

Parliamentary Procedures



Robert's Rules of Order

Presented by

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Principles

- The right of the majority ultimately to rule
- The right of the minority to be heard
- The right of the individual to participate in the decision-making process
- One thing at a time recognizes things may justifiably temporarily interrupt other things with germaneness
- Balance between affirmative and negatives
 - Alternating speeches between pro and con
 - Both affirmative and negative votes taken
- Parliamentary courtesy: Debate measures, not members

Standard Order of Business

- Reading and Approval of minutes of the previous meeting
- Reports of officers, boards, and standing committees
- Reports of special committees (select or ad hoc)
- Unfinished Business
- New Business

Notice and Order

- ❧ The secretary should prepare, prior to each meeting, a memorandum of the order of business for the use of the presiding officer, showing everything known in advance that is to come before the meeting.
- ❧ The chairman, as soon as one thing is disposed of, should announce the next business in order.

Handling Motions

- A member seeks recognition for the floor
- Chairman recognizes the member
- Member makes a motion
- Another member seconds the motion
- Chairman states the motion
- Debate (amendment and secondary motions)
- Chairman puts the question to a vote
- Chairman announces the result of the vote

What Precedes Debate

- Before a subject is open to debate, it is necessary for a motion to be made by a member who has obtained the floor;
- Next it is seconded (with certain exceptions);
- And then it is stated by the chair (president)
- Until the motion is stated or ruled out of order by the chair, no debate or other motion is in order.

Motions & Resolutions

- A motion is a proposal that the assembly take certain action, or that it express itself as holding certain views.
- Obtaining the floor, a member states, “I move that” (the equivalent of “I propose that”), then stating the action he proposed to have taken.

Resolutions

- Every resolution should be in writing
- When a main motion is of such importance or length as to be in writing it is usually written in the form of a resolution beginning with the words, “Resolved, That,” the word “Resolved” being underscored (printed in italics) and followed by a comma, and the word “That” beginning with a capital “T”.
- If the word “Resolved” were replaced by the word “I move,” the resolution would become a motion

Seconding Motions

- As a general rule, with exceptions, every motion should be seconded.
- This is to prevent time being consumed in considering a question that only one person favors, and consequently little attention is paid to it in routine motions.
- Where the chair is certain the motion meets with general favor, and yet members are slow about seconding it, he may proceed without waiting for a second. Yet anyone may make a point of order that the motion has not been seconded, and then the chair is obliged to proceed formally and call for a second.

Exceptions: Motions not requiring a second

- ✧ Question of Privilege, to raise a
- ✧ Questions of Order
- ✧ Objection to the Consideration of a question
- ✧ Call for Orders of the Day
- ✧ Call for Division of the Question (under certain circumstances)
- ✧ Call for Division of the Assembly (in voting)
- ✧ Call up Motion to Reconsider
- ✧ Filling Blanks
- ✧ Nominations
- ✧ Leave to Withdraw a Motion
- ✧ Inquiries of any kind

Stating the Question

- When a motion has been made and seconded, it is the duty of the chair, unless he rules it out of order, immediately to *state the question* that is before the assembly for its consideration and action.
- “Mr. A offers the following resolution [read]”
- “It is moved and seconded that the question be laid on the table.”
- “It is moved and seconded that we adjourn”
- If the question is debatable or amendable, the chair should immediately ask, “Are you ready for the question?” If the question cannot be debated or amended, he immediately puts the question after stating it.

Debate

- After a question has been stated by the chair, it is before the assembly for consideration and action.
- All resolutions, reports of committees, communications to the assembly, and all amendments proposed to them, and all other motions except the undebatable Motions, may be debated before final action is taken on them, unless by a two-thirds vote the assembly decides to dispose of them without debate. (Two-thirds of the vote cast of those present.)
- No one can speak longer than ten minutes at a time without permission of the assembly.

more to Debate

- In the debate each member has the right to speak twice on the same question on the same day, but cannot make a second speech on the same question as long as any member who has not spoken on that question desires the floor.
- Debate must be limited to the merits of the immediately pending question
- Speakers must address their remarks to the presiding officer, be courteous in their language and deportment, and avoid all personalities, never alluding to the officers of other members by name, where possible to avoid it, nor to the motives of members.

Secondary Motions

- To assist in the proper disposal of the question various subsidiary motions are used, such as to amend, to commit, etc., and for the time being the *subsidiary* motion replaces the resolution or motion, and becomes the immediately pending question.
- While these are pending, a question incidental to the business may arise, as a question of order, and this *incidental* question interrupts the business and, until disposed of, becomes the immediately pending question.

Secondary Motions...

