



APPENDIX I

Overview of Robert's Rules of Order

This document provides a broad overview of Robert's Rules of Order ("the Rules"), the most widely-used procedural manual for meetings, discussion, and group decision-making in the English-speaking world.

Whether in Council meetings, Committee, or in any group dialogue/decision-making process, the Rules offer a process that encourages critical thinking, respectful debate, and consensus-building. Of course, it may also be appropriate to modify or deviate from the Rules in certain situations. For example, the Governance Policy deviates from the Rules by not allowing Council members to abstain from voting except for reason of conflict of interest.

This document provides a detailed overview of key aspects of the Rules, but it is not exhaustive and does not deal with every possible situation. In certain situations, Council may need to make recourse to the Rules and clarifications themselves, available online at <http://www.robertsrules.com/>

N.B. Although this Overview refers to "Council members", when a committee is struck by RRFNs, it may include non-Council members. Therefore, the phrase "Council member" may be modified as required for use of Robert's Rules by Committees.

Contents

GENERAL RULES	2
ATTENDANCE	2
KEY ROLES	2
BASIC PROCEDURE	2
QUORUM	2
VOTING ON MOTIONS	2
BASICS	2
WHO AND WHEN	3
THE NINE CORE MOTIONS	3
1. MOTIONS.....	4
2. POSTPONEMENTS (INDEFINITE).....	4
3. AMENDMENT	5
4. COMMIT / SEND TO COMMITTEE	6
5. CALL A VOTE / "CALL THE QUESTION" (archaic)	6
6. TABLE + "TAKE UP" FROM TABLE.....	7
7. RECONSIDER.....	8
8. RECESS.....	9
9. ADJOURN / END MEETING	9
PROCEDURAL TOOLS FOR INFORMATION / CONDUCT	10
1. OBJECTION	11

2. POINT OF PRIVILEGE	11
3. POINT OF ORDER.....	11
4. INFORMATION REQUEST	11
5. APPEAL A CHAIR’S DECISION / MOVE TO OVERTURN	12
6. SUSPEND THE RULES / CONSIDER OUT OF ORDER	12

GENERAL RULES

ATTENDANCE

Attendance should be taken at the beginning of every Council meeting.

KEY ROLES

There is always a Chairperson.

A secretary takes the minutes of every meeting.

BASIC PROCEDURE

The meeting will always follow the Agenda. (Exceptions include tabling/taking up items and motions to change the agenda order.)

Council members address all comments to the Chair. There is a general rule against interrupting. All Council members must wait their turn to speak, and only speak when recognized by the Chair. (Exceptions include “interruption” motions, such as points of order, and are discussed towards the end of this summary.)

Council members are to speak clearly and concisely. They are to be polite, courteous, and patient.

Decisions are made by way of voting on motions.

QUORUM

Note that any Council vote requires a Quorum to be present. Quorum is defined as a majority of Council members, not including Council members unable to vote due to a conflict of interest, and in any event no fewer than three (3) Council members.

VOTING ON MOTIONS

BASICS

The foundational element of the Rules is the “Motion.” This document provides an overview of nine key motion types further below.

Motions are approved either by simple majority or by 2/3 majority, depending on the type of motion. (This is discussed in detail for each of the key motions further below.)

- ➔ “Majority” is defined as “a simple majority of those present and voting”
- ➔ 2/3 Majority is defined as “2/3 or more of those present and voting”

➔ A motion that results in a Tie vote is defeated.

There are several ways to vote.

1. **Voice:** On a given motion, the Chair calls for all those who approve to say, “Aye”, and all who oppose to say “Nay.” If it isn’t clear after hearing the ayes/nays which has a majority, any Council member can call for an individual count of all “ayes” and “nays.”
 - **Hand Count / Standing:** in this variant, the Chair calls for all those approve to raise their hands / stand, and then for all those who oppose to do the same.
2. **Roll Call:** Same as Voice, only the Chair names each Council member in turn, and each member responds “Aye” or “Nay” and their vote is counted.
3. **General Consent:** On uncontroversial motions, or motions unlikely to be opposed, the Chair may say, “If there is no objection, the motion passes...” However, if a single Council member says, “I object”, the particular item is put to a vote.
4. **Ballot:** Council members write their choice on a slip of paper, which is placed in a box. Preferred for secret ballots / to preserve anonymity of the voters.

Typically, most voting is done by Voice or Hand Count, and is not confidential. However, it is up to the Council to select its voting method, and at any time a member may move for a different voting format.

WHO AND WHEN

All Council members are entitled to vote, provided they are not in conflict of interest.

