



# WHAT BOARD MEMBERS REALLY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE



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Robert's Rules of Order should be used to HELP run an efficient meeting, not drag it out or be used for personal agendas.

There are more than a dozen Robert's Rules books.

Adopt and use an edition for SMALL boards.

Helps run efficient meetings

Gives minority a chance to speak

Common courtesy



## ROBERT'S RULES: SMALL BOARDS

Robert's Rules of Order was made for corporate boards consisting of 12 or more people.

Rules are relaxed for small boards (fewer than 12 members) so quoted rules for large boards may not apply to YOUR board.

**REMEMBER:** The law and state statutes **ALWAYS** trump Parliamentary Procedure.

Chair can vote;  
make motions

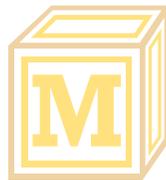
Members can sit  
while speaking

Can speak to question  
more than once



## ROBERT'S RULES: INTRODUCING A MOTION

Main motions are used when a board takes action on an item. All main motions require a second and require a majority vote. For small boards, sometimes two sets of discussions are preferred. One to better form a motion and one after a second.



I move we approve  
the agenda

I second the motion

Discussion

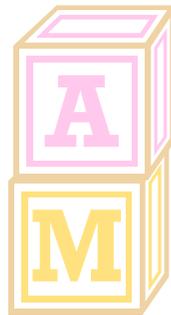
Vote



## ROBERT'S RULES: AMENDMENTS

An amendment is a subsidiary motion used to change a main motion slightly.

Like building blocks, the board must deal with subsidiary motions first before a main motion.



I move we amend the agenda to allow the public forum to be after approval of minutes

I second the motion to amend

Discussion on amendment

Vote on amendment



## ROBERT'S RULES: CALLING THE QUESTION

Robert's Rules of Order wants boards to have a thorough, public discussion on issues. It discourages limiting debate. Calling the question needs a second AND a 2/3 vote to end debate. Otherwise, discussion continues.

I call the previous question

Is there a second

If no second, discussion continues

If a second, need a 2/3 vote



## ROBERT'S RULES: POSTPONE OR LAY ON THE TABLE

**Lay on the Table** means to delay action on an item until later in the meeting.

A motion to **Postpone Definitely** delays action on an item until a specific date in the future.

A motion to **Postpone Indefinitely** delays action on an item until the board decides to discuss the item again, if ever.

I move to table the budget item until after the enrollment report on the agenda, which affects our state funding.

I move to postpone action on the budget until our February meeting when we will have information on state funding.



## ROBERT'S RULES: RESCIND OR RECONSIDER

Robert's Rules respects the majority vote of a board. If a member is in the minority, Robert's Rules is designed to prevent the minority from bringing up old, decided issues at every meeting.

Reconsidering or rescinding a past motion should only occur if:

New information is available that might change the outcome of a vote.

A member changes his/her mind so that reconsidering or rescinding would **LIKELY RESULT IN A DIFFERENT OUTCOME.**



## ROBERT'S RULES: RESCIND OR RECONSIDER

A motion to **reconsider** must be brought by a member who VOTED IN THE MAJORITY. It must also be done AT THE SAME MEETING.

**Rescinding** a past motion is highly discouraged. In some cases it can be illegal. (Such as awarding bids and then rescinding the motion to award bids at the next meeting.)

**Reconsidering** a motion must happen AT THE SAME MEETING.

**Rescinding** a motion cannot proceed unless a member has given notice to the chair that the item will be moved at an upcoming meeting. If no notice, it must be approved by a 2/3 vote. It must be done at the meeting immediately following the one with the vote.



## ROBERT'S RULES: POINT OF ORDER, INFORMATION

A **Point of Order** is simply questioning the procedure of how an item is handled during a meeting.

A **Point of Information** can be called by any member when he or she does not understand what is being voted on or what the vote will mean.

**Point of Order:** I believe that a vote to call a question needs a 2/3 majority.

**Point of Information:** If we vote yes on this amendment, will it give us more or less flexibility when choosing curriculum?



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## ROBERT'S RULES: AVOID BAD BEHAVIOR

Just because a board member is a parliamentarian doesn't mean he/she should use the rules as a weapon to force board meetings to go their way.

Example: Rude Robert wasn't picked as chair. He uses his knowledge of the rules to bog down meetings and try to make the chair look bad.

Helps run efficient meetings

Gives minority a chance to speak

Common courtesy



## ROBERT'S RULES: THE CHAIR'S ROLE

The role of the chair was not meant to be a power position.

The chair should act as the board's **SERVANT**. The chair ensures everyone has equal access to all information, all have equal rights, the minority has full opportunity to speak, all members follow the group's rules, and the meeting is run efficiently.

**Enforcement is merely enforcing the GROUP'S rules.**

**Helps and encourages ALL board members to suggest important items on the agenda for discussion.**



## ROBERT'S RULES: THE TAKE-AWAY LESSON

“The great lesson for democracies to learn is for the majority to give the minority a full, free opportunity to present their side of the case, and then for the minority, having failed to win a majority to their views, gracefully to submit and to recognize the action as that of the entire organization, and cheerfully to assist in carrying it out until they can secure its repeal.”

**- Gen. Henry M. Robert (1837-1923)**

**Majority gives minority full opportunity to speak views.**

**Minority gracefully accepts decision and cheerfully assists in carrying out the directive.**



## ROBERT'S RULES: DO I NEED TO KNOW ALL THE RULES?

**NO.** You don't need to know all the rules. You simply have to understand the concept that Robert's Rules is there to **HELP** your meeting run smoothly, to offer the board opportunity to discuss issues and to provide common courtesy.

And if you see a Rude Robert, hand them this presentation.

**Use MSBA's Parliamentary Procedure card.**

**Always ask for a Point of Information if you don't understand how a vote will go on an amendment or motion.**



THANK YOU!

For more information on Robert's Rules,  
Have your district office sign you up for

**MSBA's OFFICERS' WORKSHOPS**

At [www.mnmsba.org](http://www.mnmsba.org)