



CITY OF
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2020**

JURASSIC PARLIAMENT WORKSHOP

REMOTE MEETING ON ZOOM

PLEASE CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO JOIN THE WEBINAR:

[HTTPS://BAINBRIDGEWA.ZOOM.US/J/94600428912](https://bainbridgewa.zoom.us/j/94600428912)

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DIAL US: +1 253 215 8782

WEBINAR ID: 946 0042 8912

AGENDA

1. INTRODUCTION - 10:00 AM

1.a Meeting and Reference Materials, 5 Minutes

[WORKSHOP MATERIALS Bainbridge Island 2020 10 17.pdf](#)

[REFERENCE MATERIALS Bainbridge Island 2020 10 17.pdf](#)

[Citizens Guide_2017-12-11.pdf](#)

[Meeting Materials - Motions Chart.pdf](#)

[Meeting Materials - Precedence of motions.pdf](#)

[Meeting Materials - Reconsider, Rescind or Amend.pdf](#)

[Meeting Materials - 4 Censure Examples.pdf](#)

[Meeting Materials - Sample_Council Rules of Procedure Updated 07.03.2018.pdf](#)

2. MEETING DISCUSSION, POINT OF ORDER, APPEAL

3. HOW TO DO THIS?

4. MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

5. AUTHORITY AND ROLE OF CHAIR, MEMBERS, & STAFF

6. INAPPROPRIATE REMARKS

7. AN EFFICIENT MEETING

8. WHAT'S THE POINT OF RULES OF ORDER?
9. THE RIGHT KIND OF CONTROL
10. REVIEW AND CONCLUSION
11. ADJOURNMENT - 1:00 PM

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principle #1 - Preserve the special character of the Island, which includes downtown Winslow's small town atmosphere and function, historic buildings, extensive forested areas, meadows, farms, marine views and access, and scenic and winding roads supporting all forms of transportation.

Guiding Principle #2 - Manage the water resources of the Island to protect, restore and maintain their ecological and hydrological functions and to ensure clean and sufficient groundwater for future generations.

Guiding Principle #3 - Foster diversity with a holistic approach to meeting the needs of the Island and the human needs of its residents consistent with the stewardship of our finite environmental resources.

Guiding Principle #4 - Consider the costs and benefits to Island residents and property owners in making land use decisions.

Guiding Principle #5 - The use of land on the Island should be based on the principle that the Island's environmental resources are finite and must be maintained at a sustainable level.

Guiding Principle #6 - Nurture Bainbridge Island as a sustainable community by meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Guiding Principle #7 - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the Island's climate resilience.

Guiding Principle #8 - Support the Island's Guiding Principles and Policies through the City's organizational and operating budget decisions.



City Council meetings are wheelchair accessible. Assisted listening devices are available in Council Chambers. If you require additional ADA accommodations, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 206-780-8604 or cityclerk@bainbridgewa.gov by noon on the day preceding the meeting.



CITY OF
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

Special City Council Meeting Agenda Bill

MEETING DATE: October 17, 2020

ESTIMATED TIME: 5 Minutes

AGENDA ITEM: Meeting and Reference Materials,

SUMMARY: Attached are the following materials provided by Ann Macfarlane:

- 1) Workshop materials. It is not necessary to print out this handout in order to take the workshop. However, some people like to take notes, or to review the material in advance.
- 2) Reference materials. Again, this is for reference and does not need to be printed.
- 3) Citizen's Guide. This may be of interest and use to the attendees. It is not needed for the workshop proper.

AGENDA CATEGORY: Presentation

PROPOSED BY: Executive

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Information only

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: Good Governance

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount:	
Ongoing Cost:	
One-Time Cost:	
Included in Current Budget?	

BACKGROUND:

ATTACHMENTS:

[WORKSHOP MATERIALS Bainbridge Island 2020 10 17.pdf](#)

[REFERENCE MATERIALS Bainbridge Island 2020 10 17.pdf](#)

[Citizens Guide 2017-12-11.pdf](#)

[Meeting Materials - Motions Chart.pdf](#)

[Meeting Materials - Precedence of motions.pdf](#)

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[Meeting Materials - 4 Censure Examples.pdf](#)

[Meeting Materials - Sample Council Rules of Procedure Updated 07.03.2018.pdf](#)

FISCAL DETAILS:

Fund Name(s):

Coding:

Great City Council Meetings

Ann G. Macfarlane
Professional Registered Parliamentarian

Webinar



Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Great City Council Meetings

Ann G. Macfarlane, Professional Registered Parliamentarian
Jurassic Parliament

City of Bainbridge Island, Washington

By videoconference
Saturday, October 17, 2020

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Our topics

- I. Introduction
- II. Meeting discussion, Point of Order, Appeal
- III. How to do this?
- IV. Motions and Amendments
- V. Authority and role of chair, members, and staff
- VI. Inappropriate remarks
- VII. An efficient meeting
- VIII. What's the point of rules of order?
- IX. The right kind of control
- X. Review and conclusion

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

I. Introduction

Why are we here?

To inspire you to run effective meetings using four fundamental guidelines.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

After taking this training you will be able to:

1. List four fundamental guidelines.
2. Make a Point of Order when guidelines are broken.
3. Label five inappropriate remarks.
4. Make motions and amendments

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Disclaimer

The material contained in this presentation is based upon the principles and practices of parliamentary procedure. I am not an attorney and nothing in this presentation constitutes legal advice.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Call meeting to order

- Sit in the chair reserved for the person running the meeting.
- Rap the gavel lightly one time and announce, "This meeting of the [name of organization] is called to order."
- Ask the clerk to take the roll.
- Announce that a quorum is present (or not).

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Quorum

- The “quorum” is the minimum number of voting members who must be present for business to be done.
- Usually it is a majority (more than half) of the members in office—the members who are actually serving on the council.
- “Quorum” is different from “votes cast.”
- If you lose your quorum, you can't do business.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Walking quorum

- Local government bodies must not create a “walking quorum” or a “serial meeting.”
- When members of the body talk or email with each other outside of meetings, such that a quorum is discussing the body's business, the Open Public Meetings Act has been violated.
- You can talk to other people, as long as the number is less than a quorum.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Agenda

- Prepared by leadership, but within control of council (subject to notice requirements, of course).
- Robert's Rules says that if you follow the standard “Order of Business,” you don't need to vote to adopt an agenda.
- However, many bodies do vote. Takes a majority vote to adopt, and a 2/3 vote to change later in the meeting.
- Do not need to include approval of agenda, or other minor procedural motions, in minutes.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Simplified Standard Order of Business

- Approval of minutes
- Officers' remarks and reports
- Committee reports
- Unfinished business (not “old” business)
- New business

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Unanimous consent

- Form of voting—a type of “fast track.”
- Very efficient for minor procedural matters.
- Presider suggests something, and if you agree, REMAIN SILENT. Silence means consent.
- If you disagree, say “OBJECTION.”
- Presider then knows that everyone does not agree, and abandons the fast track to use the regular method.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Language tip

Without objection...
If there is no objection...

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

II. Meeting discussion, Point of Order, and Appeal

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Principle of Equality

All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Key Point

Discussion in council and committee meetings is **NOT A CONVERSATION**.
It is **DEBATE** and has its own rules.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Fundamental guideline

- No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.

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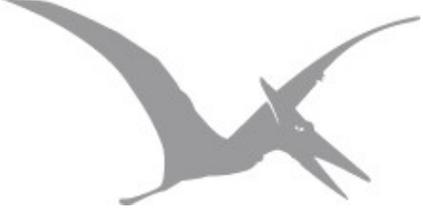
Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Why don't we follow this?

- Councils and committees tend to discuss their affairs in conversational mode.
- In conversations, dominant people tend to dominate.
- Agreeable people tend to let them.
- Must have a structure to make sure that everyone has an equal chance to speak.
- This is both fair and efficient.

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Point of Order
flying dinosaur

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 Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Point of Order

flying dinosaur

- When **ANOTHER MEMBER** breaks one of the rules, a member may make a **POINT OF ORDER**.
- Chair rules on the point.

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 Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Point of Order

- A motion claiming that a procedural mistake has been made.
- According to Robert, can be made only by a member.
- We recommend authorizing staff to do so also.
- Public may not raise a Point of Order.
- **May interrupt a speaker if necessary.**
- **Must be timely – made at the time of the offense.**

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 Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Process Point of Order

1. Member: *Point of Order!*
2. Chair: *State your point.*
3. Member: *That remark breaks our rule against interrupting.*
4. Chair: *The point is well taken. Members will refrain from interrupting each other.*

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 Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Language tip

- Use the “third person” to keep things neutral and lessen conflict.
- Note that the chair states the general rule.
- The chair is speaking on behalf of the rules of procedure.
- **DO NOT SAY** “You are out of order” or “You made a mistake.”

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 Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

When in doubt, ask the group!

- Chair can always ask the group to decide if a point of order is correct (“well-taken”) or not.

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 Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Chair doesn't have to say “Point of Order”

- The chair has the duty of maintaining order and decorum, so doesn't need to say “Point of Order.”
- Just needs to take appropriate action.

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Chair subject to same rules

- If the chair breaks one of the rules, a member may raise a Point of Order.
- The chair rules on own behavior, which seems odd, but is the way the system works.

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Don't weaponize Point of Order!

- You may interrupt to make a Point of Order.
- Sometimes you have to.
- Usually it is NOT NECESSARY TO INTERRUPT, and you should hold back.
- Usually it is best NOT TO CALL A POINT OF ORDER FOR GERMANENESS.

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No further discussion

- Once the chair has ruled on a Point of Order, the only allowable form of discussion is to appeal the ruling.

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Appeal

The most important motion in all of Robert's Rules – and the least known!

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Chair's rulings can be appealed

- The CHAIR enforces order and decorum.
- The GROUP is the final authority.
- Any TWO MEMBERS can appeal a ruling of the chair (one member appeals and one seconds the appeal).
- EXCEPTION: If the ruling is a matter on which there cannot be two reasonable interpretations, the ruling cannot be appealed.

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Process Appeal

1. Member A: *Appeal!*
2. Member B: *Second!*
3. Chair: *The chair's ruling has been appealed. The members will decide. All those who believe the ruling should be sustained, please say "Aye."*
4. Members in favor: *"Aye!"*

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Process Appeal

5. Chair: *All those who believe the ruling should NOT be sustained, please say "No."*
6. Members opposed: *"No!"*
7. Chair: *The ayes have it and the ruling is sustained, OR The noes have it and the ruling is not sustained.*

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Explaining the Appeal

- Chair must take care in explaining vote to members.
- Basic principle: The chair's ruling stands until it is overturned.
- The question being voted on is, "Shall the decision of the chair be SUSTAINED?"

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Confusing!

- It takes a NEGATIVE vote for the Appeal to win.
- A majority vote in favor of sustaining the chair's ruling, or a tie, means that the chair's ruling stands.
- The chair may vote on the Appeal.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Further points

- Point of Order is made by one member, but an Appeal needs a second.
- Point of Order and Appeal are processed immediately. No other business can take place until they are dealt with.
- Points of Order and Appeals do not count against a member's turn to speak in debate.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Debatable?

- Point of Order cannot be debated.
- Appeals pertaining to language and decorum cannot be debated.
- When an appeal can be debated, the process is different from anything else in Robert's Rules.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Point of Order and Appeal are the heart of democracy



In our view, the motions Point of Order and Appeal are the heart of our democracy. They provide the mechanism to stop a dictatorial chair who is acting like a "boss." They are essential for every level.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

III. How to do this?

- Seek recognition before speaking.
- No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.
- No sidebar conversations or whispering.
- NO INTERRUPTING!
- Speak to the chair (optional)
- Debate must be either FOR or AGAINST (optional).

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Seeking recognition

- Members must seek recognition from the presider before speaking.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Seeking recognition

- Raise your hand and wait to speak until the presider (chair) calls your name, nods at you, or gives some other sign that you have permission to speak (you "have the floor")
- Online, you can use the "raise hand" function or raise your physical hand.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Duty to remain silent

- When you have not been recognized, you have a duty to remain silent.
- The exception is a Point of Order when essential.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Rights and Responsibilities of the Member



Weldon L. Merritt, PRP, CPP, has graciously authorized Jurassic Parliament to publish this listing of the rights and responsibilities of ordinary members of an organization. All citations are taken from *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition (RONR)*.

Please note that neither the list of member rights nor the list of member responsibilities is intended to be exhaustive. In addition, neither the rights nor the responsibilities are necessarily absolute in every instance. For example, the right to debate may be cut off or limited by motions for the Previous Question or to Limit Debate. And, while a member should not vote on a matter of direct personal interest, under Robert's Rules no member

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

HOW to do this?

