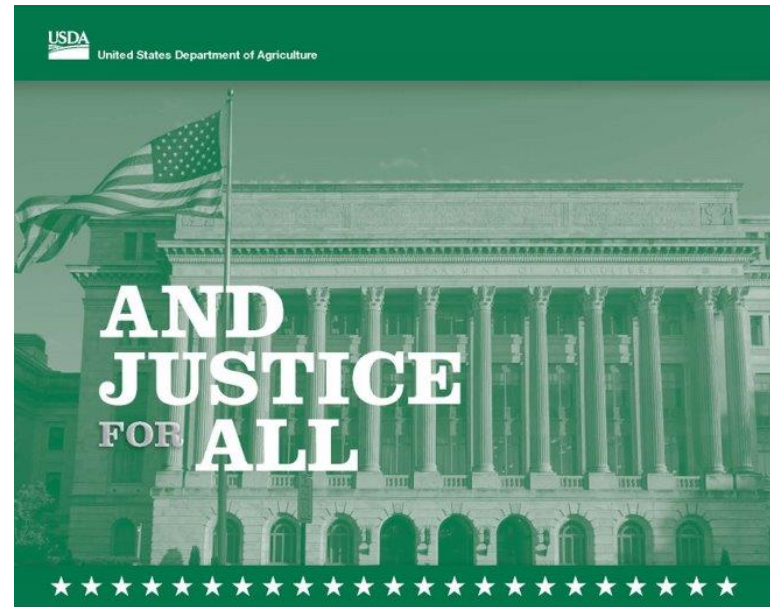


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mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442;

email:
program.intake@usda.gov.

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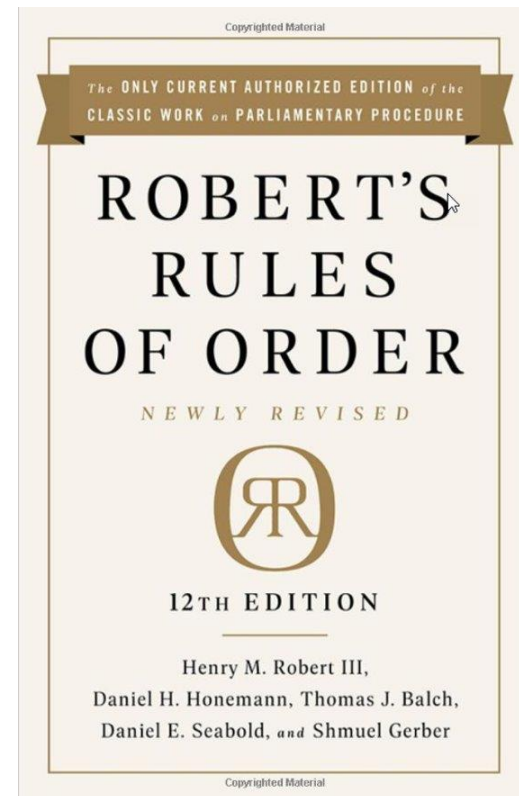
Effective Meetings with Parliamentary Procedure

MAC Spring Conference

April 25, 2023

Julie Pioch, PRP

piochj@msu.edu



Rules

Where there is no law, but every man does what is right in his own eyes, there is the least of real liberty

Henry M. Robert



Your role in public service:

When serving in an elected or appointed position, you **are** the government.

Know your job:

- Know the laws
- Follow them
- Do not practice
“government by bluff”



Who is responsible?



