CONVENTION PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE: BASIC CONCEPTS

The components of parliamentary practices are built on two important concepts so that everyone can speak, but decisions can be made:
1) All members have equal opportunity to voice opinions (minority voice), and;
2) There is an efficiency necessary to the process (majority vote).

As President of the Convention, it is the Bishop's responsibility to see that these two concepts are observed.

HOW TO ACT
Decorum, in a parliamentary context, is behavior or conduct of a Delegate of the Convention. Decorum may be considered "good" or "poor" decorum. Here are some examples:

Examples of good Decorum

- Waiting for the President to call on you before speaking from the microphone.
- Identifying yourself by name and congregation. It is also helpful to identify your position: "I am speaking in favor of the motion."
- Speaking only when you have something substantially new to say about the matter at hand.
- Addressing your comments to the President, not other Delegates. You address the President as, "Right Reverend Sir."
- Speaking no more than twice on the matter at hand and as briefly as possible.
- Making comments directly related to the matter at hand.

Examples of poor Decorum

- Beginning to speak before the President has called on you.
- Interrupting or speaking over the President or another Delegate.
- Making comments that are not directly related to the matter at hand.
- Repeating comments that have already been voiced.
- Applauding the comments made by another Delegate or after a vote is taken.
- Addressing your comments to other Delegates instead of the President.
- Trying to speak more than twice on the matter at hand.

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At the opening of each annual meeting of the Convention, Standing Rules of Order are presented for adoption by the Convention. The following Rules of Order, revised in September 2008, are presented for adoption at this Convention.

2. Unless determined otherwise by the convention, speeches or presentations from the floor are limited to two minutes each.

4. No motion shall be debated, or shall be considered as being before the Convention, unless seconded and, if required, presented in writing. When anything other than a routine motion is made by a Delegate, in the interest of clarity, a typed copy of the motion is to be handed to the Secretary of Convention for the record.
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7. The matters to come before the Convention shall include only those items indicated on the Agenda, as adopted at the opening of the Convention.

8. When procedure is not otherwise covered by the Constitution, Canons, or Standing Rules of Order, then Roberts' Rules of Order Revised shall prevail.

Please note that the sole purpose of parliamentary procedure is to enable a large body to accomplish its work in an orderly and effective fashion, not to manipulate or frustrate. In that sense it is “gospel,” not “law.”

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13. Any motion to adopt a proposed Budget that is not a balanced budget, and any motion to amend the Budget proposed by the Council in any manner that results in budgeted expenses in excess of anticipated income in the ensuing fiscal year from the pledges of faith communities and from other sources of Episcopal Church in Minnesota income, shall be out of order and shall not be considered or voted upon by the Convention.

Our normative protocol for voting on the floor, both in Roberts Rules and our Convention has been to first take a voice vote, and if not clear follow with a demonstrative vote, and if still not clear, move to a paper ballot. If however, any member believes that a secret vote will give a truer expression of the assembly’s will on a pending motion, then that member can move that the vote be taken by paper ballot at any point during the discussion. (According to RONR (11th ed.), p. 285, 30, 5)

Finally, the consent calendar may be presented by the Chair. Items are placed on the consent calendar because they are routine in nature and not viewed as controversial. At the time the Chair places the consent calendar before Convention, any item or items may be removed from it on the request of any one member. All items not removed may be adopted by general consent without debate. Removed items may be taken up either immediately after the consent calendar or placed later on the agenda at the discretion of the assembly.