- Chair can keep track of who has spoken and who wishes to speak, using a chart.
- Chair can empower vice-chair to do this – good training for them.
- Use the "round robin."

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

A great method – the “round robin”

- The chair goes around the table, asking each person in turn for their opinion. People may pass.
- Important to have a pencil in hand, to jot down points or questions for when your turn arrives.
- Chair must wait their turn also!
- This rule applies to questions and answers also, and to discussions with staff.
- Don't let any two people “hijack” the meeting.

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SPEAKING CHART

Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	etc.
Garcia							
Jackson							
Juma							
Lee							
Patel							
Smith							
Young							

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

NO INTERRUPTING!

- When a member has the floor, they have the right to speak until they have completed their comments.
- Interrupting is **ABSOLUTELY FORBIDDEN**.
- Members may not interrupt each other, and chair may not interrupt members.
- Exception—Point of Order when essential.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Speak to the chair (optional)

- Speak to the chair, **NOT** to another member.
- It is a kind of “SONAR.” Everything pings back and forth between the chair and the members.
- This depersonalizes issues and improves clarity of discussion.
- Otherwise, discussion often goes “down the rabbit hole”.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Put away your cell phone

- Jurassic Parliament strongly recommends that groups adopt a policy of no electronic devices during the meeting.
- Why? “Phone snubbing” is rude to others and weakens the body's cohesion and ability to work well together.
- When members are distracted, they are not attending to the work of the body, which wastes everyone else's time.
- Absolutely no tweeting or posting on social media during meetings.
- You can do this! Other jurisdictions have adopted policies.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

An occasional exception...

- Sometimes there is benefit in the conversational style or “informal discussion.”
- This provides a sparky flow of ideas that can be beneficial.
- It can be useful in committee meetings or work sessions.
- However, **DO NOT** make the conversational style your ordinary or “default” style of discussion.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

SAMPLE DISCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Permission is granted to modify these guidelines as your organization prefers. Note that these guidelines refer to discussion within the body, not to comment by the public.

1. The chair of the meeting runs the meeting in the service of the body. The chair serves as the facilitator for the meeting and has the primary responsibility for maintaining order. The chair may take part in discussion, but may not answer each individual speaker back, nor lecture or criticize the members. When discussing substantive questions, the chair will usually speak and vote, if entitled to do so, after others have spoken.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Councilmembers:

- Don't try to convince your colleagues that you are right.
- Don't answer them back or question what they said.
- Don't argue with them.
- Just state your own position as clearly and effectively as you can.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

IV. Motions and Amendments

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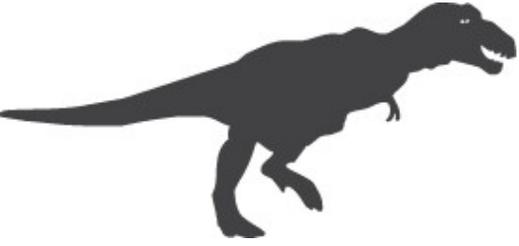
Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Main Motion

Tyrannosaurus rex

- A main motion is the usual and customary way to start the action of discussion and decision-making.
- For small boards (up to about 12 people), it is OK to have discussion before a motion is moved. Jurassic Parliament recommends moving the motion before discussing it whenever possible.

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Main Motion
Tyrannosaurus rex

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Main Motion

We recommend this sequence:

- Staff presents proposal in writing and answers any questions. Each council member may ask one or two questions, then the next member has a turn.
- Motion is moved and seconded.
- Members discuss motion and may amend it.
- Members vote on motion.

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Characteristics of Main Motion

- It should be in writing if at all possible (project on screen, use 3-part form).
- It should be **clear** and unambiguous. Don't say, "I move what he just said," or "so moved."
- It should be phrased in the grammatical **positive**.
- It must comply with the **bylaws** and the **procedural** law of the land.
- You can have only **one main motion** at a time.

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How do you introduce a Main Motion?

Three little words:

I move that...

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Member must be clear

- The member has the responsibility of formulating the motion.
- Don't mix up your ideas about the subject with the motion itself. Save those for debate.

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I've been noticing that the number of wild cats is increasing in our city, and they're getting stomped on by bigger dinosaurs. It's important that the city do something to protect them, so I think allowing catios would be great, this fits in with our mandate to serve all species and it will make the little kitties safer.

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State the exact motion clearly

I move that residents be authorized to build catios in their private yards.

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You can request a moment to write it down

- May I have a few minutes to write this motion down?
- Chair may also request that motion be written.
- Can use 3-part motion forms.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Second the motion

- You “second a motion” to show that you would like to talk about it.
- No need to be recognized. Just call out “second.”
- It is OK to second a motion you disagree with, if you want to explain why it’s a bad idea.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

If no second...

- If there is no second, the chair says:
There being no second, the motion will not be considered.
- Then moves immediately to next item of business.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

You can't speak against your own motion

- Under Robert's Rules, the maker of the motion cannot speak against it.
- If the discussion has changed their mind, they should request permission to withdraw the motion.
- The maker CAN vote against their own motion.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Eight steps to process a motion

1. **Member makes motion.**
2. Another member seconds motion.
3. **Chair states motion.**
4. Members debate and/or amend motion.
5. **Chair restates motion and calls for vote.**
6. Members vote on motion.
7. Chair states results of vote, whether motion passes or fails, and what happens next as a result of the vote.
8. Chair states next item of business.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Main Motion

Tyrannosaurus rex

Residents will be authorized to build catios in their private yards.

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Main Motion
Tyrannosaurus rex

66

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Eight Steps To Process A Motion

Member A: *I move that we hold a cruise on Dino Bay.*

Member B: *I second the motion!*

Chair: It has been moved and seconded that we hold a cruise on Dino Bay. We will now debate the motion. [debate]

Chair: Are you ready to vote?

The motion is that we hold a cruise on Dino Bay. All those in favor say “aye.” All those opposed say “no.” The “ayes” have it, the motion passes, and we will hold a cruise on Dino Bay. The Social Committee will make the plans for this event. Our next item of business is...

Eight steps to process a motion

1. Member makes a _____.
2. Another _____ seconds motion.
3. Chair states _____.
4. Members _____ and/or amend motion.
5. Chair restates _____ and calls for the vote.
6. Members _____ on motion.
7. Chair states results of vote, whether motion _____, and what happens as result of vote.
8. Chair states next item of _____.

In taking the vote, the presider must call for the _____ or the vote is not legitimate.

The presider has a duty to make things clear so that members understand what they are doing.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Discussion

General Contractor: *I feel that catios will allow our dear feline friends to experience the outdoors without getting hurt or endangering other wildlife. Here is an example of a cute little catio. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this motion.*

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Discussion

Photographer: *I'm in favor! My cousin has built a catio, and her little pet Fuzzy is completely at home in it, as you can see from this picture.*

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Discussion

Architect: *I think this is a terrible idea! Catios are intrusive and will ruin the look of our city. Here's an example I saw when I visited Dinodome last week. We don't want this kind of ugly building in beautiful Dinopolis.*

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Moving to vote

- When it seems that discussion is finished, chair asks, "Is there any further discussion?" or "Are you ready to vote?" and then, if no one speaks up, takes the vote.
- Note that this is different from the traditional language recommended by Robert's Rules.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Voting

- Chair repeats the motion.
- Chair says, "All those in favor say 'aye,' all those opposed say 'no.'"
- Chair announces results of vote, whether motion passes or fails, and what will happen next as a result of the vote.
- Chair announces next item of business.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Voting

The "ayes" have it, the motion passes, and residents will be authorized to build catios in their private yards,
OR
The "noes" have it, the motion fails, and we will not implement this proposal.

- Note that the chair must call for the negative vote, even if it seems obvious that the motion is unanimous.

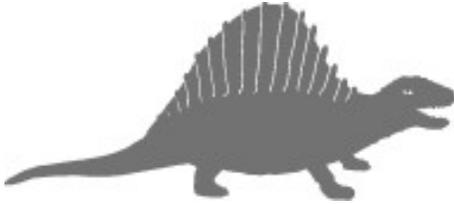
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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Fundamental guideline

One thing at a time.

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Amendment
Dimetrodon

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Amendment

Dimetrodon

- You amend a motion to improve it.
- The Amendment applies to the main motion.
- The Amendment must be germane (relevant).
- Anyone may move to amend, even the person who made the motion.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Amendment

I move that we amend the motion by adding the words, "Provided that the plan for each patio is approved by the Design Review Board."

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

If adopted, will read:

Residents will be authorized to build patios in their private yards, **provided that the plan for each patio is approved by the Design Review Board.**

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Four ways to amend

1. Add or insert words.
2. Strike out words.
3. Strike out words and insert words in their place.
4. Substitute (tricky!).

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Process Amendment

- The Amendment is processed using the same eight steps that we just saw for a main motion.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

The challenge is...

- We vote on amendments BEFORE we vote on the main motion, in order to make the main motion as good as possible—to PERFECT the motion.

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Amendment blocks Main Motion

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Fate of the Amendment

- People sometimes get confused, and don't realize that after voting on the amendment, the process continues.
- Once the fate of the amendment has been decided, debate continues on the main motion.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

More amendments are possible...

- Once you've dealt with one amendment, you may have others...
- provided that they apply to a *different aspect* of the main motion.
- It takes special actions (reconsideration) to go back and change something we've already amended.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

The process continues

- After all amendments have been processed, the body still must vote on the AMENDED MAIN MOTION.

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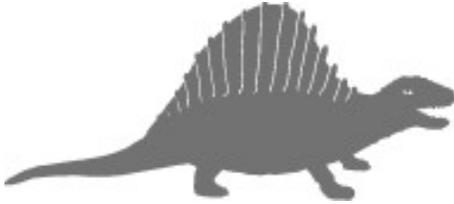
Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Secondary amendment

- When an amendment has been proposed, it is called a “primary amendment.”
- It is also possible to amend the amendment, which is called a “secondary amendment.”
- This is processed just like the main motion, EXCEPT that no further amendments are possible—no “tertiary” amendments.

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85



Primary Amendment
Dimetrodon

86



Secondary Amendment
Small Dimetrodon

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Amend the Amendment

I move that we amend the amendment by striking the words “Design Review Board” and inserting the words “a licensed architect.”

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

If adopted, amendment will read:

provided that the plan for each catio is approved by the ~~Design Review Board~~ **a licensed architect.**

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Secondary amendment
Secondary amendment
blocks primary amendment

90

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Sequence

- Discuss and vote on the secondary amendment.
- Discuss and vote on the primary amendment.
- Discuss and vote on the Main Motion.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

“Friendly amendment”

- People often process “friendly amendment” the wrong way.
- DO NOT turn to maker and seconder to ask if they accept the amendment – this give them improper power.
- Handle this the same as any other amendment.
- Ask, “Is there a second?” etc.
- Once a motion has been stated by the chair, the maker and seconder have same rights as any other member.

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Call the Question
Triceratops

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Call the Question *Triceratops*

- Motion requesting that we stop debate and vote.
- This motion requires a **second**.
- HOWEVER it cannot be **debated**.
- It cannot be **amended**.
- And, it takes a **two-thirds** vote to pass.
- Once approved, no more discussion is allowed.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Two-thirds vote

- Note that this means AT LEAST TWO-THIRDS of the voting members.
- Different type from majority, which means MORE THAN HALF.
- Robert specifies two-thirds when members' rights are limited or extended. Must be taken so you can see the result, not by voice.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Process Call the Question

1. Member A: *I call the question!*
2. Member B: *Second!*
3. Chair: *The question has been called, so we will vote immediately on whether to end debate and vote on the pending motion, which is [state motion]. All those in favor of stopping debate now, please raise your right hand.*
4. [Members in favor raise right hand]

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Process Call the Question

5. Chair: *Thank you, hands down. All those opposed, please raise your right hand.*

6. [Members opposed raise right hand]

7. Chair: *Thank you, hands down. There are two-thirds in favor of ending debate, so we will vote immediately, OR There are not two-thirds in favor of ending debate, so discussion will continue.*

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

V. Authority and role of chair, members, and staff

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Note on role of chair

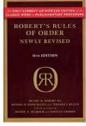
- Robert has different rules for small boards (up to about 12 people).
- In a small board, chair may make motions, discuss, and vote, unless law, regulations or bylaws say otherwise.
- We recommend chair exercise restraint by speaking and voting last, and refrain from making motions (this is a Jurassic Parliament suggestion).

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Small board rules are different



The different rules for small boards are one of the best-kept secrets of Robert's Rules of Order. If you serve on a small board (up to about 12 people) you may benefit from the flexibility that the rules for small boards offer.