Presiding officer (chair, vice chair, committee chairs)

- Have working knowledge of the rules – no bluffing!
- Conduct the meeting according to the agenda
- Protect the rights of the members
- Set the tone of the meeting and serve as a good example
- Encourage appropriate input
- Mediate conflict
- Reach closure and move on
- Represent the board (or committee)
- Maintain impartiality and professional image
- Other duties as assigned by law, bylaws, board rules, custom



Board Members

- Attend meetings
- Have working knowledge of rules and governing documents
- Read meeting handouts and materials ahead of time
- Participate in deliberation
- A right to enforcement of the rules
- Represent the opinions of constituency

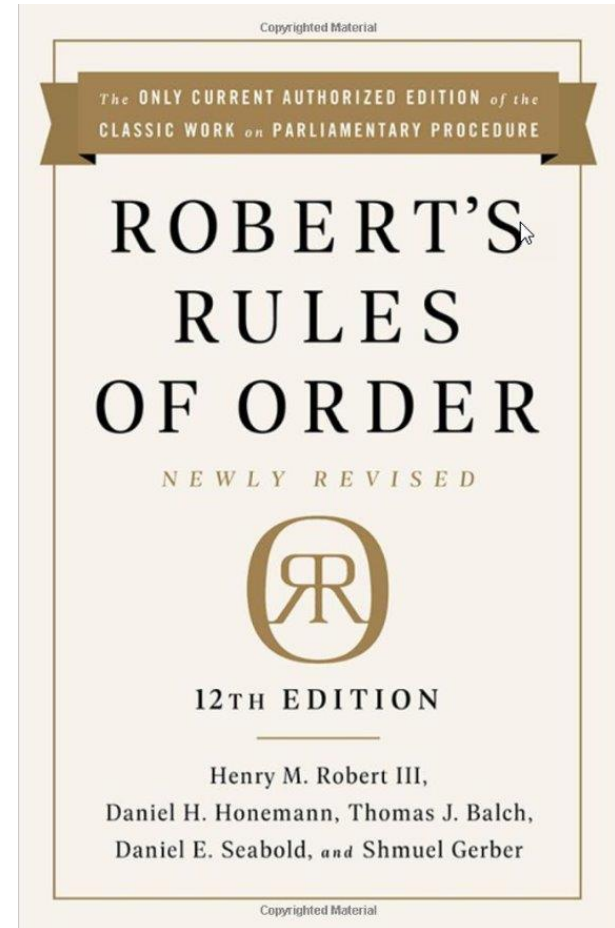


The role of the public

- Have a right to attend and speak at meetings
- Must obey your meeting rules
- Could use a friendly explanation of the rules up front
- Don't deliberate or vote
- Should be treated with respect



The most common
parliamentary authority



Rules Governing Deliberative Assemblies (Government)

- Federal & State Constitutions
- State Laws, Court Interpretations
- Bylaws
- Board Rules
- Parliamentary authority → Rules of procedure used to govern the meeting on questions not covered by any of the preceding rules.
- Custom

