

## ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

(Checked against large table)

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker =no chair recognition	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable
Object to procedure or personal affront	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes (or chair recognition)	No	No	No
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"I call for a division of the house"	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No

Take up matter previously tabled	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes (or chair recognition)	Yes	No	No
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to..."	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).

## PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MAIN MOTION

**NOTE:** Nothing goes to discussion without a motion being on the floor.

### Obtaining and assigning the floor

A member raises hand when no one else has the floor

- The chair recognizes the member by name

### How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

- The member makes the motion: *I move that (or "to") ...* and resumes his seat.
- Another member seconds the motion: *I second the motion* or *I second it* or *second*.
- The chair states the motion: *It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the question?*

### Consideration of the Motion

1. Members can debate the motion.

2. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor.
3. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly
4. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion.

5. Debate can be closed only by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate.

#### **The chair puts the motion to a vote**

1. The chair asks: *Are you ready for the question?* If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote.

2. The chair says: *The question is on the adoption of the motion that ... As many as are in favor, say 'Aye'. (Pause for response.) Those opposed, say 'Nay'. (Pause for response.) Those abstained please say 'Aye'.*

**The chair announces the result of the vote.**

1. *The ayes have it, the motion carries, and ...* (indicating the effect of the vote) or
2. *The nays have it and the motion fails*

**WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS**

1. Listen to the other side
2. Focus on issues, not personalities
3. Avoid questioning motives
4. Be polite

**HOW TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN MEETINGS**

**MAIN MOTION**

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.

- After recognition, make a main motion.
- Member: "Madame Chairman, I move that \_\_\_\_\_."

**AMENDING A MOTION**

You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed.

- After recognition,  
"Madame Chairman, I  
move that the motion be  
amended by adding the  
following words \_\_\_\_\_."

- After recognition,  
"Madame Chairman, I  
move that the motion be  
amended by striking out the  
following words \_\_\_\_\_."

- After recognition,  
"Madame Chairman, I  
move that the motion be  
amended by striking out the  
following words,  
\_\_\_\_\_, and adding in  
their place the following  
words \_\_\_\_\_."

### **REFER TO A COMMITTEE**

You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation.

- After recognition,  
"Madame Chairman, I move  
that the question be  
referred to a committee  
made up of members Smith,  
Jones and Brown."

### **POSTPONE DEFINITELY**

You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question until \_\_\_\_."

### **PREVIOUS QUESTION**

You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move the previous question."

### **LIMIT DEBATE**

You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker."

### **POSTPONE INDEFINITELY**

You want to kill a motion that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madam Moderator, I move to postpone the question indefinitely."

### **POSTPONE INDEFINITELY**

You are against a motion just proposed and want to learn who is for and who is against the motion.

- After recognition, "Madame President, I move to postpone the motion indefinitely."

## **RECESS**

You want to take a break for a while.

- After recognition, "Madame Moderator, I move to recess for ten minutes."

## **ADJOURNMENT**

You want the meeting to end.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to adjourn."

## **PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW A MOTION**

You have made a motion and after discussion, are sorry you made it.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I ask permission to withdraw my motion."

## **CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY**

At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda was adopted. The chairman is not following the order of the approved agenda.

- Without recognition, "Call for orders of the day."

## **SUSPENDING THE RULES**

The agenda has been approved and as the meeting progressed, it became obvious that an item you are interested in will not come up before adjournment.

- After recognition, "Madam Chairman, I move to suspend the rules and move item 5 to position 2."

### **POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE**

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing.

- Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."
- Chairman: "State your point."
- Member: "There is too much noise, I can't hear."

### **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

You are going to propose a question that is likely to be controversial and you feel that some of the members will try to kill it by various maneuvers. Also you want to keep out visitors and the press.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that we go into a committee of the whole."

### **POINT OF ORDER**

It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules.

- Without recognition, "I rise to a point of order," or "Point of order."

### **POINT OF INFORMATION**



You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

- Without recognition, "Point of information."

### **POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY**

You are confused about some of the parliamentary rules.

- Without recognition, "Point of parliamentary inquiry."

### **APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR**

Without recognition, "I appeal from the decision of the chair."

