



## The City of Lee's Summit

### Final Agenda

### City Council Rules Committee

Thursday, April 4, 2019

6:00 PM

City Council Chambers

City Hall

220 SE Green Street

Lee's Summit, MO 64063

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1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Action Letter
  - A. [2019-2660](#) Approval of the Action Letter
5. Public Comments
6. Items for Discussion
  - A. [2018-2462](#) Discussion related to expanding the number of Council districts.
  - B. [2019-2661](#) Points of Order and Debate Discussion
7. Roundtable
8. Adjournment

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## Packet Information

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**File #:** 2019-2660, **Version:** 1

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**The City of Lee's Summit**  
**Action Letter - Draft**  
**City Council Rules Committee**

Thursday, March 7, 2019

6:00 PM

City Council Chambers

City Hall

220 SE Green Street

Lee's Summit, MO 64063

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1. Call to Order

Chairperson Carlyle called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Staff in Attendance:

Nancy Yendes

Steve Arbo

Jina Bellamy

Guests in Attendance:

Ms. Geraldine Amato

**Present:** 3 - Chairperson Trish Carlyle  
Vice Chair Bob Johnson  
Councilmember Diane Forte

**Absent:** 1 - Councilmember Phyllis Edson

3. Approval of Agenda

**Councilmember Forte made a motion to approve the Agenda. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Johnson. Vote: 3-0. Motion passed.**

4. Approval of Action Letter

A. [2019-2562](#) Action Letter for January 3, 2019 City Council Rules Committee Meeting

**Councilmember Forte made a motion to approve the Action Letter for January 3, 2019. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Johnson. Vote: 3-0. Motion Passed**

5. Public Comments

Ms. Geraldine Amato spoke regarding the following:

1. She would like the Council to consider adding the names of the Councilmembers at the top of Agendas for each of the Committees to assist audience members who aren't able to see the name plaques at the dais.

2. She requested having maintenance leave the handicap function on for the City Hall doors when there are evening meetings to better assist the public.
3. She requested the Council to show respect to members of the public at Council meetings.

6. Items for Discussion

- A. [2018-2461](#) Discussion related to procedure for selecting a new Councilmember following a vacancy on the City Council.

Councilmember Forte brought this item forward for discussion. She would like to be more familiar with the process for replacing councilmembers when there is a vacancy. The last time a vacancy came open and the Council needed to make a decision on the replacement, direction on the process was unclear and the meeting was somewhat awkward as some of the councilmembers were not aware that discussion and vote would take place in the same meeting in a relatively short amount of time.

City Manager Steve Arbo suggested the possibility of advising the council in advance of the process instead of learning the process as it is occurring.

Councilmember Johnson mentioned the draft Resolution, in the packet, addressed his concern with the changes presented on item number 8 allowing the Council to continue voting until there is a majority vote. He is fine with waiting to adopt the Resolution until a time in the future where it may be needed.

Councilmember Carlyle stated that she felt this was a great outline and doesn't believe anything needs to go forward at this time.

After brief discussion regarding this topic, Staff mentioned that if this does become an issue in the future, we would research the topic and the prepared "draft" Resolution from this meeting would come up in the search and could be discussed at that time.

- B. [2018-2462](#) Discussion related to expanding the number of Council districts.

Councilmember Johnson brought this item before the Council Rules Committee in an effort to make it easier for citizens of all backgrounds and financial ability to be able to run for office. He originally suggested redistricting to 8 Districts with one Councilmember per District, however understands that some individuals are used to having two people representing their district. As such, he mentioned possibly going to 5 Districts with two Councilmembers per district. He is suggesting that any changes in redistricting would be made effective with the 2022 election and be divided by thoroughfares/major highways and not subdivisions.

After brief discussion, the consensus was to have Staff research numbers of districts and councilmembers comparable to Charter cities with 100,000 population in Missouri as well as in our Region and bringing the information back to the next Rules Committee meeting for discussion.

**This Discussion Item was continued to the City Council Rules Committee due back on 4/4/2019.**

- C. 2019-2528** Discussion related to the possibility of creating an alternate process for determining the successful candidate in City elections.

Councilmember Johnson brought this item to the Committee at the January 3, Rules Committee meeting to determine if there is concern with Councilmembers being elected by a simple majority vote vs a majority vote and asked Staff to research different types of voting mechanisms.

Staff researched and provided the following information in the packet:

1. Information on Ranked Voting
2. City Charter Section 9.3 stating " the candidate receiving the highest number of votes for each office shall be declared elected and inducted into office at that time."
3. A bill currently filed in the Missouri legislature that would allow for ranked voting (HB27)

There was brief discussion about whether we have authority over the Jackson County Election Board and can request a change in our voting practices with how votes are counted. The answer was "no" and it may require a State law change for Jackson County Election Board to assist us.

City Manager Steve Arbo mentioned that if there is a real desire to change the way we vote, we could research this further regarding what Legislation would be.

Councilmember Forte mentioned that she is fine with the way we are currently doing elections. Councilmember Carlyle stated that it looks like everyone is ok with status quo. Councilmember Johnson mentioned he may research this further on his own.

There was no further action on this item.

**This Discussion Item was read into the record.**

## 7. Roundtable

First Item:

Councilmember Johnson suggested creating a rule regarding how the Council would handle certain situations involving decorum and debate. He presented the following suggested Rule:

"DECORUM AND DEBATE

Rule: \_\_\_\_\_

When a councilmember is about to speak, he or she should respectfully address himself or herself to Mr. Mayor or Madam Mayor, and wait until his or her name is announced, when he or she shall proceed. The Councilmember or Mayor shall confine himself or herself to the questions under debate and avoid derogatory personal comments."

Councilmember Forte spoke about a situation where she was involved in a difference of opinion with another member of the Council at a Council meeting and emphasized the importance of focusing on debating the issue and not the person.

In answer to a question about who police's the Council/Committee, Councilmember Carlyle mentioned that per the City's Charter, the BODY (Council/Committee) police's itself. She further suggested possibly having a training on decorum from "Roberts Rules of Order" at a future Work Session and/or summarizing decorum from Roberts Rules and place it in our Rules Book.

