

Standing Beside Alaska's Nonprofits



theforakergroup

Roberts Rules of Order - The Basics:

Just enough to make you dangerous!!!



Objectives

- Learn where Robert's Rules of Order came from
- Discover who "Robert" is
- Talk about why Robert is part of meetings for many groups and organizations
- Learn some of the most common parts of Robert's Rules of Order



The worst meeting you ever attended

- No order – it seems no one is running the meeting
- Everybody talks at once
- No one is listening
- One person dominates
- You're thinking: "*We're not getting anything done – this is a HUGE waste of time...*"



Or what about a good meeting?

- Goes smoothly
- People take turns to talk
- We talk about the most important stuff, and
- *“We are making good progress – I felt that meeting went really well...”*



That's why we have Robert's Rules...

- Thomas Jefferson created the Manual of Parliamentary Practice in 1801
 - It was immediately adopted by the House and Senate
 - Created so meetings could be run in a civilized & courteous manner – not like Parliament in London
 - Gave everyone the opportunity to express their opinion, so a consensus was formed
- General Henry M. Robert published those rules in “Robert's Rules of Order” in 1876



Who was Robert?

- Henry Robert was an engineer and a general in the U.S. Military.
- He crafted the book of rules to bring simplified parliamentary procedure to non-legislative organizations in 1876
 - Has been changed very little since
- Designed to *help*, not *hinder*, decision making



All participants are created equal under Robert's Rules

- Parliamentary procedure offers democratic rule, flexibility, protection of rights, and a fair hearing for everyone
 - Is a set of rules for conduct at meetings
 - Allows everyone to be heard & make decisions
 - Enables you to expedite the flow of business



It's all about motions: A snapshot of the four types of motions



- Main
- Subsidiary
- Privilege
- Incidental



Main Motions

- Used to present new business
- Amendments to bylaws
- Cannot be made when another motion is in action
- Must be “seconded” before it can be discussed or voted on (Move unanimous consent)
 - *“I move that the board authorize the Executive Director to pursue a new partnership with xyz org.”*
 - *“I second that” someone else says”, or*
 - *“I move unanimous consent”*



Subsidiary Motions

- Change or affect how the main motion is handled before it has been decided
- These changes have to be voted on **BEFORE** the main motion
- **EXAMPLE:** *“I move we ask the executive to research situation and provide this critical information before we proceed with that motion.”* or
- *(Amendments? To Main?)*



Other Motions

- Privileged and Incidental Motions
 - Do not require the eight steps usually needed to make a motion
 - Privileged motions are of immediate importance and take precedence over any main motion
 - Incidental motions do not relate directly to the substance of the pending motion but to the method of transacting the business of the motion



Privileged Motion

- Are urgent, about special, or important matters NOT relating to pending business
 - A second is not required,
 - May not be amended and does not require a vote.
- Question of Privilege: If you can't see or hear the meeting, you may stop the meeting and have the problem corrected. ***“I cannot hear the main speaker.”***
- Call for the Orders of the Day: Used to move discussion to the item scheduled for that particular time on the agenda. ***“I move that we recess the meeting to eat lunch.”***



Incidental Motions

- Are questions of procedure that arise out of other motions
- Must be considered BEFORE the other motion
- Do not require that you be recognized
- Do not require a second
- Cannot be amended or debated
- ***“I believe the main motion did not receive a second, so we can’t vote on it.”***



Incidental Motions

- These Incidental motions do not require a vote:
 - **Point of Order:** If someone isn't following Robert's Rules, you can state "Point of Order" and explain your point; the Chair then rules on your point.
 - **Point of Information:** Used to stop action to call for clarification of the process or consequences of the debate.
- This Incidental motion requires a 2/3 vote:
 - **Object to Consideration:** This motion is made to kill a sensitive or embarrassing motion before it is discussed by the assembly. **EXAMPLE: "I move that we set aside the bylaws so that new board members can be appointed with a 4/5 majority of board members instead of a simple majority"**



“Perfecting a Motion” a.k.a. Amending a Motion

- Motions are amended to change the wording to make it more acceptable before taking final action
- There are 3 ways to change the wording of a motion, to make it more acceptable before taking final action
 - To add words or phrases
 - To strike out words or phrases
 - To substitute by striking out & inserting; or substitute an entire motion or paragraph



Amending a Motion

- Modifications can be made
 - Between the time a motion is made and before the Chair states the motion
 - After the Chair has stated the motion
 - Before the motion is voted upon
- The board then votes on only the amended portion; if that passes, then you return to the original motion **AS AMENDED** to vote on in its entirety
- If the amended portion fails, then the board returns to vote on the motion as it was originally worded



Present Motion: 8 easy steps

1. Raise your hand (or rise) and address the Chair
2. Receive recognition from the Chair
3. Make the motion (I move that/to...)
4. Requires a second
 - A motion must be seconded to bring it up for discussion. Seconding a motion does not mean you agree with it. The Chair must hear a second or the motion is lost.



5. Chair restates the motion
 - “It has been moved and seconded that...”
6. Discussion
 - Membership to be recognized by Chair
 - No member shall speak twice to a motion until all members who want to speak to the motion have been heard
7. Chair puts the motion to vote – “All in favor say Aye? All opposed say Nay”
 - Voice, raise hand, stand, ballot
8. Chair announces result of vote





Some facts we all should know

- **Calling the meeting to order** is the first item of business in Robert's Rules
- A motion to accept a report doesn't need be made because there is no need to accept a report
 - The President can assume a motion; for example, *"If no objection the minutes are approved as read/presented/corrected."*
 - The Treasurer's report is not approved—it is filed
 - Don't need to say *"I make a motion to accept the treasurers report"*





Everyone should know these points too

- A recess is called for a meeting to cease temporarily (for a speaker, entertainment, meal, etc.) and then reconvenes to conduct remaining business
- When there is a request for information you do not need a second
- Renewing a motion
 - If a motion is defeated it usually cannot be brought up again (unless it is amended) at that meeting.
 - However, the original motion can be brought up again at another meeting.