#### **Rule Classification and Requirements**

<b>Class of Rule</b>	<b>Requirements to Adopt</b>	<b>Requirements to Suspend</b>
Charter	Adopted by majority vote or as proved by law or governing authority	Cannot be suspended
Bylaws	Adopted by membership	Cannot be suspended
Special Rules of Order	Previous notice & 2/3 vote, or a majority of entire membership	2/3 Vote

Standing Rules	Majority vote	Can be suspended for session by majority vote during a meeting
Modified Roberts Rules of Order	Adopted in bylaws	2/3 vote

<b>Vote</b>	<b>#</b>
<b>Needed</b>	<b><u>RONR 12</u></b>
Majority	2
Majority	3
Chair Decides /M	4
Majority	6
2/3	7
Majority	8
Majority	11
Majority	14

<b>Vote Needed</b>	
Chair decides /M	22
None	<b><u>45</u></b>
None unless someone objects	17
2/3	19

Majority	30
Majority	25
2/3	29
Majority	12















# MOTIONS

Fill the time to adjourn	1	"I move that we fill the time to adjourn (by ---)."	3																																									
Adjourn (when privileged)	2	"I move that we adjourn."	2,43,44																																									
Recess (when privileged)	3	"I move that we recess for -----."	79,80																																									
Question of privilege	4	"I rise to a question of privilege." about heat noise etc, or if the main motion may not be on order.	72,73																																									
Call for orders of the day.	5	"I rise to call for the orders for the day."	41																																									
Lay on the table	6	"I move to table the motion." suspending further consideration of an issue.	46																																									
Previous question	7	"I move the previous question." ending debate and amendments.	31,70																																									
Limit or extend limits of debate.	8	"I move that the limits of the debate be (limited/extended) by ----."	41,42																																									
Postpone to a certain time.	9	"I move to postpone the discussion until ----."	43																																									
Commit, recommit or refer.	10	"I move to refer the matter to committee." to give closer study of something.	26,27,88																																									
Amend	11	"I move to amend the motion --- by ----."	11																																									
Appeals	12	"I appeal the chairs' decision." for a vote on the chairpersons' ruling.	18																																									
Appeals relating to indecorum, etc.	13	"I apologize for --- and appeal the chairs' decision on the grounds that ---."	19																																									
Main motion	14	"I move that ---."	1																																									
The above motions are in order of precedence, 1 being highest. The motions below have no order of precedence.			-																																									
Parliamentary inquiry	15	"Point of information." to request information.	65																																									
Division of the assembly	16	"I rise to call for a division of the assembly."	36,37																																									
Division of a question	17	"I call for a division" or "Division" to verify a voice vote.	38,39																																									
Informal consideration of a question	18	"I move that the question be considered informally until (time/event)."	28																																									
Objection to consideration of a question	19	"I object to consideration of this motion." to avoid consideration of an improper matter.	59																																									
Order of the day, when pending	20	"I rise to call for the pending order(s) for the day."	60,61,62,63																																									
Fill blanks	21	"I rise to request that the --- blanks of information be filled."	22																																									
Question of order	22	"I rise to a point of order." to protect from a breach of rules or conduct.	64																																									
Postpone indefinitely	23	"I move that --- be postponed indefinitely."	66																																									
Read papers	24	"I move that the --- paper(s) be read."	77																																									
Reconsider	25	"I move to reconsider the vote on ----." to reconsider a hasty action.	81,82,83																																									
Rescind	26	"I move that --- be rescinded."	86,87																																									
Speak after indecorum	27	"I rise to apologize for --- and wish to speak about ---."	61																																									
Special order	28	"I move that special order --- be in force until (time/event)."	7																																									
Suspend the rules	29	"I move to suspend the rules so that --- until (time/event)." for a temporary suspension.	92,93																																									
Take from the table	30	"I move to take from the table ----." to take up a matter that was previously tabled.	94																																									
Take questions out of order	31	"I move that --- questions be taken in that order."	95																																									
Withdrawal of a motion	32	"I wish to withdraw my motion." to retract a motion. The motion ceases unless someone states they are another mover or seconder.	98																																									
Motions to voting	33	"I move we vote on this question."	20,96,97																																									
Adopt a report	34	"I move we adopt the --- report."	4																																									
Adopt a constitution or by-laws.	35	"I move we adopt the --- (constitution/by-law(s))."	5,6																																									
Adopt standing rules	36	"I move we adopt the --- standing rule(s)."	8																																									
Make nominations	37	"I move --- for ---."	53,56,57																																									
Close nominations	38	"I move that nominations be closed."	54																																									
Reopen nominations	39	"I move that nominations be reopened."	55																																									
Ratify.	40	"I move that we ratify ---."	76																																									
Secret Ballot request	41	"I move that the question be voted by secret ballot."	30																																									
Motion Number to right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41			
Recognition of the chair required	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		
In order if another has the floor	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	
Secunder required	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	?/N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Requires immediate decision	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Debatable	Y	N	?/N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	#3	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	#9	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
Debate confined to pending question	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Amendable	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y/N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N
Two Thirds vote required	M	M	M	M	M	M	Y	Y	M	M	M	M	M	M	N	#7	M	-Y	M	M	#4	M	M	M	#5	M	Y	Y	M	Y	M/N	M	M	Y/M	M	M	Y	M	M	M	M	M	M	
May be reconsidered	Y	N	N	N	N	N	#1	Y	N/Y	#2	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	-N	#6	Y	Y	N	M	Y	N	-M	Y	Y	N	N	N	#8	Y	Y	-M	Y	N	N	N	-M	Y	N	N	

