

SECTION 3

EFFECTIVE MEETING MANAGEMENT



Effective Meeting Management

Rules of Procedure

A meeting is a single official gathering of the members of an organization in one room, with a quorum present to transact business. All meetings, regardless of size or purpose have some things in common:

- A quorum must be present
- Someone is in charge of conducting the meeting
- Someone is responsible for taking the minutes
- Business is conducted according to specific rules that state who can attend, who can participate in the discussion of business, and who can vote.
- All members are notified of the meeting, the date, time, location, and the purpose.

Parliamentary Procedure is a set of rules for conduct at meetings that allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion. Because Parliamentary Procedure is a time-tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings, it can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization. Today, Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised, is the basic handbook of operation for most clubs, organizations and other groups, so it is important that everyone involved in these endeavours know these basic rules. Organizations using parliamentary procedure usually follow a fixed order of business. Below is a typical example:

1. Call to order.
2. Roll call of members present.
3. Reading of minutes of last meeting.
4. Officer's reports.
5. Committee reports.
6. Special orders – important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.
7. Unfinished business.
8. New business.
9. Announcements.
10. Adjournment.

Auxiliaries may hold two types of formal meetings, ***Regular*** and ***Annual***.

Regular Meetings: These are periodical meetings, which can be held weekly, monthly, quarterly, or at other similar intervals. The bylaws should state the day of the meeting (e.g. first Monday of the month).

Typical Agenda for a Regular Meeting

Organization Name
Date, Time, Location

Welcome and Call to Order

Auxiliary Prayer

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Reports: Executives (list as necessary)

Committees (list as necessary)

Unfinished Business

List as necessary

New Business

List as necessary

Adjournment

Annual Meetings: This meeting is the one in which members receive the annual reports of officers, boards, and committees. Officers can be elected, and other once-a-year business is conducted.

Typical Agenda for an Annual Meeting

Name of Organization
Date, Time, Location, and Purpose (*i.e.: Annual General Meeting*)

Call to Order

Auxiliary Prayer

Moment of Silence

Welcome & Introductions

Recognition (*former board members*)

Explanation of Meeting Procedures

Announcement of Quorum

Adoption of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Board Reports (list as necessary)
Resolutions (*if any*)
Election of Officers
Unfinished Business (list as necessary)
New Business (list as necessary)
Announcements
Adjournment

Minutes of Meetings

What to Include in Minutes

Robert's Rules of Order, a manual for running non-profit organizations, explains that minutes are a record of what was **done** at the meeting, not what was said. At a minimum, minutes should include:

1. Name and kind of meeting. Is it a regular board meeting, an annual meeting, a meeting of a particular committee or a special meeting? If it is a special meeting, attach a copy of the meeting notice given to members.
2. Date, place, and time that the meeting began and ended.
3. Names of the chair and secretary or their substitutes.
4. Names of voting members attending and whether a quorum was present. You may circulate a sign-in sheet and attach it to the minutes.
5. Names of guests and their subject matter.
6. Whether minutes from the previous meeting were approved or corrected.
7. Motions made. You must record:
 - the exact wording of the motion
 - who made the motion
 - the result of the vote
8. Reports. Record the name of the report, the name of the member presenting it, and any action taken on the report. If the report was in writing, attach it, or tell where it may be found. An oral report may be summarized briefly.
9. Other actions, assignments and deadlines, resolutions, and recommendations can be briefly recorded.
10. Secretary's signature once the minutes have been approved.

Summarizing Discussions

Some boards may opt to go beyond the basics and include additional items. For example, a summary of a discussion can give a more complete picture of the meeting. This can be helpful to members who could not attend the meeting and to those looking back at the historical record of the organization. Summaries, if included in the minutes, should be balanced and include major opposing viewpoints, even if they are not adopted.

What to Leave Out

The minutes are a factual record of business. Do not include:

- * Opinions or judgments: Leave out statements like "a well-done report" or "a heated discussion."
- * Criticism or accolades: Commentary about members, good or bad, should not be included unless it takes the form of an official motion. Thanks, or expressions of appreciation should only be included if there was a clear consensus of meeting participants. (For example, by applause.)
- * Discussion: If the organization has opted to include discussion summaries, do not personalize it by recording the views of individuals. Avoid extended rehashing of reports: just hit the highlights or key facts, particularly if a written report is attached.

Approving the Minutes

Minutes do not become official until they are read and approved by formal vote. They should be read by the Secretary at the next regular meeting. The Chair then asks for corrections and additions, and calls for a vote.

Members may agree to skip reading the minutes aloud if members have had enough advance time to read them. Send a draft of the minutes to members before the meeting. This is a good way to save time, while also helping members prepare for the meeting.

