



SDDTAC JULY MEETING: Robert's Rules of Order

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Training Objectives

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Learn strategies for running effective and orderly meetings

- Manage time
- Manage public comment



Overview key principles, terminology, and actions of Robert's Rules of Order

Introduction

“It’s not that the decision you make must be correct, but each decision you make must be correctly made.”

Purpose of Parliamentary Procedure

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To ensure public meetings are run fairly, consistently, and in accordance with all applicable laws such as the Sunshine Ordinance



SDDTAC Rules and Regulations

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IX. Rules of Order

All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, except as otherwise required by these Rules and Regulations or applicable state or local law.

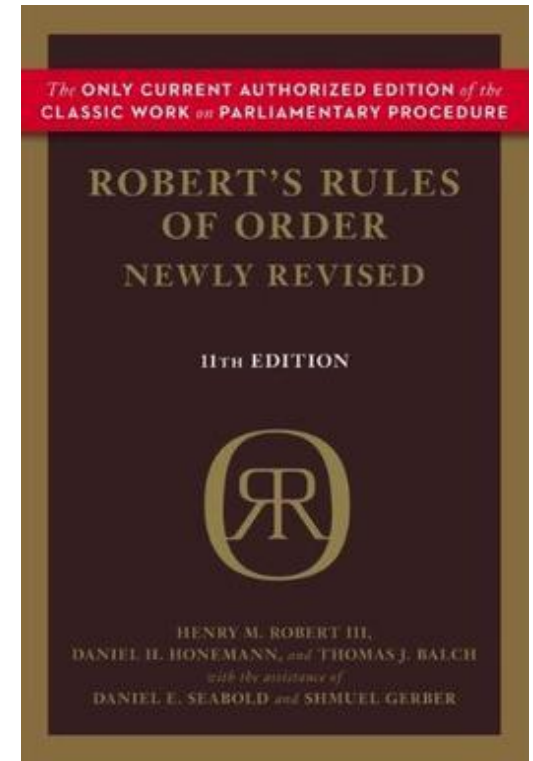
X. Compliance with Applicable City Charter, Public Meeting and Public Records Laws

The Committee shall perform its duties in compliance with all applicable provisions of the San Francisco Charter, California's Ralph M. Brown Act (California Government Code §§54950 et seq.), and the San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance (San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 67). (San Francisco Business and Tax Regulations Code §906.3-1 (i).)

Robert's Rules

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- Most commonly adopted parliamentary procedures because they help you:
 - ▣ Facilitate meetings effectively and consistently regardless of the presiding Chairperson
 - ▣ Protect all member's rights, privileges, and obligations
 - Majorities make decisions
 - Minorities can be heard
 - Individuals members can act
 - Absentee members can be informed
 - ▣ Ensure no one side has an edge
 - Arrive at “the true will of the assembly” with “due consideration” for all points of view
 - ▣ Promote cooperation and facilitate the transaction of business where everyone has more control
 - Preparation and understanding these rules helps everyone participate fairly

