

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

BASIC PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE IS USED BY THE BOARD.

THE SAMPLE AGENDA IS:

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Reading and Approval of Minutes
- Reports of Officers (President, & Vice Presidents), Board Chair and Standing Committees
- Reports of Special Committees
- New Business
- Announcements/ Program
- Adjourn

ROBERT'S RULE OF ORDER -

Parliamentary procedure is to facilitate the transaction of business and to promote cooperation and harmony.

- All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations. The majority has the right to decide.
- A quorum must be present for the meeting.
- Full and free discussion of every motion considered is a basic right.
- Only one question at a time can be considered at any given time.
- Members have the right to know at all times what the immediately pending question is, and to have it restated before a vote is taken.
- No member can speak until recognized by the chair.
- No one can speak a second time on the same question as long as another wants to speak a first time.
- The chair should be strictly impartial.

ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Object to procedure or personal affront	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"I call for a division of the house"	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	None unless someone objects
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to..."	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).

PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MAIN MOTION

NOTE: Nothing goes to discussion without a motion being on the floor.

Obtaining and assigning the floor

A member raises hand when no one else has the floor

- The chair recognizes the member by name

How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

- The member makes the motion: *I move that (or "to") ...* and resumes his seat.
- Another member seconds the motion: *I second the motion* or *I second it* or *second*.
- The chair states the motion: *It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the question?*

Consideration of the Motion

1. Members can debate the motion.
2. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor.
3. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly
4. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion.
5. Debate can be closed only by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate.

The chair puts the motion to a vote

1. The chair asks: *Are you ready for the question?* If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote.
2. The chair says: *The question is on the adoption of the motion that ... As many as are in favor, say 'Aye'.* (Pause for response.) *Those opposed, say 'Nay'.* (Pause for response.) *Those abstained please say 'Aye'.*

The chair announces the result of the vote.

1. *The ayes have it, the motion carries, and ...* (indicating the effect of the vote) or
2. *The nays have it and the motion fails*

WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS

1. Listen to the other side
2. Focus on issues, not personalities
3. Avoid questioning motives
4. Be polite

HOW TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN MEETINGS

MAIN MOTION

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.

- After recognition, make a main motion.
- Member: "Madame Chairman, I move that _____."

AMENDING A MOTION

You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by adding the following words _____."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words _____."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words, _____, and adding in their place the following words _____."

REFER TO A COMMITTEE

You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the question be referred to a committee made up of members Smith, Jones and Brown."

POSTPONE DEFINITELY

You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question until _____."

PREVIOUS QUESTION

You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move the previous question."

LIMIT DEBATE

You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker."

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

You want to kill a motion that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madam Moderator, I move to postpone the question indefinitely."

POSTPONE INDEFINITELY

You are against a motion just proposed and want to learn who is for and who is against the motion.

- After recognition, "Madame President, I move to postpone the motion indefinitely."

RECESS

You want to take a break for a while.

- After recognition, "Madame Moderator, I move to recess for ten minutes."

ADJOURNMENT

You want the meeting to end.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to adjourn."

PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW A MOTION

You have made a motion and after discussion, are sorry you made it.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I ask permission to withdraw my motion."

CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY

At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda was adopted. The chairman is not following the order of the approved agenda.

- Without recognition, "Call for orders of the day."

SUSPENDING THE RULES

The agenda has been approved and as the meeting progressed, it became obvious that an item you are interested in will not come up before adjournment.

- After recognition, "Madam Chairman, I move to suspend the rules and move item 5 to position 2."

POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing.

- Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."
- Chairman: "State your point."
- Member: "There is too much noise, I can't hear."

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

You are going to propose a question that is likely to be controversial and you feel that some of the members will try to kill it by various maneuvers. Also you want to keep out visitors and the press.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that we go into a committee of the whole."

POINT OF ORDER

It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules.

- Without recognition, "I rise to a point of order," or "Point of order."

POINT OF INFORMATION

You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

- Without recognition, "Point of information."

POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

You are confused about some of the parliamentary rules.

- Without recognition, "Point of parliamentary inquiry."

APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR

Without recognition, "I appeal from the decision of the chair."

Rule Classification and Requirements

Class of Rule	Requirements to Adopt	Requirements to Suspend
Charter	Adopted by majority vote or as proved by law or governing authority	Cannot be suspended
Bylaws	Adopted by membership	Cannot be suspended
Special Rules of Order	Previous notice & 2/3 vote, or a majority of entire membership	2/3 Vote
Standing Rules	Majority vote	Can be suspended for session by majority vote during a meeting
Modified Roberts Rules of Order	Adopted in bylaws	2/3 vote

Q&A

(3-10 answers below are from Cagle's Parliamentary Procedure - John A Cagle, Professor, California State University)

1. Hi. I'm a consultant and I've got a non-profit board of directors which is hung up on a particular decision. I am confused about which rules are dictated by the By-Laws of the agency and which by Robert's Rules of Order.

ANSWER:

The By-Laws of the agency would take precedence over Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. State and federal laws prevail over the bylaws.

2. The By-Laws state that normally, a vote carries with a majority of those present provided that there is a quorum. However, for this particular vote -- one of the most important that the Board has to make -- a vote can only carry with a majority of the full board -- not the majority of the quorum.