Y = Yes, -Y is 2/3 vote against.  
M = Majority (instead of 2/3)  
N = No or no vote required.  
? = Circumstances  
A/B = Slide rule/Jaycee rule

#1 No unless a vote on the question is not yet taken  
#2 Yes unless the committee has already taken up the subject.  
#3 Yes only if the the motion to be amended is debatable.  
#4 Majority, or no vote except for doubtful cases.  
#5 If the original motion was passed by majority vote, then a majority is required. If the original motion is passed by 2/3 vote, then a 2/3 vote is required.  
#6 Only if the main question or motion was not, in fact, considered.

Address the chair "**Mr. or Madame Chair (or Chairman or Chairwoman)**"; Subject to rules

#7 No vote unless someone objects, then majority needed.

**"The Chair recognizes -"**; making a motion

#8 Only if the vote was no.

"Mr. Chairman/Madame Chairwoman **I move that -** the chair **"Is there a seconder?"**

#9 Only if the motion to be reconsidered is debatable.

**"I second the motion"; "It is moved and seconded to adopt the following resolution -";**

If the resolution is amended, the seconder may not have the right to speak last. This depends on the rule version followed, and should be clarified for the organization.

If the resolution is amended, the seconder may not have the right to speak last. This depends on the rule version followed.

To a debatable or amendable question, the chair will ask, **"Are you ready for the question?"**

If a secret ballot is requested by a mover and seconder, this may be voted on by open vote or secret vote depending on the rule version followed.

Then the chair will put the question and take the vote.

Items that are not clarified in this document may be defined in a constitution or in by-laws.

## Order Of Business

Further Reference; [www.rulesonline.com](http://www.rulesonline.com)

Read the minutes of the previous meeting and voting their approval.

Reports of boards and standing committees.

Reports of special committees.

Special orders.

Unfinished business and general orders.

New Business.

A chairperson may be removed at any time by motion and vote. Also the chairperson may recuse themselves from a motion because of conflict of interest.

A motion to adjourn is always in order and is not debatable.

On questions that are debatable, the minority has the undeniable right to deliberate.

Points of order take precedence over all business. **"Mr. (or Madame) Chair (or Chairman or Chairwoman) I rise to a point of order".**

Inquiries, if reasonable, have the same status as a point of order. **"Mr. (or Madame) Chair (or Chairman or Chairwoman) I rise for information."**

On a motion of a previous question, **"Shall the main question be put?"** If carried, this ends the debate.

On orders of the day, **"Will the house now proceed to the orders of the day?"** If carried, supercedes intervening questions.

A motion to strike out the words, **"Shall the words stand part of the motion?"** Words are struck without a majority vote.

An appeal from the Chairs' decision. **"Shall the decision be sustained as the ruling of the house?"**

When an objection is raised to consider the question, - **"Shall the question be considered"**

Objections may be made before a debate.

If voted in favor, filling time until adjourning with some identified activity.

Indecorum; e.g. swearing, disturbing the peace or even speaking when not recognized by the Chair.

## Actual Parliaments, Governments and other organizations usage

Each organization has its own constitution, articles of incorporation, etc and these include the definition of the process by which the constitution, articles etc. may be amended.

In addition there are often Standing Rules or equivalent decisions made under the above Rules that define things like the amount of time a speaker may have and other details.

In the U.S. Congress, such rules provide for procedures such as filibusters for example.

One procedure may be to permit a Suspension of Rules, which means that the legislation passed in one body may be brought in for vote as

pass or not, without discussion or amendment. One of these was relevant to my work, and it passed.

Recommended reference; Roberts Rules of Order 12th Ed. 2020. Includes electronic meeting scenarios.

Adopt Parliamentary Rules in a Convention. "By direction of the Committee on Standing Rules, I move the adoption of the Standing Rules as just read."

Adopt convention agenda or program. "By direction of the Program Committee, I move the adoption of the Convention Program as printed."

Amend an amendment of the pending motion. "I move to insert(delete) the word(s)... Before the word(s)..."

Amend Something Previously Adopted, general case, including ordinary standing rule: "I move to amend thre resolution relating to ... adopted at the ... meeting, by ..."

Amend parliamentary standing rules in a convention, when they are not pending. "I move to amend Standing Rule... by ..."

Amend adopted convention agenda/program with reference to items not yet reach ""I move to amend the agenda/program by..."

Amend bylaws or constitution, when not pending "In accordance with notice given, I move the adoption of the following amendment to the bylaws/constitution."

Amend special rules when not pending. "In accordance with the notice given, I move to amend Special Rule of Order ... by ..."

Blank, to create by striking out. "I move to create a blank by striking out ..."