Confidential Items

Occasionally a meeting calls for confidentiality, such as when sensitive personnel matters are being handled. In that case, the board may vote to go into executive session, restricting participation to members and invited guests only. The minutes of an executive session are read and approved only by those members attending the executive session. If they wish, the participants may opt to make the minutes available to all members, but the discussion must remain confidential. Executive session minutes are kept separate from regular minutes.

Moving Motions

The method used by members to express themselves is in the form of moving a motion, i.e. a proposal based on which the entire membership will take action or a stand on an issue. Individual members can:

- Call to order.
- Second motions.
- Debate motions.
- Vote on motions.

There are four basic types of motions:

1. **Main Motions:** The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the membership for their consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor. Main motions would yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.
2. **Subsidiary Motions:** Their purpose is to change or affect how a main motion is handled, and such a motion would be voted on before a main motion.
3. **Privileged Motions:** Their purpose is to bring up items that are urgent about special or important matters unrelated to pending business.
4. **Incidental Motions:** Their purpose is to provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other motion.

How to Present Motions

1. Obtain the floor
 - a. Wait until the last speaker has finished.
 - b. Rise and address the Chair by saying, "Mr./Madam Chair, or Mr./Madam President."
 - c. Wait until the Chair recognizes you.
2. Make Your Motion
 - a. Speak in a clear and concise manner.
 - b. Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we ..." rather than, "I move that we do not ...".
 - c. Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.
3. Wait for someone to Second Your Motion
4. Another member will second your motion or the Chair will call for a second.
5. If there is no second to your motion it is lost.
6. The Chair States Your Motion
 - a. The Chair will say, "it has been moved and seconded that we ..." Thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
 - b. The membership then either debates your motion or may move directly to a vote.
 - c. Once your motion is presented to the membership by the chairman it becomes "assembly property" and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.

7. Expanding on Your Motion
 - a. The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it.
 - b. The mover is always allowed to speak first.
 - c. All comments and debate must be directed to the Chair.
 - d. Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.
 - e. The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the Chair.
8. Putting the Question to the Membership
 - a. The Chair asks, "Are you ready to vote on the question?"
 - b. If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
 - c. On a motion to move the previous question may be adapted.

Voting on a Motion

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the by-laws of policy of your organization. There are five methods used to vote by most organizations, they are:

1. By Voice -- The Chair asks those in favor to say, "aye", those opposed to say "nay". Any member may move for an exact count.
2. By Roll Call -- Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person's vote is required.
3. By General Consent -- When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chairman says, "if there is no objection ..." The membership shows agreement by their silence, however if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.
4. By Division -- This is a slight variation of a voice vote. It does not require a count unless the Chair so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.
5. By Ballot -- Members write their vote on a slip of paper; this method is used when secrecy is desired.

Two other motions commonly used in voting:

1. Motion to Table -- This motion is often used in the attempt to "kill" a motion. The option is always present, however, to "take from the table", for reconsideration by the membership.
2. Motion to Postpone Indefinitely -- This is often used as a means of parliamentary strategy and allows opponents of motion to test their strength without an actual vote being taken. Also, debate is once again open on the main motion.

Parliamentary Procedure is the best way to get things done at your meetings. But, it will only work if you use it properly.

1. Allow motions that are in order.
2. Have members obtain the floor properly.

Speak clearly and concisely. Obey the rules of debate. Most importantly, *BE COURTEOUS.*

Here is a summary of some potential motions, how to make them, and the relevant rules for each.

To Do This	You Say This	May you interrupt the speaker?	Do you need a second?	Is it debatable?	Can it be amended?	Vote Required	Can it be reconsidered?
Introduce Business	“I move that . . .”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Call an intermission	“I move that we recess for....”	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Complain about heat, noise etc.	“I rise to a question of privilege”	No	No	No	No	No vote	No (usually)
Suspend further consideration of an issue	“I move to table the motion”	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
End debate and amendments	“I move the previous question”	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No ^①
Postpone discussion for a certain time	“I move to postpone the discussion until.....”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Give closer study of something	“I move to refer the matter to committee”	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes ^②
Amend a motion	“I move to amend the motion by	No	Yes	Yes ^③	Yes	Majority	Yes
Adjourn meeting	“I move that we adjourn”	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No

The motions listed above are in order of Precedence . . . There is no particular order for the following types of motion.

Protest breach of rules or conduct	“I rise to a point of order”	Yes	No	No	No	No vote ^④	No
Vote on a ruling of the chair	“I appeal the chair’s decision”	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority ^⑤	Yes
Suspend rules temporarily	“I move to suspend the rules so that...”	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Avoid considering an improper matter	“I object to the consideration of this motion”	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 ^⑥	- ^⑦
Request information	“Point of information”	Yes	No	No	No	No vote	No
Take up a matter previously tabled	“I move to take from the table. . .”	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Reconsider a hasty action	“I move to reconsider the vote on.”	Yes	Yes	-- ^⑧	No	Majority	No

Notes

1 Unless vote on question is not yet taken.

2 Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.

