor, Paul Rene will remain serving as Second Vice-President. Congratulations to all these officers!

Treasurer Karen Price presented and explained the budget for the next fiscal year which had been approved by the executive board. FSAP continues to have very good financial health thanks to the hard work of the treasurer.

Meetings Coordinator Julie Palm reported the next meeting of the association will be held at the Embassy Suites in Brandon on October 18-20. Be watching for the registration forms which will be published soon.

Members enjoyed three excellent programs presented by Jason Abellada, PRP, on *Is it in Order?*; Linda Laurendeau led the group in several rounds of Parliamentary Games; and Tim Wynn, PRP, gave a workshop on *Answering Parliamentary Questions and Writing Practice Parliamentary Opinions*.

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Helen Popovich, PRP, Presiding

## PRESIDENTIALLY SPEAKING....



Our Code of Ethics for Parliamentarians describes us as “guardians of parliamentary procedure.” To be that guardian, we must always be prepared to answer questions as it relates to parliamentary procedure.

Being prepared does not mean that we always have the answers, it means that we should not be afraid to ask for advice from another parliamentarian when faced with situations we have not encountered or are just not comfortable.

I heard a Professional Registered Parliamentarian say that parliamentarians should not be afraid to ask for advice from another parliamentarian, because there will be a time when we will be asked by a colleague for advice.

I believe that many of us found ourselves in the same position as General Henry Martyn Robert, lost or completely lost when presiding at a meeting and decided that would not happen again. That is one of the reasons I am a practicing parliamentarian. Practicing, because there are some parliamentary procedure questions and situations I have not encountered.

Practicing parliamentary procedure is a challenge which can have very positive results on the organizations we work with or will work with.

As my first article to our association, I look forward to our continuing to learn as Parliamentarians.

*Henry Lawton*

*Professional Registered Parliamentarian*

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**Henry Lawton, PRP, Editor-in Chief**

(904) 446-6141  
Email: hcjr@lawtonparliamentarygroup

**Ann Guiberson, PRP, Editor**

(727) 641-6308  
E-mail: aguiberson@gmail.com

**Helen Popovich, PRP, Associate Editor**

(813) 855-2123  
Email: hpopovich@mac.com

**Paul Rene, PRP, Circulation Manager**

(321) 662-0040  
Email: paul@rulesoforder.net

**DEADLINES FOR COPY**

March issue	February 1
June issue	May 1
September issue	August 1
December issue	November 1

**SEND ADDRESS CORRECTIONS TO:**

Paul Rene, PRP  
Phone: (321) 662-0040  
Fax: (407) 517-4414  
E-mail: paul@rulesoforder.net

**FSAP WEBSITE**

<http://www.flparliamentarian.com>

## NEW MEMBERS AND DIRECTORY UPDATE

### NEW NAP MEMBERS

Hazel Johnson 14816 Amelia View Dr Jacksonville, FL 32226; hazejoh@gmail.com, Golden Gavel Electronic Unit

Clifton Eserman 4135 NW 67th Way Coral Springs, FL 33067; eserman@me.com; Broward-Palm Beach

Kevin Gardner 1114 S Park Ave Sanford, FL 32771; kgardner@ligonier.org; Florida Delta Unit

Carolyn Lowry-Nation; (941) 361-1047 x005; ceesea@gmail.com; 13207 Malachite Dr., Lakewood Ranch FL 34211; Bradenton Unit

John Piland, (813) 281-8118, 2156; Centerview Court No, Clearwater, FL 33759; johnpiland@gmail.com; Florida Alpha

## NEW UNIT OFFICERS 2019-2020

### Apollo XI

President: Betti Cogswell

Vice-President: Jaquie Moore

Secretary: Solly Jo Hansen

Treasurer: Pat Rosenthal

### Bradenton

President: Karen Price

Vice-President: Edward Janz

Secretary: Linda Smith

Treasurer: Sharon Spry

### Broward-Palm Beach

President: Eric Shaw

Vice-President: Pat McDougale, PRP

Secretary: Mary Smith

Treasurer: Alexander Baisden

### Charlotte County

President: Joyce Gleason, RP

Vice-President: Louis Rivera

Secretary: Barbara Davis

Treasurer: Stephanie (Sam) King, PRP

### Florida Alpha:

President: Rebecca Lopez

Vice-President: Mary Lou Harden, PRP

Secretary: Linda Young, PRP

Treasurer: Shirley Brodbeck, RP

### Florida Delta

President: Paul Rene, PRP

Vice-President: Pat Patterson

Secretary: Stacey McCauley

Treasurer: Marjorie McCauley

### Florida Registered Section:

Chairman—Shirley Brodbeck, RP

Vice-Chairman—Henry Lawton, PRP

Secretary—Linda Young, PRP

### Miami Parliamentary Law

President: Elizabeth Bain

Secretary: Sarah Russell

Treasurer: Edith Owens

Looking for information on:

### Plato Unit

### South Dade Unit



All page numbers are references to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th ed., unless otherwise noted. Send questions to the Associate Editor, Carol Austin, PRP

E-mail: [carolaustinprp@cs.com](mailto:carolaustinprp@cs.com)

**Question 1:** What are your choices in selecting candidates other than a nominating committee?

**Answer:** You can have nominations (a) by the chair; (b) from the floor (sometimes called open nominations); (c) by ballot; (d) by mail; and (e) by petition. RONR 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Pages 430 and 431

**Question 2:** I belong to a small club. Our bylaws do not stipulate that write-in votes are allowed. However, our ballot has a column for write-in votes.

**Answer:** Members have the right to vote for anyone they see fit. The teller will report the number of votes for that person even if there is only one vote. RONR 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Page 439

**Question 3:** Notice was given of a proposed amendment to the bylaws to increase the number of members on the board of directors from 20 to 30 and to change the vote from majority to plurality. Both issues were included in one amendment, which was lost. A member then moved to amend the bylaws to increase the number of members on the board from 20 to 30.

- a. Was this motion in order?
- b. Would further notice be required before such a motion could be presented?
- c. If the chair says the motion is out of order, is there any other way to consider the motion at this time?

**Answer:** No, the motion is not in order; however, a negative vote on an amendment to

the bylaws can be reconsidered. A vote to reconsider, if adopted, would permit the amendment to be considered again without further requirement of notice. During the new consideration, the member can move to amend by striking out the portion related to the plurality votes. RONR 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Page 592

**Question 4:** Our organization meets monthly. At one meeting, a very controversial resolution was amended and then postponed to the next meeting. At the next meeting, the resolution was taken up under general orders. The member who originally introduced the resolution was granted leave to withdraw it. The minutes of the previous meeting stated the resolution as amended and the fact it was postponed. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved but since it is never too late to correct minutes, should we go back and take the withdrawn motion out of those minutes? How about the minutes of this meeting? Should you state the motion as having been postponed to put it before the assembly? If withdrawn motions do not appear in the minutes, what should be done about this one?

**Answer:** The minutes of the previous meeting should not be corrected. The resolution was not withdrawn at the previous meeting. The chair announces the motion as pending at the proper time in the current meeting. The fact that it is withdrawn should be in the minutes of this meeting in order to be clear about what happened to the postponed motion. RONR 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Footnote on page 469

## A Pair of Ex-officio Members

RONR describes two different types of *ex-officio* members: those who are under the authority of organization and those who are not, primarily honorary members. Often problems arise with some who believe the designation *ex officio* automatically removes rights. It is important to have a clear understanding of rights and expectations before creating ex-officio members.

### Under the authority of the organization

A person who is under the authority of the organization can be a member, nonmember officer, employee, or consultant. Anyone under the authority of an organization may be expected to attend meetings on a regular or periodic basis. These individuals have all the rights of membership on a board or committee. They count in the quorum, and they may participate fully in making motions, debating, and voting. If any of these rights are to be limited, the bylaws must specify the limitations. For example, many groups make their executive director an *ex-officio* member of the board without vote. This provision allows the executive director to make motions and debate, but they do not vote.



Many organizations name officers to related committees, such as the secretary to the bylaws committee or the treasurer to the finance committee, or committee chairmen to the board. It is also a practice to assign directors to serve as a liaison to a committee or a group of committees. As *ex-officio members*, they also have full rights of participation and are expected to be fully engaged in these assignments.

### Not under the authority of the organization

On the other hand, someone who is not under the authority of the organization may be a dignitary, a person who holds a public office, such as a mayor, or a celebrity who helps raise the profile of the organization in the public's eye. These individuals are invited to come to meetings but are not expected to attend; therefore they are not counted in the quorum for meetings and do not count toward meeting the quorum if they do attend. There is often confusion about what rights this type of ex-officio member has in a meeting. If they do happen to attend a meeting, these ex-officio members also have the right to participate fully and can make motions, debate, and vote.

### The president is a special case

The bylaws may state that the president is an ex-officio member of all committees. The president has the right to participate, but not the obligation. Presidents are not counted in the number needed for a quorum and are not counted toward meeting the requirement when attending a meeting. Otherwise, the president has full rights of participation when present.

It is a good practice to determine why an ex-officio member is needed before bringing them on the board or on a committee. It is also important to understand the implications of having rights. For example, an executive director who is ex officio a member of the board, either with vote or without, cannot be required to leave the meeting when it goes into executive session—not even if the board wishes to discuss the executive's contract. They can leave voluntarily but cannot be forced to depart.