Bylaw amendment, to rearrange order of consideration. ""I move the amendments be considered in the following order..."

Chair, to declare vacant "I move to declare the Chair vacant, and proceed to elect a new chairman."

Roberts Rules **RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed**

**9**

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**12**

**13**

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**24**

[illegible]

9:30        **Extension of Parliamentary Law to Electronic Meetings**

9:30        Except as authorized *in the bylaws*, the business of an organization or board can be valdly transacted at a regular or properly called *meeting*- that is, as defined in 8:2(1), a single official gathering in one room or area- of the assembly of the members of its members at which a quorum is present.

9:31        Among some organizations, there is an increasing preference, especially in the case of a relatively small board or other assembly, to transact business at *electronic meetings*- that is, at meetings at which, rather than all participating members being physically present in one room or area as in traditional (or "face to face") meetings, some or all of them communicate with the others through electronic means such as the Internet or by telephone. A group that holds such alternative meetings does not lose its character as a deliberative assembly (see 1:1) so long as the meeting provider, at a minimum, condition of opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all the participating members equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or another. Under such conditions, an electronic meeting that is properly authorized in the the bylaws is treated as though it were a meeting at which all the members who are participating are actually present.

9:32        If electronic meetings are to be authorized, it is advisable to adopt additional rules pertaining to their conduct (see *Additional Rules for the Conduct of Electronic Meetings*, below).

9:33        **Types of Electronic Meetings**

9:33        Various provisions for electronic meetings are possible, so that more than the minimum standard of an audioconference may be required. Thus, if the bylaws provide for meeting by videoconference (but not merely by "teleconference" or "audioconference"). the meeting must be conducted by a technology that allows for all participating members to see each other, as well as hear each other, at the same time. Provision may also be made for the use of additional collaborative technology to aid in the conduct of a meeting.

9:34        It is important to understand that, regardless of the technology used, the opportunity for simultaneous aural communication is essential to the deliberative character of the meeting. Therefore, a group that attempts to conduct the deliberative process in writing (such as by postal mail, e-mail, "chat rooms", or fax - which is not recommended - does not constitute a deliberative assembly. Any such effort may achieve a consultative character, but is foreign to the deliberative process as understood under parliamentary law.

9:35        **Electronic Meetings in Committees.**

9:35 As in the case of a board or any assembly, committees that are expressly established by the bylaws can hold a valid electronic meeting only if authorized in the bylaws to do so. A committee that is not expressly established by the bylaws, however may instead be authorized to hold electronic meetings by a standing rule of the parent body or organization, by the motion establishing the particular committee, or the instructions included in the motion referring an individual matter to the committee or issued subsequent to such a motion (see 13:8(d), 13:22).

9:36 **Additional Rules for the Conduct of Electronic Meetings.**

9:36 meetings, such a provision should indicate whether members who are not present in person have the right to participate by electronic means, or whether the body may choose to allow or disallow such participation; and, conversely whether there is required to be a central location for members who wish to attend meetings in person. The notice of an electronic meeting must include an adequate description of how to participate in it, ( for example, the telephone number to call for a teleconference must be provided). Various additional rules (in the bylaws, special rules of order , standing rules, or instructions to a committee, as appropriate) may also be necessary or advisable regarding the conduct of electronic meetings related to:

- the type of equipment or computer software required for participants in meetings, whether the organization must provide such equipment or software, and contingencies for technical difficulties or malfunctions;
- methods for determining the presence of a quorum;
- the conditions under which a member may raise a point of order doubting the presence of a quorum, and the conditions under which the continued presence of a quorum is presumed if no such point of order is raised;
- methods for seeking recognition and obtaining the floor;
- means by which motions may be submitted in writing during a meeting, and;
- methods for taking and verifying votes.

In addition, depending on the character of the organization, it may be advisable to adopt provisions for ensuring that non-members cannot participate in meetings (unless properly invited to do so), especially during any meeting or portion of a meeting held in executive session. (For examples of rules for electronic meetings designated to meet various needs, see the appendix *Sample Rules for Electronic Meetings*, pp. 635-649, reproduced below.)

**VIII Table of Rules for Counting Election Ballots, paper based. The equivalent for electronic ballots also needs definition.**

TYPE OF BALLOT	CREDITED TO	COUNTED TOWARD
<b>Ballot That Indicates Preference, Cast by Member</b>		
IF<meaning_of_Ballot_is_Clear>AND<Ballot_indicates_eligible_candidate>	1	1
IF<Ballot_indicates_ineligible_candidate>	0	1
IF<Meaning_of_Ballot_is_Unclear>AND<Can't_Affect_Result>	0	1

