

# Committees in Robert's Rules



Many of us have experience in serving on committees, but receive little training in how to make that service effective. This article provides useful information that can help you enjoy your service more and avoid common pitfalls. It gives an overview of committees, their type, structure, and functioning; information on agenda and minutes; a set of sample discussion guidelines, and an effective method for processing complex proposals. You may adapt the guidelines to suit the needs of your organization. This information is based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition*, and Jurassic Parliament's experience over 20 years of working with committees.

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## Committees in Robert's Rules

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# Committees in Robert's Rules

## 1. Introduction

A committee is a group of volunteers who have agreed to do a job defined by someone else.

The key fact about a committee is that it is not its own master. When a board of directors, a city council or a faculty senate creates a committee, it has the right and the duty of deciding what the committee is called, who will chair it, who will serve on it, what job it is to do, and when its job will be over. If the authority that creates the committee chooses, it may change the mandate, remove the chair, add members or take them away, ignore the committee's recommendation, or even dissolve the committee before its work is complete.

Clear understanding of these facts would remove much of the heartbreak that sometimes accompanies committee work. Characteristically, when volunteers undertake a committee job, they bring dedication, energy and their own views. This is desirable and praiseworthy. Such commitment and energy drive much civic improvement.

However, in the course of tackling whatever job they have been given, members of committees can get carried away. Committee members sometimes invest so much time and energy that they come to see themselves as the owners of the task. They may:

- expand their scope beyond what was assigned;
- move from policy into operational details that are not their responsibility;
- make commitments beyond the authority they were given;
- disregard timelines and other parameters of their assignment;
- try to change the chair appointed by the governing body;
- fail to consult other interested persons or staff;
- decline to collaborate with other committees whose duties intersect with their own; or
- react with outrage when their recommendation is not approved by the overseeing body.

This grim picture is not the whole story, of course. Voluntary committees are a huge part of the fabric of our country today. They make an inestimable contribution to the functioning of our world, both in the civic and in the not-for-profit realm. We literally could not run our society without them. We believe, however, that both committee members themselves, and the appointing bodies, need to be very clear on the facts of their functioning, and to commit themselves to timely and clear communication, if the work is to be done well. Neglecting to attend to these aspects can lead to friction, bad feeling, and wasted time and energy on all sides.



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## 2. Fundamentals

### Governing authority

The first question to ask about any committee is: what authority governs the committee?

- When the board of directors of a nonprofit organization creates a committee, the board is responsible for the committee's functioning and decisions. Should the committee take an illegal action, the board members could be sued, even if they knew nothing about it.
- When a city council appoints a parks committee, the council is responsible for the board's functioning. Note that the nature of the committee, not its name, is the indicator. For example, some cities have a "parks board." If that board's actions must be referred to the council for ratification and implementation, the "parks board" is, in actual fact, a "parks committee."

The body that creates the committee is ordinarily the body which is responsible for it, and to which it reports. The body or person who appoints members of a committee has the right to remove them.

### Powers of committee

The second question is: what powers does the committee have? The charter or assignment of authority to the committee is critical to understanding what tasks the committee is to take on, and how it should undertake them. If you are a member of a committee and have not been given a description of what your job is, make it your first piece of business to get that description. It is essential.

Some organizations include the charter (also called a "charge") with every agenda packet, in order to help keep members keep focused. This can prevent "scope creep" and related problems.

John Hasling in *Committees in Action* describes the following purposes for which a committee may be established:

- To exchange information
- To set goals
- To establish policy or criteria
- To make decisions and plan a course of action
- To evaluate
- To hear complaints and negotiate resolutions
- To make recommendations



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H.W. Farwell in *Point of Opinion* gives a shorter list:

- to investigate
- to investigate and recommend
- to investigate, recommend and take action

A committee that has been created to make recommendations is very different from a committee that has been given power to make decisions.

### **Unusual suggestion**

We have heard an unusual suggestion in this realm: it has been argued that committees should never be asked to make a recommendation. The speaker suggested that either (1) committees should be given the power to make a decision, or (2) they should be requested to research options and present them to the governing body for a decision. The rationale was that too often, when a committee makes a recommendation and it is not accepted, the committee members become discouraged and disheartened, and may decline further service.

