

# MEETINGS OF SMALL BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

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In this workshop we will wade through the parli-talk and parliamentary procedures in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (RONR) and *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised in Brief* (RONRIB) as they apply to small boards and committees. Some of this discussion may weave into owners' meetings. What we will not cover is state law or governing documents.

See additional handouts, "Sample Rules for Electronic Meetings" and "Sample Meeting Rules."

- Quorum** The number of members needed to conduct business. This is not the threshold for a vote. A properly noticed or scheduled meeting should be called to order even if a quorum is not present. [RONRIB, p. 12]
- Inquorate** Options when a quorum is not present: recess to call members; adjourn; set an adjourned meeting. When quorum is lost, business can no longer continue. The owners' open forum may still be held since is not board business. [RONRIB, p. 13]
- Minutes** Not read if previously distributed. This is not dispensing with the minutes, which just delays approval. Vote is not taken on approval. Approved minutes are done by unanimous consent after all corrections have been handled. [RONRIB, p. 14]
- Reports** The agenda does not need to list every officer and chair; only those who will be reporting. [RONRIB, p. 14] Treasurer should report. [RONRIB. p 156]
- Unfinished** Business from the previous meeting that was not handled. [RONRIB, p. 15] Not OLD business. Not business now in the hands of committees or officers.
- Agenda** Sets the order of business. Often a draft agenda is sent out before the meeting, but to be binding it must be adopted. It can be amended, and items can be taken up out of assigned order, all done by adopting certain motions. [RONRIB, pp. 16-17]
- Adjourn** If an adopted agenda sets the time for adjournment, then the chair announces that the meeting is adjourned when that time arrives. A motion can be adopted to continue the meeting by 2/3 vote or by unanimous consent. [RONRIB, p. 17]
- Motion** A proposal to do something, "I move to..." or "I move that..." [RONRIB, p. 20]
- Debate** One person speaks at a time, debate must be germane, person doesn't speak a second time until all have spoken once. Limits don't apply. Cannot call for the question. Can adopt special rules. [RONRIB, pp. 23, 161, and 165]
- Vote** Usually a majority of votes cast; also, unanimous consent. [RONRIB, p. 68]

<b>Chair</b>	Can make motions, debate, and vote. [RONRIB, pp. 69-70, and 161]
<b>Second</b>	Not necessary in small boards/committees. [RONRIB, pp. 21 and 161]
<b>Lay on Table</b>	When a motion that is under discussion needs to be set aside temporarily in order to do something else that is time sensitive the motion Lay on the Table is used. [RONRIB, p. 127]
<b>Postpone Indefinitely</b>	When it is desired to defeat a motion without taking a vote on it. [RONRIB, p. 126]
<b>Postpone Definitely</b>	When the present time is not the best time to discuss the motion. [RONRIB, p. 53]
<b>Decorum</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 – confine remarks to the pending question (also referred to as germane);</li> <li>2 – address all remarks through the chair;</li> <li>3 – do not attack another member’s motives;</li> <li>4 – Avoid using member’s names; it is proper to use titles or simply say the previous speaker if the reference is even necessary;</li> <li>5 – avoid speaking adversely on prior action not pending, unless it is to make a connection to the current motion or other related parliamentary motions;</li> <li>6 – cannot speak against your own motion;</li> <li>7 – refrain from disturbing the assembly</li> </ol>
<b>Indecorum</b>	When the chair has lost control of the meeting, then it is time to either recess or adjourn. The chair can say, “unless the members will come to order, the meeting will be adjourned.” Or a member of the board may make a motion to adjourn which must be seconded and adopted by a majority.
<b>Disorderly</b>	<p><u>Member</u> – Members can order a recess, adjourn, or set an adjourned meeting; or order a member removed from meeting. [RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.), 61:13-17].</p> <p><u>Nonmember</u> – Chair can order disorderly nonmember to leave, subject to appeal by members. [RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.), 61:19]</p> <p><u>Chair</u> – Point of Order and Appeal from the Decision of the Chair are used to control a chair, but when that doesn’t work, a motion to Suspend the Rules is made to remove the authority to preside and the vice president or another presides for the rest of the meeting. [RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.), 62:12]</p>

Most of what RONR has to say about dealing with offenses at the time they occur is on pages 609-613 [RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.), 61:6 – 61:21].

It is a balance of the member’s right to attend and the rights of a society or board to have an orderly meeting and get business done.

## **Miscellaneous**

### **Motions often put by the chair – and generally adopted by unanimous consent**

Adopt the agenda

Approve the minutes

Adjourn

Appoint members to minutes' approval committee

### **Motions that should be put to a vote**

If it requires 2/3

If it involves money

### **Annual Meetings**

All formalities

Three reports: credentials, standing rules and program. Set order of business.

Minutes' approval committee

### **Problem Areas**

Same issue(s); no decisions – have discussion after the motion; rotate speakers; take a vote

Speaker monopolizes meeting – enforce debate rule about speaking second time; adopt rules

Owners' forum – adjourn meeting, set time limit, speaking limits, rules on decorum, sign-in

### **References:**

*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (12<sup>th</sup> ed.)

Small-board rules – 1:24; 49:21; 2:16; 4:56; 50:25-26; 4:9n7; 4:40; 3:12; 3:31n4

*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised in Brief* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)

Small-board rules – p. 112; p. 161, p. 165