	IF<Meaning_of_Ballot_is_Unclear>AND<May_Affect_Result>	assembly for decision	1
	Two or more Ballots filled out and folded together	0	Count as 1 only
	One filled out Ballot folded with one or more blank	1	Count as 1 only
	<b>Blank Ballots OR Ballots that indicate no preference</b>	0	0
	<b>Ballots cast by nonmember</b>	0	0 (see note 1)
	<b>Ballots for multiple positions on a board or committee</b>		
	With votes for full number of positions to fill	1	1 (see note 2)
	With votes for less than the full number of positions	1	1 (see note 2)
	With votes for too many candidates.	0	1 (see note 2)
Note 1	If there is evidence that any ballots were cast by persons not entitled to vote but those ballots cannot be identified, and if there is any possibility that such ballots might affect the result, the entire ballot vote is null and void and a new ballot vote must be taken.		
Note 2	When votes are cast in the ballot for multiple positions on a board or committee, every ballot with a vote in that section for one or many candidates is counted as one vote even if the extra candidates selected means all candidates receive no vote.		

## APPENDIX

### SAMPLE RULES FOR ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

#### INTRODUCTION

AS NOTED IN THE MAIN TEXT OF ROBERTS RULES (21<sup>ST</sup> EDITION (copyright), there is an increasing preference among some organizations to transact business at "electronic meetings," in which some or all of the members communicate through electronic means such as the Internet or by telephone. Regarding the proper authorization of such meetings, and their limitations, see *Electronic Meetings* 9:30-36, wherein it is stated that when electronic meetings are authorized - which, in the case of a board or some other assembly, always requires a bylaw provision - additional rules should be adopted to govern their conduct. Depending on the nature of the rules and the specific provision in the bylaws, adopted as special rules of order or standing rules, or contained in instructions from a superior body.



The additional rules appropriate to a particular organization's electronic meetings may depend on many factors, such as the number of members in the organization, then nature and complexity of the business to be transacted, the organization's need for confidentiality in its proceedings, and the funds available. Four sets of sample rules for electronic meetings designed to meet various needs are provided here, along with bylaw provisions sufficient to authorize such meetings. These rules should, of course, be adopted as necessary for the particular circumstances of each group and the technology the organization finds most useful. It is therefore advisable to review all four sets of rules, as some particular rules from one set may prove appropriate for adaptation together with some or all the rules of another. It is also worth noting that although the rules below are written on the assumption they would be used by a board, electronic meetings could be authorized for another type of assembly or for a committee, and the sample rules could be adapted accordingly.

Consider an organization governed by bylaws whose relevant provisions are patterned directly on the Sample Bylaws in Roberts Rules of Order 12 edition 56:58-67. Each of the four sets of sample rules below shows how the organization might amend Article VI of the bylaws to authorize the executive board to conduct business by a particular type of electronic meeting. In each case, the sample bylaw provisions are followed by a number of additional rules that may be helpful in governing the conduct of that type of meeting.

designed for allowing the board to make use of the following types of electronic communication to conduct meetings respectively;

- A. Full- features Internet, or combination Internet/telephone meeting services that integrate audio (and optionally video), text, and voting capabilities.
- B. Telephone meetings, with Internet services for conducting secret votes and sharing documents.
- C. A speakerphone in the meeting room to allow members who are not physically present to participate by telephone.
- D. Telephone meetings without Internet support (and without any central meeting room).

For Scenarios A and B, it is assumed that electronic meetings will be the most usual meeting for conducting business, with in-person meetings held only when ordered by the board or all of its members. In Scenario C, it is assumed that a physical meeting space is designated for every meeting, but individual board members may participate by telephone. In Scenario D, in-person meetings are assumed as the norm, but telephone meetings may be ordered as needed.

#### **SCENARIO A: USE OF FULL FEATURED INTERNET MEETING SERVICES**

In this scenario, the board makes use of the internet meeting services with integrated audio (and optionally video), text, and voting capabilities as the usual meeting method, with in-person meetings when ordered by the board or all of its members.

Internet meeting services adapted to the needs of deliberative assemblies vary somewhat in the names given to their features and how they are set up and arranged. Typically, a full-featured Internet meeting is set up as follows:

Each participant, using his or her own computer or other device, and view the current list of all participants - with and indication of which member has the floor or which members are seeking recognition of the chair - and can seek recognition, submit motions in writing, view the result of pending motions, vote, and view the results of a vote. The sample rules given below require that anonymous voting be supported (in other words, that a member who is properly logged in to a meeting can cast an "electronic ballot" that does not identify that member's vote as belonging to him or her), and they also assume that non-anonymous votes can be taken, as well.

Audio transmissions can be integrated directly via the Internet, so that participants listen and speak through microphones and speakers or headsets at their computers or other devices. Alternatively, there might be a conference call, with access codes for the participants, that is dialled into by ordinary telephone, but is also linked to the Internet connecting interface, so that participants speak and listen by telephone, but use the Internet service (which remains aware of the identity of each caller) for all other features. If the participants have webcams for transmitting live video, a portion of the screen might show their faces, or else (perhaps depending on the total number of participants) just those of the chair and/or the person speaking in debate or presenting a report.