3 Only if the motion to be amended is debatable.

4 Except in doubtful cases.

5 A majority vote in negative needed to reverse ruling of chair.

6 A 2/3 vote in negative needed to prevent consideration of main motion.

7 Only if the main question / motion was not, in fact considered.

Nominations and Elections

Once you have carried out the important task of identifying people with the skills, attributes and energy required to fulfil roles with excellence, and after what can be a politically charged prequel of nominating and campaigning, you may well find that the election process itself to be the easiest part of deciding who handles a particular job in the organization. Robert's Rules on elections are very straightforward.

An election is really nothing more than the handling of an assumed motion, with the question being on whom to elect to fill a position. Like any incidental main motion, an election can be decided by voice vote or by ballot.

The organizations bylaws should clearly state the process to be followed in nominating and electing officers and board members.

Nominations

There are several ways in which an organization can nominate candidates:

- A nominating committee
- From the floor
- By ballot
- By mail
- By petition

Most frequently, the nominations are presented by a committee, and the members have the opportunity to present additional nomination(s) from the floor.

Committee Nominations:

The bylaws should state the composition of this committee and how it is selected. The president should **not** be a member of this committee, nor help to select members.

Duties of a nominating committee:

The duty is to find the best candidate for each office, and bylaws should not hamper the committee to find just one candidate for each office, should that be the case. No one should be nominated without her/his consent.

If no candidate is found, the committee can leave that position open for nominations from the floor; or they can tell members that they do not have a candidate for a certain office, allowing members to volunteer.

Report of the nominating committee:

The report is usually given under “Nominations” at the meeting. The chair of the committee clearly states the nomination for each office, for example: *for president, Jane Doe, for vice president, James Brown*, etc. The chair then hands the nominations written on a sheet of paper to the president, and sits down.

Elections

Once the nominations have been announced, members must vote on the proposed candidates. If the bylaws do not state how the vote is to be taken, a member can make an incidental motion regarding how to take the vote.

Members can take the vote for election by:

- Voice
- Ballot
- Roll Call
- Cumulative voting

Electing by Ballot

Voting by ballot enables a member to vote for a candidate not formally nominated by writing in a name — a *write-in vote*. A write-in vote is a legal vote unless it's unintelligible or cast for an unidentifiable or ineligible person or for a fictitious character, in which case it's counted as an illegal vote.

Electing by voice vote

If your bylaws don't require you to conduct an election by ballot, and if candidates are unopposed or there's no major contest for an office, you can save time with a simple voice vote (or *viva voce*). After nominations are closed, the vote is taken on each nominee in the order in which they were nominated.

Because this form of voting favors one candidate over another based on the order of nomination, you should avoid using it except in mass meetings or when there's no serious contest for the office and a ballot is not required. If members don't understand exactly how it works, the ones whose preferred candidate doesn't get voted on are likely to think something is amiss.

Electing by roll call

If your assembly's members are accountable to a constituency, your rules may require you to conduct your elections by roll-call vote. You follow the same procedures for elections by ballot, as far as arriving at the point of the election is concerned, but instead of casting your vote by ballot, each member announces his vote when the secretary calls that person's name. The secretary repeats the vote after recording it, to ensure accuracy.

Determining who wins

Elections are decided by majority vote unless your bylaws provide differently. In a voice vote, the winner is easy to determine and the vote is over when someone wins the election. When it comes to ballot elections, your election isn't complete until a position is filled, and a position is never filled until a candidate receives the threshold number of votes required for election. In most cases, the threshold is a majority of the votes cast. If you have only two candidates and the vote is a tie, you repeat the balloting until one candidate receives a majority.

Balloting must continue until a candidate receives a majority. It's never proper to drop the candidates receiving the lowest vote totals from a ballot unless they withdraw voluntarily. That means run-offs are just plain out of order. The requirement for election by ballot is a majority, and a candidate has no obligation to withdraw just because he polls low numbers. Your members may wind up voting for Mr. Low as the compromise candidate.

Here are some key points regarding the manner of voting, and recording the votes, drawn from chapter 12 of “Roberts Rules of Order”.

Some Key Points about Elections

- A quorum must be present throughout the elections.
- When presenting the nominations or taking the vote for a list of offices, the president should follow the order of offices that appears in the bylaws.
- If a member is elected and not present, and has not previously said that if elected he or she would serve, then they must be called and asked if they will accept the office. If not, then the members can vote again during that meeting for another candidate.
- If it is discovered after an election that the person elected does not meet the eligibility requirements, and even if the person has begun to serve, the election is void. The organization must have another election.
- If counting ballots takes some time, it is best for the assembly to take a recess instead of adjourning the meeting.

There are a number of other points included in this chapter; we strongly recommend that all auxiliary executive read and be familiar with “Roberts Rules of Order”.