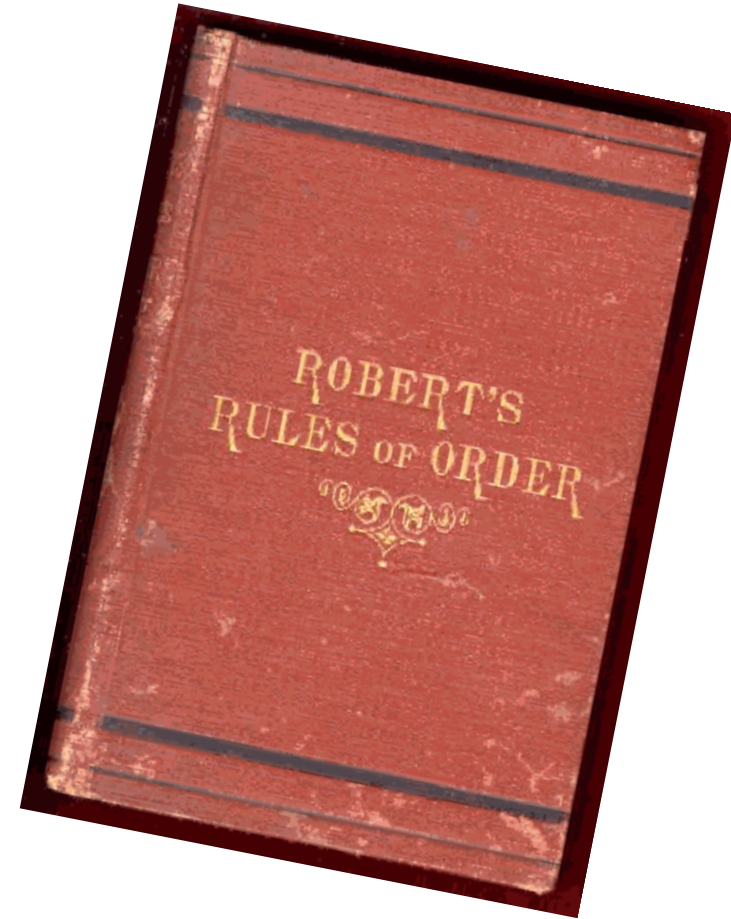


What is in your Board Rules?

- Review annually
 - Look at examples
 - Use a committee
- Things to include:
 - Order of business
 - Use of consent agenda
 - Committees and process
 - Specific rules that deviate from RONR:
 - Time limits for speaking (# and duration)
 - Informal discussion allowed without motion on the floor
 - Time limits on reconsidering a motion
 - Conflict of interest process
 - Public comment rules
 - What has been helpful to your board?



Consensus or Tyranny



Basic Parliamentary Principles

- The organization is paramount
- All members have equal rights
 - Protection of majority, minority, those not present and all of these together (special meetings)
- An established minimum number of members must be present in order to transact business
- Only one main proposal may be before the assembly at a time and only one member may have the floor at a time



Basic Parliamentary Principles

- Full debate should be allowed before the vote on a main motion, except when the members, by motion, impose limitations
- A question, once settled may not be presented again in the same form, in the same session, except by reconsideration



Basic Parliamentary Principles

- A majority vote decides a question except where basic rights of members are involved or the rules of the organization take precedence, then a larger vote is required
- What are the two most basic rights of a member of a deliberative assembly?
 - Right to debate
 - Right to vote



Basic Parliamentary Principles

- Silence gives consent
- A proposition or issue is the item under discussion, never the person who introduced it.



6 steps in handling a motion

1. A member is recognized by the chair and states a motion
2. A different member seconds the motion
3. The chair states the motion
4. Members discuss the motion
5. Chair “puts” the question to a vote
6. Chair announces result of the vote



Main Motion

–the business at hand

“I move to...”,
“I move that...”

Can you interrupt a speaker to make this motion? **No**

Does this motion need a second? **Yes**

Is this motion debatable? **Yes**

Is this motion amendable? **Yes**

What type of vote **M** does it need to pass?

May it be reconsidered? **Yes**

Main Motion



Main Motion - the business at hand

Made orally, or in writing depending on the length, complexity or importance

The maker always gets first right to speak to the motion so that they can explain what they are proposing

There should be no discussion until there is a motion on the floor.

Always having a pending motion keeps the discussion focused on one topic at a time

In small groups there is often discussion prior to presenting a main motion



6 steps in handling a motion

1. A member is recognized by the chair and states a motion
2. A different member seconds the motion
3. The chair states the motion
4. Members discuss the motion
5. Chair “puts” the question to a vote
6. Chair announces result of the vote



6 steps in handling a Motion

1. A member is recognized by the chair and states a motion

“I move to...” ,

“I move that...”

“I move the adoption of the following resolution:”





6 steps in handling a motion

2. A different member seconds the motion.

“Second”

or

“I second the motion.”



6 steps in handling a motion

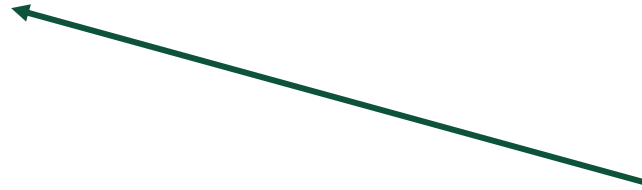
3. The chair states the motion
“It is moved and seconded...”

