

# Robert's Rules of Order

---



# Agenda



1. Overview of Robert's Rules of Order
2. Ten Rules of Robert's Rules of Order Standard Version
3. The Practical American Version
4. Running a Meeting Effectively
5. Keeping Minutes



## History of Robert's Rules of Order

- British Parliamentary Procedures
  - Birthplace for Robert's Rules of Order
- Came to North America with the British
- 1801: Thomas Jefferson
  - Drafted *The Manual of Parliamentary Practice*
  - Uniform system of rules
  - Prevent needless haggling over government procedures
  - Evolved to assist government decision making
- 1876: General Henry Robert
  - Wrote a standard form of rules
  - "Based...upon the rules and practices of Congress"



General Henry Robert

= Robert's Rules of Order =

# Robert's Rules of Order



## Meetings that use Robert's Rules of Order...

- Run in the same manner
- No matter where the meeting is held



# Purpose of Robert's Rules of Order

Based on common sense and logic...

The rules protect:

- (a) the rights of the majority to decide
- (b) the rights of the minority to be heard
- (c) the rights of individual members
- (d) the rights of absentees

# Robert's Rules of Order Terms and Definitions

- **Point of Order** – A matter raised during consideration of a motion concerning the rules of Parliamentary Procedure
- **Point of Information** – Allows an opposing team member to offer a brief point during the current speech
- **Questions of Privilege** – Questions relating to the rights and privileges of the assembly, or to any of its members, take precedence of all other motions except the three preceding relating to adjournment and recess, to which they yield
- **Objection to the Consideration of a Question** – An objection may be made to the consideration of any original main motion, and to no others, provided it is made before there is any debate or before any subsidiary motion is stated.

---

# The Ten Basic Rules of the Standard Version

---



## The Ten Basic Rules

1. The Rights of the Organization Supersede the Rights of the Individual Members

2. All members are equal and their rights are equal

Those rights are...

- TO ATTEND MEETING
- TO MAKE MOTIONS AND SPEAK

In debate...

- TO NOMINATE
- TO VOTE
- TO HOLD OFFICE





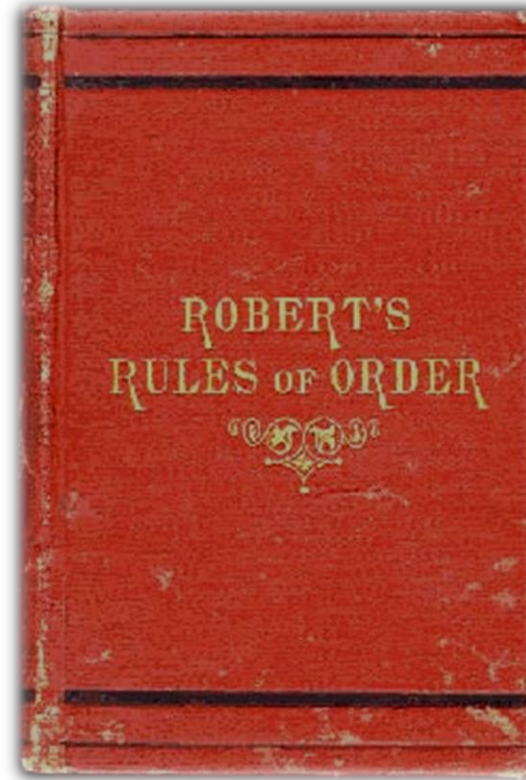
## The Ten Basic Rules

3. A quorum must be present to do business

For Chapter Business Meetings...

“Quorum”

- Either 10% or fifteen voting members
- Including a majority of the chapter officers





## The Ten Basic Rules

### 4. The majority rules

- “All questions at any legally convened Society meeting shall be decided by simple majority of the votes cast, unless stipulated otherwise in the Constitution.”

### 5. Silence means consent

- “Those members that do NOT vote AGREE to go along with the decision of the majority by their silence.”

