



# Roberts Rules of Order: A Primer

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- Wrote the manual because of an embarrassing performance running church meeting





# General Outline of a Meeting

- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
- Officers Reports
- Old Business (Anything unfinished from previous meeting)
- New Business
- Adjournment

# Some Basic Definitions

- Quorum – A quorum shall consist of at least one eligible vote above one-half of all the board Officers, Representatives or Alternates showing active membership in the board '
  - Current Quorum =
  - Motion – formal proposal by a member, in a meeting, that the assembly take certain action
  - Main Motions – Introduce items for consideration
  - Subsidiary Motions – change or affect how a main motion is handled, voted before main motion
  - Privileged Motions – bring up urgent business
  - Incidental Motions – provide means of questioning procedure concerning other motions



# Basic Protocol to Make a Motion

- Representative raises their hand to be recognized by presiding officer
- Member then states ‘I move that we...’
  - The member may then briefly describe the motion
- The motion must be seconded by another member of the council
- Presiding officer then calls for discussion on the motion
  - Member who introduced the motion has the right to speak first
  - Other members wishing to express their opinion on the motion on the table will raise their hands and wait to be recognized by the presiding officer in order to enable everyone to share their opinion

# What if we have Amendments to the motion on the floor?

- During discussion of the motion, a member may introduce a motion to amend the original motion once they are recognized by the presiding officer
  - This is an example of a Subsidiary motion
- The member states the amendment, which then must be seconded by another council member
- If the amendment is seconded, discussion will begin about the proposed amendment



# Means to End Debate

- Referral to Committee
  - Member makes motion to refer to committee which must be seconded and voted following any discussion
- Tabling a Motion
  - Member makes motion to table the original matter on the table which must be seconded and voted on immediately
- Removing a Motion from the Table
- Motion to Postpone

# ‘Call the Previous Question’ or ‘Previous’

- If debate has ceased to be productive, a council member or the presiding officer may call ‘Previous’ which would then immediately put the motion on the table to a vote
- If an amendment is on the table, the amendment is voted on, then discussion returns to the previous question



# Methods of Voting

- By voice
  - Those in favor say ‘aye’, those against say ‘no’
- By Roll Call
  - Poll all voting members
- By General Consent
  - When a motion is not likely to be opposed, presiding officer says ‘If there is no objection...’ Council agrees if there is no objection
- By Division
  - Verification of voice vote, members raise their hand or stand
- By Ballot
  - Members write vote on slip of paper, normally done during voting for officers

# Example of Debate with Amendments

- Motion to discuss potential grad student email listserv and newsletter
  - Discussion ensued regarding the usefulness and necessity for this listserv
  - Amendment made to for *ad hoc* committee to oversee the listserv
    - Discussion ensued
    - Matter put to a vote, returned to initial topic of the listserv itself
  - Further Discussion regarding listserv
  - Question of implementing listserv put to a vote



# Point Of Order

- ‘It is the right of every member who notices a breach of the rules to insist on their enforcement. If the chair notices a breach, he/she corrects the matter immediate; but if he/she fails to do so – through oversight or otherwise – any member can make the appropriate *point of order*’ – Roberts, Chapter VIII
- ‘In ordinary meetings it is undesirable to raise points of order on minor irregularities of a purely technical character; if it is clear that no one’s rights are being infringed upon and no real harm is being done to the proper transaction of business’