

The Michigan Parliamentarian

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Spring 2020

President's' Message

Steve Britton, PRP

Genesee Area Parliamentarians Unit

Greetings from Your President.

Your president is greatly saddened surrounding the circumstances that forced our state Association to cancel its 2020 Annual Meeting and workshops; but is grateful for the resolve of the members of the Michigan State Association of Parliamentarians (MSAP) and how for safety's sake, the MSAP Executive Committee took action to cancel the event. Hence, the Association did not place members or guests at risk of potential exposure to the deadly virus.

Please note, related to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the authors of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, have published three new Official Interpretations (2020-1; 2020-2; 2020-3), which are reviewable on the Robert's Rules of Order website, at <https://robertsrules.com>. More information about rules for electronic meetings may be found on the NAP website, at: <https://www.parliamentarians.org>.

Currently, as I pen this President's Message, the National Association of Parliamentarians (NAP) continues with its plans to hold the *National Association of Parliamentarians Training Conference* (NTC) at the Hilton Palacio del Rio in San Antonio, Texas on August 28-30, 2020. More information about the NTC is located at the following <http://napconference.org>.

On a more personal note, your president is greatly appreciative for the work and support of the MSAP Officers and Executive Board Members.

In closing, thank-you to the Michigan Unit of Registered Parliamentarians (MURP) for all its work to host the MSAP Annual Meeting and workshops, and to the MSAP Conference Coordinating Committee for its planning. Also, thank you to all those who agreed to present workshops and to all other volunteers.

Please be reminded that the next meeting of the MSAP Board of Directors is Saturday, June 13, 2020, at 10:00 AM, via ZOOM.

Best wishes and please stay safe.

Keepers of the Democratic Process

MSAP Annual Meeting

Gretchen Denton, PRP

MSAP First Vice-President

Genesee Area Parliamentarians Unit

I was looking forward to seeing all of you in early April for the MSAP Annual Meeting ***Keepers of the Democratic Process***. Since that did not happen, let me say that I hope that you are well and are learning how to use what technology we have to interact with friends and family, and study parliamentary procedure.

What did I learn from canceling the Annual Meeting?

Besides Robert Burn's statement "The best-laid plans of mice and men oft go astray..." (paraphrased from *To a Mouse* by Mr. Burns), I rediscovered the importance of insightful Bylaws.

A clause in the MSAP *Bylaws* allowed for the meeting cancellation. Article VII, Section 5, on "Cancellations," states that in the event of a national or local emergency, the Executive Committee can by an affirmative vote of three members in a meeting, by mail, or by telephone, may cancel any MSAP meeting. All members shall be notified of the cancellation.

While the Bylaws were written without knowledge of a particular future unknown event like COVID-19, they permitted the Executive Committee to act quickly. Perhaps you discovered in your Unit's Bylaws a provision for holding virtual meetings so that you had a program or an entire meeting electronically. The Detroit Unit held at least one such outstanding meeting. Or, maybe you discovered that your Bylaws do not provide for electronic meetings, the Louise Saks Unit Bylaws permit electronic committee meetings but not electronic regular meetings.

Bylaws do matter; help for crafting well-done bylaws is another gift from *Robert's Rules Newly Revised*. Hats off to all of us for studying bylaws and sharing this important knowledge with many organizations where we help make good decisions for the benefit of members as well as furthering the democratic processes in our communities.

COVID-19 Meeting Cancellations: A Secretary's Perspective

Barbara Bonsignore, PRP
MSAP Recording Secretary

The Minutes of an organization are the official record of the proceedings of a deliberative assembly. What does a Secretary do when there are no Minutes because the Annual Meeting has been cancelled due to a health crisis such as the COVID-19 Pandemic, or some other prohibitive circumstance that precludes an in-person meeting?

The responsible action is for the Secretary to document the occasion by writing an explanation of the circumstances and place the Memorandum in the official record of the organization. Without such a document there would be a gap in the chronology of the scheduled meetings, and there would be no record of the action taken to cancel the meeting. Future members might wonder why there was no reference to the missing documents, was it an oversight by the administration, a lapse on the part of the Secretary, or was there a governmental mandate that prohibited gatherings of more than ten people, as was the case in Michigan in the Spring 2020?