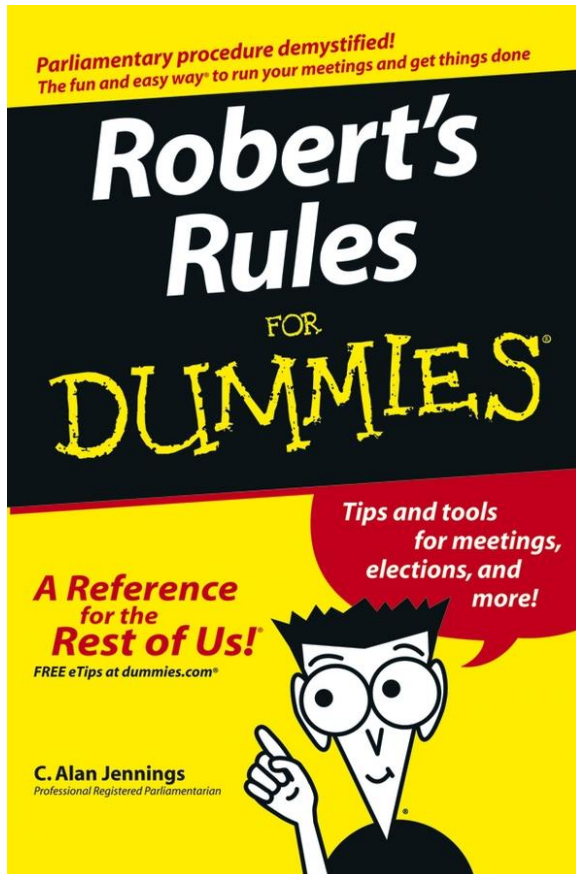


First published in 1876

Helpful tip! Robert's Rules are neither statutory law nor the official “Rules & Regulations” (bylaws). These are procedural rules to help you facilitate meetings and conduct official business.

Overview of Robert's Rules

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- ❑ A **quorum** must be present for the group to take action, such as discussion or voting
- ❑ You must be recognized by the **Chairperson** to speak
- ❑ Only one speaker at a time
- ❑ Only one **question** or **motion** can be considered at a time
- ❑ The **Chairperson** maintains strict impartiality during discussion but is allowed to vote
- ❑ A higher voting threshold is required to change something already adopted
 - ❑ Defined in “Rules & Regulations” (bylaws)

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Conducting Meetings

Using Robert's Rules of Order

You must have a *quorum*

- Defined in the “Rules & Regulations” (bylaws), a *quorum* is the minimum number of members necessary to conduct official business (9)
- If there is not a *quorum* of members present, the only action that can be taken (the only *motion* that can be made) is to *recess* or *adjourn*.



You must have an *agenda*

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- Schedules and outlines the ***orders of business***
- Typically includes:
 - ▣ Review and approval of previous meeting's ***minutes***
 - ▣ Updates from committees and officers
 - ▣ Continuing (old) business
 - ▣ New business



Helpful tip! Once determined, changing the agenda requires a 2/3 vote

*According to the Brown Act, agendas must contain “brief general descriptions (approximately twenty words in length) of each matter to be considered or discussed.”

Agendas include orders of business

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Sample *agenda* for a 60 minute meeting with eight *orders of business*

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of Minutes (5 mins)
- III. Reports (5 mins each)
 1. Officers
 2. Standing Committees
 3. Special Committees
- IV. Continuing Business (10 mins)
- V. New Business (10 mins)
- VI. Announcements (10 mins)
- VII. Public Comment (10 mins)
- VIII. Adjourn



Keeping time

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- The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring the meeting starts and ends at assigned times
 - ▣ May assign a timekeeper to assist
- The Chairperson adjourns the meeting when the stated time is reached
 - ▣ Or entertain motions to extend discussion
- Otherwise, the meeting ends when:
 - a. A member moves to adjourn
 - b. Another member seconds
 - c. Majority votes in favor



Helpful tip! Assigning times to orders of business helps the Chairperson limit discussion and keep the meeting progressing on time.

Using *motions* to take action

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- A ***motion*** brings a ***question*** before the committee
- Any voting member can make a ***motion*** once recognized by the Chairperson
- ***Motions*** typically require a ***second*** to proceed
 - ▣ The ***primary question*** is whatever is under discussion right now
- The ***primary question*** must be disposed or decided before moving on
 - ▣ Exceptions include ***amendments*** or ***motions affecting the content or debate*** of the primary question



Helpful tip! It is critical for the Chair to recognize the speaker so it is clear who has the floor.

Sample script for making a *motion*

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- Member addresses Chair
 - “Madam Chairperson”
- Chair recognizes member
 - “The Chair recognizes Mr. Smith”
- Member states his/her motion
 - “I move that we recess for lunch.”
- Another member seconds the motion
 - Chair does not need to recognize the second
 - If no second, Chair should ask “Is there a second?”
 - “Second”
- Chair re-states motion
 - “It has been moved that we recess for lunch.”
- Members debate
 - Discussion, one speaker at a time--
- Chair ***calls the question*** (calls for a vote)
 - “If there is no further discussion, let’s vote.
Those in favor... Those opposed... Those abstaining...”
- Members vote
 - Voting--
- Chair announces result
 - “The motion passes. We will recess until 1:30pm.”

