

Parliamentary Procedure Basics
APFO Committee March 26, 2025

Robert's Rules - Overview

- Parliamentary rules are a set of rules to facilitate meetings and allows boards to make orderly decisions.
- Actions by a board requires a quorum. A quorum is a majority, which is more than half. Without a quorum, you cannot take action.
- Follow the agenda – Conversation on agenda items, such as questions, answering questions, noting information pertinent to the agenda topic, can occur, and be limited by the Chair, outside of motions/debates on motions.
- How to take action (action is done via motion).
 - Obtain the floor/be recognized by the chair
 - Make a motion
 - The motion needs to be seconded
 - Chair must restate the motion
 - Debate, if allowed (most motions are debatable; some motions are not)
 - Members vote
 - Chair announces the vote result
- Rules for debate vs. conversation (see below re: conversation)
 - Chair must allow each member to speak at least once
 - Speakers should address remarks on the motion to the chair
 - Speakers should maintain a courteous tone and avoid personal attacks
 - Speakers are limited to 5 minutes for first time recognized by Chair, and 4 minutes for second time.
 - Any member can speak, but only twice, with regard to debate. Speakers can speak outside those two times, if posing a question, if giving an answer to a posed question, AND/OR making a motion to amend a current motion.
 - Members who have not yet spoken should be recognized before those who seek to speak a second time
 - Debate ends when discussion ends or a motion is made to end debate and call for a vote, has a second and majority vote passing.
 - Rules of debate can be changed by a majority vote, general consent without objection, or via Rules of Procedure
 - Motions can be amended during debate, with or without the permission of the original mover of the current motion or the person who seconded. Motions to amend must be made after obtaining the floor, requested by the Chair, which do not count as being allowed to debate twice. Motion to amend motion must be seconded, then debated first, then pass a majority vote to amend the motion. After any amended motions are voted, the original motion debate can then continue, if applicable, or vote commences. – Lisa
 - Only friendly amendments to motions are allowed. Motions to amend must be agreed to proceed to debate if mover and seconder of motion on the floor agree. - Laura
- Voting
 - A vote cannot proceed without a quorum.

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- Generally, a majority of those present and voting is required.
- Majority means more than half of the members present and voting
- Members who abstain from the vote are not counted
- Votes can be by voice (members saying “yes” or “no”), by ballot, by roll call (calling each member’s name), raising hands.
- Motions for reconsideration of previously passed Motions can be made with reason given, need to be seconded. If majority agree to reconsider the motion, for the reason stated, then debate ensues and a new vote is taken.

Conversation – The Chair may allow conversation, informal back and forth, outside of the motion process, if there are questions, requests to correct factual information, points of order, requests to consider process changes, etc. The Chair can decide to allow a speaker the floor and entertain whether the topic raised outside of an on-going motions process, should be discussed, without rules of how often someone can speak, or order of recognition. The Chair can allow this discussion at the Chair’s discretion. The Chair can also allow this type of conversation within the motions process, if amendments to a motion that requires a lot of input is needed, due to a motion maker not having specific details in a motion, but instead requests conversation on possible components of a motion.