

# ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

## WORKBOOK

*Host Fair, Democratic & Productive Board Meetings*



# WHY DO WE NEED MEETING RULES?

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In order to conduct the meeting in an

- Organized
- Fair
- Non-threatening manner

And, the bigger the meeting - the more formal the Chair has to be.

So generally,

- Annual and Extraordinary Meetings of Members are very formal and follow Robert's Rules closely
- Board of Directors meetings are less formal, but still follow Robert's Rules on major or contentious issues
- Committee meetings are generally informal and follow the basics of Robert's Rules. For example, requiring that someone second motions.

## **Different "Rules" can be adopted and followed by the Society**

You can create your very own rules if the group agrees to be governed by them

You can use Robert's Rules of Order (newly revised edition) [Most popular]

You can use Bourinot's Rules of Order.

***BUT FIRST, AND ABOVE ALL - KNOW YOUR BYLAWS BECAUSE THEY OVERRIDE WHATEVER RULES YOU CHOSE TO USE***

# ROLE OF THE CHAIR DURING THE MEETING

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- Conduct the meeting by following the approved agenda
- Preserve order according to the rules that have been adopted
- Decide on points of order and procedural issues, according to the rules
- Decide who will speak
- Suggest when there has been sufficient debate of motion
- Put motions to the vote and declare the result
- Take part in the meeting (or not)
- Vote at the meeting (or not)



# “ROBERT’S RULES” EXPLAINED

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## **Adjourn the meeting**

The motion to adjourn takes precedence over all others, except the motion “to fix the time to which to adjourn,” to which it yields. It is not debatable, nor can it be amended or have any other subsidiary motion applied to it; nor can a vote on it be reconsidered. It may be withdrawn.

Note, in many cases with a Board meeting or a committee meeting, the Chair might simply say something such as “We have come to the end of our meeting agenda, and there being no other business, and unless I hear an objection, I hereby adjourn the meeting” in which case the meeting would end.

## **Recess the meeting**

A motion to recess means a brief interruption of the meeting’s business, usually so that an ancillary matter can be addressed, or simply to provide a needed break. Unless stated in the motion, the period of recess is decided by the Chair. If necessary, a recess can extend the meeting from one day to another. The motion cannot interrupt a speaker, and a second is required. It is debatable. It can be amended, and a majority vote is required.

## **Complain about noise etc.**

The person would say “Point of privilege ....” It could pertain to noise, personal discomfort, etc. The person may interrupt only if necessary!

# “ROBERT’S RULES” EXPLAINED

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## **Suspend consideration of something**

Occurs in a situation where the Mover believes more information is needed in order to make an informed decision. The Mover would say something like “I move that we suspend consideration of this matter”. No date needs to be mentioned for bringing the matter back to the group. (See Postpone Consideration below.)

## **End debate**

Forces an immediate, non-debatable, vote requiring a two-thirds majority to pass on terminating the current debate. If it passes then a vote on the motion under discussion is held without further debate. A member must call the question immediately after being recognized by the speaker, before saying anything else.

## **Postpone consideration of something**

This motion may arise from a need for further information, a matter of convenience, or for any other reason that will enable the meeting to deal with the issue more effectively at a later time. Unless otherwise specifically provided in the motion itself, a postponed motion can be renewed at a later time.

The motion cannot interrupt a speaker, requires a seconder; is debatable; is amendable, particularly as to postponement timing; a majority vote is required.

# “ROBERT’S RULES” EXPLAINED

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## **Have something studied further (Motion to Refer)**

A motion to refer is typically used to submit an issue to a committee, usually for study leading to a subsequent recommendation.

Because it ordinarily disposes the motion for purposes of the current meeting, a motion to refer is subject to the same rules that apply to the main motion.

It cannot interrupt the speaker; a seconder is required; it is debatable and amendable; and a majority vote is required.

## **Amend a motion**

A motion to amend proposes a change in the wording of a motion currently under consideration. When a motion to amend is pending and an amendment to the amendment is proposed, the chair should focus discussion on the latest amendment, resolve that question, then proceed to the first amendment before continuing discussion on the main motion. Votes on amendments are thus, in reverse order of sequence in which they are proposed.

A motion to amend cannot interrupt a speaker, requires a second; is debatable; and a majority vote is required. It should also be noted that the governing law often restricts amendments to proposals that are set forth in the notice of the meeting such that they cannot enlarge the original purpose of the proposal.

# “ROBERT’S RULES” EXPLAINED

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## **Introduce business (The primary motion)**

The basis for discussion is a motion, put forward by a Mover and a Secunder, who may speak first and second on the motion, respectively. While the motion is 'on the floor', discussion must be on the motion only. Each motion must be considered and discussion completed, with a decision arrived at by vote, before the next motion can be considered.

## **Object to procedure or to a personal affront**

Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised immediately after the error is made. The person would say something such as “Point of order Madam Chair, I object to the Director’s comment about my ...” The Chair would be the arbitrator in this situation, perhaps ask for an apology or withdrawal of the comment.

## **Request information**

Generally applies to information desired from the speaker. The requester would say “Point of Information, I should like to ask the (speaker) a question.”

## **Object to considering some improper matter**

Generally applies to information desired from the speaker. The requester would say “I object to the Board considering this question because it ... (is not part of our mandate, for example). A two-thirds majority is required to stop discussion of the matter.

# “ROBERT’S RULES” EXPLAINED

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## **Take up a matter previously tabled**

This occurs when a director wants the Board to recommence discussion of a matter that was previously tabled by the Board. There is no debate on the motion, but a seconder is required and a simple majority vote carries the motion.

## **Vote on ruling by the chair**

If a director at a Board meeting, or a member at a members meeting believes the Chair has made an improper ruling, they can challenge or appeal the decision of the Chair. The motion must have a seconder, and both the Mover and the Chair would outline the reasons for their viewpoints. A simple majority vote carries the motion.

## **Conclusion**

Always remember, that meeting rules are crafted to facilitate discussion and decision- making – not to stifle debate. When faced with a situation at a meeting, ask yourself, “What is the fairest way to handle this situation?” “Robert’s Rules” will serve as an excellent guide in answering that question.

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## REACH OUT

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