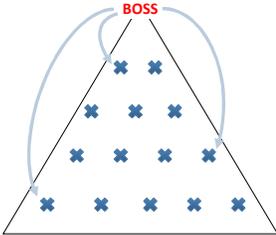
Robert's *Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 11th edition (the only current valid version of Robert's Rules) says on page 487, "some of the formality that is necessary in a large assembly would hinder business" in small boards.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Accountability Hierarchy

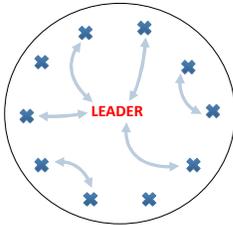


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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Voluntary Association



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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Key Point

Each member has an equal right to speak and to try to persuade others to accept their view.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Key Point

During meetings, the chair controls the process so the group can make the decisions.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Fundamental guideline

During meetings, the chair is the servant of the group, and the group is the final authority.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

The chair is not in charge of your meeting

It is a little-known fact that ultimately it is the board that is in charge of your meeting, not the chair. According to the principles of parliamentary procedure and Robert's Rules of Order, the chair runs the meeting while subject to the will of the body as a whole.



This is very different from the workplace, the military, or many other institutions in our society. Those institutions are structured as an **ACCOUNTABILITY HIERARCHY**, in which everyone reports, through the appropriate channels, to the **BOSS** at the top of the pyramid. The boss makes the ultimate decisions and is responsible for the organization's performance.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

You have both types of structure

- The council forms a voluntary association.
- The city manager and staff form an accountability hierarchy.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

What is each person's individual authority?

All members of a governing board share in a joint and collective authority which exists and can be exercised only when the group is in session.

The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

What is your individual power?

- When people get elected to public office or appointed to a citizen committee, often they are surprised at how little power they have.
- An individual member may not have a staff member fired, direct staff, oversee employee work product, or interfere in administration.
- Know the limits of your role! You are a policy maker, not a mover-and-shaker.

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LEGISLATION is the prerogative of the council. City manager supports council, but does not decide.

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ADMINISTRATION is the prerogative of the city manager. Council may not interfere.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

It's OK to disagree

- The fact that people have different opinions is a strength. It's a good thing!
- BUT we tend to identify with our own position.
- When we are defeated, we sometimes take it personally.
- This is a mistake.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

At the end of the day, the body must unite behind its decision.

- It is a basic democratic principle that the decision of the majority, voting at a properly called meeting, is the decision of the body as a whole.
- The minority must make it their decision as well.
- It's a terrible system—but see Winston Churchill quote...

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Democracy is the worst system of government in all the world, with the exception of those others that have been tried from time to time.

Winston Churchill

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Bottom line

- In a democracy, HOW we decide things is more important than WHAT we decide.
- Courtesy and respect, no surprises, no unilateral action, no end-runs...these are essential for the system to work.

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Members have a duty

- When serving on a public body, members have a duty to uphold the decision of that body, even if they disagree with it.

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Disagreement

- Members may express their disagreement in public, but may not attempt to UNDERMINE the decision.
- They are free to try to persuade their colleagues, during the meeting, to change the decision (within limits).

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

The willingness to engage in honest debate and lose on issues you care deeply about reaffirms your commitment to common citizenship.

Cornell Clayton, Washington State University

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

What is the alternative?

The ballot box is sacred because the alternative is blood.

Elias Canetti

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

VI. Inappropriate remarks

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Fundamental guideline

Courtesy and respect are required.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

- It is a basic principle of parliamentary procedure that debate must be “germane” (relevant) to the topic at hand.
- Certain kinds of remarks are inappropriate because they are not relevant to the discussion.
- Therefore, courtesy and respect are required at all times.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

These remarks are inappropriate

1. Personal remarks about others (except for conflict of interest issues)
2. Discourteous remarks – insulting language, attacks
3. Inflammatory language
4. Criticizing past actions of the group (unless subject is under discussion, or member is about to propose a change)
5. Remarks that are not germane (relevant) to the discussion

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Inappropriate Remarks on Local Government Councils



If you serve as an elected official on a local government council or board, you should know the types of remarks that are inappropriate during discussion at a meeting. Robert's Rules of Order and the common parliamentary law it is based on require that:

- Members of a council or board must be courteous to one another.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Duty to be polite

- During the meeting, councilmembers have a duty to be polite to their colleagues, staff, and everyone else.
- This is part of their fiduciary duty of obedience to the goals of the organization.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Personal remarks

The measure, not the member, is the subject of debate.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition, 43:21

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Speaking about other members

- Robert's Rules stipulates formality in speaking about other members, saying one should not name them.
- However, many councils are more informal and do use the names of others.
- In general, councilmembers must address issues and not personalities.
- However, it sometimes is necessary to speak about another member, and we will address this later.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

The focus of our meeting is...

- Words on paper.
- Focus on the motions and not on the people who make the motions.
- We recommend that councilmembers take this approach outside the meeting also.
- Focus on actions taken and do not criticize colleagues outside the meeting.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Language tip

Members will kindly keep their remarks strictly to the topic under discussion.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Who decides?

- If any question arises whether a remark is appropriate or not, or a comment is germane, the chair rules, subject to appeal.
- The chair may also turn immediately to the group to ask the members to decide.
- Ultimately it is the GROUP'S CALL.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

How to be objective about subjective comments



What can you do when your colleagues on a board or council say things that you find offensive? What if they are making subjective statements that hurt your feelings? We are living in tough times for civility. People feel free to say things during meetings that can be offensive and challenging.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Send the right message

- No sarcasm
- No frowning
- No eye-rolling
- No sighing

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Jurassic Parliament
Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

CHEAT SHEET

WAIT! WAIT! WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

	If you are the chair, say...	If you are a member speaking about another member, say...	If you are a member speaking about the chair, say...
DIG MISTAKES			
speaking twice in a row	Members are reminded that no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.	Point of order. The member has spoken twice before others are ready to speak.	Point of order. The chair does not have the right to dominate the discussion, but must speak in turn.
not seeking recognition	Members will kindly seek recognition before speaking.	Point of order. Members must seek recognition before speaking.	[not applicable]
speaking directly to another member	Members will kindly address all remarks to the chair.	Point of order. Members are supposed to speak to the chair.	[not applicable]
interrupting another person	Members will kindly refrain from interrupting one another.	Point of order. Interrupting is not allowed.	Point of order. The chair does not have the right to interrupt a member.
INAPPROPRIATE REMARKS			
personal remarks	Members will refrain from making personal remarks.	Point of order. Personal remarks are not allowed.	Point of order. Personal remarks are not allowed.
insulting language, vulgarities, attacks	Insulting or vulgar language is not allowed at our meetings.	Point of order. The language used by the member is insulting/vulgar.	Point of order. The chair is using insulting/vulgar language.
inflammatory language	Inflammatory language is not allowed.	Point of order. That remark is inflammatory.	Point of order. That remark is inflammatory.
criticizing past actions	Members may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.*	Point of order. Members may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.*	Point of order. The chair may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.*

Note that this is proprietary information. Do not duplicate.

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Jurassic Parliament
Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Important note

- We are speaking here about discussion within council and committee meetings.
- These prohibitions DO NOT APPLY to the public when they are giving public comment.

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Jurassic Parliament
Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Comment vs. disruption

- Attendees do not have the right to DISRUPT the meeting.
- In general, the courts have found that mere words do not constitute disruption.
- If a free speech issue comes to court, often the local government loses the case.
- Be prepared with an action plan in case of difficulties. Consult with your attorney and staff.

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Jurassic Parliament
Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Guidelines for Public Comment in Local Government



The public comment period is an essential part of local government meetings. These are our guidelines for public comment periods in local government. They refer to ordinary business and work or study meetings of councils, boards and committees. Public hearings and quasi-judicial hearings are governed by different rules.

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Jurassic Parliament
Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

VII. An efficient meeting

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Jurassic Parliament
Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

It is the duty of the chair...

To expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of members.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition 47:7 (7)

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

- Councilmembers **MUST** read the packet in advance! It is part of your “duty of care” to your body.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

- If you have questions, send them to the staff in advance.
- Don't play “gotcha” with the staff by asking questions in public that could have been addressed and researched ahead of time.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

- If you have amendments, send them to the clerk in advance (NOT to your colleagues!)
- During the meeting, amendments can be displayed on the screen, so everyone knows what is being considered.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Successful staff interaction in local government meetings



© City of Shoreline WA, 2011.

Staff interaction in local government meetings can be effective or disastrous. Here are a few suggestions on how to structure successful staff interaction.

▶ NOT ENOUGH STAFF INTERACTION
Sometimes we have observed staff who are too cautious at their council or committee meetings. They see themselves in a subordinate position and feel that their comments are welcome only when requested.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

- Council and board members should not criticize staff in public and must be courteous to them.
- Speak to the city manager privately about any concerns!

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

- Why?
 - Staff and elected officials are in an unequal and hierarchical relationship.
 - Attacking the staff when they can't answer back is bullying.
 - It violates the boundary between the duties of the council and the duties of the administration.
 - It can create a hostile work environment and serious HR problems.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

When should the clerk speak up?

By Ann G. Macfarlane, Professional Registered Parliamentarian

The clerk of a local government meeting or the secretary on a nonprofit board has a high calling. Under Robert's Rules, two persons must be present for a valid meeting: the chair and the secretary. They cannot be the same person, and state law often specifies this as well.



The clerk or secretary keeps the record of the meeting, the minutes, which in case of dispute can become critical to resolving conflict and moving ahead. In a lawsuit, the minutes of a meeting provide evidence of what

City Clerk Andrea Smithke reads agenda to Council Members Emily Robertson, City of Dinoville, 2018.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

- The agenda should have proposed times for each item, to keep everyone on track.
- Add “all times approximate” or “estimated” to keep flexibility.
- Identify
 - Information
 - Discussion
 - Decision

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Sample City Council Agenda

Dinopolis City Council Meeting

City Council Chambers • 989 Fort Street, First Floor • Dinopolis
January 28, 2019 • 5:00 PM

1. Opening ceremonies—est. 5 minutes
 - a. Call to order
 - b. Roll call and determination of a quorum
 - c. Flag salute
 - d. Acceptance of agenda
2. Consent agenda—Decision—est. 2 minutes
 - a. Approval of the minutes of the City Council study sessions and regular meetings of December 7 and 14, 2018, and special meetings of December 15 and 16, 2018.
 - b. Resolution commending the Dinopolis Red Cross for raising \$1,000,000 for disaster relief during 2018.
3. Proclamations, recognitions, presentations and announcements—information—est. 10 minutes
4. Public comment—information—est. 20 minutes
5. Reports by the City Manager—information—est. 10 minutes
6. New business—Decisions—est. 60 minutes

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Sample Nonprofit Board Agenda

Dinoville Service Club Board Meeting

Club Headquarters, Dinoville
January 30, 2019
7:00 – 9:00 pm

Mission Statement:
We strive to serve all humanity, whether we like them or not

1	Call to order, determination of a quorum, acceptance of agenda	President	7:00 pm	5 min
2	Let's connect!	Information	Everyone	7:05 pm 10 min
3	Approval of minutes of December 15, 2018 board meeting	Decision	President	7:15 pm 5 min
4	President's remarks	Information	President	7:20 pm 10 min
5	Key Item: Planning for Strategic Planning	Discussion	Strategic planning consultant	7:30 pm 30 min
6	Social committee report and decision on date and venue for spring picnic. Draft motion: That the spring picnic be held on April 8, 2019, at the Dinoville City Park.	Decision	Social Committee Chair	8:00 pm 15 min

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

- The body should establish time limits. We recommend:
 - 3 hours maximum for meetings
 - 5 minutes each for individual member discussion and council reports
 - 30 minutes maximum for public comment
 - 3 minutes maximum for public speakers

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Time limits create productive meetings



The mayor of Alexandria, Virginia began council meetings by responding to each person giving public comment, sometimes delaying the start of regular business three hours or more. Was this reasonable? No. We need time limits to establish structure and create productive meetings. Robert's Rules says that members have the right to an efficient meeting. It takes effort to do this, and for the chair to maintain the limits, but the effort will pay off big time.

SET AN OVERALL TIME LIMIT FOR THE MEETING
If you are a private nonprofit board, a good target for a regular board meeting is two hours. After

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

VIII. What's the point of rules of order?

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Flow of authority at a meeting

The group adopts its rules and guidelines.

↓

In attending, members accept the rules of the group.

↓

During meetings, the presiding officer applies the rules for the benefit of the group.

↓

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Flow of authority at a meeting

↓

All persons present at a meeting have an obligation to obey the **legitimate orders** of the presiding officer.

↓

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Flow of authority at a meeting

↓

Any member who disagrees with a ruling, decision or order by the presiding officer may **appeal the ruling**.