The organizers of the meeting also have access to a control panel for use by the chair, the Recording Secretary, and their assistants, which enables them to perform their duties during the meeting, such as ensuring that the text of the pending question is properly displayed, assigning the floor to a member, opening and closing the polls for taking a vote, controlling their camera view, etc. ~~By adopting an organization's bylaws are patterned directly on~~ the Sample Bylaws in this book (Robert's Rules of Order 12th Edition), the organization can authorize the board to meet by use of an Internet meeting service with features like those described above by adding the following sections to Article VI (56:64).

#### Sample Bylaw Provisions for Scenario A

##### **1. Login information.**

The Corresponding Secretary shall send by e-mail to every member of the Board, at least [time-period] before each meeting, the time of the meeting, the URL, and codes necessary to connect to the Internet meeting service, and, as an alternative and backup to the audio connection provided within the Internet service, the phone number and access code(s) the member needs to participate orally by telephone. The Corresponding Secretary shall also include a copy of, or a link to, these rules.

##### **2. Login time.**

The Recording Secretary shall schedule Internet meeting service availability to begin at least 15 minutes before the start of each meeting.

##### **3. Signing in and out.**

Members shall identify themselves as required to sign in to the Internet meeting service, and shall maintain Internet and audio access throughout the meeting whenever present, but shall sign out again upon any departure before adjournment.

##### **4. Quorum calls.**

The presence of a quorum shall be established by audible roll call at the beginning of the meeting. Thereafter, the continued presence of a quorum shall be determined by the online list of participating members, unless any member demands a quorum count by audible roll call. Such a demand may be made following any vote for which the announced totals add up to less than a quorum.

##### **5. Technical requirements and malfunctions.**

Each member is responsible for his or her audio and Internet connections, no action shall be invalidate on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented participation in the meetng.

**6. Forced disconnections.**

The chair may cause or direct the disconnection or muting of a member's connection if it is causing undue interference with the meeting. The chair's decision to do so, which is subject ot an undebatable appeal that can be made by any member, shall be announced during the meeting and recorded n the minutes.

**7. Assignment of the floor.**

To seek recognition by the chair, a member shall do [specifying the exact method appropriate to the Internet meetingservice being used]. Upon assigning the floor to a member, the chair shall clear the online queue of members who had been seeking recognition, another member who had been seeking recognition may propmtly seek recognition again, ad the chair shall recognize the member for the limited purpose of determning whether that member is entitled to preference in recognition.

**8. Interrupting a member.**

A member who intends to make a motion or request that under the rules may interrupt a speaker shall use [the designated feature] for the chair's instructions before attempting to interrupt the speaker by voice.

**9. Motions submitted in writing.**

A member intending to make a main motion, to offer an amendment, or to propose instructions to a committee, shall, before or after being recognized, post the motion in writing to the onine area designated by the recording secretary for this purpose, preceeded by the member's name and a number corresponding to how many written motions the member has so far posted during the meeting (e.g., "SMITH 3: "; "FRANCES JONES 2: "), Use of the online area designated by the Recording Secretary for this purpose shall be restricted to posting the text of intended motions.

**10. Display of motions.**

The Recording Secretary shall designate an online area exclusively for the display of the immediately pending question and other relevant pending questions (such as the main motion, or the pertinent part of the main motion, when an amendment to it is immediately pending); and, to the extent feasible, the Recording Secretary, or any assistants appointed to him or her for this purpose, shall cause such questions, or any other documents that are currently before the meeting for action or information, to be displayed therein until disposed of.

**11. Voting.**

Votes shall be taken by the anonymous voting feature of the Internet meeting service, unless a different method is ordered by the Board or required by the rules. When required or ordered, other permissible methods of voting are by electronic roll call or by audible roll call. The chair's announcement of the voting result shall include the number of members voting on each side of the question and the number, if any, who explicitly respond to acknowledge their presence without casting a vote. Business may also be conducted by unanimous consent.

**12. Video display.**

[For groups using video, but in which the number of participants is too large for all to be displayed simultaneously.] The chair, the recording Secretary, or their assistants shall cause a video of the chair to be displayed throughout the meeting, and shall also cause display of the video of the member currently recognized to speak or report.

**13. Audio transmission.**

For reasons of 1) security, 2) redundancy and reliability, or 3) of for reduced latency possible with landlines, it may be desirable to have the audio transmitted separately for 1), or by both internet and phone call for 2), or for use for broadcasting to reduce latency causing lip sync issues for 3). This may be for all or some selected speakers.

