



Parliamentarian
Dee Dee Buckley ~ Chairman

The President appoints a Parliamentarian who is knowledgeable and skilled in organization and parliamentary procedure. She should have a good working relationship with the President since her duty, when requested to do so, is to give advice to the President, or any member, on matters of parliamentary procedure. The Parliamentarian works closely with the Constitution and Standing Rules Chairman – the keeper of our governing documents.

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE PARLIAMENTARIAN

BE IMPARTIAL - The Parliamentarian is much like an official in a game. She is to be impartial and make sure everyone plays by the rules. Similarly, as the official does not play the game, the parliamentarian does not exercise the same rights as a member. She does not make motions, debate or vote, except by ballot.

KNOW THE RULES – Just as a referee must know the rules of the game, a parliamentarian must know the rules of the organization and of the parliamentary authority. As the size of the group increases, so must the depth of knowledge of the parliamentarian. A department parliamentarian must know and understand bylaws, standing rules and parliamentary procedure much better than a unit parliamentarian.

PRESIDENT’S APPOINTMENT – The president appoints the parliamentarian for her knowledge and skills, not as an honor or special appointment for a friend. The parliamentarian should be someone reliable and trusted to provide accurate advice for everyone on both sides of an issue. The president and parliamentarian should have a good working relationship.

VARIED ROLES – The parliamentarian has a variety of duties before and during meetings with members, committees, officers and boards. The goal is for the business to be handled properly and smoothly.

DUTIES BEFORE A MEETING – Review the agenda with the president to be familiar with the business and possible problems that may arise. Review the bylaws and standing rules of our organization. Work with any committee members who request assistance in preparing reports for the meeting.

DUTIES DURING A MEETING – Preparatory work before the meeting should reduce the work necessary during the meeting. The parliamentarian should arrive early to counsel as needed. Have a copy of the governing documents at the meeting. Keep track of motions to assist the presiding officer. Be as inconspicuous as possible. Provide advice when requested and communicate with the president tactfully and discreetly. Remain impartial and be prepared to cite references if needed. Be available after the meeting for further counsel.

PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY – Any organization requires rules of operation. The most important should be the hardest to change. Typically these include a Constitution and/or Bylaws, Rules of Order and Standing Rules. These rules are written specifically for the organization and take precedence in governance. On matters not specifically addressed in any of these documents, *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* will prevail. A parliamentarian should spend time studying these rules.

HELP MEMBERS LEARN – The parliamentarian should work with members to educate them in parliamentary procedures. This can be as you counsel them in their roles or teach lessons to further develop their knowledge and skills.

DEVELOP YOUR KNOWLEDGE – Good parliamentarians are always learning their craft. Invest in your knowledge. There are many resources available through National Emblem Sales, in local bookstores and online.

RESOURCES:

2017-2022 Program Action Plan (available at www.alaforveterans.org)

The Minnesota American Legion Auxiliary website is www.mnala.org. Check it out for current, up-to-date information.

The national organization's website is www.alaforveterans.org. There is a special section for members only. You must register using your membership identification number. There is a wealth of information on this website.

For those who do not have access to a computer, there are many references available in print as well. Many are available through our Department office and through National Emblem Sales (www.emblem.legion.org).

National Constitution, Bylaws & Standing Rules (item #355.202)	\$ 3.95
Parliamentary Procedures (item #755.203)	\$ 1.50
Unit Guide Book (item 355.200) (In process of being revised available soon)	\$ 9.95
Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (Hardback - item #855.300)	\$28.95
Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (Paperback – item #855.301)	\$13.95

Note: The items in bold print are available online ready to download and print at no cost at www.alaforveterans.org.

The Department of Minnesota Standing Rules and the Constitution and Bylaws for Department, Districts and Units can be downloaded at www.mnala.org.

As we work with Department President Donna Arends by “Lighting Veterans Paths” all Unit Parliamentarians are encouraged to gain knowledge in parliamentary procedures and to pass this knowledge on to their Unit members for smooth Unit operation. Please feel free to contact me with any questions and/or suggestions.

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