More basics...

- President or Chair of a board cannot make motions – can “entertain a motion”
 - That means he or she wants someone else to make a motions
 - “So moved,” someone might say



And more basics

- All participants and their rights are equal
- A quorum must be present to do business – state law has a minimum – its in your bylaws
- The majority rules – what ever you say the majority is in your bylaws
- Silence is consent



What the Presiding Officer does

- Be on time and start on time
- Be organized and prepared
- Take control of the floor
- Be impartial
- Be precise
- Be focused



Expediting Business

- Use general consent
- Refer to a committee or entertain a motion to do so
- Assist in phrasing of a motion
- Restate the motion periodically
- Allow motions to be withdrawn
- Prevent bullying with parliamentary procedure



Practice making a motion

- Raise your hand, and the president may or may not call on you.
- When called on (stand up) and state the following “Mr./Madame President/Chair, I move to/that....”
- Then state what you want to happen. (or not to happen)



More making a motion...

- State what you want to happen clearly and concisely (have a specific wording in mind first)
- After the motion, sit back down
 - Hints - do not use no double negatives
 - If its longer than one sentence write it down



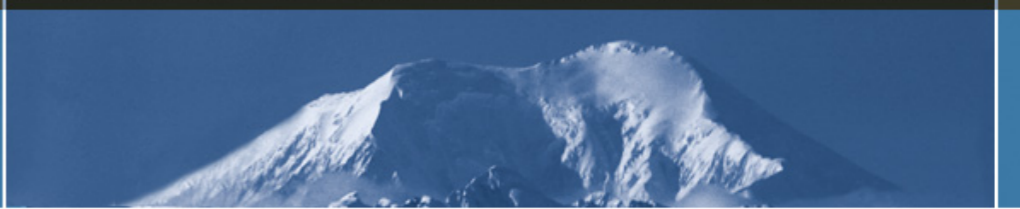
But wait, there's more on motions

- Someone who seconds says that they feel that the motion is of importance
 - If they don't it motion dies
- After motion and second, there is discussion/debate
 - Debate can be stopped by running out of people with opinion, putting a limit on debate, or by the President moving on because of repetitive debate
- Then it time to vote. President will restate the motion and will state how the votes will be cast.
 - Unless stated, majority is usually 50% + 1 of the active members present – simple majority



Who's hungry? An example

- You - “Ms/Mr. President I move that we get 100 burgers at The Powerhouse Restaurant.”
- Someone- “second”
 - If there isn't a second, we don't talk about it any more
- President- “Its been moved and seconded that we all go and get 100 burgers from The Powerhouse, is there any debate?”



Debate

- Members bring up Positive and Negative points, or pertinent information on the motion.
- Points not directly dealing with the motion or amendment can not be brought up.
 - That's the President's job
- President also decides who gets to speak and in what order.



Burgers galore

- Person 1: “The Powerhouse is awesome, let’s do this.”
- Person 2: “Isn’t 100 burgers a little much for only 11 people?”
- Person 3: “Yes, but they are so good.”
- Person 4: “But they are not as good as McDonalds.”
- Person 5: “Mr. President, I move that we amend the original motion to say let’s get 100 Tofu Burgers from the Health Food Restaurant.”



Amendment

- Same as a motion except you say “Mr./Ms. President I move to AMEND the motion to say.... (state what you want to happen)”
- The Amendment must relate to the original motion
 - This can be used to clarify a motion, make it more specific, change specifics, or add to or detract from a motion.



Amendments...

- Debate is given on the amendment as if it were a new motion, then a vote is taken to add the amendment to the original motion.
- After that, a vote is taken on the acceptance of the now new motion that includes (or doesn't include) the amendment.



Healthy dissent

- President: “An amendment to the main motion has been offered. Is there discussion of the amendment?”
 - “Hearing none and no second, the original motion stands.”
- President: “Is there any more debate? All in favour of getting 100 burgers from The Powerhouse raise your hand. All those Opposed?”
- *votes tallied – drum roll please...*
- President: “By a vote of 12-1 we will be getting 100 burgers the Powerhouse.”



Point of order

- Person 5: “Point of order. I think we should continue with the meeting because the agenda says we don’t have lunch until noon, which is 45 minute away.”



Points

- Points can be made at any time
- There is four Points
 - Parliamentary Procedure
 - Point of Personal Privilege
 - Point of Order
 - Point of Clarification



Point of Parliamentary Procedure

- This is made when a member questions the Parliamentary Procedure that just happened (not what happened last semester)
- You say “Mr. President Point of Parliamentary Procedure.” “the chair is in error because there was a second on the amended motion to go to the Health Food Restaurant...”



Point of Order

- Used when it is believed that the order of the meeting is out of whack, that is to say people are speaking out of order, or items are being discussed in an order not specified by the agenda.
- You: “Point of Order, there is nothing on the agenda that says we have to go to eat hamburgers”



Point of Personal Privilege

- You stand up, and wait to be recognized by the chair
- Once recognized you may use personal privilege to introduce motions that deal with your person, i.e.: needing a bio-break, not being able to hear, turning up the heat, etc.



Point of Clarification

- Used to clear up confusion.
- Can be used to reword the motion, ask a question about the motion, etc.



Final points

- Most organizations have little clue about how to use Robert's Rules of Order
- In the hands of a good parliamentarian, Robert can be really helpful
- Remember: "Use this power for good and never for evil..."