The Chair (generally the Chief) is entitled to vote.

Abstention: While the Rules permit abstention, this has been modified through the Governance Policy. Therefore for purposes of RRFNs Council votes, abstentions are not permitted except where a Council member would be in a conflict of interest. The RRFNs Governance Policy requires Council members to declare their conflicts of interest and abstain from any votes for which they have a conflict.

When votes occur/Introducing a motion for voting: All Motions/procedures require an initial person to introduce the Motion, almost always beginning with the phrase “I move that...”

In each case, the initial mover needs to raise their hand and wait until they are recognized by the Chair, giving them the opportunity to speak. The moving person must, as a rule, wait until the previous speaker has finished speaking before being given the opportunity to speak.

A second person must support the procedure/motion in order for it to be discussed/voted on. The seconder says, “I second it” or “seconded.” This person does not need to wait to be recognized in order to “second.”

THE NINE CORE MOTIONS

Procedurally, the Rules break down into nine basic elements, each one a variant of the fundamental procedure of the “Motion”. Below, we break down these nine types of motions:

1. Motions
2. Postponements (Indefinite)

3. Amendments
4. Commit / Send to Committee
5. Call a Vote
6. Table + “Take Up” From Table
7. Reconsider
8. Recess
9. Adjourn

Following this section, there is one final section addressing the additional procedural tools that are used to address matters of conduct or information. These include “point of order”, “point of information”, and “suspend the rules.”

1. MOTIONS

➔ “I move that...”

The Motion is the fundamental way to introduce any topic / order of business / proposed decision or action. Motions are always introduced by one person.

First rule: wait until the previous topic has been fully discussed, and the last speaker has finished speaking. in order to introduce a topic, the speaker raises their hand or stands and waits until the Chair “recognizes” them, giving them the chance to speak.

The motion always begins with the phrase, “I move that ...” followed by an introduction of the subject matter in a few words. As mentioned, Motions must be seconded: for a motion to be discussed, a second person needs to say, “I second it.” At this point, the Chair then restates the original motion for the benefit of the group, i.e., “It has been moved and seconded that X...”

Motions are where the action happens. The group then proceeds with a discussion / debate of the topic, using the various other procedures (see #2-7 below) – e.g. the Motion may be amended, tabled, and so on.

Procedural Requirements:

- 1st person to introduce motion
- 2nd person to second motion
- When a vote is called, a majority vote is required in order for the motion to pass

EXAMPLE OF A MOTION:

Ms. A: “I move that the Council build a new football field.”

Ms. B: “I second this.”

The Council debates the football field, where to put it, how much to spend, etc. Then the Chair calls a vote (more on calling a vote below), the majority approves and RRFNS has decided to build a new field.

2. POSTPONEMENTS (INDEFINITE)

➔ “I move to indefinitely postpone the motion on the floor.”

This is used in order to end all consideration of a motion during the meeting, setting it aside and preventing the same topic from being reintroduced in the same meeting. That motion can, of course, be reintroduced at any future meeting. Postponement must be approved by a majority vote.

Procedural Requirements:

- 1st person to move to postpone
- 2nd person to second motion to postpone
- Majority vote required in order to accept postponement

EXAMPLE OF POSTPONEMENT:

Mr. C: "I move to postpone discussion of the motion to repave Main Street."

Mr. D: "Seconded."

The Chair calls a vote; the majority agrees to postpone the Main Street discussion indefinitely, i.e. at least not until the next Council meeting.

3. AMENDMENT

➔ "I move to amend the motion on the floor."

Any time a motion is being discussed, any Council member or eligible meeting participant can move to amend the motion. The motion to amend must be seconded. Amendments can be used to add something to the original motion, remove something from it, or simply tweak the form while leaving the content essentially the same.

The Majority must vote to approve the amendment for it to be accepted. That said, sometimes an amendment can be approved by "General Consent", i.e. the Chair can simply ask if there are any objections, and if nobody objects, the Motion is immediately amended, and discussion continues ahead of voting on the amended Motion.

N.B. **Once a Motion is amended**, discussion continues: approval to amend the Motion **does not mean that the original Motion has passed**. It simply means that the discussion now revolves around the Motion as Amended, leading up to a final vote on whether to pass that amended Motion.

N.B. There may be several amendments to a motion, each one debated and voted on in turn, ahead of a final vote on the Motion as Amended.

Procedural Requirements:

- 1st person to introduce amendment
- 2nd person to second the motion to amend
- Majority vote required in order to accept amendment

EXAMPLE OF AMENDMENT:

Ms. D: "I move to amend the Motion to cut down the Cherry Street oak tree. I move that we only cut off half the branches and leave it standing."

