



What's a Snippet? Glad you asked! A Snippet is short article about meetings or parliamentary procedure. New snippets are released on the first day of every month at www.agreatmeeting.com.



Snippet #126
Resolutions

What's the difference between a resolution and a motion? Which is used when? The short answer is that a resolution is a main motion, but a main motion is not necessarily a resolution. Which form you use depends on the situation.

Business is brought before an assembly by means of a motion. Parliamentary classifications of motions include main motions, privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions, and motions that bring back an action from a previous time. All of them either request a decision of the assembly or make a demand for a particular action.

The key distinction of resolutions is that they state the reasons for the action followed by the actions being proposed. The reasons begin with the word “Whereas” and are supposed to be objective statements of the conditions that exist – or may someday exist – compelling the actions being proposed. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (RONR) considers the “whereas” statements to have the same force and effect as the “resolved” statements. *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* (TSC) and *American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code* (AIPSC) treat “whereas” clauses as informational, and of no consequence.

A resolution can be the source of needless punctuation anxiety for its proposer. Use the following template for resolutions, noting the italics, semicolons, and capitalization. The table will help you keep things lined up, and you can remove the borders table so they do not distract. Set up the table in your word processing program and fill it in so that all resolutions follow the same format.

Whereas,	Insert the first statement (usually the most general) about the reasons for this resolution's importance or need; and
Whereas,	Insert the second statement about the reasons for this resolution's importance or need, if necessary; and
Whereas,	Insert the final statement about the reasons for this resolution's importance, keeping in mind that a resolution can have any number of whereas clauses, but finishing the last one with; now, therefore, be it
<i>Resolved,</i>	That we now insert the language that describes the intent of the resolution; and
<i>Resolved,</i>	That we use as many clauses as necessary to finish that description of the position, opinion, or action(s) to be taken.

At the end of the last “whereas” clause, you can substitute the phrase “therefore” or “therefore, be it” for “now, therefore, be it” if you wish.

So, why would you want to use a resolution with all of that extra writing? You use the resolution format if the reasons for doing something are so important that you want them in the permanent record, such as for a resolution commending or censuring someone, presenting an award, urging public action, or stating a public position.