

Parliamentary Procedure for Meetings April 2018

Robert's Rules of Order is the standard for facilitating discussions and group decision-making. **Robert's Rules** will help your group have better meetings, not make them more difficult. Your group is free to modify them or find another suitable process that encourages fairness and participation, unless your bylaws state otherwise.

Here are the basic elements of **Robert's Rules**, used by most organizations, including SCT:

1. **Motion:** To introduce a new piece of business or propose a decision or action, a motion must be made by a Board member ("I move that.....") A second motion must then also be made (raise your hand and say, "I second it.") After limited discussion the President calls for vote on the motion. A majority vote is required for the motion to pass (or quorum as specified in your by-laws.)
2. **Postpone Indefinitely:** This tactic is used to kill a motion. When passed, the motion cannot be re-introduced at that meeting. It may be brought up again at a later date. This is made as a motion ("I move to postpone indefinitely..."). A second is required. A majority vote is required to postpone the motion under consideration.
3. **Amend:** This is the process used to change a motion under consideration. Perhaps you like the idea proposed but not exactly as offered. Raise your hand and make the following motion: "I move to amend the motion on the floor." This also requires a second. After the motion to amend is seconded, a majority vote is needed to decide whether the amendment is accepted. Then a vote is taken on the amended motion. In some organizations, a "friendly amendment" is made. If the person who made the original motion agrees with the suggested changes, the amended motion may be voted on without a separate vote to approve the amendment.
4. **Question:** To end a debate immediately, the question is called (say "I call the question") and needs a second. A vote is held immediately (no further discussion is allowed). A two-thirds vote is required for passage. If it is passed, the motion on the floor is voted on immediately.
5. **Table:** To table a discussion is to lay aside the business at hand in such a manner that it will be considered later in the meeting or at another time ("I make a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting. In the meantime, we will get more information so we can better discuss the issue.") A second is needed and a majority vote required to table the item being discussed.
6. **Adjourn:** A motion is made to end the meeting. A second motion is required. A majority vote is then required for the meeting to be adjourned (ended).

Note: If more than one motion is proposed, the most recent takes precedence over the ones preceding it.

In SCT Board meetings, usually only four motions are used:

- To introduce (motion.)
- To change a motion (amend.)
- To adopt (accept a report without discussion.)
- To adjourn (end the meeting.)

Remember, these processes are designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and to share ideas in an orderly manner.

Tips in Parliamentary Procedure

- **A main motion must be moved, seconded, and stated by the chair before it can be discussed.**
- **If you want to move, second, or speak to a motion, raise your hand and address the Chair.**
- **If you approve the motion as is, vote for it.**
- **If you disapprove the motion, vote against it.**
- **If you approve the idea of the motion but want to change it, amend it or submit a substitute for it.**
- **If you want advice or information to help you make your decision, move to refer the motion to an appropriate quorum or committee with instructions to report back.**
- **If you feel they can handle it better than the assembly, move to refer the motion to a quorum or committee with power to act.**
- **If you feel that the pending question(s) should be delayed so more urgent business can be considered, move to lay the motion on the table.**
- **If you want time to think the motion over, move that consideration be deferred to a certain time.**
- **If you think that further discussion is unnecessary, move the previous question.**
- **If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a motion referred to a quorum or committee, move the motion be recalled.**
- **If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a matter already voted upon, move that it be reconsidered.**
- **If you do not agree with a decision rendered by the chair, appeal the decision to the assembly.**
- **If you think that a matter introduced is not germane to the matter at hand, a point of order may be raised.**
- **If you think that too much time is being consumed by speakers, you can move a time limit on such speeches.**
- **If a motion has several parts, and you wish to vote differently on these parts, move to divide the motion.**

IN THE MEETING

TO INTRODUCE A MOTION:

Speak when no one else has the floor.

Raise your hand and wait until the chair recognizes you.

- Now that you have the floor and can proceed with your motion say "I move that...", state your motion clearly.
- Another member may second your motion. A second merely implies that the seconder agrees that the motion should come before the assembly and not that he/she is in favor of the motion.
- If there is no second, the Chair says, "The motion is not before you at this time." The motion is not lost, as there has been no vote taken.
- If there is a second, the Chair states the question by saying "It has been moved and seconded that ...(state the motion). . ., is there any discussion?"

DEBATE OR DISCUSSING THE MOTION:

- The member who made the motion is entitled to speak first.
- Every member has the right to speak in debate.
- The Chair should alternate between those "for" the motion and those "against" the motion.
- The discussion should be related to the pending motion.
- Avoid using a person's name in debate.
- All questions should be directed to the Chair.
- Unless there is a special rule providing otherwise, a member is limited to speak once to a motion.
- Asking a question or a brief suggestion is not counted in debate.
- A person may speak a second time in debate with the assembly's permission.

VOTING ON A MOTION:

- Before a vote is taken, the Chair puts the question by saying "Those in favor of the motion that ... (repeat the motion)... say "Aye." Those opposed say "No." Wait, then say "The motion is carried," or "The motion is lost."
- · A majority vote is more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote.
- A 2/3 vote means at least 2/3 of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote.
- A tie vote is a lost vote, since it is not a majority.

Process for SCT Board Meetings

- Dates are set in advance by the President and announced by the Secretariat.
- Board members are asked to save the dates and allow at least two hours for the meetings
- The President, with input from the officers, sets the agenda. Any Board member or Committee Chair may submit requests or suggestions for the agenda to the President.
- The President will contact committee chairs in advance to submit written reports.
- Materials will be sent out electronically prior to the Board meeting.

- The Secretary is responsible for ensuring the preparation of the formal minutes, and they are issued electronically within a few weeks of the meeting. They are approved at the next meeting.