Councilmember Carlye also mentioned that the new Granicus software allowing you to push a button when you wish to speak addresses the first part of the suggested Rule. Councilmember Johnson pointed out that there is nothing in the Rules regarding the presiding Chair choosing NOT to allow someone to speak. He would like to have everyone have the right to speak "by Rule" and maybe changing the proposed rule adding that.

Councilmember Johnson stated if someone is out of order, all members of the "Body" should be allowed to state to the person(s) that they are out of order and why or "Call for the Question" to shut down the debate, which would require a vote of the Body.

Councilmember Johnson stated that he didn't bring this suggested rule due to any previous situations. He wants to make sure in the future that when one of the Council is speaking and a colleague wants to interject and take the floor away from the speaker, someone isn't shutoff in the middle of their comments.

Councilmember Carlyle asked if the Chair has the right to shut someone off and take the floor. Acting City Attorney Nancy Yendes mentioned that according to Roberts Rules of Order, as long as the person is talking about the topic and it is germane to the issue, the Chair isn't supposed to cut them off. However, Robert's Rules of Order can sometimes be challenging and suggested the City might like to create it's own rule.

Any Councilmember would have the right to call someone out of order but ultimately the Chair decides. The Committee asked for guidelines on points of

**City Council Rules Committee**

**Action Letter - Draft**

**March 7, 2019**

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order occurring during debate when the debate is not on point or not relative to the issue. What may the body do? Councilmember Johnson would also like research on how to protect a speaker being able to complete what they want to say.

Staff was directed to research this further and bring it back to the next meeting.

Second Item:

The Committee would like a quick guide showing Rules on Motions added to the Rules Quick Reference Book and a laminated copy be placed in the Council Chambers.

**8. Adjournment**

**Chairperson Carlyle announced that the next meeting would be held on April 4, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. and then adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m.**

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## Packet Information

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**File #:** 2018-2462, **Version:** 1

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Discussion related to expanding the number of Council districts.

At the March 7, 2019 Rules Committee meeting, Staff was asked to research what cities of similar size to Lee's Summit use for election of councilmembers based on districts or at large representation in the region.

A table was created and is attached to the packet for discussion.





# **LEE'S SUMMIT**

LAW DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

DATE: March 26, 2019

TO: Chairperson Trish Carlyle and Members of the Rules Committee

FROM: Nancy K. Yendes, Chief Counsel Infrastructure and Planning

RE: Report on Number of Council Districts Utilized by Similarly Sized Cities to Lee's Summit in the Region

The Committee asked staff to investigate and report on what cities of similar size to Lee's Summit use for election of councilmembers based on districts or at large representation in the region. Research revealed there are only a handful of cities in the region with similar populations to Lee's Summit. Therefore, cities close in population were added to provide more examples of how cities deal with districts and numbers of council members. Where possible, examples of charter cities from adjoining states were used.

Councilmember Johnson also mentioned expectations of the electorate and therefore smaller charter cities from the immediate metro area were added to show what is taking place in the area with the exception of Kansas City, Missouri.

The information is provided on the attached chart, which is organized, by State and the City, population, number of districts if any and number of council members in each district is shown. The Mayor has been added to the total number of council or board members as that office is universally elected at large unless the governing body itself elects the Mayor. In those instances, the number of council members will equal the number of at large or district members.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

CITY NAME	POPULATION	NUMBER OF DISTRICTS OR ELECTED AT LARGE	NUMBER OF MEMBERS PER DISTRICT	TOTAL NUMBER ON COUNCIL OR BOARD	CHARTER
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**MISSOURI**

Belton	26,000	4 districts	2 per district	9 with Mayor	Yes
Blue Springs	54,036	3 districts	2 per district	7 with Mayor	Yes
Columbia	121,717	6 wards	1 per ward	7 with Mayor	Yes
Independence	117,306	4 districts, 2 at large	1 per district	11 with Mayor	Yes
Liberty	30,000	4 districts	2 per district	9 with Mayor	Yes
O'Fallon	85,246	5 districts	2 per district	11 with Mayor	Yes
Springfield	167,376	4 zones or "districts", 4 at large	1 per zone	9 with Mayor	Yes
St. Joseph	76,472	5 districts, 3 at large	1 per district	9 with Mayor	Yes

**ALABAMA**

Tuscaloosa	100,287	7 districts	1 per district	8 with Mayor	Yes
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**ARKANSAS**

Fayetteville	85,257	4 wards	2 per ward	9 with Mayor	No
Fort Smith	88,037	4 wards, 4 at large	1 per ward	8 including Mayor	No
Springdale	79,599	4 wards	2 pre ward	9 with Mayor	No

**COLORADO**

Boulder	107,125	All at large	n/a	9 with Mayor	Yes
Pueblo	111,127	3 districts, 3 at large	1 per district	9 with Mayor	Yes
Westminster	112,812	6 at large	n/a	7 with Mayor	Yes

CITY NAME	POPULATION	NUMBER OF DISTRICTS OR ELECTED AT LARGE	NUMBER OF MEMBERS PER DISTRICT	TOTAL NUMBER ON COUNCIL OR BOARD	CHARTER
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ILLINOIS					
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Elgin	112,456	8 at large	n/a	9 with Mayor	No
Peoria	112,883	5 districts, 5 at large	1 per district	11 with Mayor	No

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IOWA					
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Cedar Rapids	132,798	5 districts, 3 at large	1 per district	9 with Mayor	Yes
Davenport	102,624	8 wards	1 per ward	9 with Mayor	Yes
Iowa City	75,798	4 districts, 4 at large	1 per district	9 with Mayor	Yes
Sioux City	83,499	4 at large	n/a	5 with Mayor	Yes

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KANSAS					
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Leawood	34,656	4 wards	2 per ward	9 with Mayor	No
Lawrence	93,954	5 at large	n/a	5 with Mayor	No
Lenexa	52,903	4 wards	2 per ward	9 with Mayor	Yes
Manhattan	55,427	5 at large	n/a	5 with Mayor	Yes
Olathe	134,368	4 wards	2 per ward	9 with Mayor	Yes
Topeka	127,139	9 districts	1 per district	10 with Mayor	Yes