Ms. E: "Seconded."

Chair calls a vote; majority agrees to amend the Motion to cut down the Cherry Street oak tree.

Debate continues. At the conclusion of debate, there is then a vote on whether to pass the Motion as Amended. It succeeds based on the motion rules described above.

4. COMMIT / SEND TO COMMITTEE

➔ "I move to send the motion on the floor to committee."

A motion to commit suspends discussion of the motion on the floor and sends it to a committee for discussion. The motion must be proposed by one person, and seconded by another. In order to be sent to committee, the motion to commit must be supported by a majority vote.

The committee can either be an existing Standing or Special Committee, or a Special Committee can be established for the purpose of discussing the motion at hand. If there are different views on this, the Chair can call a vote on which committee to send the motion to.

At the next meeting, the committee is expected to present a report on its discussion of the motion, and if prepared, to present the motion for discussion and vote by the Council.

Procedural Requirements:

- 1st person to move to commit
- 2nd person to second the motion to commit
- Majority vote required in order to commit to committee

EXAMPLE OF COMMIT:

Ms. E: "I move to commit the question of education budget allocation to the Budget Committee."

Ms. F: "Seconded."

Chair calls a vote, and majority of Council agrees to send the education budget to the Budget Committee, who will return to the next meeting with a report on their recommendation.

5. CALL A VOTE / "CALL THE QUESTION" (archaic)

➔ "I call a vote on the motion currently on the floor."

Use this to propose ending all discussion of the motion currently on the floor, so as to immediately vote on the motion. One person moves to "call a vote" (some refer to this as "calling the question"), and someone else must "second" this call.

At this point, the Chair immediately calls for a vote on whether or not to end discussion of the motion.

N.B. There is no discussion here: the group immediately votes on whether to end debate.

A motion to "call a vote" succeeds only if 2/3 (two-thirds) of the group support the call.

IF a move to “call a vote” succeeds, the Chair *then* calls a vote on the original motion on the floor. There is no more debate; the group goes directly to voting on the original motion.

It is also possible to move to “call a vote” on *all* outstanding motions. If such a call succeeds, there is no more group debate, and all motions are put to a vote, one after the other.

Procedural Requirements (this can be tricky!) :

- 1st person moves to “call a vote”
- 2nd person seconds the “call”
- Chair immediately calls a vote on whether to end debate on the current motion
 - ➔ IF 2/3 majority approve the “call a vote”, all debate on the current motion ends
 - THEN, Chair calls a vote on the motion itself. Approval by majority/quorum, as described under I. Motions above.
 - ➔ IF motion to “call a vote” is not approved by 2/3 majority, debate continues.

EXAMPLE OF CALLING A VOTE:

Council is currently debating a Motion to hire a contractor.

Mr. J. raises hand, and after being recognized by the Chair, says, “I call a vote on the Motion.”

Ms. K says, “Seconded.”

The Chair immediately calls a vote on whether to end debate of the Motion to hire the contractor.

2/3 of Council approve of the motion to “call a vote.”

The Chair now immediately calls a vote on the original Motion, whether to hire the contractor. It passes/fails based on the standard Motion rules.

6. TABLE + “TAKE UP” FROM TABLE

- ➔ “I move that we table discussion of the current motion, and return to it no later than the end of the meeting.”

A motion to table is typically used when a Council member, or the group itself, is waiting on more information in order to cast an informed vote. For example, during debate of a motion, the group may collectively realize that it lacks information about some key elements. It may well be that something to be discussed later in the meeting will help clarify the motion at hand. At this point, someone will propose “tabling” the discussion until later in that meeting or at a subsequent meeting.

Council can agree to Table until a specific moment, i.e. “after Topic X has been discussed.” Alternately, as in the example above, something can be tabled until “no later than the end of the meeting.”

“Taking Up” From Table

- ➔ “I move that we take up the motion on X.”

At any time, a Council member may move to “take up” a previously tabled item from earlier in the meeting. This simply means returning to discussion of the tabled item, for example after the Councillor has obtained the information they were waiting on.

Procedural Requirements – TABLE:

- 1st person to move to table
- 2nd person to second the motion
- Majority vote required in order to table the discussion

Procedural Requirements – TAKE UP FROM TABLE

- 1st person to move to take up from table
- 2nd person to second the motion to take up
- Majority vote required in order to take up the tabled item

EXAMPLE OF TABLING:

Council is discussing whether to repaint the high school.

