

# ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

# HANDOUT

Robert's Rules of Order is a manual of parliamentary procedures that governs most organizations with boards of directors. Robert's Rules of Order are a provision of each of the SMPS chapter's bylaws normally stated as the following:

*"The rules contained in the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall provide the rules of procedure for the Chapter where they are not inconsistent with the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation or these bylaws."*

## TYPES OF MOTIONS

- **Main Motion:** Introduce a new item
- **Subsidiary Motion:** Change or affect how to handle a main motion (vote on this before main motion)
- **Privileged Motion:** Urgent or important matter unrelated to pending business
- **Incidental Motion:** Questions procedure of other motions (must consider before the other motion)
- **Motion to Table:** Kills a motion
- **Motion to Postpone:** Delays a vote (can reopen debate on the main motion)
- **Point of Inquiry:** A member may use point of inquiry to ask for clarification in a report to make better voting decisions.
- **Point of Personal Privilege:** A member may use point of personal privilege to address the physical comfort of the setting such as temperature or noise. Members may also use it to address the accuracy of published reports or the accuracy of a member's conduct.

## EVERY MOTION HAS 6 STEPS

1. **Motion:** A member rises or raises a hand to signal the chairperson.
2. **Second:** Another member seconds the motion.
3. **Restate motion:** The chairperson restates the motion.
4. **Debate:** The members debate the motion.
5. **Vote:** The chairperson restates the motion, and then first asks for affirmative votes, and then negative votes.
6. **Announce the vote:** The chairperson announces the result of the vote and any instructions.

**TIP!** If the board is in obvious agreement, the chairperson may save time by stating, "If there is no objection, we will adopt the motion to..." Then wait for any objections. Then say, "Hearing no objections, (state the motion) is adopted." And then state any instructions. If a member objects, first ask for debate, then vote and then announce the vote.

## REQUESTING POINTS OF SOMETHING

Certain situations need attention during the meeting, but they don't require a motion, second, debate or voting. It's permissible to state a point during a meeting where the chairperson needs to handle a situation right away. Board members can declare a Point of Order, Point of Information, Point of Inquiry, or Point of Personal Privilege.

- **Point of Order:** Draws attention to a breach of rules, improper procedure, breaching of established practices, etc.
- **Point of Information:** A member may need to bring up an additional point or additional information (in the form of a nondebatable statement) so that the other members can make fully informed votes.

## TIPS AND REMINDERS FOR CHAIRPERSONS

Robert's Rules of Order, which is also widely known as parliamentary procedure, was developed to ensure that meetings are fair, efficient, democratic and orderly. A skilled chairperson allows all members to voice their opinions in an orderly manner so that everyone in the meeting can hear and be heard. The following tips and reminders will help chairpersons to run a successful and productive meeting without being run over or running over others.

- Follow the agenda to keep the group moving toward its goals.
- Let the group do its own work; don't overcommand.
- Control the flow of the meeting by recognizing members who ask to speak.
- Let all members speak once before allowing anyone to speak a second time.
- When discussions get off-track, gently guide the group back to the agenda.
- Model courtesy and respect, and insist that others do the same.
- Help to develop the board's skills in parliamentary procedure by properly using motions and points of order.
- Give each speaker your undivided attention.
- Keep an emotional pulse on the discussions.
- Allow a consensus to have the final authority of the group.

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*FOR USE FOR REFERENCE DURING MEETINGS*

## HANDLING MOTIONS

Member says, "I move that...". Another member seconds the motion, or chair asks, "is there a second?"

Chair states motion and asks for discussion.

Members enter into a debate. Make of motion has first right of floor. Debate only on merits of motion.

Debate is closed when no members seek further discussion.

Chair puts motion to vote.

Chair announces results of vote.

## WHAT MINUTES MUST INCLUDE

- The kind of meeting begin held...regular, special, etc.
- The name of club
- Date, time and place of meeting
- Names of person running meeting
- Names of everyone in attendance.
- Approval of past meeting minutes with any corrections.
- Summaries of reports from officers.
- Exact final working of all motions with names of movers and seconders.
- Results of all votes.
- Points of order raised an appeals made, with the chair's ruling on each.
- Announcements.
- The time of adjournment.
- The signature of the secretary or person who took minutes.

<b>AGENDAS</b> A typical agenda includes...	<b>TYPICAL LANGUAGE USED BY PERSON RUNNING MEETING</b>
<b>Call To Order</b>	"I call this meeting to order"
<b>Roll Call</b>	"Will the secretary please do roll call?"  "We have a quorum. Will the secretary please read the minutes of the last meeting"
<b>Reading &amp; Approval of Minutes</b>	"Are there any corrections to the minutes?"  "If there are no corrections, the minutes stand approved".
<b>Reports of Officers</b>	"We'll now move to the officer's reports. Will the treasurer, Jane Doe please read/submit their report."  "Are there any questions concerning the treasurer's report? (if none) Will the Vice President now give their report?"
<b>Unfinished Business</b>	"We'll now move on to unfinished business. At the last meeting..."
<b>New Business</b>	"The meeting is now open for new business"  "It has been moved and seconded that.....is there any further discussion?"  "We will now vote on that motion that...All in favor say "Aye". All opposed say "Nay". The motion has passed.
<b>Announcements</b>	"Are there any announcements?" The next meeting will be held on....."
<b>Adjournment</b>	"May I please have a motion to adjourn the meeting?"