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KENTUCKY					
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Bowling Green	58,067	5 at large	n/a	5 with Mayor	No
Owensboro	57,265	5 at large	n/a	5 with Mayor	Yes

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CITY NAME	POPULATION	NUMBER OF DISTRICTS OR ELECTED AT LARGE	NUMBER OF MEMBERS PER DISTRICT	TOTAL NUMBER ON COUNCIL OR BOARD	CHARTER
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### MINNESOTA

Rochester	115,733	6 wards, 1 at large	1 per ward	8 with Mayor	Yes
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### OKLAHOMA

Broken Arrow	107,125	4 wards, 1 at large	1 per ward	6 with Mayor	Yes
Norman	122,843	8 wards	1 per ward	9 with Mayor	Yes

### TENNESSEE

Franklin	78,321	4 wards, 1 at large	1 per ward	9 with Mayor	Yes
Murfreesboro	136,372	Up to 11 districts, or 11 at large	Presently 6 at large	7 with Mayor	Yes

### TEXAS

League City	104,903	7 at large	n/a	7 with Mayor	Yes
Lewisville <sup>1</sup>	106,021	5 districts	1 per district	6 with Mayor	Yes
San Angelo	100,119	6 districts	1 per district	7 with Mayor	Yes
Tyler	104,991	6 districts	1 per district	7 with Mayor	No
Wichita Falls	104,747	5 districts, 1 at large	1 per district	7 with Mayor	Yes

### WISCONSIN

Green Bay	102,116	12 districts	1 per district	13 with Mayor	Yes
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<sup>1</sup> Changed from at large to districts in 2017

## Packet Information

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**File #:** 2019-2661, **Version:** 1

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### Points of Order and Debate Discussion

During the March 7, 2019 Roundtable, Councilmember Johnson brought up the debate process and the rights of the members to be recognized during debate. He stated that the current rules do not require recognition of a speaker. Also of some concern was the proper procedure if in the future someone would attempt to interrupt the speaker who had the floor. The Council has adopted Robert's Rules of Order except where specifically changed by the Council's adoption of a rule. The Committee requested Staff bring back information on Robert's Rules regarding Points of Order and rights of debate of members of a body. To facilitate further discussion on "Points of Order" and the rules of debate, please find attached for the Committee's reference:

1. Duhaime's Law Dictionary - Point of Order Definition,
2. Excerpt of several sections from Robert's Rules of Order Online Version dealing with "Debate", "Decorum in Debate", and "Closing Debate and Preventing Debate" detailing rules of debate,
3. "Running Meetings with Robert's Rules of Order" article from <https://www.alphaharhochi.org/documents/2014/03/roberts-rules-tip-sheet.pdf>. This article includes explanations of being recognized, speaking and which motions are used for specific purposes, and
4. "Survival Tips On Robert's Rules of Order" from <http://roberts-rules.com/part11.htm>.

## Duhaime's Law Dictionary

### Point of Order Definition:

A term of parliamentary law and procedure which refers to an interjection during a meeting by a member, who does not have the floor, to call the attention of the chair to an alleged violation or breach of the assembly's or meeting's rules of order.

#### Related Terms: Question of Privilege

A point of order takes precedence once alleged and is ruled upon by the chair right away, to whom it is submitted for decision.

From *Horsley's Meetings – Procedure, Law and Practice*, at page 63:

"It (a point of order) is not a **motion**. It is an allowable interjection which directs the chairman's attention to an apparent or alleged breach of order. In effect it is an appeal to the chairman for his ruling."

It is not a matter for the whole assembly to debate unless the chair defers to the assembly on the point or if the chair's ruling is appealed to the assembly (some organizations provide for an appeal of the chair's decisions on points of order or questions of privileges — some explicitly disallow such an appeal).

It is the chair's responsibility to ensure that the rules are adhered to. But for any number of reasons, the chair might not react to a breach. In those instances, individual members may raise the alleged error or omission by claiming aloud "point of order".

A point of order must be raised at the relevant time and not later or it will risk being dismissed as untimely, except where the alleged breach is of a continuing nature.

Points of order are often challenging for chairs not familiar with the intricacies of parliamentary procedures or corporate rules of procedures and meetings.

If the chair is uncertain, he or she ought to recess the meeting (a brief intermission) to consult with other members more familiar with meeting procedures, before making a ruling.

### REFERENCES:

- Kerr, K. and King, H., *Procedures for Meetings and Organizations* (Toronto: Carswell, 1996)
- Nathan, H. and Voore, M., *Corporate Meetings: Law and Practice* (Toronto: Carswell, 1995), page 19-29 and 19-30.
- Robert, H., *Robert's Rules of Order*, 10th Edition (Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Publishing, 2000)
- Taggart, W. J., *Horsley's Meetings – Procedure, Law and Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Sydney: Butterworth, 1983)

### Categories & Topics:

#### Duhaime's Parliamentary Law Dictionary

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*If you find an error or omission in Duhaime's Law Dictionary, or if you have suggestion for a legal term, we'd love to hear from you!*

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# Robert's Rules Online: RulesOnline.com

Robert's Rules of Order Revised, Fourth Edition, with Up-to-Date Annotations!

## Art. VII. Debate.

- 42. Debate
- 43. Decorum in Debate
- 44. Closing and Preventing Debate
- 45. Principles of Debate and Undebatable Motions

**42. Debate.** In 1-6 are explained the necessary steps preliminary to debate namely, that when no business is pending a member shall rise and address the chair by his title, and be recognized by the chair as having obtained the floor; and that the member shall then make a motion which, after being seconded, shall be stated by the chair, who shall then ask, "Are you ready for the question?" The question is then open to debate, as is partially explained in 7, which should be read in connection with this section. No member shall speak more than twice during the same day to the same question (only once on an appeal), nor longer than ten minutes at one time, without leave of the assembly; and the question upon granting the leave shall be decided by a two-thirds vote without debate.<sup>1</sup> No member can speak a second time to a question as long as any member desires to speak who has not spoken to the question. If greater freedom is desired, the proper course is to go into committee of the whole, or to consider it informally, either of which requires only a majority vote; or to extend the limits of debate [30], which requires a two-thirds vote. So the debate, by a two-thirds vote, may be limited to any extent desired, as shown in 30. The member upon whose motion the subject was brought before the assembly, is entitled to close the debate with a speech, if he has not previously exhausted his twenty minutes, but not until every one else wishing to speak has spoken. He cannot, however, avail himself of this privilege after debate has been closed.<sup>2</sup> An amendment, or any other motion, being offered, makes the real question before the assembly a different one, and, in regard to the right to debate, is treated as a new question. When an amendment is pending the debate must be confined to the merits of the amendment, unless it is of such a nature that its decision practically decides the main question. Merely asking a question, or making a suggestion, is not considered as speaking. The maker of a motion, though he can vote against it, cannot speak against his own motion. [To close the debate see 44.]