↓

If another member seconds the appeal, the **group will decide by majority vote** whether the ruling, decision or order is legitimate.

↓

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Flow of authority at a meeting

↓

The presiding officer **obeys** the group's decision.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

- Democracy is fragile and depends on mutual acceptance and understanding.
- It can only work if everyone agrees to follow its principles and process.
- Everyone must know and understand the rules, because...

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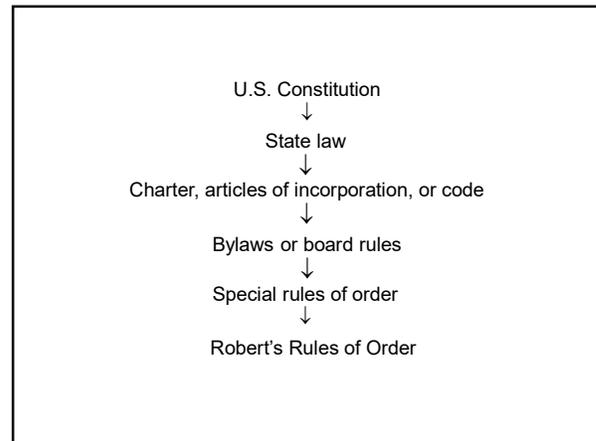
Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

YOU are IT!

- There are no parliamentary police.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Enforcement

- We don't like the idea that guidelines must be enforced.
- However, all human organizations, even benign institutions like hospitals, schools and retirement communities, ultimately depend on power enforcement for their success.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Board may sanction

- The power of the group extends to the power to sanction.
- It is best if board rules of procedure include specific steps to be taken when the guidelines are broken.
- If Robert's Rules is your authority, you have this power already.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

It is also possible to adopt a motion of censure without formal disciplinary procedures.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th ed.) 61:2n1

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Don't do this lightly!

- Use sanctions only when repeated offenses make it necessary.
- Consult with your attorney before proceeding.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

“Just the facts, ma’am”

- You can’t talk about your feelings about another member.
- You can discuss actions taken by another member if, in your view, they merit sanction.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

What actions may merit sanction?

- Failing to offer courtesy and respect, using foul language.
- Failing to observe the rules of discussion: interrupting others, speaking out of turn, speaking beyond established time limits.
- Violating the confidentiality of executive session.
- Failing to observe ethics guidelines.
- Taking actions outside the meeting that hamper the board in its work.
- Taking actions outside the meeting that attempt to undermine a board decision.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

What does “undermine” mean?

- The minority may express their disagreement outside the meeting.
- They may not take action intended to prevent the board’s decision from being carried out.
- Board members who do this are subject to sanction, and rightly so.
- They are violating their duty of loyalty.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Possible sanctions

- Verbal admonishment.
- Letter of reprimand.
- Motion of censure (member may vote on own censure motion, unless under disciplinary proceedings).
- Removal from external or board committees.
- Ordered to leave the meeting at which behavior occurs (cannot be barred from future meetings).

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

City Council Minutes of the City of Tacoma, WA August 15, 2006

Moved, pursuant to Rule 3D of the Rules of Procedure, that the Council issue a written reprimand to Councilman Tom Stenger, remove him from his duties as Chairperson of the Environment and Public Works Committee, and place him on probation as to his appointments on the Pierce Transit Board, Puget Sound Regional Council....

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

continued...

This proposed action is based on Councilman Stenger’s transgressions of the Council rules, specifically for his discourteous conduct at the last meeting of the Neighborhoods and Housing Committee which involved repeated derogatory remarks directed toward a member of the public, and failing to come to order at the request of the presiding officer.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Sanctioning rogue board members



In general, people who serve on nonprofit boards or in local government are peaceful and compliant. But every once in a while, you get a rogue board member. What can be done? We believe that it's important for boards to be prepared to sanction rogue members when necessary.

This is an unpleasant subject. However, all human organizations, even benign institutions like hospitals, schools and retirement communities, depend on similar enforcement for their survival. If a

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Voting

- In sanctioning, sometimes there is a higher voting requirement than for ordinary action, such as
 - Two-thirds vote
 - Majority of board members in office

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Voting

- Check state law and conflict of interest policy to determine whether person who is subject of proposed sanction may vote on the motion, or not.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Voting

- From parliamentary perspective, a member may vote on their own sanction UNLESS
 - Member is under disciplinary proceedings, OR
 - Member offends repeatedly during a meeting, to extent that chair has warned offender 3 times and "named" the member. See *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (12th ed.) 61:17.*

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Removal from current meeting

- This is obviously a drastic step!
- Talk with your attorney and verify that this can be done under state law and your bylaws.
- The chair does not have this power.
- Only the body itself can order a member to leave the room.
- You can't bar a member from future meetings.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

You are your own authority

RCW 35A.12.120 The council shall determine its own rules and order of business, and may establish rules for the conduct of council meetings and the maintenance of order.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

“Get out of jail free” card

Failure of the Council, acting in an open public meeting, to follow any of these rules shall be considered a Council decision to waive such rule. No notice of such waiver need be given.

Article 1.2, Manual of City Governance

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

This is too loose

- It is correct that failure to follow a minor procedural rule does not invalidate Council action.
- If there is an error, a member should make a Point of Order at the time.
- However, in my opinion, this language is too loose.
- If the Council wants to waive or suspend a rule, it should do so by specific action.
- This is part of your commitment to good functioning.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Suspend the Rules with extreme caution

By Ann G. Macfarlane, Professional Registered Parliamentarian



The motion to Suspend the Rules is a trap for the unwary. Be careful in using this motion and avoid doing things that may get you into big trouble.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

IX. The right kind of control

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Three things you must have:

1. Knowledge of how this system works
2. A majority on your council in favor of civility and this system.
3. The personal moxie, chutzpah, energy and drive to put it all into practice.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Chair must control who speaks when

- The chair serves as a BENEVOLENT DICTATOR, enforcing the rules the group has chosen.
- Individual members must SEEK RECOGNITION before speaking.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Chair controls who speaks when

- If someone speaks up without being recognized, STOP THEM.
- If someone speaks out of turn, INTERRUPT THEM.
- If someone makes insulting remarks, CUT THEM OFF.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Duty to obey the chair

- Members have a duty to obey the chair's directions.
- If they disagree, they can't argue back.
- What can they do?

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

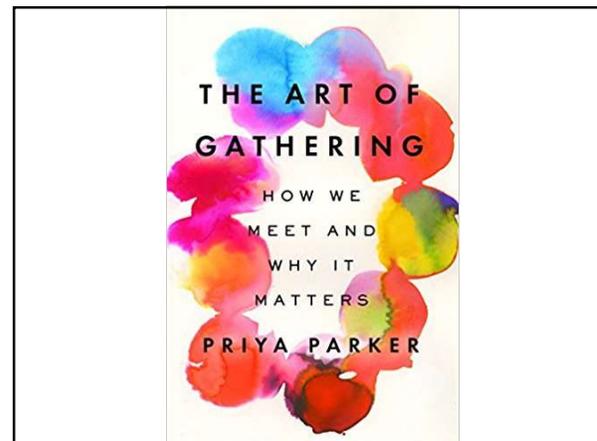
"Generous authority"

Priya Parker

- It's important to be business-like and focused.
- Keep things moving.
- At the same time, show humanity and humor when appropriate.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Strength vs. warmth

John Neffinger and Matthew Kohut

*Compelling People:
The Hidden Qualities that
Make Us Influential*

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

HOW to control?

The chair should never get excited.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition, p. 456

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

CHEAT SHEET

LANGUAGE TIPS FOR MEETING MANAGEMENT

SITUATION	CHAIR CAN SAY
Call to order	<i>This meeting of the [name of organization] is called to order.</i>
Unanimous consent	<i>Without objection... If there is no objection...</i>
To begin discussion	<i>It has been moved and seconded that... Is there any discussion?</i>
If there is no second	<i>Since there is no second, the motion will not be considered.</i>
To end discussion	<i>Is there any further discussion? or Are you ready to vote?</i>
Process Point of Order	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member says, "Point of Order." 2. Chair says, "State your point." 3. Member explains issue. 4. Chair says, "The point is well taken," or "The point is not well taken."
When someone says "Point of Order" but can't explain what they mean	<i>What rule has been broken?</i>
Process Point of Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member says, "Point of Information." 2. Chair replies, "State your question."

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

X. Review and conclusion

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MASTERING COUNCIL MEETINGS
 A GUIDEBOOK FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
 Ann G. Macfarlane, PRP, CAE and Andrew L. Estep, CAE
 Jurassic Parliament

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Why are we here?

To inspire you to run effective meetings using four fundamental guidelines.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

After taking this training you will be able to:

1. List four fundamental guidelines.
2. Make a Point of Order when guidelines are broken.
3. Label five inappropriate remarks.
4. Make motions and amendments

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Four fundamental guidelines

1. The chair is the servant of the group, and the group is the final authority.
2. All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations. To ensure this, no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.
3. Courtesy and respect are required.
4. One thing at a time.

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Follow four fundamental guidelines for successful meetings



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Robert's Rules of Order includes **four fundamental guidelines** that will create successful meetings. They are easy to say but take some effort to apply, since prevailing culture is often very different. Run your meetings according to these guidelines so your meetings—and your organization—will flourish.

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These remarks are inappropriate

1. Personal remarks about other members (except for conflict of interest)
2. Discourteous remarks – insulting language, attacks
3. Inflammatory language
4. Criticizing past actions of the group (unless subject is under discussion, or member is about to propose to amend or rescind the action at the end of their speech)
5. Remarks that are not germane (relevant) to the discussion

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Making a motion

- At the right time, seek recognition from the chair.
- State your motion.
Chair, I move that we issue each council member a \$500 bonus in recognition of their service during this pandemic.
- After the motion is seconded by another member and stated by the chair, explain why you think it's a good idea.

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Seconding a motion

- After another member makes a motion, just call out "second!"
- You do not need to be recognized.

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Eight steps to process a motion

1. **Member makes motion.**
2. Another member seconds motion.
3. **Chair states motion.**
4. Members debate and/or amend motion.
5. **Chair restates motion and calls for vote.**
6. Members vote on motion.
7. Chair states results of vote, whether motion passes or fails, and what happens next as a result of the vote.
8. Chair states next item of business.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Amending a motion

- During discussion on the motion, seek recognition.
- Once recognized, state your proposed amendment.
Chair, I move to amend the motion by striking out the number \$500 and inserting the number \$5000.
- Once another member seconds the amendment, explain why it's a good idea.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Remember...

- The amendment is voted on first.
- Once the amendment is resolved, discussion may continue on the main motion.
- Further amendments may be made.
- Finally, the vote will be taken on the MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED.

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Essential Guidelines for City Councils



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Follow these essential guidelines of parliamentary procedure to take the pain out of your meetings, hold productive discussions, and serve your community better.

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CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC MEETINGS USING PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AND ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER IN WASHINGTON STATE



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This guide has been prepared to assist citizens and residents who want to know the expectations for public

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WHY do we need these rules?

Win/lose is the only game most of us understand. We have a constant unspoken need for domination and actually find no enjoyment in win/win situations.

Richard Rohr

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*Kindness is within our power.
Liking is not.*

Samuel Johnson

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

*Serving on a local government board
is like being in a marriage
arranged by the citizens.*

Tami Tanoue

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Rules are proxies for values

- They are necessary but limited.
- They are based on the past.
- They are always approximate.
- Always look to the value that underlies the rule.

Source: *How* by Dov Seidman

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What is the key value in Robert?

R E S P E C T

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Reference Materials

Ann G. Macfarlane

Professional Registered Parliamentarian



REFERENCE MATERIALS

1. Criticizing a board decision in public
2. Essential Guidelines for City Councils
3. Flow of authority at a meeting
4. Follow four fundamental guidelines for successful meetings
5. How to be objective about subjective comments
6. Inappropriate Remarks on Local Government Councils
7. Language tips for meeting management
8. Point of Order and Appeal are the heart of democracy
9. Rights and Responsibilities of the Member
10. Sample Discussion Guidelines for Local Governments
11. Sanctioning rogue board members
12. Successful staff interaction in local government meetings
13. Suspend the rules with extreme caution
14. Tips for local government bodies meeting remotely

Criticizing a board decision in public



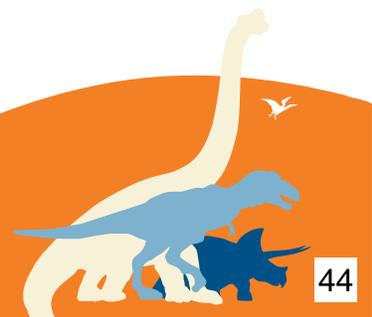
It is a basic principle of parliamentary procedure that the decision of the majority, voting at a properly called meeting, is the decision of the body as a whole. The members whose views did not prevail are bound to go along with the majority. This goes back deep in time, to the origins of our entire system of democratic governance.

