

PARLIAMENTARY LESSON: HOW SHOULD THE CHAIR RESPOND?

Read the scenarios below and answer the question. Find the citation in RONR that supports your answer. If you are using this lesson in a group, discuss your answers before sharing the answers provided below.

1. A motion to have a party is pending and chair says, "Is there any further debate? If not, we will now vote. The motion is "That we have a party on the Fourth of July, to be arranged by the Event Committee. A member interrupts, "Madam President!" How should the chair respond?
2. A member makes a motion, but no one immediately seconds it. Another member says, "Mr. Chair, I rise to suggest a modification." The chair calls on the member, who says, "I suggest that the proposer add the words, "at a cost not to exceed \$800," and the proposer of the motion immediately says, "Mr. Chair, I accept the modification." What should the chair then say?
3. At a meeting of 500 members, a controversial motion is voted on by voice, but the chair cannot judge which side is louder. What should the chair do?
4. While a main motion is pending, a motion "To limit debate to 10 more minutes" is adopted. When the time expires, an amendment is pending, and someone has the floor and is debating the amendment. The chair would like to bring the main motion to a vote without further delay. What should the chair do?
5. At 11:30 am, a main motion is pending, but the assembly is having difficulty amending it into an acceptable form. A member obtains the floor and says, "I move to refer to a committee of five appointed by the chair, with instructions to report immediately after lunch." The motion to refer is adopted. After lunch, what does the chair say to get the meeting going again?
6. A main motion and a pending amendment are referred to a committee. When the committee reports, its chair reads the report, recommending that the pending amendment NOT be adopted, but that a certain new amendment be adopted and that the main motion be adopted as amended. What should the chair say then?
7. In the morning, while a main motion is pending, a motion "That we postpone this question until 2:00 pm," is adopted. Later, at 2:00 pm, another motion is being debated. How should the chair get the postponed motion taken up again?

PARLIAMENTARY LESSON: HOW SHOULD THE CHAIR RESPOND?

ANSWERS

1. A motion to have a party is pending and chair says, "Is there any further debate? If not, we will now vote. The motion is "That we have a party on the Fourth of July, to be arranged by the Event Committee. A member interrupts, "Madam President!" How should the chair respond?

The chair should say, "For what purpose does the member rise?" Interruption of voting is permitted before any member has actually voted. RONR p. 408

2. A member makes a motion, but no one immediately seconds it. Another member says, "Mr. Chair, I rise to suggest a modification." The chair calls on the member, who says, "I suggest that the proposer add the words, "at a cost not to exceed \$800," and the proposer of the motion immediately says, "Mr. Chair, I accept the modification." What should the chair then say?

Before a motion has been stated by the chair, it is the property of its mover, who can withdraw it or modify it without asking the consent of anyone. In the same interval also, another member can ask if the maker of the motion is willing to accept a change in it, which the maker can either accept or reject. If accepted, the chair states the question on the modified motion. If a motion is modified, the member who suggested the modification has, in effect, supplied a second. RONR p. 295-296

3. At a meeting of 500 members, a controversial motion is voted on by voice, but the chair cannot judge which side is louder. What should the chair do?

If the chair feels that members may question a somewhat close result of which he is reasonably convinced, he can first say, "The ayes [or "the noes"] *seem* to have it," then pause to give opportunity for a member to call for a division. If the chair is in actual doubt in the case of such a vote, however, he should not announce a result, but should immediately retake the vote—strictly speaking, always as a rising vote. The chair would say, "The chair is in doubt. All those in favor, rise. Be seated. All those opposed, rise. Be seated." Then announce the result. RONR, p. 52.

4. While a main motion is pending, a motion "To limit debate to 10 more minutes" is adopted. When the time expires, an amendment is pending, and someone has the floor and is debating the amendment. The chair would like to bring the main motion to a vote without further delay. What should the chair do?

The chair should interrupt and announce that the time for debate has expired. It is in order for a member to move to extend debate, amendments, lay on the table, and postpone indefinitely (all undebatable). Otherwise, the chair then proceeds to take the vote on the pending motions." RONR, p. 194-195

PARLIAMENTARY LESSON: HOW SHOULD THE CHAIR RESPOND?

5. At 11:30 am, a main motion is pending, but the assembly is having difficulty amending it into an acceptable form. A member obtains the floor and says, "I move to refer to a committee of five appointed by the chair, with instructions to report immediately after lunch." After brief debate on refer, it is adopted. After lunch, what does the chair say to get the meeting going again?

After calling the meeting to order, the chair calls on the committee chairman to report. A recess is a short intermission in the proceedings. When it is over, business is immediately resumed at the point where it was interrupted. RONR p. 230

6. A main motion and a pending amendment are referred to a committee. When the committee reports, its chair reads the report, recommending that the pending amendment NOT be adopted, but that a certain new amendment be adopted and that the main motion be adopted as amended. What should the chair then say?

When the presentation of the report is concluded, the original pending amendment becomes pending automatically and the chair states the question, no motion being necessary. The chair would say: "The committee to which was referred . . . recommends that it not be adopted. The pending amendment is . . . [reading it]. The question is on the adoption of the amendment." The chair may add, "The committee recommends that the amendment be rejected."] After the original amendment is lost, the amendment recommended by the committee can be made. RONR p. 517-518

7. In the morning, while a main motion is pending, a motion "That we postpone this question until 2:00 pm," is adopted. Later, at 2:00 pm, another motion is being debated. How should the chair get the postponed motion taken up again?

This is an order of the day that cannot interrupt pending questions and it cannot come up before general orders are reached in the order of business (except by a 2/3 vote), but it is automatically taken up at 2:00 pm or as soon thereafter as general orders have been reached and any matters which have precedence over it, have been disposed of. RONR, p. 286-287