

# The Basics of Robert's Rules of Order

## Parliamentary Procedure:

- is the language of meetings. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, the most common parliamentary procedures used, may be modified by a board but it's the basis for most rules of order.
- knowing and using it can be the key to participating... and winning a debate.
- gives voice to the individual.
- ensures that the majority rules.
- increases the meeting's efficiency and order.

The Chair conducts the meeting as if she's directing traffic rather than controlling it. ("If there is no objection,...")

Speakers are acknowledged and have time limits.

A motion is made and unless it comes from a committee, a second in agreement is required.

Debate usually shifts between support and opposition. The motion may be amended (by vote).

When there is a motion to close debate or when the chair asks permission from the body to do so, the vote is taken. Majority Rules.

You can support or oppose questions at meetings and conventions with all your skill and eloquence. Then you need to abide by the result (the majority has spoken).

The goal is to get business completed efficiently with harmony and unity, while safeguarding the organization's dignity and integrity.

## The Order of Business or Agenda

- Call to Order
- Roll call (or determining a quorum)
- Reading and approval of minutes
- Reports of officers and standing and special committees
- Unfinished Business
- New Business (and Announcements)
- Adjournment

## Basic Steps for Handling a Motion

1. STAND AND ADDRESS THE CHAIR: Rise and address the Chair by saying, "Madame President" or "Mister Chairperson."
2. GAIN RECOGNITION: The Chair says, "The Chair recognizes..."
3. MAKE THE MOTION: The maker says, "I move that..."
4. SECOND THE MOTION: The seconded says, "I second the motion." [NOTE: if the motion comes from committee, no second is needed from the floor.]
5. THE CHAIR STATES THE MOTION: "It has been moved and seconded that..."
6. THE CHAIR ASKS FOR DEBATE OF THE MOTION: "Is there any discussion?" [Discussion usually progresses with pro and con alternate statements. The chair recognizes the speaker and they have a time limit to make their point. A member should not speak twice until all others receive a chance to speak.]
7. THE CHAIR PUTS THE MOTION TO A VOTE: "It has been moved and seconded that..." "All those in favor of the motion please say Aye; all those opposed, please say No."
8. THE CHAIR ANNOUNCES THE RESULT OF THE VOTE: "The motion has carried and you have just voted to..." or "The motion has lost."

## **Some Definitions and Terms Used**

Adjourn: To dissolve the meeting until the next regular or special meeting.

Agenda: The planned or approved order of business.

Amend: To modify or change a motion.

Announcing the Vote: Action taken by the Chairperson after a vote is concluded. Must state if the motion is carried or if it is lost.

Carried: The same as the terms “passed” or “adopted” when referring to action taken on a motion.

Chair: Any person presiding over an assembly. To chair a meeting means to preside over it.

General Consent: Obtaining unanimous consent from the assembly on any matter without requiring a motion and vote

Note: If there is even ONE objection, the matter must be put to a vote and a majority decide.

Germane: A matter is considered germane if it relates to the subject that is under consideration.

Main Motion: One that introduces a subject to the assembly.

Majority: More than half the votes cast.

Move: To propose a motion. NOTE: The proposer says, “I move...;” not “I make a motion...”

Postpone to a Definite Time: a motion used to provide time for further consideration and for obtaining more information before action is taken.

Previous Question: To cut off discussion and bring the immediate vote upon the pending question. Not debatable. Not amendable. Requires a two-thirds vote to carry.

Out of Order: A motion or discussion that is not allowed within the approved agenda or without authority.

Parliamentary Authority: The rules used within a meeting or assembly.

Question: The motion current under debate is the question.

Quorum: Number of persons required to be present at a business meeting before business can be legally conducted.

Recognize: The chair allows a person to speak by recognizing them. The person speaking should state their name and position on an issue.

Reconsider: To bring to the assembly a motion which has already been disposed of. Must be made the same day of the meeting or the meeting immediately following, by the one who voted with the prevailing side.

Rescind: To annul a motion when the time limit for reconsideration is past. To annul action.

Second: To agree that a motion should be considered. Without a second, a motion dies. This action simply allows a motion to be considered.

Table: To set aside for the time being the motion under discussion, with the privilege of taking it up again at some future time. [NOTE: It requires a motion to “Take from the table” before it can be considered again after being tabled.]

Unanimous: Means every voting member present at a meeting favored or opposed the motion.

Vote: A vote is announced by the Chair. Only legal members of an organization are allowed to cast a vote. There are some votes that only allow trustees or board of directors to vote while others allow all members to vote.

Withdraw: To remove a motion that has been made, seconded, and stated by the Chair, without prejudice and without a vote.