It follows from this principle that the minority members of a body may not take action that would tend to undermine the decision. What does “undermine” mean? It means trying to prevent the decision from being carried out.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition, says this: “An organization or assembly has the ultimate right to make and enforce its own rules, and to require that its members refrain from conduct injurious to the organization or its purposes” (p. 643). In another book, Robert gives this example: If a club has planned a course of lectures, club members who are unhappy about it may not talk against the course so as to interfere with the sale of tickets (*Parliamentary Law*, pp. 329-330).

They may not do so because their loyalty to the body transcends their individual views. In becoming part of a club, a group of people, they agree to submit their personal judgment to the will of the group. This is an unnatural thing to do! However, it is essential if any group is going to function.

Of course a board member is free, within certain limits, to try during meetings to persuade their colleagues to change the decision. If that doesn't work, and the member remains deeply opposed to the decision, the member may have to consider resigning.



Let's look at three different situations where this question may occur.

1. Criticizing a board decision in a private nonprofit

Private nonprofit boards will sometimes establish a policy that the board “speaks with one voice.” Members are encouraged to be as vocal as they like inside the meeting. Once the decision has been made, however, they are bound not to criticize it in public. For charitable nonprofit boards, this certainly make sense.

2. Criticizing a board decision in a membership organization

Jurassic Parliament believes that membership organizations such as professional associations may choose not to impose this restraint, depending on the nature of their members and their organization. If board members are allowed to say in public that they disagree with a decision, and to explain why, they are still obliged not to try to undermine the decision.

3. Criticizing a board decision in local government

Local governments and public bodies are different from private organizations. It seems obvious to us that under the First Amendment to the Constitution, elected officials and citizen volunteers have the right to speak out when they hold a different view from the body. At the same time, they may not try to undermine the body's decision.

We encountered an example some years ago when a city council majority took a position with regard to a local environmental issue. The minority members subsequently wrote a letter to the responsible state department stating that they felt that the council's position was wrong — they preferred a different position. This was improper, because the action was intended to influence the state department's decision. The minority members were in violation of their duty to the council and their duty to uphold democratic principles.

When there are strongly divided views in local government, the difference between “stating a view” and “undermining a decision” can be challenging. We encourage minority members of local government to do some soul-searching before criticizing a board action in public. Is the action merely a statement of personal views, or is it an attempt to undermine or counteract the board's decision? As Cornell Clayton of Washington State University said, “The willingness to engage in honest debate and lose on issues you care deeply about reaffirms your commitment to common citizenship.”

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Criticizing a board decision in public

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Essential Guidelines for City Councils



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Follow these essential guidelines of parliamentary procedure to take the pain out of your meetings, hold productive discussions, and serve your community better.

► BASICS

A quorum must be present for business to be done. Usually a quorum means a majority (more than half) of the voting members in office.

The chair runs the meeting in the service of the council. He is not the “boss” but serves as a facilitator, helping the council to hold free and fair discussion and make good decisions.

Ordinarily a councilmember must make a motion before any discussion begins. If there is no second, the motion is not taken up.

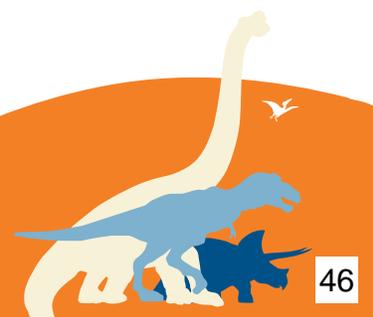
If a member makes a motion to amend the main motion, it is discussed and voted on before the main motion. After amending a motion, a vote must be taken on the main motion as amended.

After discussion, the chair calls for the vote and announces the result. The motion passes when a majority of those voting vote in favor, unless state law or your rules of procedure require a higher vote. This is different from the requirement for a quorum.

If someone “calls the question,” the chair must take a vote on whether to vote now or continue discussion. It takes a 2/3 vote to cut off discussion.

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► DISCUSSION

All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations. This means that discussion is not a conversation, but follows some important rules:

- The chair recognizes speakers in turn.
- No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.
- Interrupting is not allowed.

Councilmembers must be courteous and respectful. They may not make inappropriate remarks such as personal remarks, insulting language, or comments that are irrelevant.

If a councilmember breaks the rules, the chair may correct him, or another councilmember may raise a point of order. The chair rules as to whether the point is correct, or not. A councilmember who disagrees with a ruling of the chair may appeal it. If another member seconds the appeal, the council decides.

The minority must be provided equal opportunity to debate, even if their views are unpopular. However, the decision of the majority voting at a meeting is the decision of the council as a whole.

► PUBLIC INPUT

Public hearings and other quasi-judicial proceedings must be run according to the requirements of state law.

Public comment sessions offer an opportunity for members of the public to inform the council of their views. We recommend not entering into back-and-forth exchanges. Community forums, one-on-one discussion, feedback forms on the website, surveys etc. are better channels for an exchange of views.

Under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the public is not bound by the same rules of decorum and courtesy as the councilmembers.

The public should not engage in clapping, booing, hissing or other disruptive actions, since they intimidate speakers, may suppress free speech, and impede the work of the council.

Essential Guidelines for City Councils

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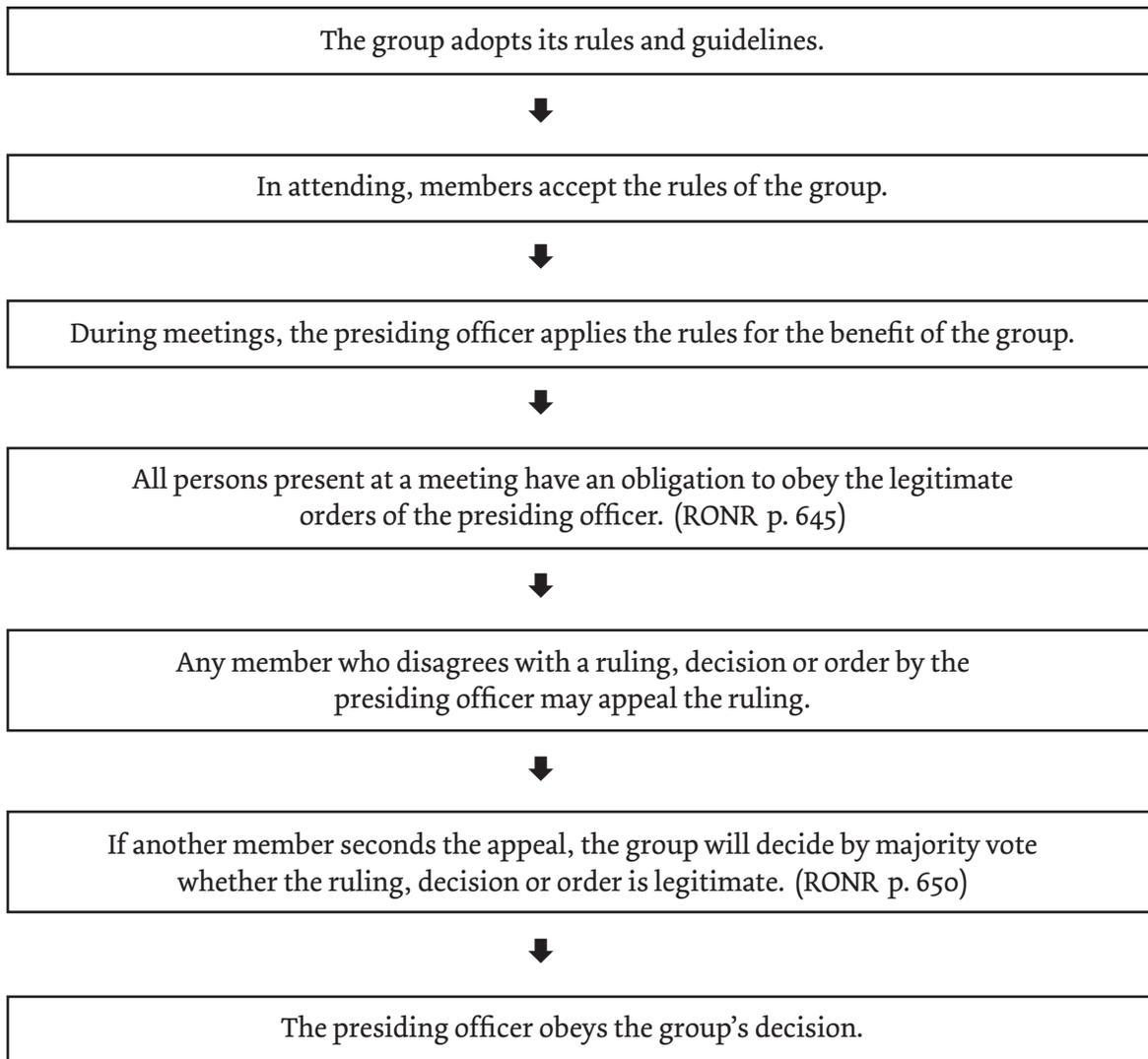
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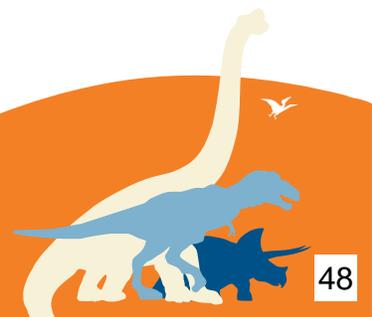
Flow of Authority at a Meeting



RONR = *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition*

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Follow four fundamental guidelines for successful meetings



Gig Harbor, Washington City Council. ©Jurassic Parliament 2018.

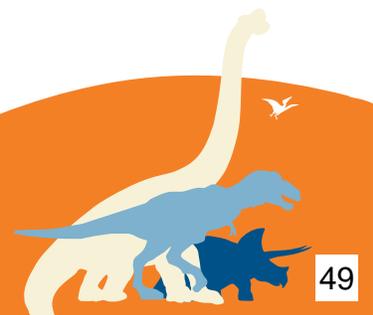
Robert's Rules of Order includes **four fundamental guidelines** that will create successful meetings. They are easy to say but take some effort to apply, since prevailing culture is often very different. Run your meetings according to these guidelines so your meetings—and your organization—will flourish.

I. The person running the meeting is the servant of the group, and the group is the final authority.

We are so used to our work situation, where the “boss” is in charge of the “employees,” that we often bring the same habits of mind to meetings of nonprofit boards, city councils, and other volunteer organizations. But in a board of directors or a council, all the members have equal standing. They are peers, and **the leader is one among equals.**

The chair has special duties to RUN the meeting, but does not determine the OUTCOME of the meeting. It is the group that must decide what it wishes to do. It is the chair's duty to assist the group in this task. And the group has the ability to overturn a decision or ruling made by the chair. Read about Point of Order and Appeal [on our website](#) to learn how this is done.

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II. All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations. To ensure this, no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.

Every member of a board has an equal right to speak. In practice, however, boards often discuss their affairs in conversational mode. And in conversations, dominant people tend to dominate, and agreeable people tend to let them.

This often leads to a few people dominating the discussion, which is not fair and can lead to poor outcomes. Your quiet, introverted members have important insights that need to be heard.

If you adopt and apply the rule that **no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once**, you will find that your meetings take on an entirely different nature—for the better!

III. Courtesy and respect are required at all times.

In these difficult times, people can be loud, rude and disorderly at meetings. Your chair and your members must insist on **courtesy and respect at all times**. These are not frills, but vital to the democratic process. No personal remarks, no insulting language, no attacks, no interrupting, no sidebar conversations, no disrespectful body language. If this happens, gently but firmly put a stop to it. Read about inappropriate remarks on our website ([local government here](#) and [nonprofit boards here](#)).

IV. One thing at a time

When a group is discussing a certain item, it must stick with that item, or make a conscious decision to set it aside to deal with something else. **You can't slip from one topic to another**, but must be deliberate in how and when you address each issue. Create a thoughtful agenda, time each item, and follow the agenda with flexible care.

Try these four guidelines, which we explain in greater detail in our [book](#), and see what a difference they make to your meetings.

Follow four fundamental guidelines for successful meetings

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How to be objective about subjective comments



What can you do when your colleagues on a board or council say things that you find offensive? What if they are making subjective statements that hurt your feelings? We are living in tough times for civility. People feel free to say things during meetings that can be offensive and challenging.