At this point the motion
belongs to whom?

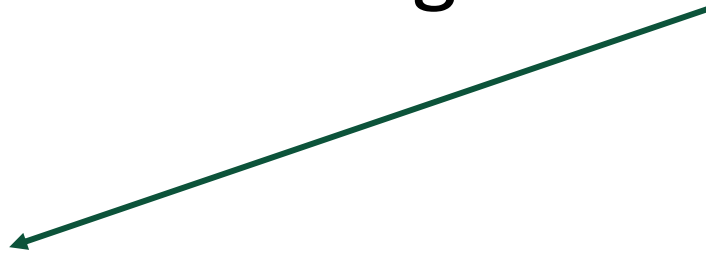
4. Members discuss/debate the motion



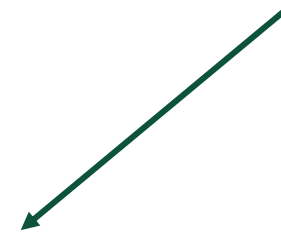
relevant



All debate must be **germane** to the motion.



To the point



pertinent

All debate must abide by proper rules of debate –
RONR or your own



Rules of Debate

- All remarks must be addressed to and/or through the chair
- The maker of the motion is entitled to speak first
- All remarks must be confined to the pending question
- A member may not speak against his own motion but may vote against it
- No member is entitled to speak a second time while any other member wishes to make a first speech
- Personal comments should be avoided
- No member may comment adversely on any prior act of the board not under consideration
- No person should speak a second time while any other person wishes to speak for a first time
- The chair shall make an effort to alternate between supporting and opposing arguments



6 steps in handling a motion

5. Chair “puts” the question (takes the vote)

“The question is on the adoption of the motion to...”

“Those in favor, say *Yes*.
Those opposed, say *No*.”



Voting

How is a vote taken?

- Voice
- Rising vote
- Show of hands
- A count
- Ballot or roll call
- Unanimous Consent



~~“All in favor say
Aye...All opposed
say No.”~~



Voting

What kind of vote is required?

- Majority
- Majority of those elected (and serving)
- 2/3
- 3/4
- Roll call, Unanimous Consent



6 steps in handling a motion

6. Chair announces result of the vote

“The motion is adopted”

...the chair instructs staff to prepare the contracts. The next item on the agenda is...”

“The motion is lost” ... The next item on the agenda is...”



6 steps in handling a motion

1. A member is recognized by the chair and states a motion
2. A different member seconds the motion
3. The chair states the motion
4. Members discuss the motion
5. Chair “puts” the question to a vote
6. Chair announces result of the vote

