



**ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER
AND
APPLICATION TO COLORADO OWNER ASSOCIATIONS**

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1. ***Introduction to Robert’s Rules of Order***

Parliamentary procedure was first utilized by the British Parliament to maintain order. Parliamentary procedure was brought to America by English colonial settlers and became the means of running meetings. To set forth the common practices at meetings of organizations, American Henry Robert put together a small book of rules in 1876. Since then, Robert’s Rules of Order have been revised many times and used by organizations all over the world, including many Colorado owners’ associations.

2. ***Purpose of Roberts Rules of Order***

The purpose of Robert’s Rules of Order is to prevent confusion, permit all meeting participants to be heard, and to allow organizations (like Colorado owner associations) to conduct meetings in a fair, efficient and orderly manner.

3. ***Purpose of this Article***

The objective of this article is to simplify and summarize relevant rules from Robert’s Rules of Order.

4. ***Are all owner associations required to follow Robert’s Rules of Order?***

No. Owner associations should review their bylaws and other governing documents to determine whether they are required to follow or use Robert’s Rules of Order. Compliance with Robert’s Rules of Order ranges from informal in most associations (of those that have reference to these rules in their governing documents), to formal compliance by just a few associations.

The bylaws sometimes refer to Robert’s Rules of Order or allow for the use of Robert’s Rules of Order. If an owner association’s governing documents require Robert’s Rules of Order to be followed or used, then leaders of the association should become familiar with these rules. In the absence of provisions requiring a Colorado owner association to utilize Robert’s Rules of Order, the association should simply follow its existing bylaws, its other governing documents and its governance policies (adopted under Senate Bill 05-100, Senate Bill 06-89 and House Bill 09-1359). One of the required policies under these Senate Bills is a policy on the conduct of meetings. That adopted policy may include elements from Robert’s Rules of Order.

When an association's bylaws include a provision on Robert's Rules of Order, the bylaws often provide that "failure to strictly follow Robert's Rules of Order shall not invalidate any action taken at a meeting of the Board or Members."

5. ***Quorum***

Under Robert's Rules of Order, a quorum must be present to transact any business. (This quorum requirement is typically in the bylaws of Colorado owner associations).

6. ***Obtaining the Floor at Member Meetings***

Before a member can make a motion or speak in debate, he or she must obtain the floor; that is, the member must be recognized by the chair as having the exclusive right to be heard at that time.

7. ***Introducing Business (Making Motions) at Member Meetings***

Business may be introduced by an individual member or by a committee.

Business is always introduced in the form of a motion.

8. ***Seconding a Motion***

After a motion has been made, another member, without rising and obtaining the floor, may second the motion.

A second merely implies that the member, who seconds, agrees that the motion should come before the assembly and not that he or she necessarily favors the motion.

A motion made by a committee requires no second, since its introduction into the assembly has been approved by a majority of the committee.

The purpose of a second is to prevent time from being consumed by the assembly having to dispose of a motion that only one person wants to see introduced.

Where informal meeting procedures are appropriate (i.e., for smaller meetings), a second to a motion is often not requested.

9. ***Placing a Motion before the Association***

After a motion has been made and seconded, the Chair typically repeats the motion verbatim, thus placing it before the assembly for debate and action.

The Chair may help formulate a motion by a member.

During the brief interval between the making of a motion and the time when the Chair places it before the assembly by restating it, the maker of a motion may modify or withdraw it simply by stating the intention to do so.

After the motion has been restated by the Chair, it is officially before the assembly and must be dealt with appropriately (e.g., adopted, rejected, postponed).

10. *Debate*

Every member of the association has the right to speak on every debatable motion before it is finally acted upon. This right cannot be interfered with except by adopted policies, rules or by a motion to limit debate.

All discussion must be confined to the immediately pending question and to whether or not it should be adopted.

While debate is in progress, amendments or other secondary motions can be introduced and disposed of accordingly.

11. *Amendments to Motions*

As noted above, before the Chair has restated a motion, the maker has the right to modify his or her motion or to withdraw it entirely. After the Chair has restated it, however, a motion typically may be modified only by means of an amendment.

12. *Voting on Motions*

Voting rights of members are set forth in the governing documents, and may also be subject to governance policies adopted by the association.

13. *Announcing a Vote*

When voting is complete, the result should be announced by the Chair.

14. *Typical Progression of a Motion*

- A member rises to and addresses the Chair.
- The Chair recognizes the member.
- The member proposes a motion (the Chair may assist the member or may interrupt if the member speaks without making a motion).
- Another member seconds the motion.
- The Chair states the motion to the assembled members of the association.
- The members present discuss or debate the motion.

- The Chair takes the vote on the motion.
- The Chair announces the result of the vote.

This typical progression is subject to the governance policies an association adopted under Senate Bills 2005-100 and 2006-89.

15. *Types of Motions That May be Made*

Robert's Rules of Procedure contains 86 different motions. See the attached chart to this article for a list of the eleven most relevant motions to owner associations.

16. *Adjournment*

A motion to adjourn may be made by any member. It may be made during the consideration of other business, although it may not interrupt a speaker.

When it appears that there is no further business to be brought before the assembly, the Chair, instead of waiting for a motion, may simply adjourn the meeting.

17. *"Top 10" Pointers on Robert's Rules of Order and Member Meetings*

- The President or Presiding Officer should understand Robert's Rules of Order, or the applicable parliamentary rules or procedures, maintain order and assist members in phrasing motions.
- The meeting should be viewed and perceived as "fair" or "in order" to all participants.
- All remarks are addressed to the presiding officer and the presiding officer runs the meeting.
- Members should not attack or question the motives of other members.
- Accurate minutes should be taken.
- Debate should be limited to one issue at a time.
- Follow the Association's governing documents when taking votes.
- Voting is usually done by voice, by roll call, by ballot or by acclamation (except in the case of board elections, when more candidates are running than the number of positions available, then voting must be by secret ballot under Colorado law).

- The simplest and most direct voting procedures should be used.
- Association leaders and managers must work to create an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and shared purpose.

19. *Attorney or Parliamentarian Assistance on Meeting Procedures*

For assistance with parliamentary or procedures for meetings, including Robert's Rules of Order, check with the association's attorneys or a "parliamentarian."

11 MOST RELEVANT MOTIONS

MOTION	PURPOSE	TO ENACT MOTION
Main Motion	To take action on behalf of the body	Debatable – requires majority vote ¹
Table Motion	To temporarily suspend consideration of an issue	Not debatable – requires majority vote ¹
Motion to Suspend the Rules	To suspend formal process for a short period	Debatable – requires 2/3 majority vote ¹
Call for Orders of the Day	Asks to stick to the agenda	Not debatable – requires 1/3 majority to sustain ¹
Refer the Matter to Committee	Purpose is to give closer study to an issue	Debatable – majority vote required ¹
Call of the Question	Member asks for the debate and discussion to end. This is useful when the member feels that the discussion has gone on too long and that every opinion has been heard	Not debatable – requires majority vote ¹
Motion for a Recess	To call for an intermission or recess	Not debatable – requires majority vote ¹
Motion to Limit or Extend Debate	Limits or extends debate	Not debatable – requires 2/3 majority vote ¹
Point of Information	Requests information	No vote is required.
Motion to Reconsider	Moves to reconsider a decision	Debatable – requires majority vote ¹
Adjourn	To end meeting	Not Debatable – requires majority vote ¹

¹ Unless the governing documents set a different standard.