**SCENARIO B: TELECONFERENCE WITH INTERNET VOTING AND DOCUMENT SHARING**

Assuming an organization's bylaws are patterned directly on the Sample Bylaws in this book (Robert's Rules of Order 12th Edition), the organization can authorize the board to meet by teleconference, using Internet service for conducting secret votes and sharing documents, by adding the following section to Article VI (56:64):

Sample Bylaw Provisions for Scenario B

*Section 4. Meetings Held Electronically.*

Meetings of the Board shall be conducted by telephone, except that some particular meeting or meetings shall be held in person either (a) when the President or First Vice-President has obtained written consent from every Board member, or (b) when ordered by the Board, by a two-thirds vote with previous notice of a motion to do so having been given (note 2).

(Note 2). Compare this with Sample Bylaw Provisions for Scenario D, which assume in-person meetings as the norm, that authorize electronic meetings when directed by the board or with the written consent of a majority of board members ( or in the case of a special meeting, when directed by those calling the meeting).

Telephone meetings of the Board shall be subject to all rules adopted by the Board or by the Society, to govern such meetings, which may include any reasonable limitations on, and requirements for Board member participation, and which shall specify how motions may be submitted in writing via the internet. Any such rules adopted by the Board shall supersede any conflicting rules in the Parliamentary authority, but may not otherwise conflict with or alter any rule or decision by the Society. At telephone meetings, any ballot votes under the rules or ordered by the Board shall be conducted electronically using an Internet service that supports anonymous voting. The Board may then find it helpful to adopt rules such as the following to govern the conduct of telephone meetings. Note that the requirements in Rules 1 and 2 of a unique access code for each member provides greater assurance that only members and others specifically invited can participate than the sample rules given for Scenarios C and D (Cf. 9:36 Roberts Rules of Order RONR 12th Edition).

#### Sample Rules for Electronic Meetings for Scenario B

##### **1. Login information.**

The Corresponding Secretary shall send by e-mail to every member of the Board, at least [time-period] before each meeting, the time of the meeting, the phone number and unique access codes that the member needs to connect to the telephone conference call, and the URLs and login information for the Internet survey meeting tool and file-hosting service. The Corresponding Secretary shall also include a copy of, or a link to, these rules.

##### **2. Call-in time.**

The Recording Secretary shall schedule a telephone conference call, using a free service that provides each user a unique access code, to begin 15 minutes before the start of each meeting. The Recording Secretary shall also establish accounts with a free online survey tool that supports anonymous surveys, and with a free file-hosting service.

**3. Technical requirements.**

For the purposes of electronic ballot voting and file sharing, members shall maintain Internet access during the meeting.

**4. Arrival announcements.**

Members shall announce themselves at the first opportunity after joining the telephone conference call, but may not interrupt a speaker to do so.

**5. Departure announcements.**

Members who leave the telephone conference call before adjournment shall announce their departure, but may not interrupt a speaker to do so.

**6. Quorum calls.**

The presence of a quorum shall be established by audible roll call at the beginning of the meeting and on demand of any member. Such a demand may be made following the departure of any member, or following the taking of any vote for which the the announced totals add to less than a quorum.

**7. Obtaining the floor.**

To seek recognition by the chair, a member shall address the chair and state his or her own name.

**8. Motion submitted in writing.**

Members may submit motions to the chair in writing by uploading them to the file-hosting service and notifying the chair of the URL or download link needed to access the file.

**9. Voting.**

rules or ordered by the Board to be taken by ballot. When a vote is taken by roll call, only the number of votes on each side and the number of members present but not voting shall be entered in the minutes, unless the Board orders a fully recorded roll call vote. Ballot votes shall be taken electronically, as follows: The Recording Secretary shall post the question using the online survey tool, and the chair shall then alert the members that the polls are open, providing any additional information that members need to cast their votes online. The polls shall then be closed not less than two minutes after they have been opened by the chair. Business may then be conducted by unanimous consent.

**10. Technical malfunctions.**

Each member is responsible for his or her connection to the telephone conference call and to the Internet; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented participation in the meeting.

**11. Forced disconnections.**

The Chair may order the Recording Secretary to disconnect or mute a member's connection if it is causing undue interference with the telephone conference call. The chair's decision to do so, which is subject to an undebatable appeal that can be made by any member, shall be announced during the meeting and recorded in the minutes.

**SCENARIO C: SOME MEMBERS PARTICIPATE BY SPEAKERPHONE  
IN AN OTHERWISE FACE-TO-FACE MEETING**

An organization may need to permit its board to hold meetings in which some members are physically present while others participate by telephone.

Assume an organization's bylaws are patterned directly on the Sample Bylaws in Roberts Rules of Order (RONR 12th Edition, copyright), and assume that no rule of the organization requires votes of the executive board to be taken by ballot. By adding the following provision to Section 3 of Article VI of the bylaws (56:64 in RONR 12 ed.), the organization can grant board members the right to participate in meetings by telephone, subject to rules adopted by the board:

Sample Bylaw Provisions for Scenario C



Board meetings shall be held at a central location, but Board members who are not present in person shall have the right to participate by telephone, subject to any limitations established in rules adopted by the Board to govern such participation.

