

# ***Making Meetings Work***

## ***Using Parliamentary Procedure***

Ronald E. Roberts  
National Association of Parliamentarians

### **References**

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This was a collaborative effort with help from my friends and fellow Parliamentarians, they are Ms. Joanne Toebe, and Mr. Joe Pangborn. Many thanks for their help and invaluable feedback.

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**Purpose of Parliamentary Procedure**

- To facilitate the transaction of business.
- To promote cooperation and harmony.
- To protect the rights of the members.

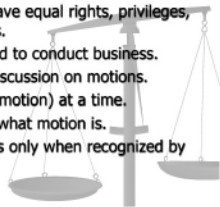


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**Basic Principles**

- All members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations.
- Quorum needed to conduct business.
- Full and free discussion on motions.
- One question (motion) at a time.
- Right to know what motion is.
- Member speaks only when recognized by the chair.

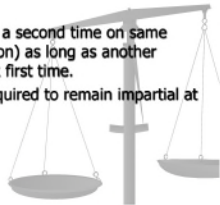


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**Governing Rules of an Organization**

- National, State, and Local laws.
- Organization's Charter.
- Organization's Constitution and By-laws.
- Organization's Standing Rules.



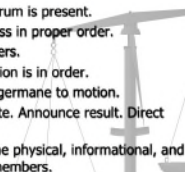
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## Section 5 — Robert's Rules of Order

### Making Meetings Work — Using Parliamentary Procedure — Ronald E. Roberts

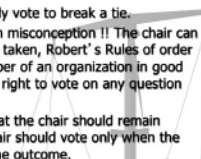
#### Role of Presiding Officer (Chair)

- Determine if quorum is present.
  - Introduce business in proper order.
  - Recognize speakers.
  - Determine if motion is in order.
  - Keep discussion germane to motion.
  - Put motion to vote. Announce result. Direct disposition.
  - Be sensitive to the physical, informational, and social needs of members.
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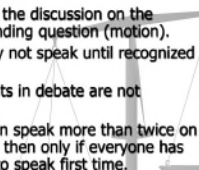
#### When the Chair can vote

- The chair can only vote to break a tie.
  - This is a common misconception !! The chair can vote on any vote taken, Robert's Rules of order says, "Any member of an organization in good standing has the right to vote on any question before the body."
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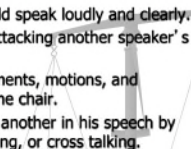
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- Debate means the discussion on the merits of a pending question (motion).
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  - Refrain from attacking another speaker's motives.
  - Direct all comments, motions, and discussion to the chair.
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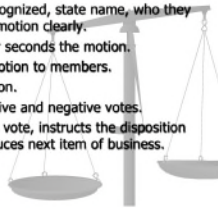
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**Six Steps to Every Motion**

1. Stand up, be recognized, state name, who they represent, state motion clearly.
2. Another member seconds the motion.
3. Chair restates motion to members.
4. Asks for discussion.
5. Asks for affirmative and negative votes.
6. Chair announces vote, instructs the disposition of matter, introduces next item of business.



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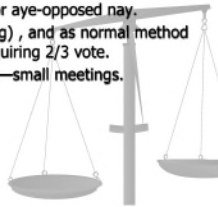


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**Voting Methods**

- Voice -- in favor aye-opposed nay.
- Rising (standing) , and as normal method on motions requiring 2/3 vote.
- Show of hands—small meetings.
- Ballot.
- Roll call.

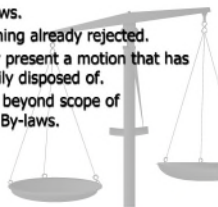


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**Four Motions Always Out of Order**

- Conflict with laws.
- Present something already rejected.
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- I make that motion !!
- I move to table it !!
- Call for the question !!



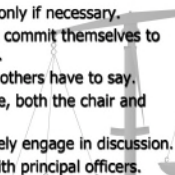
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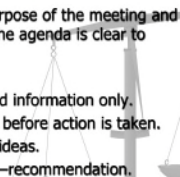
## Section 5 — Robert's Rules of Order

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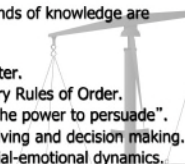
#### Holding Productive Meetings

- Have meeting only if necessary.
  - Members must commit themselves to group purpose.
  - Listen to what others have to say.
  - Plan in advance, both the chair and members.
  - Members actively engage in discussion.
  - Pre-meeting with principal officers.
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#### Holding Productive Meetings

- Be sure the purpose of the meeting and each item on the agenda is clear to members.
  - Share ideas and information only.
  - Brief members before action is taken.
  - Generate new ideas.
  - Make decision—recommendation.
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#### Holding Productive Meetings

- Recognize 5 kinds of knowledge are necessary.
  - 1. Subject matter.
  - 2. Parliamentary Rules of Order.
  - 3. Rhetoric—"the power to persuade".
  - 4. Problem solving and decision making.
  - 5. Human social-emotional dynamics.
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#### Purpose of a Committee

- Complex topics can be handled by a committee efficiently.
  - There are three types of committees:
  - 1. Research committee.
  - 2. Recommendation committee.
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**How to Keep Minutes From Taking Hours**

- Minutes should contain only action taken: Place, date, time, determination of quorum, disposition of minutes, motions passed, adjournment.
- Does not need details of ceremonies, defeated motions, or detailed committee reports.