Ms. L says, “I move to table discussion of repainting until the end of today’s Council meeting. I see on the agenda that the high school principal will be presenting to us later today.”

Mr. M says, “I second this.”

Chair calls a vote; a majority agrees to table discussion until after the principal’s presentation.

EXAMPLE OF TAKING UP:

Ms. N. has successfully moved to table discussion of the annual budget until “no later than the end of the meeting.”

After several other budget-related items are discussed, it becomes clear that no further information about the budget will be presented during the meeting.

At this point, Mr. Z, another Councillor, moves to “take up” the budget discussion.

Chair calls a vote; a majority agrees to recommence the budget discussion.

7. RECONSIDER

➔ “I move to reconsider Council’s previous decision on Motion XYZ...”

It is possible to reconsider an item that was previously already decided upon by vote. A councillor can move to reconsider if they have changed their mind about how they voted or if they want to amend the Motion, even though it has already passed/failed. In this case, the person making the motion to reconsider **must be from the prevailing side in the original vote, i.e. the mover must be someone who voted with the majority when the issue was previously considered.**

➔ For example, if the majority voted *against* adopting a new band logo, any Council member who voted with the majority *against* the new logo can move to reconsider that motion.

- ➔ Similarly, if the majority voted *for* a new logo, any Council member who voted *for* the new logo can move to reconsider that decision.

This motion can be seconded by anyone. The item will only be reconsidered if a 2/3 majority vote to reconsider.

Procedural requirements:

- 1st person, who previously voted with majority on an item, moves to reconsider it
- 2nd person to second this
- Chair calls vote; 2/3 majority required in order to reconsider the previously-decided item

EXAMPLE OF RECONSIDERING

Ms. Q: “I move to reconsider the decision to cut half the branches off the Cherry Street oak tree. I originally voted with the majority who approved that motion.”

Ms. R: “Seconded.”

Chair calls a vote; 2/3 majority approves reconsideration of the Cherry Street oak tree. The original decision to approve that motion is set aside, and discussion recommences about the tree. At the end of this discussion, the Chair calls a standard Motion vote on whether or not to approve the Motion to cut the branches off the oak tree.

8. RECESS

- ➔ “I call for a recess of fifteen minutes...”

A motion to recess is a motion to suspend the meeting for a given period of time. It can be used when Council members are getting tired, or, for example, could benefit from an unscheduled snack or coffee break. Significantly, because a Recess can be called at any time during discussion, it can actually be made during discussion of a motion, thereby pausing it temporarily until the Recess concludes.

Procedural Requirements:

- 1st person to move for recess
- 2nd person to second
- Although a Majority vote is technically required in order to call a recess, the Chair will often recess by general consent, i.e. “If there is no objection...”

9. ADJOURN / END MEETING

- ➔ “I move to adjourn the meeting...”

A motion to adjourn is simply a motion to end the meeting for the day. It must be seconded, and approved by Majority vote.

A motion to adjourn can, like recess, be called at any time. However, if a Council member moves for adjournment in the middle of discussing a motion, they are unlikely to obtain majority approval. It is good form to wait until an Agenda item or Motion has been fully discussed and voted on, before moving to

Adjourn. A motion to Adjourn can adjourn to a specific time, i.e. “I move to adjourn until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.”, OR there can simply be an adjournment “until our next meeting.”

N.B. Every meeting ends with a motion to adjourn.

Adjourned Meetings – Continuation:

If a meeting is adjourned before the completion of the Agenda, the next meeting will pick up at the same point in the Agenda, and addressing the subsequent remaining Agenda items in order.

Procedural Requirements:

- 1st person to move to adjourn
- 2nd person to second
- Majority vote
- Although a Majority vote is technically required in order to call a recess, the Chair will often recess by general consent, i.e. “If there is no objection...”

EXAMPLE OF ADJOURNMENT:

All agenda topics have been discussed. Tabled motions have been revisited where applicable. Everyone is tired and wants to go home.

Ms. N says, “I move to adjourn.”

Ms. O says, “Seconded!”

The Chair says, “If there is no objection, meeting is adjourned.”

PROCEDURAL TOOLS FOR INFORMATION / CONDUCT

There are additionally some handy tools that can help guide discussion.

Notably, a Council member may interrupt any speaker at any time in order to raise these points.

Most of these procedures do NOT need to be “seconded” but are simply put to immediate vote/consideration by the Chair.

These are:

1. Objection
2. Point of privilege
3. Point of order
4. Information request
5. Appeal: how to overturn a Chair’s ruling
6. Suspend the rules / Reorder agenda

1. OBJECTION

Objection is like postponing indefinitely, except it is deployed immediately upon introduction of a motion, before debate commences. This tactic is intended to suppress *any* consideration of a motion. Often, it will be used to prevent discussion of an embarrassing or irrelevant topic. It does not need to be seconded.