The right of members to debate and, make motions cannot be cut off by the chair's putting a question to vote with such rapidity as to prevent the members getting the floor after the chair has inquired if the assembly is ready for the question. Even after the chair has announced the vote, if it is found that a member arose and addressed the chair with reasonable promptness after the chair asked, "Are you ready for the question?" he is then entitled to the floor, and the question is in exactly the same condition it was before it was put to vote. But if the chair gives ample opportunity for members to claim the floor before putting the question and they do not avail themselves of it, they cannot claim the right of debate after the voting has commenced.

1. The limit of time should vary to suit circumstances, but the limit of two speeches of ten minutes each will usually answer in ordinary assemblies and, when desirable, by a two-thirds vote it can be increased or diminished as shown in 30. In the U. S. House of Representatives no member can speak more than once to the same question, nor longer than one hour. In the Senate there is no limit to the length of a speech and no senator can speak more than twice on the same day to the same question without leave of the Senate, which question is undebatable.

2. Formerly the member who reported a proposition from a committee was permitted to close the debate in the House after the previous question was ordered, provided he had not used all of his hour previously.

**43. Decorum in Debate.** In debate a member must confine himself to the question before the assembly, and avoid personalities. He cannot reflect upon any act of the assembly, unless he intends to conclude his remarks with a motion to rescind such action, or else while debating such a motion. In referring to another member, he should, as much as possible, avoid using his name, rather referring to him as "the member who spoke last," or in some other way describing him. The officers of the assembly should always be referred to by their official titles. It is not allowable to arraign the motives of a member, but the nature or consequences of a measure may be condemned in strong terms. It is not the man, but the measure, that is the subject of debate.

If one desires to ask a question of the member speaking, he should rise, and without waiting to be recognized, say, "Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask the gentleman a question." The chair then asks the speaker if he is willing to be interrupted, or the speaker may at once consent or decline, addressing, however, the chair, through whom the conversation must be carried on, as members cannot directly address one another in a deliberative assembly. If the speaker consents to the question, the time consumed by the interruption comes out of the time of the speaker.

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If at any time the chairman rises to state a point of order, or give information, or otherwise speak, within his privilege, the member speaking must take his seat till the chairman has been heard first. When called to order by the chair the member must sit down until the question of order is decided. If his remarks are decided to be improper, he cannot proceed, if any one objects, without the leave of the assembly expressed by a vote, upon which question no debate is allowed.

Disorderly words should be taken down by the member who objects to them, or by the secretary, and then read to the member. If he denies them, the assembly shall decide by a vote whether they are his words or not. If a member cannot justify the words he used, and will not suitably apologize for using them, it is the duty of the assembly to act in the case. If the disorderly words are of a personal nature, after each party has been heard, and before the assembly proceeds to deliberate upon the case, both parties to the personality should retire, it being a general rule that no member should be present in the assembly when any matter relating to himself is under debate. It is not, however, necessary for the member objecting to the words to retire unless he is personally involved in the case. Disorderly words to the presiding officer, or in respect to the official acts of an officer, do not involve the officer so as to require him to retire. If any business has taken place since the member spoke, it is too late to take notice of any disorderly words he used.

During debate, and while the chairman is speaking, or the assembly is engaged in voting, no member is permitted to disturb the assembly by whispering, or walking across the floor, or in any other way.

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**44. Closing Debate and Preventing Debate.** When the debate appears to the chairman to be finished, he should inquire, "Are you ready for the question?" If, after a reasonable pause, no one rises to claim the floor, the chair assumes that no member wishes to speak and, standing, proceeds to put the question. Debate is not closed by the chairman's rising and putting the question, as until both the affirmative and the negative are put, a member can rise and claim the floor, and reopen the debate or make a motion, provided he rises with reasonable promptness after the chair asks, "Are you ready for the question?" If the debate is resumed the question must be put again, both the affirmative and the negative. Should this privilege be abused by members not responding to the inquiry, "Are you ready for the question?" and intentionally waiting until the affirmative vote has been taken and then rising and reopening the debate, the chair should act as in case of dilatory motions [40], or any other attempt to obstruct business, and protect the assembly from annoyance. When a vote is taken a second time, as when a division is called for, debate cannot be resumed except by general consent.

If two-thirds of the assembly wish to close the debate without allowing all the time desired by others, they can do so by ordering either the previous question or the closing of the debate at a certain time; or they can limit the length of the speeches and allow each member to speak only once on each question, as fully explained in 29 and

30. These motions require a two-thirds<sup>1</sup> vote, as they suspend the fundamental right of every member of a deliberative assembly to have every question fully discussed before it is finally disposed of. A majority vote may lay the question on the table and thus temporarily suspend the debate, but it can be resumed by taking the question from the table by a majority vote when no question is before the assembly [35], at a time when business of this class, or unfinished business, or new business, is in order. If it is desired to prevent any discussion of a subject, even by its introducer, the only way to do it is to object to the consideration of the question [23] before it is debated, or any subsidiary motion is stated. If the objection is sustained by a two-thirds vote, the question is thrown out for that session.