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## QUICK REFERENCES

Action	What to say	Can speaker be interrupted?	Need a second?	Can this be debated?	Can this be amended?	Votes needed
Introduce main motion	"I move to..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Move item to committee	"I move that we refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Postpone item	"I move to postpone the matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Object to procedure	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	Chair's decision
Recess the meeting	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adjourn the meeting	"I move to adjourn the meeting."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Request information	"Point of information."	No	Yes	No	No	No vote
Overrule the chair's ruling	"I move to overrule the chair's ruling."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Extend the allotted time	"I move to extend the time by _____ minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Enforce the rules or point out incorrect procedure	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Table a motion	"I move to table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Verity voice vote with count	"I call for a division."	No	No	No	No	No vote
Object to considering some undiplomatic matter	"I object to consideration of this matter..."	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up a previously tabled item	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
* Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move to reconsider our action to..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider something out of it scheduled order	"I move to suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Close the meeting for executive session	"I move to go into executive session."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority

\*A member may make a motion to reconsider something that was already disposed; however, the reconsidered motion may not be subsequently reconsidered. A motion to reconsider must be made during the same meeting and can extend to a meeting that lasts for more than one day.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Everyone has the right to participate in discussion if they wish, before anyone may speak a second time.
- Everyone has the right to know what is going on at all times. Only urgent matters may interrupt a speaker.
- Only one thing (motion) can be discussed at a time.

A **motion** is the topic under discussion (e.g., “I move that we add a coffee break to this meeting”). After being recognized by the president of the board, any member can introduce a motion when no other motion is on the table. A motion requires a second to be considered. If there is no second, the matter is not considered. Each motion must be disposed of (passed, defeated, tabled, referred to committee, or postponed indefinitely).

## HOW TO DO THINGS

**You want to bring up a new idea before the group.**

After recognition by the president of the board, present your motion. A second is required for the motion to go to the floor for discussion, or consideration.

**You want to change some of the wording in a motion under discussion.**

After recognition by the president of the board, move to amend by

- adding words,
- striking words or
- striking and inserting words.

**You like the idea of a motion being discussed, but you need to reword it beyond simple word changes.**

Move to substitute your motion for the original motion. If it is seconded, discussion will continue on both motions and eventually the body will vote on which motion they prefer.

**You want more study and/or investigation given to the idea being discussed.**

Move to refer to a committee. Try to be specific as to the charge to the committee.

**You want more time personally to study the proposal being discussed.**

Move to postpone to a definite time or date.

**You are tired of the current discussion.**

Move to limit debate to a set period of time or to a set number of speakers. Requires a 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s vote.

**You want to take a short break.**

Move to recess for a set period of time.

**You want to end the meeting.**

Move to adjourn.

### Unanimous Consent:

If a matter is considered relatively minor or opposition is not expected, a call for unanimous consent may be requested. If the request is made by others, the president of the board will repeat the request and then pause for objections. If none are heard, the motion passes.

- **You may INTERRUPT a speaker for these reasons only:**
  - to get information about business –point of information to get information about rules– parliamentary inquiry
  - if you can't hear, safety reasons, comfort, etc. –question of privilege
  - if you see a breach of the rules –point of order
  - if you disagree with the president of the board's ruling –appeal
  - if you disagree with a call for Unanimous Consent –object

## PUBLIC COMMENT

### REMEMBER:

- THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO INFORM THE GOVERNING BODY ABOUT THEIR VIEWS.
- THE MEETING ITSELF BELONGS TO THE GOVERNING BODY.
- THE PUBLIC DOES NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING. INSTEAD, IT PROVIDES INPUT TO THE GOVERNING BODY, WHICH TAKES THE INPUT INTO CONSIDERATION IN MAKING ITS DECISIONS.

### TIME CONSIDERATIONS

- Establish specific periods for public comment during your meetings, in a way that is consistent with your community's expectations and customs.
- Set a length of time by which each period will conclude, unless the council votes to extend it.
- Set a time limit for each individual to speak.
- Speakers may not give their time to other people.

### WRITTEN GUIDELINES

- Provide printed copies of the guidelines and expectations.
- Review the guidelines at the beginning of each comment period if necessary, and explain that this is the time for citizens and residents to express their views in order to inform the council. Explain that the council will not engage in dialogue with the public during this time.
- The council has the right to set limits on what subjects may be addressed, how long public comment will be, and how many times people may speak. All such limits must be viewpoint neutral: they must not favor one point of view over another.

### DURING PUBLIC COMMENT

- **REQUIRE ALL SPEAKERS TO ADDRESS THEIR REMARKS TO THE CHAIR.**
- **REQUIRE ALL SPEAKERS TO ADHERE TO THE TIME LIMITS.**
- **THE CHAIR SHOULD THANK EACH SPEAKER, WHETHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE.**
- **IN GENERAL, IT IS BEST NOT TO RESPOND AT ALL TO PUBLIC COMMENT. HOWEVER, THE CHAIR MAY PROVIDE BRIEF FACTUAL INFORMATION, IF APPROPRIATE.**
- **THE CHAIR MUST NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES ENTER INTO BACK-AND-FORTH EXCHANGES WITH THE PUBLIC.**
- **COUNCILMEMBERS REFRAIN FROM SPEAKING DURING THIS PORTION OF THE MEETING.**
- **HAVE STAFF READY TO NOTE INPUT OR QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC AND TO PROVIDE RESPONSES AT A LATER DATE.**

### BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

- Model courtesy and respect and encourage members of the public to do the same.
- The public has the right to make critical and harsh remarks.
- Members of the public *do not* have the right to disrupt the meeting.
- The council may prohibit demonstrations (*booing, hissing, clapping*).