While this approach is not feasible in every setting, non-governmental bodies such as nonprofit boards might well adopt it. If such a board set the budgetary and policy boundaries, and then gave the committee members freedom to act as they determine best within those guidelines, a better outcome might result—not to mention happier committee members.

This would require, of course, that the nonprofit board take the time and effort to consider carefully what needs to be done, and what are the parameters within which action should be taken. We have seen instances where a board of directors, having received a recommendation, moves from policy into operational questions and becomes involved in details which would have been better left to the committee. The tendency to disregard stated limits to authority can appear at both ends of the spectrum, but a board can get away with it, whereas committee members can only grind their teeth helplessly as they see the board meddling with their hard work or “ruining” their thoughtful proposal.

### **Type of committee**

Some commentators nowadays say that the word “committee” is outmoded, and that organizations do better to appoint “work teams” or “task forces” rather than formal committees. Names are important, and will affect how people understand the job they have been given. Whatever they are called, however, all committees, task forces, work groups or teams in the voluntary world can be divided into two types:

- *Permanent committees*, which exist to do an ongoing job and persist from year to year, whatever their membership at a given time. These are often called “standing committees.”
- *Temporary committees*, which are created for a particular task, and cease to exist once the task is accomplished. These may be called “special,” “ad hoc,” or “select” committees.



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## Structure and members

A committee should be as large as it needs to be—no larger and no smaller. If your assignment is focused on getting a particular job done, a smaller committee will be better. If your assignment includes obtaining representation and views from many different sectors or stakeholders, a larger committee may be necessary. We have found that a working group of three to six people is effective for many jobs, while a dozen people can work together well if each has a different function to carry out. Beyond a dozen, compartmentalization or establishing subcommittees may be necessary. Subcommittees report to the committee of which they are a part.

If your committee has “ex officio” members, that means members who serve on the committee because of their position, not because of who they personally are. Ex officio members are full voting members of committees, unless the bylaws or rules say otherwise. If the president is ex officio a member of all committees, he or she is not counted towards the quorum.

## Quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of voting members who must be present for business to be done. Usually a quorum is a majority (more than half) of the voting members of the committee. If a quorum is not present, a committee may discuss matters, but it may not make decisions or take action. The clerk or secretary should maintain an up-to-date list of committee members that indicates who is a voting or non-voting member, and have it available at every meeting.

Committees may have members who are not members of the organization if the governing rules permit this. In some circumstances, non-members bring useful expertise and a neutral point of view.



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### 3. Rules

The next question to ask is: what rules govern the committee? In general, committees are governed by the rules of their appointing body. So it's very important to read the bylaws. This document, often maligned as dull or boring, is in fact the basis on which everything happens within your organization. Read the bylaws and you may even find out important facts that are not known to the members of your governing body! If you are serving on a citizen board or committee, read the policies and procedures of your appointing council or commission. Many enlightened cities now provide citizen handbooks which, intimidating as they may seem, are invaluable guides to your task.

If your board has adopted *Robert's Rules of Order* in its bylaws, your committee must follow the rules given in that book. The current edition is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition*. (This book is referred to informally as "Robert.") Be warned that many versions of Robert's Rules are available for sale but are based on old, out-of-copyright editions. Only the latest edition should be used.

A board or council may give a committee power to create its own rules, but we do not advise this. We believe that consistency throughout an organization makes for better functioning and improves process. Many people don't realize that Robert allows for more casual functioning in smaller boards and committees (see below).

Some bodies adopt other books than Robert, such as *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*. We believe that is very useful for bodies to adopt a "parliamentary authority." We recommend Robert's Rules first and foremost as the most widely used guide in this country, but the other authorities can also be useful.

If your board or city council has not adopted any rules, or any particular source of guidance on procedure, you still cannot do things any which way you like. There is such a thing as "common parliamentary law," which expresses the usage of our society over centuries. Courts have found that common parliamentary law applies to local governments, nonprofit organizations and associations. So procedure is not a matter which can simply be made up, or ignored.



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## 4. Role of leader

The leader of a committee has to facilitate the meetings, be sure that everyone is heard, and move the committee forward. At the same time, he or she may carry out important administrative functions, such as taking the minutes of the meeting, assigning tasks, and holding members accountable for their performance.

