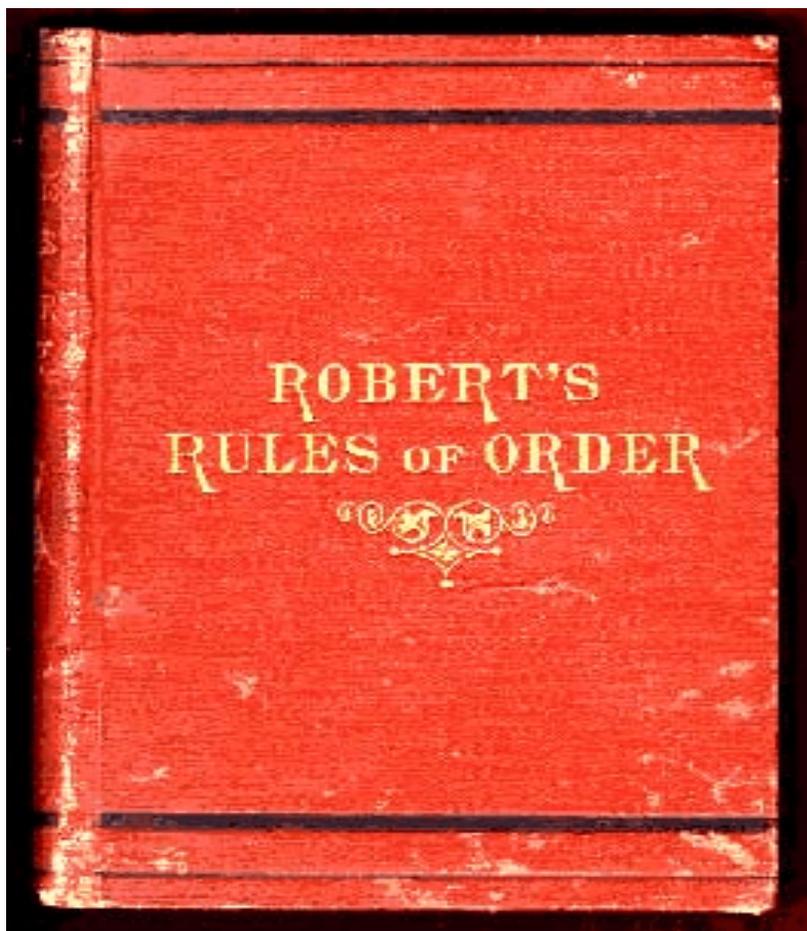


# ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

A SHORT HANDBOOK OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES  
FOR THE TIMBERLAKE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION



By Henry Martyn Robert

Published in 1876

Revised in 1990

# Introduction

This handbook is an abridged discussion of the basic rules and principals embodied in the 704 page Robert's Rules of Order, published in 1876 by US Army Major Henry Martyn Robert and revised in 1990. It is adapted from material provided by the Virginia State Association of Parliamentarians.

The procedures prescribed by the book were loosely modeled after those used in the United States House of Representatives, with such adaptations as Robert saw fit for use in ordinary societies. The author's interest in parliamentary procedure began in 1863 when he was chosen to preside over a church meeting and, although he accepted the task, felt that he did not have the necessary knowledge of proper procedure. In his later work as an active member of several organizations, he discovered that members from different areas of the country had very different views regarding what the proper parliamentary rules were, and these conflicting views hampered the organizations in their work. He eventually became convinced of the need for a new manual on the subject, one which would enable many organizations to adopt the same set of rules.

## Membership Privileges and Responsibilities

No organization can exist without members. Qualifications for membership, which are determined by the organization, should be clearly stated in its governing rules (charter, constitution and/or bylaws). Some organizations define the different classes of membership, not all of which include full participation in the proceedings of the organization; however, the term "member" in this meeting, handbook refers to a person who has full participating rights.

When one joins an organization, he or she enters into a "contract" of membership with the organization. If a member feels that change is necessary, it should be brought about by working through proper channels and within the current rules.

Membership carries with it responsibilities as well as privileges, and where these are peculiar to the organization, they should be defined in its bylaws. However, it is neither necessary nor advisable to encumber bylaws with a list of privileges and important responsibilities common to members of all organizations. Such a list of generally accepted privileges and responsibilities of membership includes, but is not limited to the following:

### Member Privileges

1. To attend meetings.
2. To make motions and enter into debate.
3. To vote.
4. To nominate and be nominated.
5. To insist on enforcement of the rules of the organization and of parliamentary law based on Robert's Rules of Order or other adopted authority.
6. To review official records of the organization, including the most recent governing document and the minutes of previous meetings.

