

Robert's Rules of Order (The VERY abbreviated version.)

1. What:

- The proper parliamentary process by which governing bodies run meetings.

2. Why:

- (1) To ensure fairness and equity.
- (2) So that the minutes can accurately reflect the issues, actions and decisions made.
- (3) To ensure that future leaders of the organization have accurate documentation on the activities of the previous committee.
- (4) To ensure that by laws and other legal codes are adhered to.
- (5) So that decisions and actions taken can be justified or defended if needed.
- (6) To streamline the meeting, maintain focus and order, and ensure items not germane to the issues at hand are kept in check, and out of the record.

3. Roles:

(1) Chair:

- To help facilitate the meeting.
- To keep order.
- Make rulings on points of order, points of information, or points of procedure.
- The chair generally remains neutral, but can vacate the chair if the chair wishes to weigh in on a particular side of an issue.
- The chair can not make a motion, but may prompt for one from the members if it is evident a motion is needed.
- To clarify and restate pending motions for which a vote is in order.
- Can vote on an issue if that vote would impact the outcome.

(2) Vice Chair:

- To help facilitate the meeting.
- To help keep order.
- Takes the chair if the presiding chair wishes to vacate on an issue or if the presiding chair is absent.

- Can make motions and has full voting rights.

(3) Secretary:

- To accurately record the facts of the meeting for future use.
- To note all motions and their results. The minutes should not contain discussions of motions.
- To present and post minutes of the meeting and keep past minutes filed for future reference.
- Is next in line to fill the chair in the absence of the presiding chair or vice chair.

(4) Committee Members:

- To own the meeting.
- To make, discuss, amend and vote on motions germane to the agenda.
- To ensure the actions taken and motions passed represent the needs and requests of the membership at large.
- To uphold the by laws.

4. Robert's Rules of Order provide a foundation for the entire process of a meeting, from preparation to conclusion.

5. Agenda:

- Everyone can participate in the development of the agenda. Suggest topics or issues that you feel need to be covered.

- When ever possible, the agenda should be sent out prior to the meeting.

- Agenda should be organized as:

- (1) Call to order
- (2) Read and approve minutes
- (3) Reports of officers and standing committees
- (4) Reports of special committees
- (5) Special orders
- (6) Unfinished business
- (7) New business
- (8) Adjourn

6. Reports:

- Reports should be prepared ahead and copies brought. Or if possible, distributed to members prior to the meeting especially if they are of great length, or constitute a motion that will require a vote.
- Reports should be as clear and succinct as possible. Committee reports should not be a rehash of the committee meeting, but should contain dot points of what was done. Recommendations from standing or special committees should be made in the form of a motion. These motions do not require a second.

7. Discussion Items:

- During a discussion (or debate) a member may call for any of the following.

All of these permit interruption of the speaker.

- (1) Point of order. Is a request that the rules be followed. It may be in regard to parliamentary procedure, by laws, codes or decorum and is ruled by the chair.
- (2) Point of information. Allows a member to ask a question about the business at hand and is usually a point of clarification. This may be responded by the chair or referred to a member who can make a clarification.
- (3) Call for the orders of the day. Is a request to return to the matter at hand. Usually asked for when the discussion has strayed from the agenda or from the motion on the floor. Anyone can call for the orders of the day; it does not have to be the chair.

8. For a discussion to be effective there are some rules of decorum that should be followed.

- (1) Speak when called on.
- (2) Direct comments to the chair.
- (3) Don't be disruptive.
- (4) Make corrections if you know something is inaccurate. Of course do it politely.
- (5) Allow the chair to interrupt you. However, do not interrupt others unless calling for one of the items listed above.

9. Discussion Items that require a vote:

- Items that bring up a question of "what shall we do?" require a motion and a vote. These items need to follow a process.

- (1) Presentation of item
- (2) Motion made and seconded
- (3) Discussion
- (4) Restatement of the motion
- (5) Vote
- (6) Move on to next item

- While a motion is on the floor may be amended. However, the amendment must be germane to the main motion presented.

- During a discussion (or debate) members may also want to make one of the following motions. (These motions do not allow interruption of the speaker.)

- (1) Lay on the table definitely. This puts the motion on the floor aside for the moment and sets a definite time to bring it back to the floor.
- (2) Lay on the table indefinitely. This kills the motion.
- (3) Refer to committee. This puts the motion aside and asks that a committee do some research and come back with a proposal.

- Voting can be done in any number of ways. For our purposes, we will use one of 2 methods.

- (1) "If there are no objections". This will be used for approval of minutes or other topics where there seems to be no one opposed to the motion made.
- (2) "Those in favour - Aye. Those opposed - No". This will be used when a majority vote is needed, and there may be opposition to the motion.

- The chair may vote if the vote will affect the outcome, or if the chair has relinquished the chair.