This is different from the role of the chair of a board of directors. The leader at a board meeting is not responsible for the decision that the board makes—the group is responsible. The situation is different for committees. A committee chair, in accepting the job, also accepts the responsibility of endeavoring to guide the committee toward a successful outcome. It remains the case, however, that he is not the “boss” of the committee in the way that a CEO is the boss of their company. The chair needs to combine persuasion and tact with the willingness to hold others accountable. It is not a job for the faint-hearted.

Because this role is so important, we advise against assigning co-chairs to committees. If two people are willing to share leadership roles, in our experience it works better to appoint one person as chair, and one as vice-chair. This keeps the lines of authority clear and prevents muddle and abdication of authority, which can occur, even unintentionally, when two people share one job. Robert says, “The anomalous title ‘co-chairman’ should be avoided, as it causes impossible dilemmas in attempts to share the functions of a single position” (*Robert’s Rules of Order*, Section 13:17).

It is essential for a chair to be definite about procedure while running the committee meeting. A chair should announce the beginning and end of the meeting clearly, take up each item of business in turn, move on to the next item promptly, and enforce whatever rules the committee has adopted for its functioning. For instance, if the committee has agreed that each person will have the opportunity to speak once before anyone speaks a second time, the chair must interrupt someone who starts to speak up out of turn.

It is not always easy for chairs to carry out the role of enforcer of the rules, but if you find it a challenge temperamentally, please remember that the job carries this responsibility. The work will go much better if the chair is willing to be assertive in service of the group.

It is equally important that the chair create an atmosphere in which every member feels free to speak up and state their true opinion. The tendency to “self-censor” is strong in all of us. Only careful listening and a strong commitment from the chair to true openness will allow people to feel comfortable when they have uncomfortable thoughts. Yet without those thoughts, and diversity of opinion, a group is easily subject to the herd mentality and “group think.” In our view, the single best indicator of the health of a group is how free the members feel to express a differing opinion, and still be welcome.





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## 5. Agendas and Minutes

### Agendas

Preparing the agenda is a vital part of any successful committee meeting. While the chair, with the assistance of the clerk or secretary, usually prepares a draft agenda, it is only a draft until the members adopt it at the beginning of the meeting. If the chair has declined to include an item which a member wishes included, at the beginning of the meeting the member may say, “I move that the agenda be amended by ... [state the change].” This proposal can be debated, and takes a majority vote to approve. Once an agenda has been adopted, it takes a two-thirds vote to change it later during the meeting.

We recommend planning an agenda with care. It is not always wise to follow the traditional “order of business,” which puts unfinished business ahead of new business. Such an order means that by the time members come to anything new, they may be exhausted and have no energy for the task. Any organization can adopt a “special rule of order” that allows it to create an agenda with more flexibility, and we recommend doing this. Put the tough issues that will take more energy and thought early on, and save routine matters such as reports for later (unless they must be covered before some action can be taken).

### Simplified order of business

This is the order of business presented in Robert’s Rules:

1. Approval of minutes
2. Officer reports
3. Committee reports
4. Unfinished business
5. New business

Here is a suggested alternative order, that dedicates time to a “strategic item” early on in the agenda. Members are then able to give their best thinking to the important issues while they are still feeling fresh and energetic.

1. Approval of minutes
2. Chair’s remarks
3. Strategic item
4. Unfinished business
5. Any other new business
6. Treasurer and committee reports



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Agendas should provide an expected time for each item, and include the notation “all times are approximate” or “estimated time” in order to prevent the schedule from being too restrictive. During the meeting, the chair should track time very carefully. A “count-up timer” is helpful in this regard. By speaking up a few minutes before a given time period has elapsed, a chair can encourage members to wrap up a subject, make a decision, or postpone the item to the next meeting. We have found that having meetings end on time is one of the most positive things a chair can do for committee success.

A useful way to structure an agenda is to use active verbs rather than nouns. For example, rather than listing “laboratory guidelines” as an agenda item, use the words “Determine top 6 laboratory guidelines.” Action words keep people focused on action results.

It is fine to include the text of draft motions or proposals in an agenda. This helps the committee make decisions, as long as it is clear to everyone that they are only drafts, and can be freely modified.

Agendas and supporting materials must be distributed in advance if the committee is to be effective. How much in advance will depend on your group, but it is not a good use of time to have members reading the materials and thinking about the subject matter on their way to or at the beginning of the meeting. Members who accept committee service have an obligation to give time to the work, in addition to attending the meetings.