## MAKE YOUR OFFICER REPORT COUNT

You are the vice-president and your board meeting is coming up. You know the president will call on you to make a report. Are you among those who believe writing a report can seem as bad as being assigned to write a term paper? You are certainly not alone. Just what are you supposed to say (or write) anyway? You certainly don't want your account to become a brag fest or the story of your gall bladder operation. So what should it be?



RONR says officer reports should be about activities that are “incident to the office.” That means the gall bladder operation and your trip to Iceland are out. Any work you did to carry out your official duties or any duties assigned by the assembly, the president or by a motion to your office are the types of activities to include in a report.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT.** For the president, it’s pretty easy. The president represents the organization and it is appropriate to report activities in this regard. The president also has general oversight over all activities of the group, especially the progress toward the goals of the strategic plan. It’s always appropriate to comment on achievements, problems, and issues related to the society’s direction, successes and challenges.

**VICE-PRESIDENT’S REPORT.** In some organizations there are no assigned duties as an officer positions of president-elect or vice-president. Or the job description may simply be to support the president and attend meetings. There’s nothing there on which to base a report. If these officers are assigned to chair a committee or serve on the committee, that information is reported under the committee rather than the office. If these officers have delegated assignments, such as being a liaison, overseeing certain events or groups of committees, or serving as a representative to other organizations, these activities would be appropriate to report. If there are no substantive duties assigned to the office, no report should be given.

**SECRETARY’S REPORT.** Secretaries may be assigned to read correspondence or report on executive board actions under the secretary’s report. Sometimes records need to be recovered, safeguarded by a new method, or researched. These activities are in order as well.

**TREASURER’S REPORT.** The treasurer usually gives the financial report. Although RONR advises a very brief report of revenue and expenses, it is necessary in most organizations to provide more detail, such as balance sheets and the statement of financial activities. The board members have a fiduciary duty, and scrutiny of the financial reports is critically important to fulfill this duty.

Other officers should follow this pattern. If the activity or event is not a duty of the office, there should be no report. If you have a new idea, the time to bring it up is under new business.

Annual reports are a different matter. They are usually written and may be more lengthy than a periodic report. All officers should report what they did in fulfillment of their duties, whether their duties are substantive or not. The bottom line on officer reports is to remember they are not for blowing your own horn and stroking your ego. They are to inform the assembly of how you carried out the duties of your office.

## WHY ARE MINUTES CALLED THAT?

Have you ever wondered how minutes of meetings got that name? Was someone thinking this was a good reminder that minutes are supposed to be brief rather than a full transcript of a meeting? Or was it just wishful thinking that the meeting would be shorter if people think that minutes mean that meetings can't go over an hour.



It turns out none of those have anything to do with minutes being minutes.

Way back in the Middle Ages, before email and computers, or even typewriters and ball point pens, scribes writing in classical Latin, wrote in capital letters and block script. It wasn't until about the 15th century that lower case letters appeared. Most writing was done in monasteries in ink and parchment. To save space, they began using minute (my-noot) letters because they were small and compact.

Thus, the origin of the meaning of minutes is not that it is a minute-by-minute record being made or that the record of the meeting is limited or brief.

While the idea of a brief summary did evolve later, the origin was "*minuta scriptura*"—small writing or rough notes. (David L. Hecht)

By the 1710's the plural of *minute* was being used to mean "summary of a draft of a document or a letter. Not long after the word minutes evolved and now one of its meanings is "a written record of proceedings at a meeting made by its secretary or other corporate officer." (Etymology Thesaurus)

So while only the letters started out small, let's all remember that minutes of meetings need to be small, too, in the sense that they record what was done, not what was said. (RONR, p. 468)



### The Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Karen Price gave the financial report at the 2019 annual meeting as of May 7, 2019:

Balance forward:	\$18,013.90
Total Income:	7,399.45
Total Expenses:	3,083.33
Balance May 7, 2019:	\$22,330.02

## PARLIAMENTARY LESSON: CAN YOU STAND THE SUSPENSE?

It may sound like a terrible thing for a group of members to decide to violate rules of the organization. Breaking the rules just seems to go against the concept of fair meetings. Nevertheless there may be times when an assembly wishes to act in a particular way during a meeting but it may be stymied because that action would violate one or more of its regular rules. Just suppose, however, the members in the meeting want to consider an item on the agenda right now rather than at the end of the meeting. They would be prevented from doing so if they adhere strictly to the rules.

