

## Robert's Rules of Order for Board Committees: A One-Page Guide

**Purpose of Rules of Order:** Board Committees should generally operate by the rules prescribed in Robert's Rules of Order. Implementation of these Rules of Order provide a structured framework for conducting Board Committee meetings efficiently and fairly. Implementation should encourage full and open discussion of matters.

### Basic Principles

- A quorum must be present for business to be conducted.
- The Chair remains impartial and facilitates the meeting process.
- No person should speak until recognized by the Chair.
- Personal remarks or side discussions during debate are out of order.
- Only one matter or question at a time should be considered, and only one person should address the matter at a time.
- Decisions are made by a majority vote, except when basic rights or specific rules require otherwise.
- All members have equal rights to participate in the meeting.

### Key Meeting Procedures

- **The role of the Chair is:**
  - To introduce business in a proper order pursuant to the agenda and to recognize speakers
  - To maintain order
  - To determine if a motion is in order, to keep discussion focused on a pending motion, and to put motions to a vote and announce results.
- **Making and handling a motion:**
  - A committee member must obtain the floor by being recognized by the Chair.
  - Committee member makes a motion. Begins with "I move that . . . ." The motion is seconded by a committee member stated as "Second," or "I second the motion."
  - The motion must be seconded by another member before it can be considered.
  - The motion is discussed/debated and the maker of the motion has the right to speak first regarding the motion.
  - **Amendment:**
    - An amendment to a motion can be made before a vote is taken on a motion. A motion may be amended by:
      - Striking out words
      - Inserting or adding words
      - Striking out words and inserting others in their place.
    - Any motion to amend should be seconded and should be decided before debate on the main motion continues.
  - Discussion/debate on a motion closes when the discussion/debate has ended or a 2/3 vote closes the debate.
  - After discussion and before action is taken on the motion, the Chair should restate the motion.
  - **Voting on the motion:** The Chair should call for a vote by asking "All in favor?" and then those in favor say "Aye" and then asking "All opposed?" and those opposed will say "no."
  - The Chair announces the result.
- **General rules of discussion/debate:**
  - Discussion/debate should address the matter and/or the issues and all discussion must be relevant to the pending agenda item or immediately pending question.

- No member should speak more than twice to each debatable motion. The second time takes place after everyone wishing to debate the motion has had an opportunity to speak once.

## Miscellaneous

- **If a Committee Member wants more study and/or investigation given to the matter being discussed**, the matter could be referred to a subcommittee or study group if appropriate. The Committee should be specific as to the charge to the subcommittee or study group.
- **If a Committee Member wants more time to study a proposal being discussed**, a motion can be made to postpone action to a definite time or date.
- **If a Committee Member is tired of a current debate on a motion**, the Committee Member may move to limit the discussion/debate to a set period of time or to set number of speakers. This requires a 2/3 vote for approval.
- **If a Committee Member wants to postpone a motion until a later time**, the Committee Member may make:
  - **Motion to table**: This motion puts the discussion aside so it can be considered later in the meeting or at a different time. A second is required, and a majority vote is needed to pass the motion.
  - **Motion to defer consideration**: This motion requests that consideration of the motion be delayed until a specific time. A second is required, and a majority vote is needed to pass the motion.
- **If a Committee Member wants to take a short break**, the Committee Member may move to recess for a short period of time.

## Some Forms of Voting

**General (Unanimous) Consent:** The Chair asks if there is any objection, and if none, the motion passes. Example, when there is a motion to adjourn the meeting the Chair could state: "If there is no objection, the motion to adjourn passes. (Pause) There being no objection, the meeting is adjourned."

**Voice Vote:** Regular method of voting on any motion that does not require more than a majority vote; most common form of voting. Example for Chair to conduct: "The question is on the adoption of the motion that \_\_\_\_\_. Those in favor, say AYE." (Pause.) "Those opposed, say NO/NAY." (Pause.)

**Show of Hands:** An alternative method for a voice vote. Example for Chair to conduct: "The question is on the adoption of the motion that \_\_\_\_\_. Those in favor please raise your hand." (Pause.) "Thank you. Those opposed please raise your hand." (Pause.) "Thank you."

**Counted Vote:** Can be ordered by the Chair when it appears a voice vote is unclear, and it can be ordered by a majority vote of the committee members.

**Ballot or Roll Call Vote:** Can be ordered by a majority vote of the committee members.

## Remember

- Robert's Rules provides a framework, but it should be adapted to fit the needs of your committee.
- Flexibility and common sense are important.
- Focus on facilitating open discussion and reaching fair decisions.

## Further Resources

- The official Robert's Rules of Order website: <https://robertsrules.com/>
- Other simplified guides and cheat sheets are available online.

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