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**That meeting from Hell—Interventions**

- Cross talking, arriving late, texting, etc.

Example—arriving late.

- At beginning: Let's all try to get here on time, so as not to disrupt the meeting.
- During: It was noticed that some members are arriving late, could we try to arrive on time so as not to disrupt the meeting?
- End: It was noticed that some members arrived late and didn't have a chance to contribute fully to the meeting. Could everyone please try to arrive on time? We value input from everyone.



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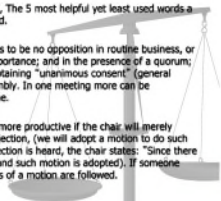
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**Unanimous Consent**

"If there is no objection—", The 5 most helpful yet least used words a chairperson will ever find.

In cases where there seems to be no opposition in routine business, or on questions of little importance; and in the presence of a quorum; you can save time by obtaining "unanimous consent" (general consent) from the assembly. In one meeting more can be accomplished in less time.

Any meeting can be much more productive if the chair will merely state, "If there is no objection, (we will adopt a motion to do such and such. When no objection is heard, the chair states: "Since there is no objection,...(such and such motion is adopted). If someone objects, then the 6 steps of a motion are followed.



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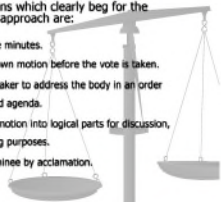
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**Unanimous Consent continued**

- Examples of situations which clearly beg for the unanimous consent approach are:
  - To correct or approve minutes.
  - To withdraw one's own motion before the vote is taken.
  - To allow a guest speaker to address the body in an order contrary to the approved agenda.
  - To divide a complex motion into logical parts for discussion, amendments, and voting purposes.
  - To elect a LONE nominee by acclamation.



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## Section 5 — Robert's Rules of Order

### The Squadron meeting basics

Roberts Rules of Order Revised is The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion accepted authority for applying parliamentary procedures. Every person running a meeting, known as the Chair, should have an understanding of Roberts Rules of Order Revised. Insistence of strict observance of this procedure in a peaceable meeting can be observed as a hindrance to the progress of the meeting.

Along with Roberts Rules of Order Revised, the Constitution and By-laws of the organization and its parent organizations are to be utilized to manage the business of the meeting. These rules guide the organization to assure orderly business is conducted to achieve the goals of the organization by determining the most cost effective way and least time consumption way to achieve an action. *All persons should have the opportunity to voice their opinion, before a person steps forward to address the organization a second time.*

#### Meeting Management

All meetings of the Sons of The American Legion should follow the same basic structure.

- 1 Call Meeting to Order
  - a Prayer
  - b Pledge of Allegiance
  - c SAL Pre-Amble
  - d POW MIA
  - e Blue Star
  - f Role Call of Officers
- 2 Reading of Minutes – It is OK to motion to 'accept as printed' or 'subject to correction'.
- 3 Finance Report
- 4 Executive Committee Report or Officer Reports
- 5 Reading of any communications
- 6 Committee, Standing Committee and Special Committee Reports.
- 7 Unfinished or Old Business
- 8 New Business
- 9 Good of the Sons
- 10 Adjournment
  - a Prayer
  - b Closing remarks by the Chair

### Making a Motion

The most important thing to remember when making a motion is to be clear on what is the motion and start the motion with "I move that we perform action 'ABC'".

The Chair should repeat the motion By Stating "We Have a Motion to perform action 'ABC'. Is there a second?"

Following the Second the Chair again repeats

- "It has been moved and seconded that we perform action "ABC". Is there any discussion?"

"It has been moved and seconded and discussed that "we perform action "ABC".

- All in favor say "Aye"
- All opposed Say "No"

If the Voice Vote is close, members or the Chair may call for a Division, which would result in a Raising Vote, Role Call or Ballot Vote.

Occasionally, during the discussion a point is brought up that is considered to be prudent to the Motion and it is decided to change the motion. This is called an Amendment.

It starts by a member stating "I move to amend the motion by replacing action C with action D. The Chair will then call for a Second by repeating the Amended motion and once it is seconded. The chair will repeat the amended motion "We have an amended motion to perform action "ABD". Is there any discussion? If none Call for the vote. Followed by closing the original Motion by calling for a Vote.

Technically, someone could amend the amended motion to replace Action D with Action E and you could repeat the process. The national organization of the Sons of The American Legion only allows one amended motion to a motion at a time. Allowing more than one amendment gets confusing with multi layered amendments to the motion. Therefore, we advise to only deal with one amendment at a time. It should also be noted, that if someone motions to amend Action A or B once the motion to Amend to Amend action C is requested, *it is an out of order motion.*

The above are online Guidelines and are not necessarily the Letter of the Law. Roberts Rules of Order Revised is the Standing Authority.