

# Robert's Rules of Order adapted for the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

## Overview

Robert's Rules of Order provide common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language.

## General Procedure

Business items are typically introduced by staff. Staff should indicate whether they are providing information, asking for a discussion or asking for a vote of the board. Once the item is introduced, the following should take place to ensure orderly discussion/debate and voting:

- Obtain the floor (the right to speak) by raising your hand and waiting to be acknowledged by the Chair.
  - You must be recognized by the Chair before speaking.
  - Speaking while another has the floor is out of order.
  - Be considerate of other speakers by waiting to raise your hand until they are through speaking.
- If the item requires a vote of the Board, a member can make a motion at any time following introduction.
  - Motions should be clearly worded to take action or a position. "I move..."
  - Motions are recorded in the minutes.
- A motion must be seconded. "Second!"
  - A second allows discussion to occur; it does not signify approval.
  - A motion without a second does not move forward.
- The Chair restates the motion to provide clarity. "It is moved and seconded that..."
- With or without a motion, the Chair leads the discussion/debate.
  - Members who have not yet spoken about the topic at hand have priority over those who have. The Chair is obliged to try and alternate recognizing those who are for and against the motion being discussed. For example, if a member just spoke against a motion, the Chair would say, "Is there anyone who wishes to speak in favor of the motion?"
  - When speaking, you may only speak on the merits of the topic immediately at hand. Anything off topic is out of order and you may be asked to stop talking.
  - The Chair can use their discretion in setting a time limit for discussion topics and how many times members get to talk on any one topic.
  - If you have a thought, this is the time to speak up. The opportunity for discussion will be closed by the Chair before asking for a vote.
- Amendments may be offered. "I move to amend the motion by..."
  - The mover can modify as he/she pleases or even withdraw the motion without consent of the seconder. If the mover modifies, the seconder can withdraw the second.
- The Chair closes discussion and calls for a vote when a vote is requested.
  - The motion is repeated word for word.
  - The Chair provides voting directions. "Those in favor of the motion, say aye"; "Those opposed, say no".
- The Chair announces the result of the vote. "The motion passes/fails with X votes in favor/X votes against".

To Do This	Motion	You Say This	Debate Allowed?	Vote Required
Make a Motion	Move	"I move that..."	Yes	Majority
Second a Motion	Second	"Second!"	No	No
Change the Wording or add Clarity to a Motion	Amend	"I move to amend the motion by..." (adding words; striking out words; substitute words)	Yes	Majority
Send to Committee	Commit/Refer	"I move the motion be referred to..."	Yes	Majority
Postpone Action until a Specific Time	Postpone	"I move the motion be postponed until..." (provide a specific time on the agenda or next meeting date)	Yes	Majority
Postpone Action until an Unspecified Time (a motion will be required to discuss in the future)	Lay on the Table	"I move to lay the motion on the table."	No	Majority
Limit Debate	Limit Debate	"I move that the debate on this motion be limited to (one) speech of (two) minutes for each member."	No	Two-thirds
Extend Debate	Extend Debate	"I move to extend the debate on this motion to (two) speeches of (three) minutes for each member." (The Chair has been enforcing rules about time limits & number of times members can speak, but I think we need to discuss this more.)	No	Two-thirds
End Debate or Request a Vote	Previous Question	"I move the previous question." (You are moving to vote on whether or not to end discussion on the motion; not on the motion itself.)	No	Two-thirds
Take Intermission	Recess	"I move to recess for (time)."	No	Majority
Ask a Question (I have no idea what's going on) OR I have a question for the person speaking)	Parliamentary Inquiry OR Point of Information	If no one is speaking, make a parliamentary inquiry and ask the Chair to explain what is going on.  If someone is speaking, ask them, "Will the speaker yield to a question?" The speaker can accept or decline. During strict time limits, it is best to wait until the speaker is finished and direct the point of inquiry to the Chair.	No	No
Close Meeting	Adjourn	"I move to adjourn."	No	Majority