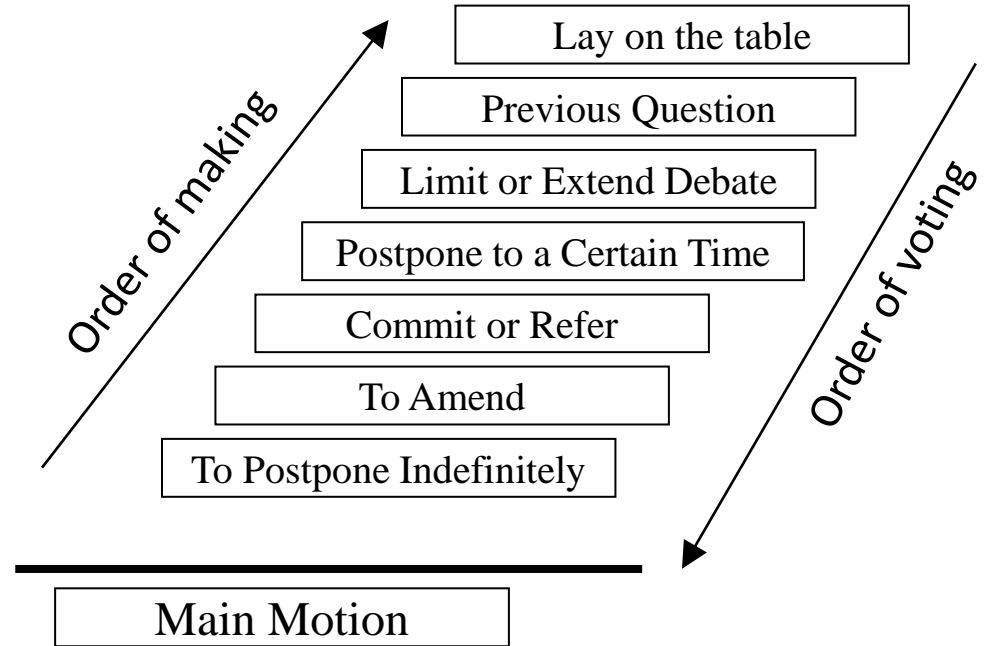


There is a motion for that!



Subsidiary motions

- do something to the main motion
- have a rank and order

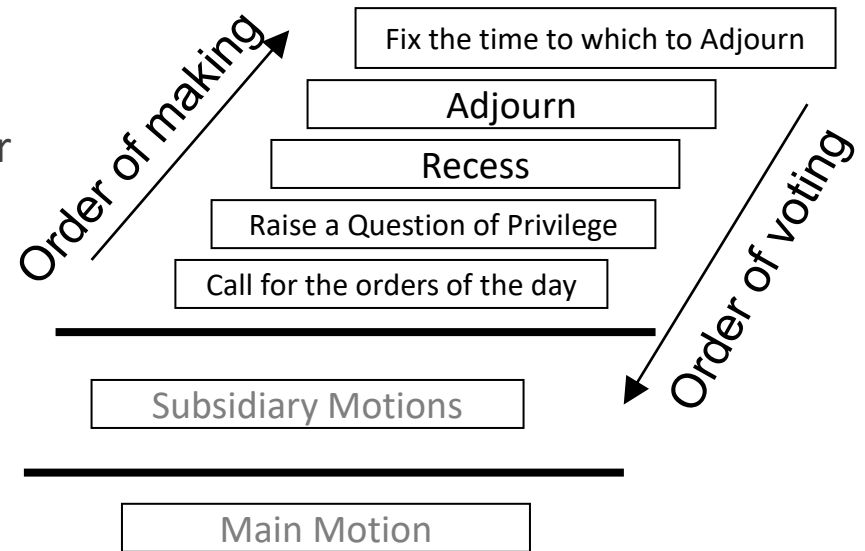


Members have the right to conclude their debate with a higher-ranking motion than the one pending.



Privileged Motions

- Have a rank and order
- Answer immediate questions of process
- Do not relate to pending business
- Rank higher than subsidiary because of their immediacy
- Are not debatable in most circumstances



Incidental Motions

Deal with matters of procedure related to pending business
Many allow a member to interrupt a speaker
Most are undebatable

- **Point of order** - That's against the rules!
- **Parliamentary inquiry** - I have a question about meeting process or rules
- **Request for information** - I need clarification before I vote
- **Appeal** from the decision made by the Chair
- **Suspend the rules** – put aside a parliamentary or standing rule in order to do something different in the meeting.



Motions that bring a question again before the assembly (enable an assembly to change its mind)

- Reconsider
- Rescind/Amend Something Previously Adopted
- Take from the table
- Discharge a committee



- To amend a motion
 - insert or add
 - strike words
 - strike & insert words
- To postpone or refer
 - To another meeting
 - To a committee
- Stop Debate and vote
 - Previous question
 - Call the question



Avoid the use of “Table”

- Instead:
 - Determine why you are “tabling”
 - Make the motion to postpone (and set the time for the issue to come back)
 - Make the motion to refer to a committee (provide instructions to the committee)
 - If you are attempting to “kill” a motion
 - Use postpone indefinitely – followed by previous question
 - Ask yourself why the issue is before the group and WHY are you trying to “kill it” - is it good policy to do that?