Procedural Requirements:

- 1st person objects *immediately* after motion introduced, saying “I object.”
- Chair calls vote; Objector must win a 2/3 majority vote in order to suppress the motion

2. POINT OF PRIVILEGE

Points of privilege are more about the conduct of the meeting than its content. A Point of Privilege typically relates to one of four things:

1. Comfort: dealing with a problem in the room, i.e. cold air coming in through a window
2. Noise/Amplification: for example, if it is difficult to hear a speaker
3. Safety: Permits safety concerns to be discussed. N.B. Robert’s Rules are *always* suspended in cases of actual emergency; there is no need to move to adjourn if, say, there is an earthquake.
4. Personal Privilege: if an individual needs to leave the room for whatever reason

Points of Privilege are rarely voteable; the Chair simply takes a moment to address the issue. If the Point interrupted another speaker, the Chair will often give the initial speaker the chance to conclude, provided the Privilege matter is not so urgent.

Procedural requirements:

- 1st person raises Point of Privilege
- Chair’s consideration

3. POINT OF ORDER

This is used in order to object to some element of the conduct of the meeting. Typically, this might be:

1. Personal affront, i.e. a Council member feels they have been insulted;
2. Procedural matter, i.e. object to how a vote is being counted; or
3. Rules violation, i.e. identifying how Council or a Council member has violated a Robert’s Rule

As with Points of Privilege, there is no vote: the Chair must decide how to deal with the Point of Order.

Procedural requirements:

- 1st person raises Point of Order, interrupting the current speaker as the case may be
- Chair considers Point of Order

4. INFORMATION REQUEST

This is used in order to request more information related to the motion on the floor. Even though the question may be directed at another Council member, it is good form to ask the Chair the question, and

the Chair will then turn and repeat it to the relevant Council member. Although it is possible to interrupt a speaker in order to request information, err on the side of politeness.

Procedural requirements:

- 1st person requests information of the Chair.
 - ➔ Even though the question is aimed at another Council member, for example the current speaker, it is appropriate to ask the Chair instead of turning and asking the Council member directly

5. APPEAL A CHAIR'S DECISION / MOVE TO OVERTURN

It is possible to appeal a Chair's decision on any of the above or any other points, including something like how a vote was counted. A move to appeal **can interrupt any other speaker**, and must be seconded. The Chair then calls a vote, and their decision is automatically overturned if a simply majority agrees with the Motion to Appeal.

Procedural requirements:

- 1st person moves to appeal the Chair's decision. This can be done at any time, interrupting anyone.
- 2nd person seconds.
- Chair calls vote; if Majority votes to overturn, the Chair's decision is overturned.

6. SUSPEND THE RULES / CONSIDER OUT OF ORDER

Any Council member can move to "suspend the rules" in order to do something normally not permitted. This is a *procedural* tool: it is used to suspend rules of committee procedure; **it cannot be used** to, i.e., **suspend rules about RRFNs** administration or to suspend a previously-adopted Council policy.

Most commonly, this is used for a **non-controversial situation: changing the order of the Agenda to consider an item out of order**. For example, a Council member can move to consider Agenda Item 7 before Agenda Item 4, by "suspending" the rule that agenda items must be heard in order.

However, there may be situations where there is special business that would in spirit violate the Rules. A **Council member may move to allow this special business by suspending the rules**. An example is to "reset" discussion of a particularly contentious or complicated Motion. In this situation, a Council member moves that all prior debate and any previously-accepted amendments be set aside, in order to start discussion anew. They do so by saying, "I move to suspend the rules and reset discussion."

A motion to suspend the rules **cannot interrupt another speaker**. A motion to suspend must be seconded. It must be **approved by a 2/3 majority** in order to pass (with one key exception, see #5 below).

Note the following about rules that can never be suspended:

1. The rules can never be suspended so as to allow ineligible persons to vote.
2. The rules can never be suspended so as to waive the requirement of quorum.
3. The rules can never be suspended so as to suspend any Council by-laws or foundational document.

4. It is never permissible to vote to strip a Council member of their right to attend meetings, make motions, speak, or vote. Even in cases of disciplinary issues, those are addressed by the Council procedures on discipline.

Procedural requirements:

- 1st person moves to suspend the rules so as to do a normally impermissible action.
- 2nd person seconds.
- Chair calls vote; 2/3 majority approves suspending the rules to allow the action.