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1. In the Senate not even two-thirds of the members can force a measure to its passage without allowing debate, the Senate rules not recognizing the above motions. In the House, where each speaker can occupy the floor one hour, any of these motions to cut off debate can be adopted by a mere majority, but practically they are not used until after some debate. Rule 27, §3, H.R., expressly provides that forty minutes twenty on each side, shall be allowed for debate whenever the previous question is ordered on a proposition on which there has been no debate, or when the rules are suspended. [See note to 22.] In ordinary societies harmony is so essential that a two-thirds vote should be required to force the assembly to a final vote without allowing free debate.

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**45. Principles of Debate and Undebatable Motions.** All main motions are debatable, and debate is allowed or prohibited on other motions in accordance with the following principles:

(a) *High privilege is, as a rule, incompatible with the right of debate of the privileged motion:* and, therefore, all highly privileged motions are undebatable, except those relating to the privileges of the assembly or a member. Questions of privilege [19] rarely arise, but when they do, they are likely to be so important that they must be allowed to interrupt business, and yet they cannot generally be acted upon intelligently without debate. and, therefore, they are debatable. The same is true of appeals from the decision of the chair which are debatable, unless they relate to indecorum, or to transgression of the rules of speaking, or to priority of business, or are made while an undebatable question is pending; in which cases there is not sufficient need of debate to justify making them an exception to the rule, and therefore an appeal under any of these circumstances is undebatable.

(b) *Motions that have the effect of suspending a rule are not debatable.* Consequently motions to suppress, or to limit, or to extend the limits of, debate are undebatable, as they suspend the ordinary rules of debate.



(c) Appeals made after the previous question has been ordered are undebatable, as it would be manifestly improper to permit debate on them when the assembly by a two-thirds vote has closed debate on the pending question. So any order limiting debate on the pending question applies to questions arising while the order is in force.

(d) To Amend, or to Reconsider, an undebatable question is undebatable, whereas to amend, or to reconsider, a debatable question is debatable.

(e) *A Subsidiary Motion* [12] is debatable to just the extent that it interferes with the right of the assembly to take up the original question at its pleasure. *Illustrations:* To "Postpone Indefinitely" a question places it out of the power of the assembly to again take it up during that session, except by reconsideration, and consequently this motion allows of free debate, even involving the whole merits of the original question. To "Commit" a question only delays the discussion until the committee reports, when it is open to free debate, so it is only debatable as to the propriety of the commitment and as to the instructions, etc. To "Postpone to a Certain Time" prevents the consideration of the question till the specified time, except by a reconsideration or suspension of the rules, and therefore allows of limited debate upon the propriety of the postponement. To "Lay on the Table" leaves the question so that the assembly can consider it at any time that that question or that class of business is in order, and therefore to lay on the table should not be, and is not, debatable.

Because a motion is undebatable it does not follow that while it is pending the chair may not permit a question or an explanation. The distinction between debate and asking questions or making brief suggestions, should be kept clearly in mind, and when the latter will aid the assembly in transacting business, the chair should permit it before taking the vote on an undebatable question. He should, however, remain standing during the colloquy to show that he has the floor, and he should not allow any more delay in putting the question than he feels is helpful to the business.

The following lists of motions that open the main question to debate, and of those that are undebatable, are made in accordance with the above principles:

**Motions That Open the Main Question to Debate.**

<i>Postpone Indefinitely</i>	34
<i>Reconsider a Debatable Question</i>	36
<i>Rescind</i>	37
<i>Ratify</i>	39

**Undebatable Motions.**

<i>Fix the Time to which to Adjourn</i> (when a privileged question)	16
<i>Adjourn</i> (when unqualified in an assembly that has provided for future meetings)	17
<i>Take a Recess</i> (when privileged)	18
<i>Call for the Orders of the Day</i> , and questions relating to priority of business	20
<i>Appeal</i> when made while an undebatable question is pending, or when simply relating to indecorum, or transgression of the rules of speaking, or to priority of business	22
<i>Suspension of the Rules</i>	22
<i>Objection to the Consideration of a Question</i>	23
<i>Incidental Motions</i> , except an Appeal as shown above in this list under Appeal	13
<i>Lay on the Table</i>	28
<i>Previous Question</i> [29] and <i>Motions to Close, Limit, or Extend the Limits of Debate</i>	30
<i>Amend an Undebatable Motion</i>	33
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## ***Running Meetings with Robert's Rules of Order***

*A guide for chapter meetings and convention sessions*

- A. General Procedures
- B. Situations
- C. Terms
- D. Common Motions
- E. Voting
- F. Robert's Rules Example

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## General Procedures

*A meeting wouldn't be a meeting without some general rules of procedure and decorum. Robert's Rules, of course, have many of these. We have tried to whittle them down to what we think would be most useful for most chapter meetings and the national convention. Although the rules may seem at times to be trivial or nitpicky or downright weird, they are essentially just a way of ensuring fairness and common courtesy to all members of the meeting.*

### **Getting to Speak**

When you have something to say, you have to be *recognized by the chair*. According to Robert's Rules, this is done by standing up and *addressing the chair*. Now this may a bit too formal for many occasions and, admittedly, a few people shouting "Mr. President" every few minutes gets really annoying. So many chapters (and traditionally the national convention) have been a bit less formal and fallen back on simply **raising hands to get recognized**. **If the chair then calls on you, you may speak.**

As a common courtesy (and according to the Rules), you should **never seek recognition while someone else is talking**. There's nothing more frustrating than trying to get a point across while a dozen people have their hand in the air and are trying so hard to get the chair's attention that they are not paying attention to anything being said. Be polite and wait until they are finished. There are a few instances when it is acceptable to interrupt someone or speak without gaining recognition by the chair, such as when making a point of order or a point of information, but these are pretty rare.

**Members who have not yet spoken about the topic at hand always have priority over those who have.** According to the Rules, **each member can only speak twice on any given topic** (note: the standing rules of the national convention actually allow each person to speak only once). Additionally, the chair is obliged to try and alternate recognizing those who are for and against the motion being discussed. For example, if someone just spoke against a motion the chair would say something like "Is there anyone who wishes to speak in favor of the motion?" and then recognize someone.