Robert's Rules of Order offers a simple solution to the problem of subjective, offensive or hurtful remarks during a meeting. It works like this:

- 1) Meetings are held to discuss issues, not personalities.
- 2) Members may not make inappropriate remarks.
- 3) The group decides what remarks are inappropriate.

So the objective answer to “what can I say?” is that the group, by majority vote, decides. (Note that this applies to discussion by the members, within the group, and not to any comments made by the public at a local government meeting.)

Sometimes this feels unsatisfactory! We wish for an outside authority who will settle the matter on our behalf. But it is fundamental to parliamentary procedure, as part of our common law heritage, that the group is the final authority (under the aegis of the law, of course). When there is a majority vote taken at a properly called meeting of your board or council, that is the decision of the body.

Note that the majority has the right to make poor decisions! The vote could be wrong from your perspective. But this method has the advantage of providing an objective answer to subjective questions such as “can he or she say that?”



HERE IS HOW IT ALL WORKS

To start with, the group adopts bylaws or rules of procedure. Sometimes these bylaws or rules state explicitly what may or may not be said.

It is desirable for the group, in those bylaws or rules of procedure, to adopt a parliamentary authority. This is a specific set of rules that governs your meetings. The most common parliamentary authority is *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, just published in its 12th edition. If you have adopted Robert's Rules in your bylaws, then you are governed by its rules, which go into careful detail about what may and may not be said. Read [Inappropriate remarks on nonprofit boards](#) and [Inappropriate remarks on local government councils](#).

When an issue arises, the chair may “call the member to order” to remind them not to use such a term. If the chair fails to act, a member may make a Point of Order. The chair then issues a ruling as to whether the Point of Order is well-taken (correct) or not. If any two members disagree with the chair, they can appeal the ruling. One member makes the appeal and another seconds it. The group then votes on the appeal to decide the outcome.

The chair can also turn immediately to the group to decide. Say a member uses the term “mugwump,” and another member believes that this word is an insult. The member may raise a Point of Order. In this case, the chair might turn immediately to the group to decide the question. (Note that when a question arises about decorum or correct language, it cannot be debated—a very wise rule, in our opinion!)

SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR TURNING TO THE GROUP

Chair: *A Point of Order has been raised that the term “mugwump” is an insult. The chair is in doubt, so will ask the group to decide. All those who believe that the term “mugwump” is an insult, please say “aye.”*

Members who agree that it is an insult: *Aye.*

Chair: *All those who believe that the term “mugwump” is not an insult, please say “no.”*

Members who do not agree that it is an insult: *No.*

Chair [if the ayes win the vote]: *The ayes have it and the term “mugwump” is an insult. It may not be used in our meetings.*

Chair [if the noes win the vote]: *The noes have it, the term “mugwump” is not an insult, and it may be used at our meetings.*

The results of this vote, and of Points of Order and Appeals, should be recorded in the minutes as precedent for the future.

Finally, even if you haven't adopted a specific parliamentary authority, the courts have found that the principles of common parliamentary law are applicable to boards of directors and local government bodies.

In some ways this system fails to answer our emotional need to be right, and to have our righteousness confirmed. However, it is a powerful and simple way to settle difficult questions. And if you lose such a vote, you have the comfort of knowing that you are following the best practices that have ever been established to govern the way that human beings of equal status relate to each other.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 12th edition was published in September 2020. Our previously published materials refer to the 11th edition. In substance the two editions are the same. We will be updating our articles to take account of the minor differences, textual changes, and the change in reference method. The new edition gives references by section number, not by pages.

How to be objective about subjective comments

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Inappropriate Remarks on Local Government Councils



If you serve as an elected official on a local government council or board, you should know the types of remarks that are inappropriate during discussion at a meeting. Robert's Rules of Order and the common parliamentary law it is based on require that:

- Members of a council or board must be courteous to one another.
- They must speak to the issues, and not to personalities.
- They must stay on topic, and keep their remarks relevant to the item at issue.

▶ Why are these remarks inappropriate?

A list of inappropriate remarks is given below. They are inappropriate because they are considered to be “not germane” (irrelevant) to discussion. We are offering parliamentary information here, and nothing in this paper constitutes legal advice. It is a fact, however, that courts have affirmed the right of councils and boards to define the frame of reference for their discussions, and to require elected members of the council or board to keep their remarks “germane” (relevant).

▶ List of inappropriate remarks that are not germane under Robert's Rules of Order

1. Personal remarks – remarks that pertain to an individual's appearance, background, ethnicity or other personal aspects, rather than their views on issues.
2. Insults, obscenity, vulgarity and personal attacks.
3. Inflammatory language – remarks that incite high emotions rather than addressing the issues.
4. Criticizing past actions of the group, with two exceptions:
 - a. If the group itself is discussing a past action, it is fine to criticize it.
 - b. If the council member intends to propose to “amend” (change) or to “rescind” (cancel out) the action at the end of his speech, they may criticize it during their speech.
5. Remarks that are not “germane” (relevant) to the discussion.

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► **Can members of the public make these inappropriate remarks?**

These restrictions apply to discussion by the members of the council or board themselves, and not to the public. When citizens or residents offer public comment, they have greater freedom than the elected officials. The council may set time limits for public comment, or require that public comment be limited to a subject under discussion by the council or board. However, any such restrictions must be “viewpoint neutral.” Under the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, councils may not discriminate in favor of one point of view over another.

► **Who decides that a remark is inappropriate?**

The chair of the meeting has the duty of enforcing the rules and should speak up and stop a council member who makes one of these remarks. If the chair neglects to do this, any council member can raise a Point of Order. When that happens, the chair makes a ruling as to whether the remark can be allowed in discussion.

Any two council members can challenge the chair’s ruling by appealing it. In that case, the council or board will decide, by majority vote, whether the remark can be made. There are no “parliamentary police”—the council itself interprets its own rules, based on its chosen parliamentary authority, and decides what remarks can be allowed in discussion, and what not. The council is the final authority—subject of course to any legal advice you receive from your attorney.

Note that Appeals pertaining to language and decorum may not be debated. It is just a straight up/down vote. Learn more about Point of Order and Appeal [in this blog post](#).

► **Where can I find the inappropriate remarks in Robert’s Rules of Order?**

You can find the rules about these remarks in *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition*, the only current authorized version of Robert’s Rules, on pages xxxiv, 43, and 392-393.

Thank you for your interest in running effective meetings using Robert’s Rules of Order. Visit our website, www.jurassicparliament.com, for much more information on how to do this. Or contact us at info@jurassicparliament.com or 206-542-8422. We look forward to hearing from you!

inappropriate Remarks on Local Government Councils

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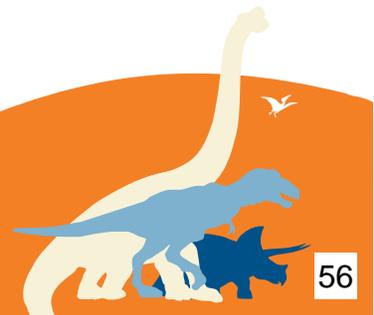
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LANGUAGE TIPS FOR MEETING MANAGEMENT

SITUATION	CHAIR CAN SAY
Call to order	<i>This meeting of the [name of organization] is called to order.</i>
Unanimous consent	<i>Without objection... If there is no objection...</i>
To begin discussion	<i>It has been moved and seconded that... Is there any discussion?</i>
If there is no second	<i>Since there is no second, the motion will not be considered.</i>
To end discussion	<i>Is there any further discussion? or Are you ready to vote?</i>
Process Point of Order	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member says, "Point of Order." 2. Chair says, "State your point." 3. Member explains issue. 4. Chair says, "The point is well taken," or "The point is not well taken."
When someone says "Point of Order" but can't explain what they mean	<i>What rule has been broken?</i>
Process Point of Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Member says, "Point of Information." 2. Chair replies, "State your question." 3. Member states question. 4. Chair can respond three ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Respond yourself. ▶ Ask someone else to respond. ▶ Say, "We'll get back to you later."
When "Point of Information" is misused to give information	<i>What information does the member need in order to decide how to vote?</i>
If someone is dominating the meeting	<i>No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once. Does anyone else wish to speak on this topic?</i>
When comments are not germane (relevant)	<i>Members will kindly keep their remarks strictly to the topic under discussion.</i>
If people are whispering	<i>Members will kindly refrain from sidebar conversations.</i>
Adjourning the meeting	<i>There being no further business, this meeting is adjourned.</i>

- Strive to be firm, fair and friendly.
- Use the "third person" to keep things neutral and lessen conflict.
- Give up on the word *but*. Always say *and*.
- Say *kindly*, not *please*, which sounds like pleading.
- Say *very well* and move on.
- Beware of "negativity bias." No frowning, no sarcasm, no eye-rolling.
- Keep an emotional connection with the members by emphasizing what we have in common.



Point of Order and Appeal are the heart of democracy



In our view, the motions Point of Order and Appeal are the heart of our democracy. They provide the mechanism to stop a dictatorial chair who is acting like a “boss.” They are essential for every local government body, nonprofit board, and any group that functions on democratic principles. Learn how to use them to ensure that the group is the final authority.

In this discussion, whenever we say “member,” we mean a voting member of the governing body.

► What is a Point of Order?

Point of Order is a motion that requires the chair to abide by the organization’s rules or parliamentary rules, or to require another member to abide by the rules. If an error isn’t obvious, the member may have to briefly explain how the rules are being broken.

This motion is made by just one member and in most circumstances the motion must be made at the time of the rule violation. When this motion is made it immediately and temporarily stops business until the Point of Order is ruled on by the chair, who will either agree with the member and enforce the rules, or may disagree with the member. Once the chair rules that the Point of Order was “well taken” (correct) or “not well taken” (incorrect), the business that was interrupted then continues (unless the chair’s ruling is immediately appealed).

► How does a member raise a Point of Order?

The member who sees a rule violation and wants the rule enforced should call out, “Point of Order!” or stand up and say, “I rise to a Point of Order.” If necessary, you may interrupt a speaker, but don’t do this lightly!



▶ **What happens next with a Point of Order?**

The chair should say, “State your point.” The member then explains the problem. Finally, the chair gives a ruling.

- If the chair agrees with the Point of Order, the chair says, “The point is well taken” and enforces the rule.
- If the chair disagrees, the chair says, “The point is not well taken,” and moves on with the business at hand.

▶ **Can a member raise a Point of Order about the chair’s actions?**

Yes. Everyone in the meeting must follow the rules. If this happens, the chair issues a ruling on their own action.

▶ **Can a member of the public or the audience who is not a member of the body raise a Point of Order?**

No. Only a member of the body itself can raise a Point of Order.

▶ **Sample script for “Point of Order”**

Member: *Chair, I rise to a Point of Order.*

Chair: *State your point.*

Member: *My esteemed colleague has used the term “cream-faced loon” in referring to the mayor of Dinoville. Under Robert’s Rules of Order, insults are inappropriate.*

Chair: *The point is well taken, and members will refrain from using this term.*

▶ **What should members do when they disagree with a ruling by the chair?**

A member can appeal the chair’s ruling (which must be seconded). This tells the chair that two members are in disagreement with the chair’s interpretation and want the body to decide it for themselves. The motion must be made immediately. If other business intervenes, then it is too late to appeal the chair’s decision or ruling.

When the Appeal is made, it immediately and temporarily stops the pending business until a decision is reached on the Appeal. After a vote is taken on the Appeal by the members, the business that was interrupted then continues.

▶ **How is an Appeal conducted?**

A member stands and without waiting to be recognized, says: “I disagree with the ruling by the chair.” The chair must recognize an Appeal, even if worded simply as, “I don’t think that’s right - I disagree with you.” The formal wording is, “I appeal from the decision of the chair.” The chair then processes the motion, which may or may not be debatable.

Read more about how to process a Motion to Appeal, including a sample script, in this [this blog post](#), “Keep the chair in line using Appeal.”

Many thanks to Beverly Przybylski, PRP, for providing the original content of this paper. Any errors are, of course, the responsibility of Jurassic Parliament.

Point of Order and Appeal are the heart of democracy

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Rights and Responsibilities of the Member



Weldon L. Merritt, PRP, CPP, has graciously authorized Jurassic Parliament to publish this listing of the rights and responsibilities of ordinary members of an organization. All citations are taken from *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition* (RONR).

Please note that neither the list of member rights nor the list of member responsibilities is intended to be exhaustive. In addition, neither the rights nor the responsibilities are necessarily absolute in every instance. For example, the right to debate may be cut off or limited by motions for the Previous Question or to Limit Debate. And, while a member should not vote on a matter of direct personal interest, under Robert's Rules no member may be compelled to abstain on such a matter. Finally, as with all matters of parliamentary procedure, any right or responsibility established by RONR or any other parliamentary authority will yield to a contrary rule in the bylaws or in any applicable procedural statute.