## **Member Responsibilities**

1. To promote the object and purpose of the organization.
2. To comply with and uphold the organization's governing rules.
3. To attend meetings regularly and punctually.
4. To give one's undivided attention to the business as well as the program.
5. To abstain from acts or remarks outside the meetings that will in any way interfere with the work of the organization and/or its officers.
6. To hold office when requested.
7. To perform conscientiously any duty assigned and accepted in the organization.

## **Keys to Being a Good Member**

1. Attend meetings regularly.
2. Speak up during the meeting, bringing out points and contributing from your own experiences.
3. Learn to be brief, because brevity wins the good will of other members.
4. Refrain from being technical, or more strict than is absolutely necessary for the good of the meeting.
5. Consider ideas, not people.
6. Serve willingly to the best of your ability, thus gaining experience with each added duty.
7. Confine yourself to the question before the assembly and avoid personalities.
8. Practice correct parliamentary procedure.

## **Meetings**

### **Types of Meetings**

All organizations conduct their affairs through meetings. Regardless of format, meetings are one of the following types:

1. **Regular Meetings:** Those for which the time and place are usually prescribed in the bylaws or standing rules.
2. **Special Meetings:** Those called for transaction of a special item of business. The procedure for this is usually defined in the organization's bylaws.
3. **Annual Meetings:** Those scheduled for hearing reports, electing officers, amending rules, and such other business as may need to come before members at the close of the organization year.

## Plans for Meetings

An understanding of the meaning of the following terms is helpful to meeting planners.

1. **Session:** A meeting or series of connected meetings devoted to a single order of business.
2. **Order of Business:** The sequence of business to be conducted at a session of an assembly. An Order of Business is essential to all meetings in which business of the organization is transacted. It helps the presiding officer and members to proceed in an orderly way, maintains continuity in the transaction of business and establishes priorities for items of business. Orders of Business should not be included in the bylaws since the bylaws may never be suspended.
3. **Agenda:** An order of business expressly adopted for a particular session, which assigns times and positions to specific items of business. (Used in a convention or meeting of an organization that convenes less than quarterly.)
4. **Program:** Includes business items, times for speakers, meals, and other non-business items (may include an agenda). Programs are usually used in conventions.
5. **Call to Order:** On time, after ascertaining the presence of a quorum, the presiding officer takes the chair, signals (raps gavel once) for quiet. and while standing says, "The meeting will come to order".

Parliamentarians recommend that every group adopt a parliamentary authority as a guide. **Robert's Rules Of Order** is one of the most widely accepted authorities in both deliberative and legislative assemblies.

## MOTIONS

A motion is a formal proposal which brings a subject to a group for its consideration and action. Motions are not all the same. They fall within certain classes and some take priority over others. Only members who have a right to vote may make a motion, speak in debate on it, and vote.

### Classes of Motions

1. **Main Motions:** A main motion introduces a question or business for consideration when no other business is pending. Only one main motion may be considered at a time, and no other main motion can be introduced until the first one is disposed of in some manner. It is the lowest rank of all motions.
2. **Subsidiary Motions:** Subsidiary motions help the assembly to treat or dispose of a main motion. Since they relate to the question before the house, a subsidiary motion may be proposed when a main motion is still before the assembly. The vote on the subsidiary motion is taken before the main motion is acted upon. Subsidiary motions have definite rank.
3. **Privileged Motions:** Privileged motions do not relate to pending business, but deal with special matters of immediate and overriding importance. Privileged motions may interrupt debate before the assembly. They have definite rank. (See chart of motions, p. 6.)
4. **Incidental Motions:** Incidental motions are those that help facilitate a pending motion or other business at hand; such as, suspending the rules or closing nominations. Incidental motions have no rank. (See chart of motions, p. 6.)
5. **Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly:** These motions bring a question back that has already been considered before the assembly, as in the case of the motions to rescind or take from the table. These motions have no rank. (See chart of motions, p. 6.)

## **Making a Motion**

To make a motion, follow these procedures:

1. Member rises and addresses the Chair: "Mr./Madam President or Chairman."
2. Chair recognizes the member.
3. Member: "I move that. ...(states motion)."
4. Second to motion. (not necessary to stand) "I second the motion." If the motion comes as a recommendation from two or more members, the motion does not need a second.
5. Chair states motion: "It has been moved by (name) and seconded that. .."
6. Discussion: If the motion is debatable, every member has the right to debate; the Chair refrains from debate while presiding. The Chair carefully determines the order in which members are recognized to speak, giving first opportunity to the proposer of the motion. The discussion must be related to the question.
7. The Chair says, "If there is no further discussion, the motion is. ..(restate motion)."
8. Vote: The Chair says, "All those in favor of. ... (the motion stated) ...say 'aye.' Those opposed say 'no.'"
9. Result of the vote is stated by the Chair. "The motion is carried" or "the motion is lost."