### **Speaking**

After you've been recognized, you may then speak. It's best to start by addressing the chair with their title, but again this may be a bit formal for chapter meetings. **Always address your comments to the chair, even if they involve another member.** This keeps debate from becoming personal. **When referring to other members, use their title and not their name** (i.e., "Brother Smith", or "The delegate from Andronicus.") Using someone's first name implies a level of friendship that may not be appropriate when some of the members present may not know each other very well.

**When speaking, you may speak only on the merits of the topic immediately at hand.** Anything off the topic is *out of order*, and you can be made to stop talking if someone points it out.

You may speak only a certain amount of time on any given topic. Robert's Rules allows for 10 minutes, the standing rules of convention allow for 2 minutes. Your chapter should have standing rules regarding both how long and how many times members get to talk on any one topic, unless you want to use Robert's standards.

## Situations

*This is a quick guide listing common situations you may find yourself in and how to deal with them.*

- **I want to change the wording of the motion we are discussing.**
  - Move to *amend* the motion and state your change specifically.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is debatable.
    - Requires a simple majority to pass.
  
- **I want to end the discussion and have the vote.**
  - Move to the *previous question*. Remember, when you are voting on the previous question you are voting only on whether or not to end discussion on the motion, not on the motion itself.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is not debatable.
    - Requires a 2/3 majority to pass.
  
- **I think discussion should continue, but I don't want it to go on all day.**
  - Move to *limit debate*, and state specifically how you want to limit it.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is not debatable.
    - Requires a 2/3 majority to pass.
  
- **I want the chair to enforce rules about time limits and the number of times people are allowed to speak.**
  - Make a *point of order* and then point out the rules being violated. The chair is then obliged to enforce the rules.
    - Can be made at any time, even when someone is speaking.
  
- **The chair has been enforcing rules about time limits and the number of times people are allowed to speak, but I really think we need to discuss this more.**
  - Move to *extend debate* and state specifically how you want to extend it.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is not debatable.
    - Requires a 2/3 majority to pass.

- **This motion needs more attention/investigation/discussion than we can give it today.**
  - Move to *refer* the motion to committee, then give the specifics of the committee and when and how you want them to report on the matter.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is debatable.
    - Requires a simple majority to pass.
  
- **I need a bathroom break.**
  - Move to *recess* and state for how long or give a time you want to reconvene.
    - You must be recognized by the chair.
    - Requires a second.
    - Is not debatable.
    - Requires a simple majority to pass.
  
- **I have no idea what is going on.**
  - Make a *parliamentary inquiry*, and ask the chair to explain what is going on.
    - Can be made at any time, as long as no one is speaking.
  
- **I want to motion to do something, but I'm not sure how to do it or if it is in order right now.**
  - Make a *parliamentary inquiry* and explain what you want to do to the chair, who should then tell you the proper manner in which to do it.
    - Can be made at any time, as long as no one is speaking.
    - After the chair explains, you do not have the right to immediately make the motion. You must wait until the chair recognizes you in the normal fashion.
  
- **I have a question for the person who is speaking.**
  - Don't interrupt, it's not nice. Technically, Robert's Rules allows for you make a *point of information* and interrupt a speaker by saying, "Will the speaker yield to a question?" The speaker can then choose to let you ask the question or not. But since both the question and the answer will count towards to speaker's time limit, it is very impolite to use this in situations with extremely strict time limits (like at the national convention). In this case, it is best to wait until the speaker is done and then address the chair with your point of inquiry, who then has the right to decide whether or not to allow it.

- **I have a question for the maker of the motion or someone who has already spoken.**
  - Make a *point of information*, and ask the chair if they will allow a question to so-and-so. If the chair allows it, direct your question through the chair to the person. Never address the person directly.
    - Can be made at any time, as long as no one is speaking.
    - The chair has the right to decide whether or not to allow the question.
  
- **I made a motion and now I think it's dumb.**
  - Ask *permission to withdraw* the motion.
    - Can be made at any time, though it is polite to wait until someone is done speaking.
    - The chair asks if there are any objections to the motion being withdrawn.
      - If no one objects, the motion is immediately withdrawn.
      - If there is an objection, the request to withdraw becomes a motion which must be seconded, is not debatable, and requires a simple majority to pass.

## Terms

### *Amend*

To change the wording of a motion.

### *Assembly*

The people or delegates in a meeting.

### *Chair, The*

The presiding officer of a meeting, whether it is the president or a committee head, etc., always referred to by their title (Madam or Mr. President, Madam or Mr. Chair, etc). The chair essentially runs the meeting by recognizing who gets to speak when.

### *Motion*

The motion is the basic tool for getting things done, from proposing a new rule to changing the wording of something being considered to requesting a bathroom break. To make a motion, you simply use the phrase "I move that..." and state what you want.

**Main Motions** are any generally any sort of proposals that need to be discussed and voted upon, such as adopting a new rule, raising dues, amending the constitution or by-laws, etc.

**Secondary Motions** occur during discussion of main motions, and are generally about amending the main motion.

**Privileged Motions** can be made at any time. The most common is to motion for a recess, i.e. a bathroom break.

### *Second*

Before a motion can be discussed, it must be seconded. This just means that someone other than the person who made the motion also thinks it should be discussed, which they indicate by saying "**Second!**" after a motion is made. Seconding a motion doesn't necessarily mean you support it—it just means that you think it should be discussed by the assembly. If someone makes a motion and no one seconds it, it dies and cannot be discussed.

### *Order*

The proper manner for doing things, as established by the rules. Certain things can happen only at certain times, otherwise they are *out of order* and are invalidated.



## Common Motions

### *Motion to the Previous Question, or "Call to Question"*

The motion to the previous question is actually a motion to stop debate and proceed to a vote. **The call to question does not automatically force a vote on the main motion unless it is passed.** It's a bit confusing, but it is best to envision it that when someone moves to the previous question they are moving to stop discussion. Since this would effectively cut off anyone who still has something to say, a motion to the previous question requires a 2/3 majority to pass. This means 2/3 of the members have to agree to stop discussion. If the motion to previous question does not pass, discussion remains open. If it passes, discussion is stopped, the chair restates the main motion, and the assembly proceeds immediately to vote on it. A motion to previous question is required to stop debate even on amendments or amendments to amendments. However, the chair may opt to skip directly to a vote at any point when it appears no one has any more discussion on a particular topic. You must be recognized by the chair in the normal fashion to motion to the previous question.