A MEMBER OF A DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLY HAS THE RIGHT

1. to make motions. (p. 3, l. 4)
2. to speak in debate. (p. 3, l. 4)
3. to vote. (p. 3, l. 5)
4. to abstain from voting. (p. 407, ll. 12-15)
5. to be given copies of the assembly's governing documents, special rules of order (if any), and standing rules. (p. 14, ll. 32-35, p. 15, l. 1)
6. to unilaterally modify or withdraw a motion the member has made before it has been stated by the chair. (p. 40, ll. 8-9)
7. to speak first in debate on a motion the member has made. (p. 31, ll. 1-3)
8. to insist on the enforcement of the rules of order, through the raising of a Point of Order. (p. 247, ll. 3-7)
9. to require the assembly to adhere to its agenda, program, or order of business, by a Call for the Orders of the Day. (p. 219, ll. 4-8)



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10. to require a Division of the Assembly if the member doubts the result of a voice vote or a show of hands. (p. 71, ll. 11-17)
 11. to change his or her vote up to the time the results are announced. (p. 408, ll. 21-26)
 12. to demand a ballot vote on the question of guilt and on the imposition of a penalty in a disciplinary proceeding. (p. 647, ll. 31-35, p. 648, l. 1)
 13. to not have allegations against his or her good name made except by charges brought on reasonable ground. (p. 656, ll. 1-3)
 14. to have due process in any disciplinary proceedings. (p. 656, ll. 3-6)
 15. to require Division of the Question when a single motion consists of two or more unrelated questions, each of which is capable of standing alone. (p. 270, ll. 30-35)
 16. to make a Parliamentary Inquiry or a “Request for Information” (also called “Point of Information.”) (p. 292, ll. 16-20)

A MEMBER OF A DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLY HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY

17. to become familiar with the assembly’s bylaws and procedural rules. (p. 15, ll. 1-3)
18. to obtain the floor before making a motion or speaking in debate. (p. 29, l. 11-15)
19. to refrain from criticizing a ruling of the chair unless the member has appealed from the ruling. (p. 256, ll. 4-5)
20. to refrain from debating a matter that is not pending. (p. 386, ll. 6-8)
21. to confine remarks to the merits of the pending question. (p. 392, ll. 6-10)
22. to refrain from attacking or questioning the motives of other members. (p. 392, ll. 13-17)
23. to address all remarks to or through the chair. (p. 392, ll. 28-29)
24. to refrain from referring to members by name. (p. 393, ll. 1-3)
25. to refrain from speaking adversely on a prior action not pending. (p. 393, l. 13-17)
26. to refrain from speaking against the member’s own motion. (p. 393, ll. 20-22)
27. to read from reports, quotations, or other documents only with permission of the assembly. (p. 393, ll. 30-33)
28. to be seated during any interruption by the chair. (p. 394, ll. 2-7)
29. to refrain from disturbing the assembly. (p. 394, ll. 13-16)
30. to refrain from explaining his vote during voting. (p. 408, ll. 17-19)
31. to abstain from voting on a matter of direct personal interest. (p. 407, ll. 22-25)

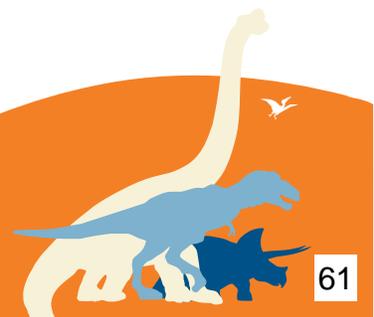
Jurassic Parliament expresses its gratitude to Weldon Merritt for allowing us to share this valuable information with our readers.

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SAMPLE DISCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Permission is granted to modify these guidelines as your organization prefers. Note that these guidelines refer to discussion within the body, not to comment by the public.

1. The chair of the meeting runs the meeting in the service of the body. The chair serves as the facilitator for the meeting and has the primary responsibility for maintaining order. The chair may take part in discussion, but may not answer each individual speaker back, nor lecture or criticize the members. When discussing substantive questions, the chair will usually speak and vote, if entitled to do so, after others have spoken.
2. Members will give their full attention to their colleagues and will put away their cell phones, unless in an emergency situation.
3. All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations. To ensure this, no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.
4. Members will seek recognition from the chair before speaking. In general, interrupting is not allowed. If necessary to enforce a guideline, the chair may interrupt a member. A member may interrupt a speaker in order to make a Point of Order, which should be done infrequently.
5. During business meetings all remarks must be addressed to the chair, and members may not speak directly to each other.
6. During work study sessions or committee meetings, members may speak in conversational mode, in which members speak without recognition and to each other. The chair will ensure that everyone has an equal chance to speak and that no one person dominates the discussion.



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7. Members may address presenters directly once recognized by the chair. Questions for presenters or staff may not become lengthy exchanges.
 8. Discussion should be focused on the issues at hand and remarks must be relevant. Members may not paraphrase other members. The body is the final authority as to whether remarks are permissible.
 9. Remarks must be courteous and respectful. Personal remarks about other members are not allowed, except for conflict of interest issues. Insults, personal attacks, vulgarity or obscenity, or inflammatory language are not allowed. Members may not criticize the body.
 10. Remarks criticizing past actions of the body are not allowed, unless the body as a whole is discussing the topic, or the member is about to introduce a motion to amend or rescind the action at the end of their speech.
 11. A member may not speak against their own motion. If discussion has changed a member's mind, the member may ask permission to withdraw the motion.
 12. If a guideline is broken or a question arises as to whether a remark is allowed under the guidelines, a member may make a Point of Order. The chair rules, subject to Appeal. The chair may also turn to the body immediately to decide the matter. A Point of Order must be made at the time of the offense.
 13. Individual speeches are limited to a maximum of 5 minutes. The body may adopt a shorter limit, or an overall time limit for a given topic, by a two-thirds vote without debate. If a speaker runs over the limit, the chair will interrupt and request that they conclude their remarks.
 14. The motion "Previous Question" or "Call the Question" requires a second and a two-thirds vote, without debate, in order to cut off discussion and vote immediately on the pending motion. Members may not call out "Question!" but must be recognized in order to make this motion.
 15. These guidelines are in effect unless superseded by law, regulation, or adopted policy. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition* is the parliamentary authority.

Sample Discussion Guidelines for Local Governments

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Sanctioning rogue board members



In general, people who serve on nonprofit boards or in local government are peaceful and compliant. But every once in a while, you get a rogue board member. What can be done? We believe that it's important for boards to be prepared to sanction rogue members when necessary.

This is an unpleasant subject. However, all human organizations, even benign institutions like hospitals, schools and retirement communities, depend on power enforcement for their survival. If a member on your board is disrupting your work, we recommend you seek allies and take action. (Read this excellent article on [“The Outlier Syndrome in Governing Bodies”](#) for perspective on rogue board members.)

Note that this article applies only to members of boards and local government bodies, not to the ordinary members of a nonprofit organization. Professional organizations with ethics requirements for their members will have separate procedures. The article also does not apply to citizens giving public comment at meetings. [See our guidelines](#) on that topic.

ESTABLISH CLEAR GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

The first and most important step is to establish clear guidelines and behavioral expectations. If you have adopted Robert's Rules of Order as your parliamentary authority, you have the basics in place. It can also be helpful to adopt more detailed discussion guidelines — [see our blog post here](#). When everybody knows what is expected and agrees on how your group will conduct its business, managing that business becomes much easier.

Just to remind, all persons present at a meeting have an obligation to obey the legitimate orders of the presiding officer (*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition, p. 645*).



YOUR RULES SHOULD INCLUDE THE POWER TO SANCTION

In drafting bylaws or procedural rules, it's easy to forget to mention sanctions. It's human nature to hope that everyone will be polite and act appropriately in all circumstances. Unfortunately that doesn't always happen. Including the power to sanction, and specific actions that may be taken, in your bylaws or procedural rules will make it easier to tackle the problem if it occurs.

WHAT KINDS OF OFFENSES SHOULD BE SANCTIONED?

Given human ingenuity, there are many actions that could be subject to sanction. Here's a starter list:

- Failing to offer courtesy and respect, using insulting or foul language in discussion
- Failing to observe the rules of discussion: interrupting others, speaking out of turn, speaking beyond the established time limits
- Violating the confidentiality of executive session
- Failing to observe ethics guidelines
- Taking actions outside the meeting which are aimed at undermining a board decision

WHAT SANCTIONS CAN BE IMPOSED?

Obviously sanctions should be considered only when there is an ongoing problem. Before embarking on the sanctions route, we recommend that a serious conversation be held with the offender, and that the individual be encouraged to change behavior without formal action by the board. Sometimes bringing the options to the offender's attention is enough to bring about change, or even resignation from office.

If that isn't effective, you may have to impose a sanction. [Craig Freshley wrote](#) that "ideal penalties inflict just the right amount of hurt in order to tilt the scales toward compliance." Options include:

- Verbal admonishment
- Letter of reprimand
- Formal motion of censure
- Removal from external or internal committees
- Being directed to leave the meeting at which the behavior occurs
- Removal from a nonprofit board if the board has the power to do this

Note that directing a member to leave the meeting at which the behavior occurs, [removing a director from a nonprofit board](#), and [removing the chair during a meeting](#) are all drastic steps. Consult with your attorney before doing this. We have more information in the linked blog posts.

WHO CAN VOTE ON SANCTIONS?

Since misbehavior is a serious matter, it's best to require that a majority of the entire board (all directors in office) vote in favor. Check your state law and conflict of interest policy to determine whether the person who is the subject of the proposed sanction may vote on the motion, or not.

From the perspective of parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules has a specific disciplinary process, described on pp. 643 to 669. If this process has been started, the member may not vote on their own case. Robert also says that if a member offends repeatedly during a meeting, to the extent that the presider has warned the offender three times and "named" the member, they may not vote (see p. 646). Robert says that in other circumstances, the member may vote on the motion proposing to sanction them.

On a nonprofit board, even if you don't follow the formal disciplinary process, you may want to establish a special or select committee to consider the behavior and recommend action to the board. In a local government body, you will of course review state law and your options before moving ahead.

SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR OFFENSES DURING A MEETING

Member A: *Member B has repeatedly violated our rules of procedure and persists in using insulting language towards his colleagues and the public. I move that Member B be issued a verbal admonishment and directed to cease his inappropriate behavior.*

Member C: *Second!*

Chair: *It has been moved and seconded that Member B be issued a verbal admonishment and directed to cease his inappropriate behavior. Is there any discussion?*

Member A: *This has just gone on too long! At every meeting Member B calls his colleagues "bozos" and describes the public as "the great unwashed." It's impossible to get any work done with all the high emotion around here.*

Member B: *You people are all too sensitive. I'm just using humor to lighten things up a bit. I think this motion is a bunch of malarkey.*

Member D: *Well, I agree with the motion. I'm sick and tired of all this nonsense.*

Chair: *Is there any further discussion? [pause] Hearing none, we'll take the vote. All those in favor of the motion to issue a verbal admonishment to Member B and direct him to cease his inappropriate behavior, please say "aye."*

Members A, C, D and Chair: *Aye!*

Chair: *All those opposed, please say "no."*

Member B: *No!*

Chair: *The ayes have it and the motion passes. Member B, you are hereby admonished for your inappropriate and disruptive use of language during our meetings. Kindly cease such actions immediately and abide by our guidelines.*

Member B: *Well, I have a lot more to say about that, Chair.*

Chair interrupts: *The motion has been approved and no further discussion is in order. The next business in order is...*

Sanctioning rogue board members.

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Successful staff interaction in local government meetings



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Staff interaction in local government meetings can be effective or disastrous. Here are a few suggestions on how to structure successful staff interaction.

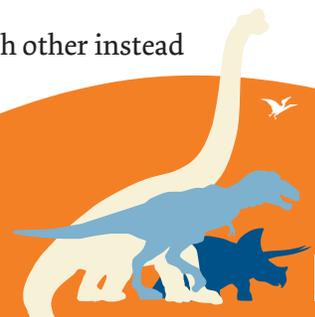
▶ NOT ENOUGH STAFF INTERACTION

Sometimes we have observed staff who are too cautious at their council or committee meetings. They see themselves in a subordinate position and feel that their comments are welcome only when requested.

We believe that in a healthy jurisdiction, staff members are empowered to speak up on occasion. For example:

- Elected or appointed officials are about to do something illegal, like making a decision in an executive session that must be made openly.
- Councilmembers are not aware of information relevant to their discussion, or past actions that have an immediate bearing on the course of action they are considering.
- Councilmembers are breaking their own guidelines by speaking directly to each other instead of addressing remarks to the chair.