## **AMENDMENTS**

### **Amending a Motion**

To amend a motion is to alter or modify the wording of a pending motion (a motion that has already been made) before it is acted upon. An amendment must be germane to the main motion. Motions may be amended by three methods:

1. Inserting: Words may be inserted at any place or at the end of the motion. Paragraphs may be inserted or added in the same fashion.
2. Striking Out: Words and paragraphs may be struck out in the same fashion as they may be inserted.
3. Substituting: This is a combination of Inserting and Striking Out.

### **Types Of Amendments**

1. Primary Amendment: An amendment that is germane to the main motion.
2. Secondary Amendment: An amendment that is germane to the primary amendment ONLY.

No amendment other than primary and secondary ones is in order, and only one of each may be made at one time. It is possible to have a motion, an amendment to the motion, and an amendment to the amendment before the assembly at one time.

### **Voting on Amendments**

1. Discuss and vote on secondary amendment.
2. Discuss and vote on primary amendment as amended (if amendment carried).
3. Discuss and vote on main motion as amended (if amendments carried).

## Special Notes about Amendments

1. There may be only one primary and one secondary amendment pending to the same motion at the same time.
2. The primary amendment must be germane to the motion, and the secondary amendment must be germane to the primary amendment.
3. A hostile amendment is in order if it is germane. (An amendment may change a motion of commendation to one of censure. The amendment would be germane as in both cases it expresses the opinion of the assembly.)
4. The order of proposing these motions is the opposite of the order of disposing of these motions:  
**Propose:** main motion, primary amendment, then secondary amendment.  
**Dispose:** (vote or decide on) secondary amendment, primary amendment (as amended, if it was), main motion (as amended, if it was).
5. The subsidiary motion to amend may be applied to main motions and to certain other motions. If applied to a main motion, it takes precedence over the motion it proposes to amend.
6. Amend requires a majority vote, even if the motion to be amended requires a 2/3 vote.
7. A substituted paragraph or motion may be amended only by adding something that does not modify the existing content.

## Resolutions

A resolution is a long main motion set in writing. That is, a resolution is usually of such length or importance that it should be written. It may or may not have a preamble setting forth the reasons for it. (For proper form, see Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 1990, pp. 105-107.) The object of a resolution is to introduce business. The following factors apply:

1. Requires recognition
2. Requires a second unless introduced by a committee of more than one person.
3. Is debatable.
4. Is amendable.
5. Yields to all privileged, incidental, and subsidiary motions
6. Requires a majority vote for adoption.
7. May be reconsidered.

Some Important points: As a main motion, a resolution is the lowest ranking of all motions, and when pending, any other motion might be in order. As with other main motions, resolutions may be made only when no other motion is pending (when the floor is clear). The chair may require that all main motions, amendments, or instructions to a committee be in writing. If lost, a main motion may not be made again in the same session.

## Some Often Used Motions

Main Motion: A motion to bring a matter before the assembly for discussion and action.

Amendments: Proposals intended to modify or change a motion. (See "Amending a Motion.")

1. Postpone Indefinitely: To reject a motion or pending question without taking a direct vote. The effect is to "kill" the main motion.
2. Refer to a Committee: A motion to send to a group for greater consideration or study of a matter.
3. Postpone to a Definite Time: To delay action on a proposed question to a specific time.
4. Limit or Extend Debate: To limit by decreasing the allotted time or to extend by increasing the allotted time. (See chart of motions, p. 6.)
5. Call for the Previous Question: A motion to determine whether the assembly will cut off debate and further amendments and vote at once on the pending question (requires a 2/3 vote).
6. Lay on the Table: A motion which enables the assembly to put aside temporarily a pending question, in order to consider an urgent matter. The pending question can be brought back by a motion to take from the table. "Tabling" a motion is not intended as a killing motion.
7. Call for Orders of the Day: A request to conform to the order of business.
8. Questions of Privilege (Personal or General): A motion requesting privilege for an individual or the assembly (e.g., too hot in room or too noisy).
9. Recess: To provide for a short intermission in the meeting.
10. Adjourn: To end a meeting.
11. Fix Time & Place to Which to Adjourn: To provide for another meeting (called "adjourned meeting") to continue business which was not completed in present meeting.
12. Point of Order: To request enforcement of the rules of order.
13. Appeal from the Decision of the Chair: To question a decision of the Chair; an effort to reverse the decision of the Chair whenever the Chair has "ruled" on question of parliamentary law.
14. Objection to Consideration: To suppress and prevent discussion of an undesirable or sensitive question. This motion must be raised before debate begins.
15. Withdraw: To remove a matter for consideration without a vote upon it. (May be made by the mover or by permission of assembly.)
16. Take from the Table: To take up a matter which has been laid on the table.
17. Reconsider: To bring back a matter previously decided upon (or acted upon). A "motion to reconsider" must be made by voter on prevailing side and must be made on the same day or in same session.
18. Rescind: To repeal or annul action previously taken. Requires majority vote with previous notice; 2/3 vote, without notice.
19. Ratify: To make legal any action taken in an emergency.