The usual source of reference for procedural questions is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (RONR), but in this instance there is no text that serves as guidance, or that can be used as an example. Fortunately, the *Bylaws* for the Michigan State Association of Parliamentarians (MSAP) state in Article VII on *Meetings*, Section 5 on *Cancellation*, contains the following:

In the event of a national or local emergency, the Executive Committee by an affirmative vote of three members in a meeting, by mail, or by telephone, may dispense with any meeting of MSAP. All members shall be notified.

What are the steps that need to be taken in order to have a cancellation Memorandum added to the official documents of an organization? There are at least three important steps.

1. Executive Committee votes to cancel a meeting.
2. Secretary creates Memorandum to document the circumstances for the cancellation.
3. Secretary requests permission to include the Memorandum in the official record of the organization.

The Memorandum created for the MSAP Record Book is the following:

On March 16, 2020, an MSAP Executive Committee meeting was held by Zoom technology. Those present were: President, Steven Britton; First Vice-President, Gretchen Denton; Second Vice-President, Tom DeMeritt; Secretary, Barbara Bonsignore; Treasurer, Diane Schrift; and Parliamentarian, Carolyn Stubbs.

Notice of the purpose for the meeting, to approve the cancellation of the 2020 MSAP Annual Meeting and Conference, was sent to the Executive Committee members in advance. A motion to cancel the 2020 MSAP Annual Meeting and Conference was adopted.

The MSAP *Bylaws* provide for the action taken by the Executive Committee to cancel the Annual Meeting. Subsequent actions related to the cancellation, adopted at the March 16, 2020 Executive Committee meeting, were ratified at the MSAP Quarterly Board meeting on April 3, 2020.

Once the Memorandum is created, the Secretary will need to request permission from the assembly at the next meeting, whether virtual or in-person, to have the document placed in the official record of the organization. Permission may be obtained through one of two actions described in RONR.

- **Request for Any Other Privilege** is usually handled by unanimous consent, or informally, but, if there is an objection, a motion can be made to grant the request.
- **Raise A Question of Privilege** where the request is treated as a Main Motion and is debatable and amendable.

Perhaps a similar Memorandum could be created and receive permission for filing in the official records of your Unit or organization, to document the actions taken when a meeting cancellation is required.

MSAP Membership Report

Dianne Bostic Robinson, RP
Louise Saks Parliamentary Unit
MSAP Director, Membership and Extension Committee

As of May 2020, NAP reports that the Michigan State Association of Parliamentarians (MSAP) membership is as follows.

- 138 Regular Members
- 16 Professional Registered Parliamentarians (PRP)
- 10 Registered Parliamentarians (RP)
- 3 Registered Parliamentarians-Retired (RP-R)
- 1 Student member

Michigan Unit Memberships (in order of chartering):

- Detroit Unit-39
- Louise Saks Parliamentary Unit-20
- Redford Unit-5
- Genesee Area Unit-16
- Kalamazoo Parliamentary Law Unit-9
- Michigan Unit of Registered Parliamentarians-3
- Members-at-Large-46

Novi High School Parli Pro Team

On March 9, 2020, the Novi High School Parli Pro Team placed First-Place in Michigan's HOSA state competition, in Traverse City. Joyce Brown-Watkins, PRP, and Barbara Bonsignore, PRP, consulted with the team prior to the state competition. The team is preparing to submit the required materials for the International Leadership Conference competition in June, in Houston, Texas. Michigan HOSA has nine geographical regions. HOSA operates as an integral component of the health science education high school curriculum and its mission is to enhance the delivery of compassionate, quality health care by providing opportunities for knowledge, skill, and leadership development of all health science technology education students, therefore, helping students to meet the needs of the health care community (<https://www.michiganhosa.org/participating-schools>). Michigan HOSA places a strong emphasis on leadership development and career exploration. FYI, HOSA is not an acronym.

From NAP Headquarters....

