



Robert's Rules of Order

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Robert's Rules of Order

- Rules governing running a meeting
 - Derived from English parliamentary procedures
 - Provides a common framework, vocabulary, and toolset
 - Generally governs the proceedings at formal WECC meetings



Why Robert's Rules of Order?

- Facilitates meetings effectively
- Grants due process
 - Enables everyone present to participate
 - Allows decision making clarity
 - Ensures that the majority decides and the minority is heard



When Robert's Rules of Order?

- Establish quorum
- Approve the agenda
- Making motions
 - Debating
 - Amending
 - Voting
 - Disposing
- Adjourning the meeting



Main Motion

- Introduces an item of business for consideration
- Cannot be made if another main motion is on the floor
- Debatable and amendable
- Example
 - “I move that the standing committee recommend to the Board of Directors that the policy be adopted”
 - “So moved”



Subsidiary

- To change the main motion or its handling
- Example
 - “I move that ‘policy’ be capitalized and read ‘Policy’”
 - OR**
 - “I move to postpone the main motion until the next standing committee meeting in order to allow time for development of an accompanying white paper”

Privileged

- Brings up urgent, special, or important matters that are unrelated to the business on the floor
- Not debatable and do not require a second
- Decided on by the chair
- Example
 - “I move that the Board enter a closed session to address the motion on the floor”

Incidental

- Related to the business on the floor
 - Allows for a question of procedure, question or point of order
 - Example
 - “Before voting on this motion, please clarify whether the Board directed the standing committee to develop a policy as well as a plan to implement the policy”
- OR**
- “Point of Order: the motion for point of information is not a debatable motion”

Presenting a Motion

- A motion must have a second
- The chair will state the exact wording of a motion before debate begins
- In practice:
 - Wait to be recognized by the chair
 - Make a concise, affirmative motion
 - Wait for a second

Debating the Motion

- The chair facilitates but does not enter into the debate while acting as the chair
- Speakers must be recognized by the chair
- In practice
 - The chair restates the motion, calls for discussion, and facilitates the debate
 - Mover may speak first
 - Motion to limit or extend debate (two-thirds majority required)
 - Motion to end debate (two-thirds majority required)

Amending the Motion

- Revisions are accomplished by amendments
- Restate the main motion as amended
- Amendments must be addressed before returning to the main motion
- Adopting an amendment does not mean the main motion has been adopted
- Must still vote on main motion
- In Practice
 - Be recognized and state a concise amendment
 - Wait for a second

Voting on the Motion

- Charter contains rules for voting
- Chair determines how the vote will be taken
 - Unanimous consent
 - Placard or hand raising
 - Roll call or paper ballot
- The chair only votes if their vote will break a tie or if a ballot is used

Voting on the Motion

- In Practice
 - If no debate occurs, the chair can ask: “Is there any discussion?” **OR** “Are we ready to vote?”
 - If debate occurs:
 - The chair allows time for all who want to be heard, debate ends naturally when everyone is finished
 - If a participant calls the question or motions to close debate, it requires a second and two-thirds majority vote
 - Committee votes pursuant to the relevant process

Outcomes other than voting on the Main Motion

- Motion to the table
 - A way to postpone the motion until a later time during the current meeting or a later meeting
- Motion to postpone indefinitely
 - A way to terminate consideration of a motion

Tips

If you want to:	You say:	Action to follow
Establish quorum	Do we have a quorum present?	WECC staff will review attendees and quorum requirements in the charter.
Request a motion for approval	Is there a motion for approval of the...	Ask for a second
	Is there a second?	
If there are no objections	The ...is approved	
If there are objections	We can open discussion of this item	Discussion and possibly a vote
Call for a vote	We will need to vote	
Ask for supporting votes	All in favor of approval	Count votes
Ask for opposing votes	All opposed to approval	Count votes
Ask for abstentions	Any abstaining?	Count votes and determine the outcome
Go into closed session *only for groups approved to hold closed sessions	Is there a motion to go into closed session?	If there are no objections, this ends the open session
Close the meeting * no motion needed	Since there are no other items, we will adjourn the meeting OR Since we are out of time, we will adjourn the meeting.	

Quick Reference

Robert's Rules Quick Reference

	If you want to:	You say:	Can you interrupt?	Is second ¹ required?	Is debate allowed?	Can motion be amended?	Votes to pass
Main Motion (in order of precedence)	Take a break	I move to recess for...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
	Go into closed session	Question of privilege	Yes	No ²	No	No	Chair rules ³
	Register a complaint	Question of privilege	Yes	No ²	No	No	Chair rules
	Return to the agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules
	Postpone temporarily	I move to lay on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	End debate	I call the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
	Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited/extended to...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
	Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Change the motion	I move to amend the motion ⁴	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Kill the main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	Introduce business	I move that (or to)...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Make a nomination ⁵	I nominate...	No	No	Yes	No	Majority
	Enforce a rule	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules
	Overtake a chair ruling	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Yes ⁶	Yes	No	No	Majority
	Not consider a motion	I object to consideration of...	Yes ⁷	No	No	No	2/3
	Divide a motion	I move to divide the question...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
	Request a rising vote	I move for a rising vote	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules
	Request information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules
	Take matter from table	I move to take from the table...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	Cancel previous action	I move to rescind...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2/3 or Majority ⁸
Reconsider motion ⁹	I move to reconsider...	No	Yes	Varies	No	Majority	

¹Motions made at the request of the chair require no second.

²If a motion is made following a claim of privilege, that motion will require a second.

³The chair rules on whether it is appropriate to request a closed session; actually going into closed session requires conformance with Board policy.

⁴There is no such thing as a "friendly amendment," once a motion has been made, seconded, and acknowledged by the chair, the motion becomes property of the group.

⁵Unless specified in the Bylaws or group charter, the chair will open nominations.

⁶Only at the time of the decision.

⁷Only before debate has begun.

⁸If the motion to rescind was noticed, a simple majority is required, otherwise 2/3.

⁹Only a person who previously voted on the prevailing side may move for reconsideration.



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