

Introduction

In this document, we give an outline for a standard meeting and a summary of the processes for motions and debates according to Robert's Rules of Order. We realize that this will take some adjustment, but our hope is that following this process will ensure that a greater variety of voices are heard and that motions will be debated efficiently.

Summary of meeting

- A. Call to order
 - The *Chair* takes their place. ***Chair: The meeting will come to order.***
 - Any opening ceremonies take place.
- B. Approval of minutes
 - The secretary sends out a draft of the previous meeting minutes.
 - ***Chair: The minutes of the previous meeting have been distributed. Are there any corrections to the minutes?***
 - Any corrections are made. Debate and vote only necessary in case of dispute over a correction.
 - ***Chair: If there are no [further] corrections, the minutes are approved.***
 - Now the minutes become the official record of what happened.
- C. Reports
 - *Chair* calls for reports from officers, boards, committees (whatever is on the agenda)
 - If the report includes recommendations for action by the group, then at the end of the report these are considered, debated, and voted on. No second is needed.
- D. Unfinished business
 - After reports, *Chair* should bring up any unfinished business not completed at previous meeting.
- E. New Business
 - ***Chair: Is there any new business?***
 - Any member can make a motion at this time, following the procedure below under Motions. The *Chair* can require that all motions be submitted in writing ahead of time.
- F. Adjourn
 - ***Chair: Is there any further business? Since there is no further business, the meeting is adjourned.***
 - If there is further business, then a majority vote is needed to adjourn.

Motions

The perspective of RR is that the purpose of such meeting is fair and efficient decision making. So, the primary way that any business is introduced is with a Motion. There should be no debate on a matter before a motion regarding it has been made and only one motion may be debated at a time.

There are two types of motions: main motions, which introduce business before the group, and secondary motions, which modify a main motion or how the debate is proceeding.

Making a motion

- [A member stands/raises hand]
- *Chair* recognizes the speaker, usually by saying their name.

- [Member stands] Member: "**I move that...**" some precise call for action. No reasons for the action are given at this time.
- [Member sits]
- The motion is not discussed further unless another member calls out "**second!**". Seconding indicates you think the motion should be discussed, not necessarily that you think it should be approved.
 - If the *Chair* finds that the motion violates the rules in some way, "**the chair rules that the motion is not in order because...**"
 - Otherwise: *Chair*: "**It is moved and seconded that...**" reiterate the precise motion to make it clear.

Debate

- The motion is now *pending* and the merits of taking the proposed action can be debated. Members wishing to speak in a debate must be recognized by the *Chair*.
 - Preference for speaking first is given to maker of the motion.
 - Preference in general is typically given to members who have not spoken yet.
 - If the chair knows the opinions of some members, try to alternate for/against. Can even specifically ask if anyone wishes to speak for/against.
 - No member may speak more than twice on a single motion in one day.
 - No member may speak for more than 10 minutes at a time.

Modifying a motion (Amending)

The motion cannot be informally modified as part of the debate. The only way to modify a motion is for someone to make a secondary motion to amend it. This motion to amend is then debated and voted.

Ending Debate before it is completed

- After being recognized by the *Chair*, a member may say "**I move the previous question.**" If it is seconded, then a majority 2/3 vote is done. If approved, then debate immediately ends and the original motion is brought to a vote. There is no debate on a motion for the previous question.
- After being recognized by the *Chair*, a member may say "**I move to postpone this motion to**" some particular time or the next meeting. This motion is debatable.
- After being recognized by the *Chair*, a member may say "**I move to refer this motion to...**" either a special committee or a standing committee. This motion is debatable.

Voting

- *Chair*: **If there is no further debate?...**
- *Chair*: **The question is on the adoption of the motion that [reiterate]**
- *Chair*: **Those in favor of the motion say *aye*.**
- *Chair*: **Those opposed say *no*.**
- *Chair*: **The ayes/noes have it, and the motion is adopted/failed.**
- Move on to the next item of business

Notes on voting

- For most motions, simple majority suffices. The usual exceptions are previous question, suspending of rules, or changing limits of debates, all of which require 2/3. Such a vote should be done by standing or ballots, not voice.
- A standing vote is up to *Chair's* judgment and does not require counting the number standing.
- Substantive actions require a quorum.
- The chair does not participate in debate on any issue unless they give up the chair until the issue is resolved. RR says this should seldom be done.
- The chair only votes when the vote is by ballot or their vote would change the result of the vote, i.e. the case of a tie, or to create a tie and thus a failed vote.