## Relationship building

In order to facilitate sharing of information among the committee members, which leads to trust, which leads to better functioning and decision-making, we recommend that every agenda include these two items:

- **Check-in**, a few minutes at the beginning when the leader goes around the table and invites each person to share a small tidbit of personal or professional information that may be of interest to colleagues. This is not “what I did last summer”—it should be short and light, and members may pass if they wish. Building this into every meeting will improve functioning. It takes less time than it seems. It is like tuning up the instruments before making the music.
- **Announcements and remarks for the good of the order**, a few minutes at the end of the meeting when members may comment on any topic they wish, or inform others of opportunities, or commend those who worked hard to prepare a successful meeting. This serves as a kind of “safety valve” and allows an opportunity for folks to speak freely. Again, while it may seem to be a time-waster, in fact it makes meetings more effective.

## Consent agenda

One useful tool for making meetings more efficient is a “consent agenda” or “consent calendar.” This is a group of items, expected to be non-controversial, that are voted on as a batch. There is no discussion on the items included in a consent agenda, and only one vote is taken.



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If a member wishes to discuss something on the consent agenda, they make the request during “approval of agenda” to remove that item from the consent agenda, and it is done. The item can then be discussed and voted on at its proper place during the agenda items.

### **Meeting minutes and other records**

As mentioned above, the chair of a committee sometimes keeps the record of the committee’s meeting, called the “minutes.” This is another important difference between a committee and a board. At a board meeting, both a presider and a secretary must be present, and they may not be the same person.

If the committee is an informal one, it may not be necessary to have the minutes formally approved by the body. On the other hand, in the civic realm, there may be a specially assigned clerk who takes minutes, and their approval is an essential part of the public record. Be sure to find out which type your committee is, and what type of record is needed. Given modern expectations for both transparency and accuracy, committees should not be too casual.

As for content, the basic guideline given in Robert is that “minutes record what is done, and not what is said.” We are strongly in favor of “action minutes” which record decisions made. “Summary minutes” are also acceptable – these include brief statements of key points of arguments made, without attribution to individuals.

We recommend against keeping “detailed minutes” that record who said what to whom. If your minutes include statements like “Ivan said that he felt it would be harmful to the organization to do this” or “Fatima argued in favor on the grounds that Juan is a nice person,” such statements should be removed. There is no place for “he said” and “she said” in meeting minutes.

We recommend keeping a running “action items list” which includes all assignments or tasks and the following information:

- person to whom assigned
- date of assignment
- target date for completion
- current status

This can be updated before the next meeting, and will be a helpful tool to keep things moving forward.

We also recommend keeping a “record of past actions.” This list helps keep a committee focused, reminds everyone of commitments that have already been made, and serves as a useful reference. If your committee operates more formally and uses motions, this would be called a “motions list.”



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## 6. Discussion and functioning

Many committees conduct their meetings using “open discussion,” in which people speak up as they feel like it, interrupt one another, and argue back and forth. While this is reasonable in a committee of two or three people, as soon as a committee gets larger, this type of discussion raises many problems. We recommend that committees adopt our “sample guidelines” (see appendix) which allow for open discussion when appropriate, but provide a more structured way to approach most topics in the meeting.

There are some basic rules from Robert and common parliamentary law that apply to every committee.

- **All members have an equal right to make motions, speak in discussion, and vote.**
- **Non-members do not have the right to make motions, speak in discussion, or vote.**
- **One subject is discussed at a time.**
- **One person speaks at a time.**
- **No interrupting (with a few exceptions).**
- **Courtesy and respect are required at all times.**
- **No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.** This is a vital principle of fairness. A group that adopts this rule will find that its meetings are far more effective. One excellent way to achieve this is to use the “round robin” method of discussion.
- **Members may not speak about the motives of other members.** This is another essential rule which will eliminate a lot of friction and emotional upset. (This is different from conflict of interest rules – every organization should have a policy to deal with conflict of interest, which usually means financial benefit.)

As mentioned above, Robert provides special guidance for small boards and committees. Here are our views on those special rules for small boards and committees:

- **Chair may take part in debate.** We concur with the provision that the chair of a committee may take part in discussion and debate. This seems very reasonable, since the chair often has the greatest commitment to the task of the committee, is the most knowledgeable, and has the best lines of communication with the leadership. We recommend, however, that the chair speak last, after other members have spoken, in order to remain as neutral as possible, and sum up what others have said. This is a Jurassic Parliament suggestion that is not included in Robert’s Rules.