## Robert's Rules Of Order — Chart Of Motions

|   | In Order When Another Has The Floor | Requires A Second | Debatable   | Vote Required                                  |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Main Motions  | No                                  | Yes               | Yes   | Majority                                       |
| Privileged Motions  |                                     |                   |   |  |
| To fix the time to which to adjourn   | No                                  | Yes               | No  | Majority                                       |
| To adjourn  | No                                  | Yes               | No  | Majority                                       |
| To recess   | No                                  | Yes               | No  | Majority                                       |
| To rise to a question of privilege  | Yes                                 | No                | No  | Chair Rules                                    |
| To call for the order of the Day  | Yes                                 | No                | No  | None   |
| Subsidiary Motions  |                                     |                   |   |  |
| To lay on the table   | No                                  | Yes               | No  | Majority                                       |
| To call for the previous question   | No                                  | Yes               | No  | Two-Thirds                                     |
| To limit or extend time of debate   | No                                  | Yes               | No  | Two-Thirds                                     |
| To postpone to a definite time  | No                                  | Yes               | Yes   | Majority                                       |
| To refer to a committee   | No                                  | Yes               | Yes   | Majority                                       |
| To amend  | No                                  | Yes               | Yes   | Majority                                       |
| To postpone indefinitely  | No                                  | Yes               | Yes   | Majority                                       |
| Incidental Motions  |                                     |                   |   |  |
| To suspend the rules  | No                                  | Yes               | No  | Two-Thirds                                     |
| To withdraw a motion  | Yes                                 | No                | No  | Majority                                       |
| To request permission to read papers  | Yes                                 | Yes               | No  | Majority                                       |
| To object to consideration  | Yes                                 | No                | No  | Two-Thirds                                     |
| To rise to a point of order   | Yes                                 | No                | No  | Chair rules                                    |
| To rise to a parliamentary inquiry  | Yes                                 | No                | No  | Chair responds                                 |
| To appeal from a decision of the Chair  | Yes                                 | Yes               | Unless related to priority of business or decorum | Majority (in negative)                         |
| To call for a division of the house   | Yes                                 | No                | No  | None   |
| To call for a division of the question  | No                                  | Yes               | No  | Majority                                       |
| Motions That Can Bring A Question Before The House (Have no rank or precedence) |                                     |                   |   |  |
| To reconsider   | No                                  | Yes               | Yes   | Majority                                       |
| To rescind  | No                                  | Yes               | Yes   | Majority, with previous notice, 2/3, otherwise |

## PARLIAMENTARIAN

A Parliamentarian is an officer charged with being well-versed in the parliamentary rules followed by the Timberlake Homeowners Association (THA). Members of THA may not be fully aware of the parliamentary rules and procedures. The Parliamentarian advises the President and other officers, committees, and association members on matters of parliamentary procedure. The parliamentarian's role during a meeting is purely an advisory and consultative one – since parliamentary law gives to the Chair alone the power to rule on questions of order or to answer parliamentary inquiries. The Parliamentarian's rulings are taken as authoritative and are usually accepted by the Chair except in special circumstances. Decisions by the Parliamentarian or the Chair may only be appealed to the whole of the membership in a regularly scheduled meeting or a meeting held as a result of a petition.

### **Basic Parliamentarian Duties**

1. Function in the role of the Parliamentarian as a non-interventionist, and assist and support the President in maintaining order and adhering to time schedules as approved by the Board or membership and provide full philosophical support for the Board in all matters related to the meeting.
2. Be available to confer with the President as needed.
3. Be available to meet with the Board at meetings whenever needed, as assigned by the President.
4. Be available to the membership to answer questions about the role and function of the parliamentarian and parliamentary procedure.
5. Be available to work on other tasks as specified by the President.
6. Assist with the coordination of motions and resolutions as requested.
7. Assist with the election and voting procedures.
8. Other services as determined necessary by the President.