The board may then find it helpful to adopt rules such as the following:

#### Sample Rules for Electronic Meetings for Scenario C

##### **1. Login information.**

The Corresponding Secretary shall send by e-mail to every member of the Board, at least [time-period] before each meeting, the time and location of the meeting and the phone number and any access code needed to connect to the telephone conference call. The Corresponding Secretary shall also include a copy of, or a link to, these rules.

##### **2. Call-in time.**

The Corresponding Secretary shall schedule a telephone conference call, using equipment provided by the Society or a free service, to begin 15 minutes before the start of each meeting.

##### **3. Meeting-room equipment**

The Society shall provide a speakerphone at each meeting, which the Recording Secretary shall connect to the telephone conference call at least 5 minutes before the start of the

##### **4. Location of the chair**

The chair of the meeting shall be present in the meeting room.

##### **5. Arrival announcements.**

Members shall announce themselves at the first opportunity after joining the telephone conference, but may not interrupt a speaker to do so.

##### **6. Departure announcements.**

Members who leave the telephone conference call before adjournment shall announce their departure, but may not interrupt a speaker to do so.

##### **7. Quorum calls.**

The presence of a quorum shall be established by roll call at the beginning of the meeting and on the demand of any member. Such a demand may be made following the departure of any member or following the taking of any vote for which the announced totals add up to less than a quorum

##### **8. Obtaining the floor.**

To seek recognition by the chair, a member shall address the chair and state his or her own name.

**9. Motions submitted in writing.**

Members who participate in the meeting by phone may not submit motions in writing during the meeting, but are entitled to make motions orally. Members may however, submit motions in writing by sending them at least [time-duration] before the meeting to the Corresponding Secretary, who shall send any such pre-submitted motions by e-mail to all members in advance of the meeting and shall provide copies to the members present in person at the meeting.

**10. Voting methods.**

fully recorded roll call, only the number of votes on each side and the number of members present but not voting (including members participating by phone) shall be entered in the minutes. Business may also be conducted by unanimous consent.

**11. Loss of meeting-room connection.**

Any business transacted while the meeting-room speakerphone is disconnected from the telephone conference call is null and void, except that the members present in the meeting room at such a time may take those actions that are in order in the absence of a quorum.

**12. Other technical malfunctions and requirements.**

Each member is responsible for his or her connection to the telephone conference call; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the the loss of, or poor quality of, a members individual connection prevented participation in the meeting.

**13. Forced disconnection.**

The chair may order the Recording Secretary to disconnect or mute a member's connection if it is causing interference with the telephone conference call. The chair's decision to do so, which is subject to an undebatable appeal that can be made by any member, shall be announced during the meeting and recorded in the minutes.

**SCENARIO D: TELEPHONE MEETING WITHOUT INTERNET**

Assume an organization's bylaws are patterned directly on the Sample Bylaws in Roberts Rules of Order (RONR 12th Edition, copyright)., and assume that no rule of the organization requires votes of the board to be taken by ballot. By adding the following section to Article VI of the bylaws ((56:64), the organization can authorize the board to meet by telephone conference call when desired, without using Internet services.

#### Sample Bylaw Provisions for Scenario D

##### *Section 4. Meetings Held Electronically.*

Meetings of the Board may be conducted by telephone (a) when the President or First Vice-President has obtained written consent for this from a majority of the Board's members; (b) when so directed by the Board; or (c) in the case of a special meeting, when so directed by those calling the special meeting. (note 3)

*Note 3).* Compare this with Simple Bylaw Provision for Scenarios A, and B, which assume electronic meetings and require a supermajority to order an in-person meeting. Telephone meetings of the Board shall be subject to all rules adopted by the Board, or by the Society, to govern such meetings, which may include any reasonable limitations on, and requirements for, Board members participation. Any such rules adopted by the Board shall supersede any conflicting rules in the parliamentary authority, but may not otherwise conflict with or alter any rule or decision of the Society.

The board may then find it helpful to adopt rules such as the following to govern the conduct of telephone meetings:

#### Sample Rules for Electronic Meetings for Scenario D

##### **1. Connection information.**

The Corresponding Secretary shall send by e-mail to every member of the Board, at least [time-duration] before each meeting, the time of the meeting and the phone number and access code needed to connect to the telephone conference call.

##### **2. Call-in time.**

The Recording Secretary shall schedule a telephone conference call, using a free service, to begin at least 15 minutes before the start of each telephone meeting.

##### **3. Arrival Announcements.**

Members shall announce themselves at the first opportunity after joining the telephone conference call, but may not interrupt a speaker to do so.

##### **4. Departure Announcements.**