

Robert's Rules— Cheat Sheet

Types of Motions

1. **Main Motion:** Introduce a new item
2. **Subsidiary Motion:** Change or affect how to handle a main motion (vote on this before main motion)
3. **Privileged Motion:** Urgent or important matter unrelated to pending business
4. **Incidental Motion:** Questions procedure of other motions (must consider before the other motion)
5. **Motion to Table:** Kills a motion
6. **Motion to Postpone:** Delays a vote (can reopen debate on the main motion)

Every Motion Has 6 Steps:

1. **Motion:** A member rises or raises a hand to signal the chairperson.
2. **Second:** Another member seconds the motion.
3. **Restate motion:** The chairperson restates the motion.
4. **Debate:** The members debate the motion.
5. **Vote:** The chairperson restates the motion, and then first asks for affirmative votes, and then negative votes.
6. **Announce the vote:** The chairperson announces the result of the vote and any instructions.

TIP! If the board is in obvious agreement, the chairperson may save time by stating, "If there is no objection, we will adopt the motion to..." Then wait for any objections. Then say, "Hearing no objections, (state the motion) is adopted." And then state any instructions. If a member objects, first ask for debate, then vote and then announce the vote.

Requesting Points of Something

Certain situations need attention during the meeting, but they don't require a motion, second, debate or voting. It's permissible to state a point during a meeting where the chairperson needs to handle a situation right away. Board members can declare a Point of Order, Point of Information, Point of Inquiry or Point of Personal Privilege.

Point of Order: Draws attention to a breach of rules, improper procedure, breaching of established practices, etc.

Point of Information: A member may need to bring up an additional point or additional information (in the form of a non-debatable statement) so that the other members can make fully informed votes.

Point of Inquiry: A member may use point of inquiry to ask for clarification in a report to make better voting decisions.

Point of Personal Privilege: A member may use point of personal privilege to address the physical comfort of the setting such as temperature or noise. Members may also use it to address the accuracy of published reports or the accuracy of a member's conduct.

*A member may make a motion to reconsider something that was already disposed; however, the reconsidered motion may not be subsequently reconsidered. A motion to reconsider must be made during the same meeting and can extend to a meeting that lasts for more than one day.

ACTION	WHAT TO SAY	CAN I INTERRUPT SPEAKER?	NEED A SECOND?	CAN BE DEBATED?	CAN BE AMENDED?	VOTES NEEDED
Introduce main motion	"I move to..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..." (Add or strike words or both)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Move item to committee	"I move that we refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Postpone item	"I move to postpone the matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Object to procedure	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decision
Recess the meeting	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adjourn the meeting	"I move to adjourn the meeting."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Request information	"Point of information."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Overrule the chair's ruling	"I move to overrule the chair's ruling."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Extend the allotted time	"I move to extend the time by _____ minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3 vote
Enforce the rules or point out incorrect procedure	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Table a motion	"I move to table."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority

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Nonprofit Board Meeting Agenda Sample

Traditional Nonprofit Agenda Sample

The most common type of agenda format is the traditional agenda. There's some room for flexibility based on the organization's needs, but this agenda generally follows the following format.

- Welcome
- Call to order
- Approve the minutes of the last meeting
- Executive director's report
- Finance committee report
- Nominating and governance committee report
- Program committee report
- Fundraising committee report
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Board development
- Guest presentations (you may move this up earlier in the agenda so guests don't have to sit through the entire meeting)
- Adjournment

The finance committee usually distributes quarterly reports, and the board may have a brief discussion about the projected budget and the actual budget. The agenda may also include cyclical items, such as the audit, elections or other annual events.

Strategic Nonprofit Agenda Sample

- Welcome
- Opening thoughts. A different board member opens the meeting with an opening thought.
- Call to order
- Consent Agenda. This usually includes the minutes of the last meeting and other routine items that require little or no discussion. Board members can move to withdraw an item from the consent agenda if it needs additional discussion.
- Finance committee report
- Nominating and governance committee report
- Program committee report
- Fundraising committee report
- Discussion of strategic initiatives
- Board development
- Unfinished business
- Adjournment

The idea behind a strategic agenda is to streamline routine items to allow board members to spend most of the meeting time on strategic planning. Some nonprofit boards have found that it's helpful to throw out a brainstorming question like, "What's keeping you up at night?" to get board discussions started.

Customized Nonprofit Agenda Sample

Taking a nontraditional approach to the agenda forces board members to pay attention. They'll usually keep their agendas front and center because they won't be able to memorize the order of the agenda. Place important information like important dates or other critical information at the top of the agenda, because board members will see them repeatedly as they look for their places on the agenda.

- Welcome
- Call to order
- Reading of the mission statement
- Board chair remarks
- 7-minute briefing
- 7-minute question-and-answer session
- Upcoming events or program planning
- Open-ended discussion on outside factors
- Minutes and commitments review
- Finance committee report
- Nominating task force
- Executive Director responds to questions

Board chair remarks refers to anything that's been weighing on the mind of the board chair. This could be an opportunity for a new fundraising idea, board development, organizational culture, potential risks or anything else that may be weighing on someone's mind.

The board member briefing gives boards a short time to hear from a board member about the knowledge or expertise that they've gained in their professional life that may help other board members. Boards can also use this time to hear from a board member who uses the services of the nonprofit. Rotate speakers so all board members have a chance to share their knowledge and experiences. Follow the brief with an additional seven minutes of questions and answers.

The reason for offering a short time to discuss outside factors is because many changes happen in communities over the course of a year. Nonprofit boards can address outside changes in a shorter amount of time when they make time on the agenda to discuss them as they occur, as opposed to discussing multiple changes in an annual meeting.

Prior to approving the minutes, boards may take a few minutes to review any follow-up actions that board members promised to take after the last meeting.

Board members should get a copy of the Executive Director report with their board packets. They should receive it in enough time to review it and to prepare questions. Provide a few minutes toward the end of each meeting for board members to ask questions.

Many boards find that this format offers them increased opportunities for two-way communications and sets the tone for strengthening their relationship with the Executive Director.

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ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

Tips & Reminders

Robert's Rules of Order, which is also widely known as parliamentary procedure, was developed to ensure that meetings are fair, efficient, democratic and orderly. The following tips and reminders will help chairpersons to run a successful and productive meeting without being run over or running over others.



Follow the agenda to keep the group moving toward its goals



Let the group do its own work; don't overcommand



Control the flow of the meeting by recognizing members who ask to speak



Let all members speak once before allowing anyone to speak a second time



When discussions get off-track, gently guide the group back to the agenda



Model courtesy and respect, and insist that others do the same



Help to develop the board's skills in parliamentary procedure by properly using motions and points of order



Give each speaker your undivided attention



Keep an emotional pulse on the discussions



Allow a consensus to have the final authority of the group