ANSWER:

By-laws often contain such provisions.

3. The question is . . . can those board members who are absent submit their vote in advance in writing? The By-Laws do not mention this. Does RRR address this?

ANSWER:

Simple answer is no. Proxy voting is prohibited under Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (p. 421) unless the bylaws specifically provide for it (or some higher law requires it--which generally is not the case, but could be for a state agency or board.)

4. The board could pass a motion to have a mail ballot, which would enable those absent to cast a vote on an important question.

ANSWER:

This method is not a form of proxy voting, but a ballot procedure often used.

5. The chair of the board is under the impression that the chairperson votes only in the case of a tie. The By-Laws do not address this. Your web page suggests that this is not true. Where and how is this specified?

ANSWER:

See Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, p. 476 ff., for special rules governing boards. "The chair can speak in discussion without rising or leaving the chair; and, subject to rule or custom within the particular board . . . he can usually make motions and usually votes on all questions." The rules for boards and committees concerning the chair are different from the rules for plenary bodies or assemblies. However, because they are different doesn't mean people understand that they are different and know the "proper" rules. There is a widespread and popular belief (albeit incorrect) that no chair ever votes, whereas in fact a chair has a right to vote and to even debate in a board.

Note the wise advice from the authorities who wrote the Newly Revised version of Robert's, "subject to rule or custom within the particular board." If the chair of a board has never voted and people believe he/she ought not to vote, then it is probably better to follow custom. My advice on this is generally for the chair to discuss this matter with the board in advance and at the beginning of his/her chairship so that everyone will have the same understanding of the "rules" in an "issue-free" environment. When controversy has stirred emotions, people get mad when the chair says, "Well, take this and like it."

6. Why does the Chair of the House of Representatives not vote unless there is a tie?

ANSWER:

Because the House of Representatives does not follow Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised; it has its own rules. Beyond that, there is a general parliamentary practice using that as an informal rule: Although the chair can vote (actually, even in an assembly), it "preserves the impartiality of the chair" if the chair only votes which his/her vote would actually affect the outcome--that is, when the vote would have the effect of passing a motion or (when voting to create a tie) to defeat a motion. Each time the chair votes, it is sort of saying "Look which side I'm on." In any event, that practice is the custom in many groups, and occasionally built into law as part of the bylaws.

7. My goal is to have this person vote because, with other members absent, it will be very difficult to get a majority of the Board to vote together on anything and we need all the votes we can get. Suggestions?

ANSWER:

Your rationale seems sensible to me. The clarification about the chair's voting prerogatives should be made as a general clarification and basis for everyone understanding what the chair's role is on the board. It is inadvisable to in any way tie this to a political rationale of getting enough votes on any specific issue.

8. Are there are a few principles of parliamentary law and procedures that can be helpful?

ANSWER:

Yes, Only the members of the Board of Directors have a "right" to speak. Generally you would be on secure ground to tell someone they are welcome as a guest to observe the meeting, but that they will be told to leave if they improperly disrupt the meeting. That is a clear principle, unless your organization says otherwise in its bylaws, or state codes give members a right to speak at their boards.

After warning someone they are indecorous and disrupting the meeting and that they will be asked to leave upon further behavior, a chair can order someone to leave the meeting, even a member of the Board of Directors itself. Depending somewhat on the laws of a state and/or city ordinances, the police or sheriff's office can be called to report disorderly conduct, etc. Some organizations have a sergeant-at-arms or a security guard. The courts have upheld an organizations right to do so, even in the case where the guard has hurt someone in evicting them from the meeting. (The standards of not using excessive force are serious and germane.) I would advise evicting someone only as a last resort and only when the disruption is serious.

Another principle is that the agenda is important and defines what and when things may be talked about. The person (or people) who call the meeting and issue the agenda have a right to enforce it. For example, if a group of people in a neighborhood invite everyone in the neighborhood to help plan an effort to put speed bumps on their street, the meeting is "for" speed bumps and to develop a plan.

No one in the neighborhood can insist on even debating the merits of the need for the plan, because the invitation made it clear that the meeting was to develop a plan to get the city to put in the speed bumps. In such meetings, people disrupting the purpose of the meeting may be evicted.

If you have a real problem, there is no simple and obvious solution. You must use your personality, use "supportive communication style," and seek allies to try to influence the people you've been concerned about. For example, you could ask someone who is popular in the organization and also a persuasive speaker to raise a point of order about the disruptions; sometimes a forceful speech by another member can quiet people down. (It doesn't always work out that way, however.)

A final suggestion:

One way to deal with such disruption is not to eliminate it but to re-direct it. For example, the Board could put an item on the agenda to hear complaints and concerns from members not on the Board. With that, you may be able to ask people to wait until that portion of the meeting.

Works cited - "Robert's Rule of Order"

Robert Rules of order - https://youtu.be/eYwKX_P8YkU

Mastering the 3 Most Important Motions

These are the motions that are used the most and, unfortunately are also misused the most. They are:

- The Main Motion
- Amendments
- Amend the Amendment

Having everyone on your board master these three motions is essential to learning Robert's Rules of Order and getting your board working as a team!

For more information visit the website listed below and register for FREE access to over 30 videos:

<https://www.robertsrulesmadesimple.com/home-1a#section--72657>