Consent Agenda/Consent calendar

- Part of the order of business
- To be effective takes a prepared board
- Items are removed at the request of one member
- Might contain
 - Minutes
 - Staff or committee reports
 - Tributes or resolutions
 - Items ready for final discussion and adoption moved over from committee or past meetings



Minutes

- Technically: What was done not what was said
- Committee Meetings & work session meetings need to help group maintain continuity of conversation and assignment (call them “notes”)
- Planning Commissions and ZBA make administrative decisions – legal requirements exist and require more detail (if it isn’t in the minutes it didn’t happen)



The “power of one”

- Request for information/Parliamentary Inquiry
- Point of Order
- Call for the orders of the day
- Call for a separate vote of an independent subject included in a single motion (consent agenda)
- Make a quorum
- Change a vote
- Object to unanimous consent





Resources

Roberts Rules of Order 12th Edition

Roberts Rules of Order 12th Edition, In Brief – 3rd Edition

Michigan State Association of Parliamentarians www.michiganparliamentarian.org

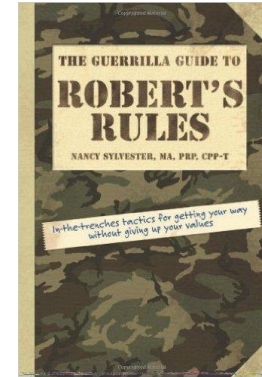
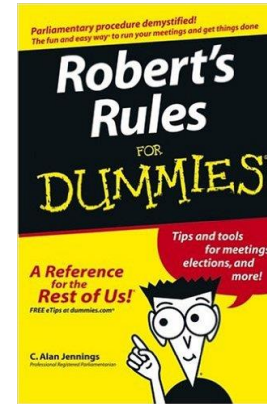
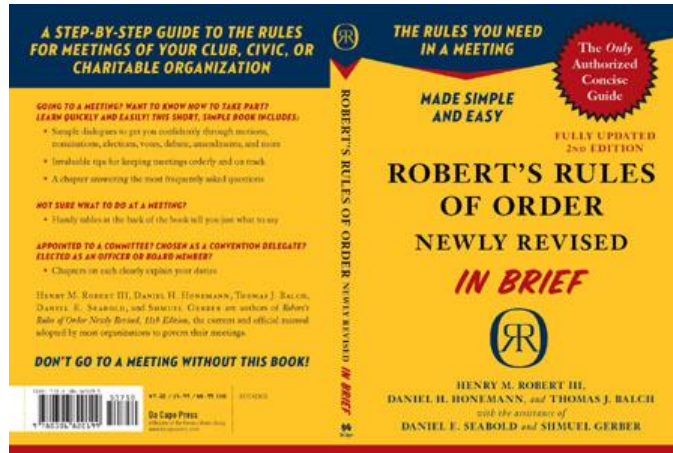
National Association of Parliamentarians www.parliamentarians.org

Roberts Rules Association www.robertsrules.com

Michigan State University Extension

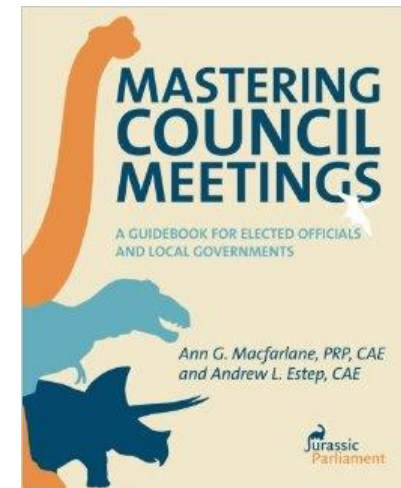
www.msue.anr.msu.edu/resources/parliamentary_procedure_resources





National Association of Parliamentarians (NAP)

www.parliamentarians.org



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