### 6. Two-thirds vote rule

- “A 2/3rds vote is necessary whenever limiting or taking away the rights of members or changing a previous decision.”



## The Ten Basic Rules

### 7. One question at a time and one speaker at a time

- “Motions must be related to matters under consideration”
- “Once a member has been ‘recognized’ this individual has been granted ‘the floor’ and may not be interrupted by another member”

### 8. Motions must receive full debate

- “The meeting chair may not put a motion to vote as long as members wish to debate it”
- “The debate can only be cut short by a 2/3rds vote”



## The Ten Basic Rules

9. Once a decision made, an identical motion must not be brought forward at the same meeting
  - Such a motion shall be ruled out of order by the meeting chair
  
10. Personal remarks in a debate are *ALWAYS* out of order
  - Debate motions not motives
  
  - Debate must be directed to principles and not personalities



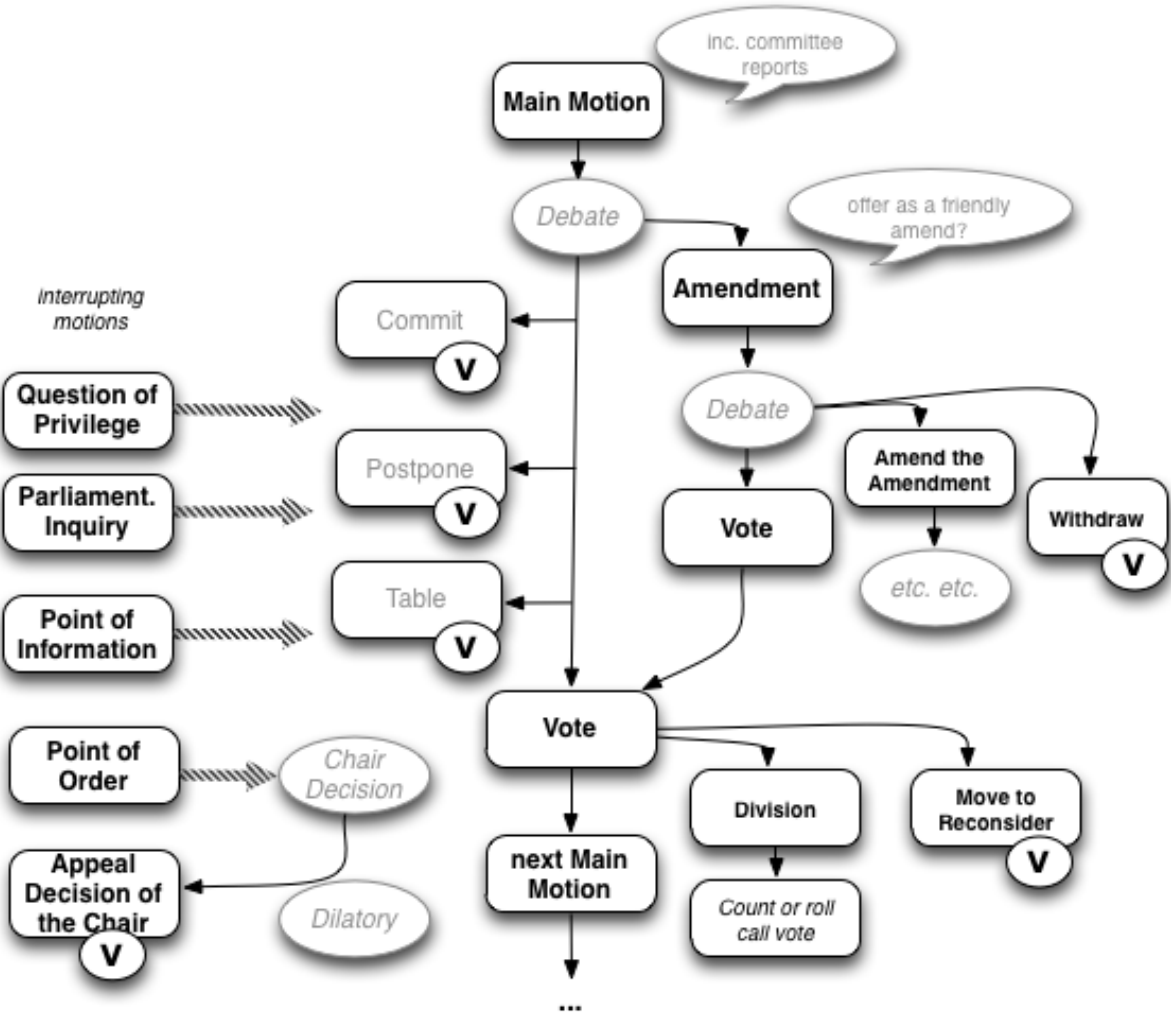
# Motions and Voting

Keep it simple

- Any voting member may make a motion
- Another voting member must “second” the motion
- Discussion may then take place
- Following discussion, the Meeting Chair must call for a vote
  - Those in favor
  - Those opposed
  - Those abstaining



# Robert's Rules of Order, Diagrammed



<http://www.adhocalley.com/roberts-rules-of-order-diagrammed/>

---

# The Practical American Version

---



## Modified Rules Used by Many Small Nonprofits

- Many small nonprofit Boards use a simplified version of Robert's Rules of Order when conducting a meeting.
- Almost all nonprofits will discuss a topic for a while before anyone actually makes a motion on it, as opposed to making the motion and then discussing it.





## Concepts Found Useful When Using Robert's Rules of Order

- “Point of Information” - If a motion is on the table one can ask for clarification on what is at stake and what a “yes” or a “no” vote means by simply saying “Point of Information” and then asking the question.