For legitimate reasons and within constraints, an assembly has the right to adopt a motion to Suspend the Rules that hinder the desired action. There are restrictions to this motion, though as some rules cannot ever be suspended and no proposals may conflict with the organization's bylaws (or constitution), with procedural rules in the law, or with fundamental principles of parliamentary law.

Because this is a handy motion to know and to apply under the correct set of circumstances, students of parliamentary procedure need to become thoroughly familiar with the uses and limitations of this motion.

A. Begin by reading the chapter in RONR on this motion which is found on pages 260-267. Then answer the following questions: (If you are working in a group, you may want to discuss these questions. If you are working alone, write out the answers to all the questions.)

1. Why would you want to suspend the rules?
  2. Name the kinds of rules that cannot be suspended.
  3. When making the motion, do you have to state which rule is being suspended?
  4. What do you say to suspend the rules in the following situations:
    - a. There is a convention standing rule to limit debate to three minutes. A member who is very knowledgeable on the pending question has been stopped for time. You really want to have the speaker finish her speech. What do you say?
    - b. You have a special interest in a particular agenda item at the meeting. The item is not going to come up until late in the meeting as it is listed at the end of the agenda. You have a doctor's appointment and will have to leave the meeting early. What do you say?
    - c. A proposal to contribute \$500 to the public library was postponed to this meeting. You are aware that the community programs committee will make a motion to contribute \$1,500 to a community park at this meeting. You want to be sure the contribution to the library is considered before any more funds are committed. What do you say?
    - d. A motion important to you was laid on the table because the keynote speaker had to give his address immediately. When the meeting reconvened, the chair announced the next item of business and it looks like there is going to be a lengthy debate. You believe the assembly should take the motion from the table instead.
-

**You are the presiding officer. In each scenario, determine what the chair should do and explain the rule that applies.**

1. A motion to suspend the rules that interfere with changing the time of meeting in the bylaws from 9 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. for the next meeting is pending. A member makes a motion to lay all pending motions on the table. The motion is seconded.
  2. A motion with an amendment is pending while the total time for debate has nearly elapsed. A member moves the previous question on all pending questions and it is seconded. Another member rises and moves to suspend the rules and take up a motion to extend the time of debate for ten more minutes. This motion is also seconded.
  3. A motion to suspend the rules and take up a motion that was postponed until 2 p.m. is pending. A member rises to a point of order and states that the motion to suspend the rules is not in order. The chair rules the point is not well taken. The member appeals from the decision of the chair and it is seconded.
  4. The number of candidates running for office equals exactly the number of vacant positions. The bylaws require a vote by ballot. Some members want to get the election over and done with. A member moves to suspend the rules that interfere with conducting the election by a voice vote.
  5. The charter of a parent body of an organization requires that the local chapters collect dues for both the local and the national entities. At a meeting a member moves to suspend the rules that interfere with waiving the collection of the national portion of the dues.
  6. A member moved to suspend the rules and take up the motion to commend Mr. Smith, Mrs. Jones, and Mr. Stillwater for their contributions to the success of the community project. The motion has been stated by the chair when another member makes a motion to amend the motion to insert Mrs. Finegold after Mrs. Jones.
  7. A motion to suspend the rules and take up item number 14 which was scheduled for later in the agenda was adopted. The assembly disposed of the item. The chair announced the next item of business as item number 15. A member called for the orders of the day.
  8. The next item of business is the report of a special committee, but the chair wishes to skip ahead to the motion to provide funding for the chair to attend a national conference which was postponed at the last meeting. The chair says, "If there is no objection, we will suspend the rules and take up the motion which was postponed at the last meeting." A member objects.
  9. The chairman of the finance committee has waited patiently for the motion to increase the dues which was postponed until later in the meeting to come up. When the time finally arrives, it is clear that a quorum no longer exists. The chairman moves to suspend the rules interfering with the consideration of the motion to increase the dues.
  10. Mr. Smith, a non-member guest at the meeting, is an acknowledged world expert in green environmental initiatives. Miss Sawicki has invited him to come and he has been granted privileges of the floor. Miss Sawicki moved to suspend the rules and allow Mr. Smith to speak in debate and the motion was adopted. Many members were clearly excited about the information Mr. Smith had to share and a motion was made to adopt several new programs that would advance the cause. Miss Sawicki moved to suspend the rules that interfere with Mr. Smith's voting on the motion.
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Newly elected officers for  
2019-2021

(l to r) Henry Lawton, PRP,  
President

Karen Price, Treasurer

Elizabeth Cogswell, Secre-  
tary

Helen Popovich, PRP, First  
Vice President

Not pictured: Paul Rene,  
PRP, Second Vice President



Outgoing President Helen Popovich, PRP, presents incoming President Henry Lawton, PRP, with the symbol of his office—the gavel.

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