NAP Headquarters has re-opened and is once again fulfilling orders. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we all come to grips with the changes necessitated by COVID-19. The continued good health and well-being of our members and staff remains a priority. We will continue to practice social distancing, frequent hand washing, and other advice from the CDC and government agencies, and encourage all our members to do the same. <https://www.parliamentarians.org/>

About RONR

Previous Question

Vivian L. W. Tansil
Detroit Unit

This Subsidiary Motion is misused. Members cannot yell/scream "Question!" to immediately end discussion. When properly recognize, a member states, "I move for the Previous Question" or "I move to close debate" and with a Second, the Presiding Officer places this Motion to stop the discussion on the pending Question to an immediate vote. If members want to end discussion, the vote is Yes. If members want to continue discussion, the vote is No.

RONR states that everyone has the right to speak twice on any pending Motion for ten minutes, speaking the second time after everyone has spoken once. It requires a 2/3-vote for approval because it denies member-rights. A Presiding Officer cannot terminate discussion and deny members the right to debate when hands are raised or members standing at the microphone to speak. If no other members wants to speak, the Presiding Officer can request by unanimous consent to close discussion and take the vote.

The Mover is usually the first speaker in debate. As a tactic, after his/her debate, the Mover can end discussion by calling for the Previous Question to close debate. If others want to speak on the pending question, vote No. As an alternative, Recess, a Privileged Motion, can be used to give members a break to interact. It does not end the discussion.

Please note that this Motion is not used in committee meetings.

Voting by Ballot: Balloting Procedure

Jewell Johnson Jones, PRP
Detroit Unit President

Balloting in a meeting, where the voting is in the same room, the Chair appoints Tellers to distribute, collect, count the ballots, and report the vote.

For a small group, two or three Tellers are usually sufficient. The Tellers should be chosen for their accuracy and dependability. They should have the confidence of the membership and should not have a direct personal involvement in the question or in the result of the vote.(RONR, Page 414 Lines 6-16).

To ensure accuracy and to enable the Tellers when unfolding the ballots to detect any error, each ballot should be folded in a manner announced in advanced or stated on the ballot itself. (RONR, Page, 414, Lines 21-25)

Unit Updates

Detroit Unit

Jewell Johnson Jones, PRP, President

The Unit congratulates three new RPs, Lois Schulman, Sharon Kelly-Person, and Joseph Person. Many Unit members have taken sections of the Legacy RP Examination before COVID-19 closed NAP testing and will complete when it is opened again. The Unit's Annual Workshop was moved from May to September because of COVID-19. Under the Unit's Vice President, Jacalyn Shelton Wallace, early-year lessons were held in person and moved to Zoom in March after COVID-19. During the March Zoom Meeting, the Unit was joined by Darlene Allen, PRP, NAP President; Wanda Sims, PRP, NAP Vice President; and David Whittaker, NAP Technology.

2020 Lesson Schedule

January 25:	RONR Vocabulary; Jewel Johnson Jones and Jacalyn Shelton Wallace, Instructors
February 22:	Committee of the Whole and Its Alternate Forms; Taniqua Carter-Brown, Instructor
March 28:	Preparation for NAP Membership Examination; Carla Patrick-Fagan, Instructor
April 25:	The Main Motion; Lois Shulman, Instructor
May 23:	Subsidiary Motions, Part I: Previous Question and Lay on the Table; Vivian Tansil, Instructor
June 27:	Subsidiary Motions, Part II: Postpone Indefinitely and Amend; Marilyn Mayberry and Carole Gillespie, Instructors
July 25:	Preparation for the NAP Membership/RP Exams; Vivian Tansil, Instructor
August 29:	Subsidiary Motions Part III: Commit/Refer, Postpone to a Certain Time/Definitely, and Limit or Extend Debate; Carla Patrick-Fagan and Dedria Willis, Instructors
September 26:	Unit's Annual Workshop (Tentative)
October 24:	Preparation for the NAP Membership/RP Exams; Frances Jackson, Instructor
November 28:	Privileged Motions; Sonja Randall and DeVette Brown, Instructors
December 19:	Holiday Celebration

Michigan Unit of Registered Parliamentarians

Frances Jackson, PRP, President

At its recent election, MURP elected the following officers.