- “Call for the question” - If a debate is going on and on and on, one can “call for the question.” This forces the board to decide whether to continue debating. If two-thirds of the board votes that they are ready to vote (on the motion at hand), the voting takes place immediately.



## Concepts Found Useful When Using Robert's Rules of Order

- “Friendly amendments” – This allows someone in favor of the motion to suggest something that would improve the original motion, or make it more palatable to someone who is not currently in support. This is workable shorthand for amending a motion. If there have been any amendments (friendly or otherwise) to a motion, the board president should always reaffirm the final text of the motion being voted upon before calling for the vote.
- “Pro/Con Debate” – This allows for a structure for a question at hand to be debated by each side. The “pro/con debate” can be called for by the Chair or by majority vote and each side has the same amount of time to provide pros and cons for the question at hand.

---

# Running a Meeting Effectively

---

# Running a Meeting Effectively



## Meeting Chair Characteristics

- On time and stays on time
- Organized: has a meeting agenda sent out ahead of time
- Prepared: knows the rules and bylaws
- A teacher: keeps the group working together



---

# Keeping Minutes

---

# Keeping Minutes

## Minutes are the written record of the meeting

- Minutes are the permanent and legal record of the meeting
- They should be written as concisely as possible
- Secretary's duty



# Keeping Minutes

## What should be in the minutes?

- Date/time of meeting
- List of attendance
- Brief description of discussions
- Recording of all motions
  - Include name
  - Who made the motion
  - Who seconded
  - Results of the vote
- Time of adjournment





# Keeping Minutes

## Approval of Minutes

- At each meeting, review minutes from prior meeting
- Allow for corrections
- Reminder to members of previous decisions and discussions





# Robert's Rules of Order

Some useful Web sites:

[www.roberts-rules.com](http://www.roberts-rules.com)

[www.constitution.org](http://www.constitution.org)

[www.amta-il.org](http://www.amta-il.org)

[www.rpia.org](http://www.rpia.org)

[www.lcdems.com](http://www.lcdems.com)