### *Motion to Amend*

The motion to amend is used to change the wording of a motion. Common methods of amending motions are by striking out words, substituting words, or adding words. You can also strike, substitute, or add entire phrases or paragraphs to a motion should the need arise. In order to make a motion to amend, you must first be recognized by the chair in the normal fashion. If your motion to amend is seconded, the assembly proceeds immediately to debate it. During this period, members may only talk about the merits of the amendment, and not of the main motion itself. Debate on a motion to amend is ended when a motion to the *previous question* has been successfully passed. The chair then restates the motion to amend, and the assembly proceeds directly to a vote on the amendment. A motion to amend must be passed by a simple majority.

### *Motion to Limit or Extend Debate*

A motion to *limit* debate can be used to set up time limits for speakers, set a time limit for discussion for the topic, limit the number of times people are allowed to speak, or otherwise reduce the amount of time allowed for discussion from the default rules. A motion to *extend* debate can be used to increase time limits, the number of times people can speak, or otherwise increase the allowable discussion time from the default rules. In order to make a motion to limit or extend debate, you must be recognized by the chair in the normal fashion. You must then state specifically how you wish to limit or extend debate. If someone seconds, then the assembly immediately proceeds to a vote. A motion to limit or extend debate must have a 2/3 majority to pass.

### *Motion to Refer to Committee*

This is pretty self-explanatory. This takes the topic you are discussing and dumps it in the hands of a committee to further discuss or resolve. You must be very specific when making this motion, stating exactly which committee you are referring it to, to what extent they should resolve the issue, and when they should report on their findings. Examples: "I move that the social committee select two of these locations for us to vote on at the next meeting," or "I move that this be referred to a new committee consisting of one person from each

major, which will give a report and recommendation two weeks from now.” You must be recognized by the chair in the normal fashion to make a motion to refer to a committee and it must be seconded. It is then debatable until someone successfully motions to previous question.

### ***Motion to Recess***

The motion to recess is used to ask for a short break. When motioning to recess, you should specify for how long you want to recess, such as “I motion for a ten minute recess,” or “I motion to recess until 3:00 PM.” In order to make this motion, you must be recognized by the chair in the normal fashion. The motion to recess is immediately put to a vote if someone seconds it, and it requires a simple majority to pass.

### ***Point of Order***

This is used to point out when something is against the rules, which can be anything from someone talking too long to a vote being done improperly. If something is out of order, all you have to do is get the chair’s attention by saying “Point of Order”, and then describe how the rules are being broken. Then the chair has to enforce the rule you pointed out.

### ***Point of Information***

There are two basic types of this. The first is when you want to ask a question of the maker of a motion or someone who has already spoken. To do this, just wait until no one else is speaking and then get the chair’s attention by saying “Point of Information” and then ask for permission to ask a question. The chair can then decide whether or not to allow you to ask the question. The second type of point of information is the *parliamentary inquiry*. You can make one of these when you are unsure of how to properly do something, or are confused as to what is going on and want some clarification. Again, when no one is speaking, you can get the chair’s attention by saying “Point of Information,” say you have a *parliamentary inquiry*, and then ask the chair your question. When you make a parliamentary inquiry, the chair does *not* have the right to decide whether or not to allow you to ask the question—he has to answer it.

### ***Permission to Withdraw a Motion***

You can do this if you’ve changed your mind about a motion you’ve made, and want to unmake it. Unfortunately, you can’t do this whenever you want. You can only do it after you’ve been called on by the chair, as if you were wanting to speak on the motion. When the chair calls on you, you may ask for permission to withdraw your motion. The chair will then ask if there are any objections—if there aren’t, then you get to withdraw the motion. But if someone doesn’t want you to withdraw it, then your request to withdraw becomes an actual motion that has to be seconded and voted on.

## Voting

*This section describes the different types of votes and some general rules about voting.*

### Voice Vote

The most common type of voting, this is when the chair says “**Those in favor of the motion, say aye.**” All members in support of the motion call out “aye”. Next, the chair says “Those opposed, say no” after which opponents call out “no”. If there is a clear majority, the chair announces the result. If there is not a clear majority, a member may call for the vote to be retaken by calling out “**division!**”

### Hand Vote

A hand vote works the same as a voice vote, where the chair first calls for those in favor to raise their hands. Without counting, they then call for those opposed to raise their hands. If a majority is seen, the chair will announce the result. Again, a member may call “**division**” if they believe there was not a clear majority. In addition, a member may **ask that the vote be counted**. The chair then retakes the vote in the same way but counts the votes for and against the motion.

### Counted Vote

This is simply the counted version of the hand vote. Some groups may choose to skip the uncounted hand vote since it really does little more than the voice vote.

### Roll Call Vote

It is not uncommon to see the roll call vote happen at convention, but it typically does not happen during chapter meetings. If you still want to know what it is, read on. A roll call vote is literally what you think it would be. The chair reads the names of each voting member, and after hearing their name, the member calls out yes (or aye) or no. You can see why this may be a bit intense for chapter meetings, where votes may be more personal than convention voting, where one person’s vote represents a group of people.

### Secret Ballot

This is the one type of vote where each member’s vote choice is not known to everyone else. This is used for elections, but may also be used for regular motions, especially more sensitive topics. This is also the most paper-traceable vote and the final destination if division is repeatedly called for. A ballot vote may be called for when the original motion is initially about to be voted upon.