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- **Chair may vote.** We favor having the chair vote in a small committee. Again, however, we recommend that the chair vote last, after the other members. An alternative is to give the chair the power to vote only when their vote will affect the outcome (break a tie, or create a tie).
  - **Can the chair make motions?** Although Robert’s “small board rules” allow this, we recommend that the chair NOT make motions. We believe that given our natural human tendency to defer to the leader of any group, a chair who makes motions can become too dominating. We suggest that if need be, the chair ask, “Would anyone care to move that...”, and refrain from personally making motions.
  - **Is a second needed?** Although Robert’s “small board rules” say that a second is not needed, we recommend that a motion be seconded before it can be discussed. It is always helpful to ensure that two people want to discuss a motion before it is taken up by a group. Requiring a second ensures this is the case.
  - **Discussion without a motion is permitted.** We think this is fine. Committees will often want to discuss a matter before they are ready to formulate a specific proposal. However, we recommend that the chair ask for a motion just as soon as the group is ready for it. Having the language of a specific motion to discuss and vote on helps clarify the issue, focus people’s minds, and keep everyone on track.
  - **Members must seek recognition from the chair before speaking.** Asking everyone to raise a hand when they wish to speak, and gain permission from the chair, allows for order and fairness.
  - **May members may speak directly to each other?** Permission to speak directly is implied in Robert’s section on small boards and committees. We recommend that this be used with great caution. All too often, when members speak directly to one another, the conversation gets hijacked by the two individuals involved, while everyone is else left behind. It makes it too easy to violate the fundamental rules outlined above. The alternative is that speakers address all remarks to the chair, not each other. When this practice is followed, discussion is depersonalized and emotions are kept under better control.

## Voting

While it is customary and usual to work towards consensus in a committee, we recommend that bodies be prepared to vote if opinions clearly differ. An unwillingness to take votes will hamper a committee and cause it to spend more time on its task than it needs to. A chair and members who can accept the idea that not everyone thinks alike will make much better decisions than a committee that is committed to keeping a surface appearance of unity, no matter how long it takes to hash things out. Voting is a useful, democratic and highly functional way of making decisions.



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When voting, a majority is necessary for a proposal to be adopted. A majority means “more than 50% of the votes cast.” People may abstain—not vote—if they wish, and abstentions are usually not counted. The chair must always call for the negative vote, not just ask for those in favor.

Language to use in taking a vote:

*Voice vote*

All those in favor, say aye. Thank you.

All those opposed, say no. Thank you.

The ayes have it and the motion passes OR The noes have it and the motion fails.

*Show of hands*

All those in favor raise your right hand and keep it up [pause]. Thank you, hands down.

All those opposed raise your right hand and keep it up [pause]. Thank you, hands down.

The ayes have it and the motion passes OR The noes have it and the motion fails.



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## 7. Checklists

### Problem-solving

We offer the following framework for problem-solving as a guide to a committee starting out on its task (from *Committees in Action*).

1. Define the problem
2. Limit the topic
3. Analyze the data
4. Establish criteria for solutions
5. Suggest possible solutions
6. Select the best solution by checking each one against the criteria
7. Carry out the solution
8. Evaluate the effect of the solution

### Conflict resolution

The following checklist can be helpful in cases of conflict (from *Facilitation at a Glance, 2nd edition* by Ingrid Bens). Ask whether any of these problems exist in your committee:

- No plan or process for approaching the task
- Lack of active listening
- Lack of closure
- Personal attacks
- No process checking
- Dominant members
- Poor time management
- Lack of skill
- Passive or nonexistent facilitation



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## 8. Additional Points

*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition* makes the following additional points about committees. For full details, read Paragraph 37:35 on Reconsideration in Committees, Section 50 on Committees, and Section 51 on Reports of Boards and Committees.

### Discussion

Limits on discussion, such as motions to extend or limit debate, or to “call the question” (close debate and vote immediately, formally named “Move the Previous Question”), are not allowed in committees.

