Parliamentary Procedure

One of the ways that 4-H clubs can run their meeting is with Parliamentary Procedure. Parliamentary Procedure is a set of rules that govern how voting can take place and help provide order to a meeting.

Some basic parts of Parliamentary Procedure:

Only one member at a time can speak at a time, and only after being recognized by the President

There can only be one motion on the floor at a time

Motions can be “tabled,” which means they can be brought back for discussion at the next meeting.

Calling the meeting to order and having a motion to adjourn the meeting are also parts of Parliamentary Procedure.

Parliamentary Procedure is a formal way to make decisions within your club. But how do we use this procedure to make motions and make decisions? Here’s a basic framework for a simple motion that could happen in your club:

**Member #1**: “I move that we have a picnic in June and that the club pays the $25 fee for using the park.”

**President**: “There is a motion on the floor, is there a second?”

**Member #2**: “I second the motion.”

**President:** “There is a motion, and a second that we have a club picnic in June and the club pays the $25 fee for using the park. Is there any discussion?”

At this time, club members can discuss the motion. They can talk about whether June is a good time, whether or not they feel the club should pay the fee, or any other thing related to the motion. They can also introduce amendments to the motion if they choose. Once discussion is over, the process continues.

**President:** “If there is no more discussion, we will continue to vote on the motion. All those in favor of having a picnic in June with the club paying the $25 park usage fee, say ‘aye’ (pause for votes), all those opposed say ‘nay’ (pause for votes). Motion carried/failed (depending on the vote).

This is a way for all the club members to participate by voting and discussing the motion. Making motions can get more complicated if members decide to offer amendments, as that adds another layer to the process.

Even though this seems really formal, don’t let it take all the fun out of voting and making decisions! Check out the next section for ways to keep the fun in decision making!