President-Frances Jackson, PRP
Vice President-Barbara Bonsignore, RP
Secretary-Patricia Dolan, PRP-R
Treasurer-Edna Arrington, PRP

The appointed officers are:

Corresponding Secretary-Steve Britton, PRP
Historian-Joan Price, PRP
Parliamentarian-Joyce Brown-Watkins, PRP

Frances Jackson thanks all who volunteered to run for office and those who volunteered to accept an appointment. She looks forward to working with them during the next two years.

The Summer Retreat has been cancelled. However, there will be a meeting of the MURP membership via Zoom, on July 18, 2020, at 10:00 AM. The link for the meeting will be emailed in July.

Frances thanks Elizabeth Haynes, RP, and all the officers and committees who served so capably in the last two years for their service to MURP; and for the promotion of parliamentary education for our membership. Frances looks forward to continuing the legacy of this great organization.

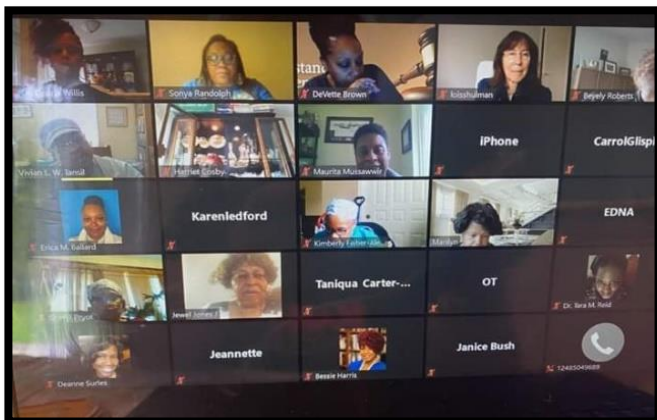
Photo Collage

Photos courtesy of:

Joan Price, PRP, (Louise Saks Parliamentary Unit) and Dedria Willis (Detroit Unit)



Robert Schuck and District 4 Members at NAP Conference, Las Vegas 2019



Detroit Unit Zoom May 2020 Meeting



NAP Officers at Detroit Unit Zoom March 2020 Meeting



T. DeMeritt and J. Brown Watkins



Detroit Unit Meeting



R. Schuck, S. Britton, J. Brown-Watkins



MSAP Members with NAP Officers at NAP Conference Las Vegas 2019



Detroit Unit Meeting



Past NAP Presidents and International and District 4, State, and Unit Officers at NAP Conference, Las Vegas 2019

2019-2021 MSAP Board of Directors

Officers

President:	Steven Britton
First Vice-President:	Gretchen Denton
Second Vice-President:	Tom DeMeritt
Recording Secretary:	Barbara Bonsignore
Corresponding Secretary:	Frances Jackson
Treasurer:	Diane Schriff
Directors:	Dianne Bostic Robinson, Sharon Jones, Vivian Tansil
Historian:	Edna Arrington

Committee Chairmen

Bylaws and Standing Rules:	Elizabeth Haynes
Membership and Extension:	Dianne Bostic Robinson
Education:	Tom DeMeritt
Public Relations:	Sharon Jones
Budget and Finance:	Susan Schneberger
Youth:	Joyce Brown-Watkins
Publication:	Vivian Tansil
Nominating:	Nancy Fody
State Coordinating:	Gretchen Denton
Auditor:	Blinda Baker

Unit Presidents

Detroit:	Jewel Johnson Jones
Louise Saks Parliamentary:	Dorothea Martin
Redford:	Garth Christie
Genesee Parliamentarians:	Thomas DeMeritt
Kalamazoo Parliamentary Law:	Betty Weston
MI Unit of Registered Parliamentarians:	Frances Jackson

You may submit articles and photos to this newsletter, for the next publication, by emailing Vivian L. W. Tansil, Publisher, at tansilv@comcast.net. Questions or comments, telephone (517) 393-0870.