### Reconsideration

In ordinary meetings of a board or assembly, a member must have voted with the prevailing side in order to move reconsideration. In committees, any member who did not vote with the losing side may move to reconsider. This includes someone who voted with the prevailing side, who did not vote at all, or who was absent when the vote was taken. There is no time limit on reconsideration in committees.

### Reports

Ordinarily the chair of the committee presents the report to the board and, if it includes recommendations for action, moves the recommendations after giving the report. No second is required, since the motion is made on behalf of the committee which (presumably) included other members.

If the board agrees to receive a minority report, members of the committee who disagree with the majority may present such a report after the committee report.

A board should not move to adopt, accept, or agree to a report, since to do so means that the board accepts every word of the report in its entirety and makes the report its own. It is also incorrect to vote to receive a report. The minutes simply note that the report was received for filing.





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## 9. Conclusion

A final reminder: whether permanent or temporary, a committee exists at the will and pleasure of its appointing body, and must conform to the rules, directives and guidance of that body.

Committees are the workhorses of the civic and volunteer worlds, often unrecognized and unsung, that make an enormous difference to our society. It is our hope that the occasional frustrations of committee service will be far outweighed by the knowledge that in serving on a voluntary committee, you are making a unique contribution to improve human conditions and advance the common good.



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# APPENDIX

## A. Sample Committee Discussion Guidelines

1. The chair runs our meetings, ensures a fair process, maintains clarity, and helps our group observe its guidelines. The chair is not in charge of decision-making; rather our group as a whole is responsible for making our decisions.
2. Committee meetings will be conducted so that everyone can hear and be heard.
3. Members have a right to information to help make decisions. Members may solicit information in advance of the meeting by sending requests through the secretary, or postpone a decision to the next meeting by majority vote, pending the collection of specific information
4. Each member of the committee will have an equal chance to contribute to discussions.
5. The committee will have two modes of discussion:
  - a) Formal discussion, which will proceed according to the “round robin” method. Members will address all remarks to the chair. No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once. Members will not engage in cross-talk (speaking to each other across the table) during this type of discussion. During formal discussion the chair may allow for answers to factual questions to be provided, at their discretion. The chair will reserve comments and observations until it is their turn to speak.
  - b) Open discussion, in which members speak more informally, in a conversational style.
6. Courtesy and respect for fellow committee members, staff and citizens are always required.
7. With the exception of conflict of interest issues, discussion of other members’ motives is never allowed.
8. We do not allow sidebar conversations or whispering. In addition, use of electronic devices must not disrupt the meeting nor distract the participants. Members who have urgent electronic business to transact will leave the room.
9. Discussion must be relevant to the topic at hand.
10. If appropriate, a subcommittee will be formed to review an issue which will report back to the committee at the next meeting or as agreed by the group.
11. The quorum for a meeting of the committee is a majority (more than half) of the members of the committee. Proxy votes will not be used.



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12. A majority of the members of the committee must vote in favor for a motion to pass.
  13. Additional issues not covered in these guidelines will be resolved according to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, latest edition, insofar as that authority is not in conflict with the legislation, statutes, regulations, and policies which govern the work of the committee, which take precedence.

## **B. Exploratory Round Robin Method**

1. Proposals will be submitted in writing to the secretary in advance of the meeting.
2. Members will review the proposals before the meeting and note their comments and concerns.
3. During the meeting, the members will share their comments on the proposal under consideration, using the round robin method. This is an information-gathering step. While members may make suggestions as to which changes should be required or how the proposal might be improved, no amendments will be voted on or actions taken during this round of discussion.
4. Staff will note comments on the whiteboard so that everyone may see them.
5. The chair will provide his/her comments last.
6. After the first round of comments, the group will either hold another round robin or engage in open discussion, as the group chooses.
7. The chair will summarize comments and observations.
8. A member will propose a course of action, which may be:
  - a) — To approve the proposal
  - b) — To amend the proposal
  - c) — To refer the proposal back to the staff for further study, to report back at a given date
  - d) — To postpone a decision on the proposal to the next meeting
9. The chair will call for the vote for and against. The secretary will record the vote count and the number of abstentions, if any.
10. Members who have a conflict of interest may not participate in discussion and will leave the meeting room while the vote is taken. Absence for reasons of conflict of interest will be noted in the minutes by name.
11. If members wish to disapprove a motion or withhold approval, they will vote “no” when the vote on the proposal is taken.



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Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

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