### *Additional notes on voting*

- A member may change their vote at **any point during the voting process** before the final result is recorded. This means, if a voice vote is made but division is called and voting moves to a counted hand vote, any member may change their vote.
- “Unanimous consent” instead of voting: This allows a simple decision to be made by the group without the formality of motioning and voting. An example of when this is useful may be that a speaker has reached the time limit on a topic but the membership still wants to hear them finish. The chair may ask “**Is there any objection** to the member’s time being extended by two minutes?” After pausing, if no member calls out “**I object**” the chair may say “**I hear no objection**, so the member’s time is extended by two minutes.”
- Any member whose right to vote has not been taken away by disciplinary matters has the right to vote, whether or not they have paid their dues. However, a group’s constitution and by-laws may take away a member’s right to vote if they are delinquent in their dues. Remember, any time Robert’s Rules may conflict with an organization’s Constitution and By-Laws, the group must follow the C&BL.
- A **majority vote** is defined as *more than half of the votes cast*, excluding abstentions, at a regular meeting with a quorum present. This vote is typically used for elections or adopting a motion.
- A **two-thirds vote** is defined as *at least two-thirds of the votes cast*, excluding abstentions, at a regular meeting with a quorum present. This vote is most commonly used for suspension of the rules, or to close, limit, or extend debate.
- The final kind of voting you may experience is the **mail vote**. This is used when a vote of the entire membership is needed when convention is not in session, most commonly to vote to **admit a new or reactivated chapter**. Each active chapter and alumni association in good standing is mailed a ballot by certified mail, and they have 30 days in which to respond. It is important for each member organization to promptly reply because a majority of possible votes must be received in the affirmative in order for the motion to pass.

## Robert's Rules Example

*This document will walk you through a situation at a meeting in which Robert's Rules is used to make, amend, and vote on a motion. This example should be read after understand definitions of basic Robert's Rules terms.*

- 1) **Motion:** I move that all meetings be limited to one hour. Emily is narcoleptic and cannot be of use longer than an hour
  - a) **Point of information:** All meetings or just chapter meetings? [*Note: the point of information may be called out at any time, without gaining the floor.*]  
**Response:** The motion says says *all*.  
**Chair calls on next person**
    - i) **Friendly amendment:** I would like to make a friendly amendment to reword the motion to read "I move that all *chapter* meetings be limited to one hour."  
This is an opportunity for the chair to ask for **unanimous consent** rather than having a vote.  
Chair asks if there are any objections. If there are no objections the chair can declare the amendment accepted.  
However, somebody objects.  
(1) Now it is open to debate.  
Discussion ensues.  
(a) A member calls to **move to previous question** – instantly calls for a vote on the amendment.  
Chair states the question: "I move that the motion be changed to read, 'I move that all *chapter* meetings be limited to one hour.'"  
A voice vote is taken.  
The motion passes unanimously.  
*We now move back to the original motion, with the new wording.*
  - b) Someone decides to question why we have chapter meetings.  
Someone says (interrupting them) "**point of order**, his statement does not apply to the question at hand." This ends the debate on why we have chapter meetings, since it is an entirely different topic for discussion.
  - c) Motion is made to to **lay it on the table**, and it must be seconded. This would put off the discussion until a future meeting. It is not debatable, so a vote is taken immediately.  
Did not pass
  - d) Motion is made to **move to committee** to discuss Emily's medical history.  
A discussion ensues on whether it needs to be sent to committee?
    - i) Call to question.  
Chair states, A motion has been made to move to committee.  
Vote  
Does not pass
  - e) Back to original motion. This would be a good point for the chair to clarify that motion at hand is "I move that all chapter meetings be limited to one hour."  
Discussion  
Move to previous question, ends discussion
  - f) Vote on motion  
Passes... (see **Voting** section)

**SURVIVAL  
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According to  
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SURVIVAL TIPS ON

# Robert's Rules of Order

## When Six Steps Do Not Apply

We accept that the typical motion follows 6 steps.

- a. **Speaker stands, is recognized, and makes a motion.**
- b. **Motion is seconded.**
- c. **Presiding Officer restates the motion to the audience.**
- d. **The assembly debates the motion.**
- e. **The vote is taken.**
- f. **The chair announces whether the motion was adopted or not; instructs the correct officer to take action.**



Now let us review 2 Privileged Motions and 4 Incidental Motions which lack the 6 steps.

- I. **Privileged Motions** do not relate to the pending motion, but are of such immediate importance that they take precedence over any Main Motion.
  1. **Question of Privilege:** As a member of the audience you believe that you can not hear or see the proceedings, but you have a feasible solution. You have the right to stop the meeting, and have the problem corrected.
  2. **Call for the Orders of the Day:** You notice that the agenda specifies the time for each portion of the agenda. You notice that the part you are interested in is scheduled for 9:15 am, and the time is now 9:16 am. The meeting is stuck with the 9:05 am item. You 'Call for the Orders of the Day'. This automatically forces everyone to abandon the 9:05 item and deal with 9:15 item.

***In both cases, you do not need to be recognized, or seconded. No one can amend or debate your motion! No vote is necessary. You can get your way without going through the 6 steps.***

II. **Incidental Motions** do not relate directly to the substance of the pending motion, but rather to the method of transacting the business of the motion. Incidental motions must be dealt with immediately.

1. **Point of Order:** During a meeting you notice that someone (even the presiding officer) is disobeying Robert's Rules of Order. You state '*Point of Order*' and explain your point. The Presiding Officer rules on your point and you help to keep everyone in line.
2. **Point of Information:** One right no one can take from you is the right to understand the process and the potential consequences of the next voting. You have the right to stop business and have someone explain the process and consequences of the debate or the voting. Your request for information can not be ignored by the Presiding Officer.
3. **Division of Assembly:** Whenever you doubt the Presiding Officer's hearing capabilities during a vote by loud ayes/nays, you can have the vote taken by having voters stand instead of yelling. You call for a '*Division of the Assembly*' and the vote has to be **retaken** in a more accurate manner.

***In the last 3 cases, you do not need to be recognized, or seconded. No one can amend or debate your motion! No vote is necessary. You can get your way without going through the 6 steps.***

4. **Object to Consideration:** Sometimes a sensitive or embarrassing motion is made. You can kill it before it is discussed by getting 2/3 of the assembly to agree with you to kill the motion **before it is discussed.**

***In this case, you do not need to be recognized, or seconded. No one can amend or debate your motion! A 2/3 vote is necessary. You can get your way without going through the 6 steps.***

If you know when the 6 steps do not applied, you can protect your rights as a member of an organization. Otherwise, somebody will undoubtedly and easily rob you of your rights.

[parlam@roberts-rules.com](mailto:parlam@roberts-rules.com) a member of  
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