Some *motions* require a 2/3 vote

- Especially if they affect or limit the rights of others or amend previously decided business:
 - ▣ Suspend or modify Rules of Order
 - ▣ Prevent introduction of a motion
 - ▣ Close, limit or extend debate
 - ▣ Limit freedom of nominations or voting
 - ▣ Take away membership or office



Some *motions* may be Out of Order

- Any Motion that:
 - ▣ Would suspend bylaws
 - ▣ Is in conflict with bylaws or Articles of Incorporation
 - ▣ Is outside the scope of the organization
 - ▣ Is not a motion to recess or adjourn while a quorum is not present
 - ▣ Is a personal attack
- Any member may interject with “point of order” for the chairperson to address the issue

Debate or Discussion

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- ❑ Chair begins debate by asking for discussion
- ❑ Chairperson must recognize a speaker to give them *the floor*
 - ❑ One speaker at a time
- ❑ Proposer of the motion has the first right of debate
- ❑ Chair refrains from debate while presiding
- ❑ Speakers must stay on topic, otherwise they are out of order
- ❑ Any motion that stops or limits debate requires a two-thirds majority

Voting

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- All members who are present have a duty to vote
- Abstentions should only be for specific reasons
- A tied vote is a failed vote
 - Under a tie, the Chair has the option of voting
 - The Chair may vote anytime it will affect the outcome

Keeping meeting minutes

- Responsibility of Secretary (DPH staff) to ensure minutes are recorded
- Minutes record what happened, not a verbatim transcript of what was said
 - ▣ Seconds need not be recorded
- Minutes serve as the official record of events
 - ▣ May be corrected

Recap

Key takeaways

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- All members are equal and their rights are equal
 - ▣ Rights include: attending meetings, making motions, speaking, and holding office
- Conducting business requires:
 - ▣ A quorum
 - ▣ An agenda
 - ▣ A Chairperson to preside
 - ▣ A Secretary to record minutes
- Majority rules unless otherwise stipulated
 - ▣ “A two-thirds vote is necessary whenever limiting or taking away the rights of members or changing a previous decision.”
- One speaker at a time, and one question at a time
 - ▣ “Motions must be related to matters under consideration.”
 - ▣ “Once a member has been ‘recognized’ this individual has been granted ‘the floor’ and may not be interrupted by another member.”
- Personal remarks are always out of order

THANK YOU!



Resource Development Associates

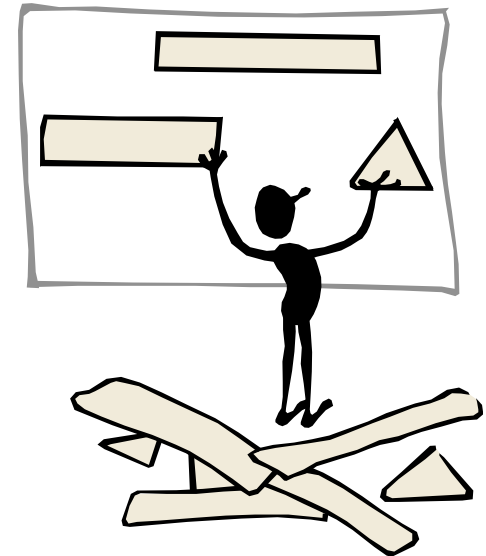
APPENDICES

Common Motions

- To Amend
- To Call for the Question
- To Refer to a Committee
- To (Lay on the) Table
- To Withdraw
- To Rise to a Point of Order
- To Adjourn

Move to Amend (a motion)

- Methods of Amending
 - ▣ Insert (inside the motion)
 - ▣ Add (at the end)
 - ▣ Strike out
 - ▣ Strike out and insert (words only)
 - ▣ Substitute (a paragraph)
- Must be germane to main motion

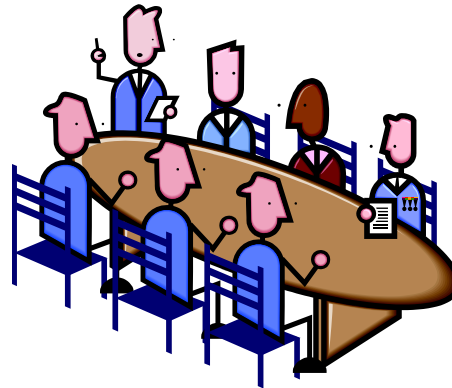


Move to Call for the Question

- Actual motion is “Call the Previous Question”
 - ▣ Must be recognized by chair to make motion, cannot be just shouted out
- Is a vote to stop debate and not to vote on pending motion
- Requires a 2/3 vote to pass
 - ▣ If receives 2/3 vote, motion passes and debate is stopped and a vote is taken immediately on pending question
 - ▣ If does not receive 2/3 vote, motion fails and debate continues