- And all of these may be superseded by certain motions, called *privileged* motions, as to adjourn, of such supreme importance as to justify their interrupting all other questions.
- All of these motions that may be made while the original motion is pending are sometimes referred to as *secondary* motions.

Putting the Question and Announcing the Vote

- When the debate appears to have closed, the chair asks again, “Are you ready for the question?” If no one rises he proceeds to *put* the question -- that is to take the vote on the question.
- First calling for the affirmative and then for the negative vote.
- The question should be perfectly clear and repeated (read).

Putting the question....

- ❧ “The question is on the adoption of the resolution [which the chair reads]; those in favor of the resolution say aye; those opposed say no. The ayes have it, and the resolution is adopted.”
- ❧ “It is moved and seconded that an invitation be extended to Mr. Stephens to address our club at its next meeting. Those in favor of the motion will raise their right hand; those opposed will signify it in the same way. The affirmative has it [or the motion is adopted, or carried].”

Announcing the Vote

- The vote should always be announced, as it is a necessary part of putting the question.
- The vote does not go into effect until announced.
- The chair should never neglect to state what is the business next in order after every vote is announced, nor to state the exact question before the assembly whenever a motion is made. Much confusion will be avoided.



❧ “Where there is no law, but every man does what is right in his own eyes, there is the least of real liberty.”

Henry M. Robert

Small Organizations

- ❧ The procedures in small boards of not more than about a dozen members present is relaxed a bit. The formalities necessary in order to transact business in a large assembly would hinder business in so small a body.



Common Question: Can the chairman vote?

- If a member, the chairman has the right to vote, and does so in small boards of not more than about a dozen members present. In larger assemblies, the chairman (who has a duty to maintain an appearance of impartiality) may vote when his vote would affect the outcome: to make or break a tie or to make or prevent a two-thirds vote, or when the vote is by ballot (at the same time as everybody else).

Common Question: Can the chairman make motions?

- Yes, in small small boards of not more than about a dozen members present. In larger assemblies the chairman may assume a motion, as in: “If there are no [further] corrections to the minutes, they stand approved, as read [as corrected].” or “If there is no further business to come before the meeting, this meeting will now adjourn. [pause] There being none, this meeting is adjourned.”

Common Question:

Can the chairman enter into debate?

➤ In small boards of not more than about a dozen members present, yes. In larger assemblies, if the chairman wishes to debate, he/she should relinquish the chair to the vice president or another member, until the matter is disposed of, before resuming the chair.

Common Question:

Must the President, if nominated, step down from the chair during the election?

➤ No.

Common Question:

The president has resigned, now what?

➤ The Vice-President automatically becomes the President for the remainder of the term of the President.

Common Question:

Should seconds be recorded in the minutes?

∞ No.

Common Question:

What can be done in the absence of a quorum?

∞ Fix the time to adjourn, Adjourn, Recess, take measures to obtain a quorum.

Common Question:

Can a bylaws requirement for a ballot vote be suspended if there is only one nominee for each office?

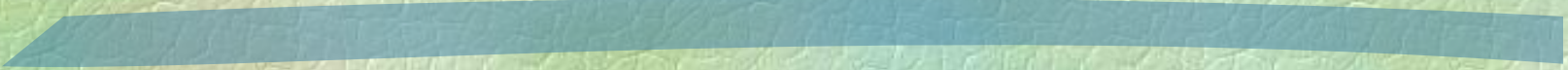
- No. Such a bylaw cannot be suspended even by a unanimous vote or unanimous consent.

Common Question:

When does a resignation take effect?

- A resignation is actually a request to be excused from a duty. It is effective only after the resignation has been accepted by the appointing or electing authority, unless the bylaws say otherwise.

The fundamental right of deliberative assemblies require all questions to be thoroughly discussed before taking action!



Robert's Rules provides for constructive and democratic meetings, to help, not hinder, the business of the assembly.

Under no circumstances should “undue strictness” be allowed to intimidate members or limit full participation

Minutes

➤ Ensure that all of the essential elements are noted, such as type of meeting, name of the organization, date and time, venue, name of the chair or facilitator, list of attendees, main topics and the time of adjournment. For formal minutes include approval of previous minutes, and all resolution (approved motions).

Basic Robert's Rules

- The larger the organization the more important it is to adhere to strict Robert's Rules of Order.
- In small organizations, basic Robert's Rules are common, with Consensus as the tool for decisions for basic business and items not requiring official votes: Thumb up (100%), thumbs sideways (need convincing).



Consistency

- ❧ It is very important to be consistent in use of parliamentary procedures. Setting a precedence of less than professional procedures can be difficult to reverse.
- ❧ Training is essential for new committee/board members for participation at the highest level.

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