Move to Refer (to Committee)

- Allows for additional information or study of issue before voting
- Motion to Refer should include details of who the committee will be and who will appoint
- Usually defines time for committee to report



Move to Table

- Proper form of motion is to “Lay on the Table”
 - ▣ Misuse of “Postpone Indefinitely” or “Postpone to a Definite Time”
- Intention sometimes is “Refer” or “Commit” which sends to committee for further review
- Out of order when no business is pending
- Definite time to “Take From the Table”
 - ▣ If next meeting within quarter, by end of next meeting
 - ▣ Over quarter, end of current session

Move to Withdraw

- Motion can be withdrawn at any time prior to voting
- Before restated by chair belongs to maker
 - ▣ Can be withdrawn, changed or modified in any way with only approval of maker
- After restating, belongs to assembly
 - ▣ Maker asks permission to withdraw
 - ▣ Chair treats first as unanimous-consent request
 - ▣ If objection, treated as a subsidiary motion

Move to Rise to a Point of Order

- Often just “Point of Order”
- Used to correct a mistake in procedure
- Can interrupt a speaker
- Doesn't require a second
- Is not debatable
- Chair rules
- Must be raised at time of mistake before action has been taken

Move to Adjourn

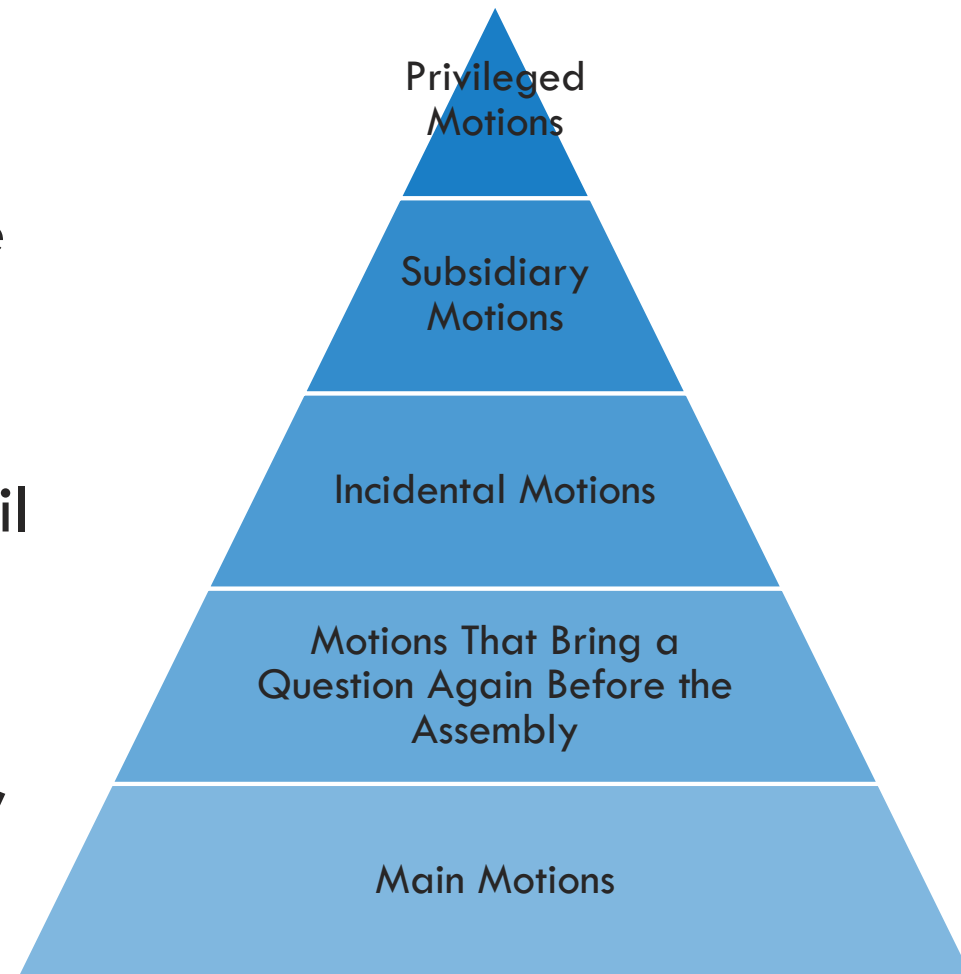
- Next to highest ranking motion
- Fix the time to which to adjourn is highest
- Can not interrupt a speaker
- Requires a second
- Not debatable
- Majority rules
- Chair can adjourn without motion
 - ▣ If no other business is pending
 - ▣ If time is reached on an adopted agenda



Classes of Motions

Classes of Motions (ranking)

- Main Motions are the lowest ranking motion, meaning only one can be on the floor at a time.
- Once pending, no lower motions can be made until the primary question is decided
 - ▣ Except Incidental Motions, which are non-ranked



Main Motions

- Main motion is the basis that drives business
 - ▣ Lowest ranking motion, which means all other motions take precedent
 - ▣ Brings before the assembly a question or business consideration
 - Requires second
 - Is debatable
 - Approved by majority vote, unless some provision in bylaws require different vote
 - ▣ Only one main motion can be on the floor at a time

Motions That Bring a Question Again

- Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly
 - ▣ Brings back to the assembly a question that has already been considered
 - ▣ Requires a second
 - ▣ May or may not be debatable

- Examples:
 - ▣ To reconsider
 - ▣ To rescind
 - ▣ To take from the table

Incidental Motions

- Incidental Motions
 - Non ranked, which means they can be made in any order
 - Incidental to pending motions or business at hand
 - Not debatable

- Examples:
 - To suspend the rules
 - To withdraw a motion
 - To call for reading of papers
 - To object to consideration
 - To rise to a point of order
 - To rise to a parliamentary inquiry
 - To appeal from the decision of the Chair
 - To call for a division of the house
 - To call for a division of the question

Subsidiary Motions

- Subsidiary Motions
 - Assisting in treating or disposing of a main motion
 - Require second
 - May be debatable
 - Requires majority vote unless involving rights of others
 - Call for previous question (2/3)
 - Limit or extend of debate (2/3)

- Examples:
 - To lay on the table
 - To call for the previous question
 - To limit or extend debate
 - To postpone to a definite time
 - To refer to a committee
 - To amend
 - To postpone indefinitely

Privileged Motions

- Privileged Motions
 - ▣ Do not relate to pending business
 - ▣ Related to the rights and privileges to the assembly or to its members
 - ▣ Not debatable

- Examples:
 - ▣ To fix the time to which to adjourn
 - ▣ To adjourn
 - ▣ To Recess
 - ▣ To rise to a question of privilege
 - ▣ To call for the order of the day

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Committee Positions

Responsibilities of the Chair

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- Call the meeting to order
 - ▣ “The meeting will come to order.”
- Preside
 - ▣ Maintain cohesion and process
- Be prepared
 - ▣ Understand committee rules and bylaws
- Stay organized
 - ▣ Send agenda out ahead of time
 - ▣ Start and end on time
- Expectations
 - ▣ Start and end on time
 - ▣ Remain impartial and composed
 - ▣ Decide on Questions of Order
 - ▣ Recognize presence or absence of a Quorum
 - ▣ Announce all Official Business
 - ▣ Refrain from Discussion and Vote on any Motion (unless a tie occurs)
 - ▣ Restate motions before voting commences
- Privileges
 - ▣ Can approve minutes without a motion
 - ▣ Can adjourn without a motion after asking for new business and hearing none OR when the adjournment time has been reached

Responsibilities of the Secretary

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- Assign a Secretary to record meeting minutes
 - ▣ Permanent and legal record of the meeting
- Minutes must
 - ▣ Be as concise as possible
 - ▣ Include date, time, location, and attendees of meeting
 - ▣ Describe discussion items in brief
 - ▣ Record all motions, including name of mover, name of seconder, and vote results
 - ▣ Record time of commencement and time of adjournment