➡ over



You can make this permission formal by adopting a special rule of order that authorizes staff to make a Point of Order. Alternately, you can have an informal understanding with your staff that they should speak up in these circumstances. Read about [Point of Order here](#) and [special rules of order here](#). In any case, it is critical that the chair and the councilmembers display the emotional maturity to accept comments from staff, and not punish them for speaking up.

▶ **TOO MUCH STAFF INTERACTION**

We've observed the opposite problem too. Sometimes staff speak up whenever they wish, and argue with the councilmembers as if they were on an equal footing. Staff must respect the fact that they support the local government officials but are not the decision-makers. This requires some delicacy on their part and a healthy humility about their role. Another problem can occur when a single councilmember has a whole series of questions for a staff member, and the two people engage in a back-and-forth conversation that basically hijacks the meeting. This should not happen.

▶ **HOW TO STRUCTURE STAFF INTERACTION?**

We recommend this structure for staff interaction:

1. Staff presents the proposed action in writing and explains it.
2. Members of the body offer any questions to the staff, with each person having the opportunity to ask one or two questions in turn, for as many rounds as are necessary.
3. Public comment is taken (if that is your process).
4. The motion is moved and seconded.
5. Councilmembers discuss the motion. During discussion, they may ask the chair for permission to address a further question to a staff member if they feel the need.
6. This is the time to offer any amendments if desired.
7. After discussion, the council or committee votes on the motion.

▶ **ONE MORE POINT ABOUT STAFF INTERACTION**

It's important to remember that the official/staff member relationship is an unequal and hierarchical one. Local government officials and staff members stand in a very different relationship to their leaders. An elected or appointed body is autonomous, within the limits of law and regulation. Staff members are employees, dependent on their employer, who is responsible for their performance.

It is crucial for officials and citizen volunteers to remember this distinction. They must respect the lines of authority and the employment conditions prevailing in their jurisdiction. Council and commission members must always speak with courtesy to staff, and not criticize or berate them in public. If they have concerns, they must raise them in the proper channels. For example, a councilmember with an issue might say to the city manager, "Please set up a time to meet with me so we can follow up on this matter."

Successful staff interaction in local government meetings

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Suspend the Rules with extreme caution



By Ann G. Macfarlane, Professional Registered Parliamentarian

The motion to Suspend the Rules is a trap for the unwary. Be careful in using this motion and avoid doing things that may get you into big trouble.

David Baker, Mayor of Kenmore, Washington, once said to me, “The rule is there for a reason. When you suspend the rule, you give up on the reason, and you don’t know what may happen as a result.” Experience in meetings has led him to recommend that city councils avoid the use of Suspend the Rules if at all possible. Nonprofit boards should also be very cautious.

RULES YOU CAN'T SUSPEND

You can't use this motion to:

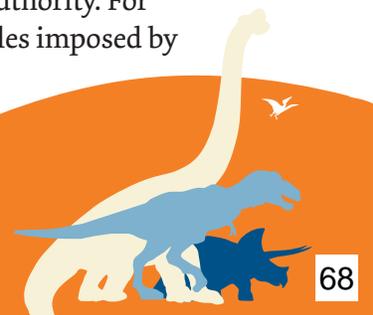
1. Suspend state law or a higher authority
2. Suspend all of Robert's Rules
3. Suspend your constitution or bylaws (with 2 exceptions)
4. Suspend the fundamental principles of parliamentary procedure
5. Suspend the rights of an individual member
6. Suspend a rule pertaining to something outside the meeting itself

Let's examine these, and then talk about what you CAN do with Suspend the Rules.

1. You can't suspend state law or a higher authority

Your organization is governed by the laws of your state, if you are a local government, or the state in which you are incorporated, if you are a nonprofit organization. Procedural rules established by state law cannot be suspended. For example, if your state law says that a majority of the board directors present must vote in favor for a motion to pass, you can't suspend that rule.

The principle applies more broadly. You can't suspend rules established by a higher authority. For example, if you are a state chapter of a professional association, you can't suspend rules imposed by your national organization.



If your organization suspends the rules and takes action that contravenes such provisions, the action is null and void.

2. You can't suspend all of Robert's Rules

We sometimes hear of cases where a person says, "Let's suspend all of Robert's Rules!" No, no and no again. This cannot be done. The motion Suspend the Rules is not an invitation to ignore the parameters set by your organization and do whatever you want.

3. You can't suspend your constitution or bylaws (with 2 exceptions)

Constitution and bylaws cannot be suspended, no matter how many people want to do it, or how inconvenient the provision is.

A reader writes describing how the club bylaws required that officers should be employed full-time in the profession. The president was due to retire and wanted to continue serving as president until her term ended. We advised her that the club could not suspend the bylaws in order to do this. They would have to amend the bylaws to achieve this purpose.

There are two exceptions:

- If a particular rule in the bylaws provides for its own suspension, then it may be suspended.
- If an item in the bylaws is "in the nature of a rule of order," then it may be suspended. C. Alan Jennings, PRP, says that this exception is narrow. The only rules it allows to be suspended are:
 - changes to an order of business,
 - permitting someone other than the president to preside, or
 - permitting someone other than the secretary to take the minutes.

This happened to me when a public hospital board was facing a set of 32 bylaws amendments. The president preferred to have the parliamentarian run that portion of the meeting in the interest of efficiency. The board voted by 4-1 to suspend the rules and allow the parliamentarian to preside. (I'm happy to report that we did work our way through all of the amendments in a single evening—though it was late when we finished!)

4. You can't suspend fundamental principles

There are certain fundamental principles of parliamentary procedure that can't be suspended.

- A school board was evenly divided on a question and asked the superintendent to cast the deciding vote. Non-members cannot vote.
- A society wanted to take up two motions at once. One thing must be considered at a time.
- The nonprofit board meeting had started with a quorum, but several people had to leave so the quorum was lost. The board voted to suspend the rules and take action anyway. Quorum requirements cannot be suspended.
- You can't suspend notice requirements, rules protecting absentees, rule protecting a minority, or rules of decorum.
- Voting protocols cannot be suspended. If your bylaws require a ballot vote, but there's only one candidate, you can't suspend that rule and elect the candidate by acclamation.

5. You can't suspend the rights of an individual member

- If a member has failed to pay their dues, they can't be prohibited from voting.
- If a board member has missed every meeting, they can't be barred from attending the annual meeting.

Exceptions: Sometimes bylaws allow for such penalties. And if a member is under disciplinary proceedings, the rules are different.

6. You can't suspend a rule pertaining to something outside the meeting itself

The standing rules state that the board of directors may authorize the organization to make grants of up to \$500 to charitable organizations that qualify. A director is gung ho to give \$1000 to the local Rotary. The rules can't be suspended to do this.

WHEN CAN YOU SUSPEND THE RULES?

In some situations it is fine to suspend the rules. A member must be recognized to make this motion, it needs a second, it cannot be debated or amended, and it usually takes a two-thirds vote. The usual form of the motion is that the member moves "to suspend the rules in order to do [whatever action is desired]."

If your council has a 30-minute limit for public comment, a member could move to suspend the rules to give 15 minutes more, so citizens who are waiting can speak. If the board needs a few minutes to finish up a pending item, it could suspend the rules to extend the meeting.

Another significant use of Suspend the Rules can occur when the person running the meeting refuses to follow Robert's Rules, abuses their power, or acts in an arbitrary manner. The group may temporarily replace the chair, for that meeting only, with another presiding officer expected to act in accord with the will of the assembly. Read our blog post, "[Removing the chair during a meeting](#)," for more on this issue.

SAMPLE SCRIPT TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Member A: *I move to suspend the rules in order to extend our meeting time until 10:30 pm.*

Member B: *Second!*

Chair: *It has been moved and seconded that we suspend the rules in order to extend our meeting time until 10:30 pm. This motion cannot be debated and takes a two-thirds vote. All those in favor, please raise your right hand.*

Members in favor: *[raise right hand]*

Chair: *Thank you, hands down. All those opposed, please raise your right hand.*

Members opposed: *[raise right hand]*

Chair: *Thank you, hands down. There are two-thirds in favor and our meeting is extended until 10:30 pm, OR there are not two-thirds in favor and we will adjourn at the usual time.*

Note that a two-thirds vote should not be taken by voice. [Read our blog entry on this here.](#)

USE UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Often everyone is in agreement with a proposal to suspend the rules. If this is the case, the chair can use unanimous consent to move ahead. Read about this very useful technique in our [blog post here](#).

AVOID THIS LANGUAGE IN CITY COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE

We sometimes see language like this in city council rules of procedure:

Any provision of these rules may be temporarily suspended by a two-thirds vote of the council, except when suspension would conflict with state law or city ordinance.

This seems to us to be too broad. It could result in problematic actions. We recommend something along these lines:

The council may vote to suspend the rules as authorized in Robert's Rules of Order, except when such suspension would conflict with state law or city ordinance.

An argument is sometimes made that if a council has adopted Robert's Rules of Order, there is no need to refer to Robert specifically in the rules of procedure. We have found that since the book is 800+ pages long, it is useful to include individual points that are less familiar to readers within the rules of procedure themselves. The rules of procedure are more likely to be read.

USE SUSPEND THE RULES APPROPRIATELY

A political party had a rule that no endorsements could be made at convention. However, they frequently suspended the rules to allow such endorsements. Don't do this! If your group uses this motion frequently, consider amending your bylaws or standing rules as a better way to achieve your goals and keep your actions congruent with your stated purposes.

LEARN MORE ON SUSPEND THE RULES

We've tried to offer clear examples here, but sometimes Suspend the Rules gets into murky waters. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition*, covers the motion Suspend the Rules on pp. 260 to 266. You may find it useful to study these pages, see more examples, and learn more about the nuances of this challenging motion.

Suspend the Rules with extreme caution.

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Tips for government bodies meeting remotely



The big moment is here. You've done your due diligence by:

- reviewing any emergency declarations affecting local government meetings in your state,
- studying how your body can proceed in light of the Coronavirus/COVID-19 emergency,
- planning with your staff,
- consulting your attorney, and
- choosing an online platform.

You're all set to launch your first totally remote meeting. How are you going to make it a win? This article offers guidelines, tools and tips to conduct a remote local government meeting with success.

- 1) **Check your system to make sure that everyone can hear, and be heard, throughout the meeting.** This is the most fundamental principle of remote meetings. It is essential. You'll be glad you scheduled a test run when you see how many things can go awry.
- 2) **Comply with notice requirements.** It should go without saying, but even in an emergency, local government bodies must follow legal requirements on notice. Don't let urgency distract you from correct procedure.
- 3) **Decide how the public will attend or observe your meeting.** This has to be part of your planning. Usually you must provide telephone access at a minimum, and may provide video access as well. Some councils are streaming their meetings on YouTube.



- 4) **Decide how you're going to handle public comment.** While not every state requires public comment, for most local governments, this is an established and essential feature of their meetings. There's a lot of creativity going on! Some bodies are urging the public to send comment in writing, others are allowing people to sign up ahead of time to dial in and speak, and some are even accepting voicemails.
- 5) **Prepare a lean and compliant agenda.** It's not possible to process as much business remotely as in person. Whenever you're meeting remotely, you want to be thoughtful in choosing what to cover. If your state has restricted the type of business allowable in this crisis, of course you will abide by that limitation.
- 6) **Add times to your agenda.** Listing the anticipated start and end times for each item will help keep everyone on track. Jurassic Parliament recommends adding "all times approximate" so you have flexibility if discussion runs over—as of course it will!
- 7) **Prepare your room for the meeting.** Everyone needs to put some thought into where they will be during the meeting. Choose as professional-looking a room as you can arrange. Dress appropriately and comfortably. Check that you have adequate lighting. Test out your microphone and camera. Minimize background noise. You don't want to have a barking dog, the front doorbell, or your cell phone intrude into the meeting. Don't chew gum on camera!
- 8) **Prepare yourself for the meeting.** It's essential to invest in the meeting ahead of time. Review the materials, study the agenda, marshal your thoughts in advance. Dress comfortably and appropriately. Plan to concentrate on the meeting and refrain from checking your email, no matter how tedious it may feel. As William Vanderbloemen says, "Virtual meetings require vigilant and singular attention—almost more focus than if you were in person."
- 9) **The chair must control the meeting.** As explained [throughout Jurassic Parliament's materials](#), the chair (mayor, council president, planning commission chair, etc.) runs the meeting as the servant of the group, and the facilitator. Once the group has adopted rules and the agenda, the chair has the responsibility of making sure that the meeting runs accordingly. This means that the chair has to be a "benevolent dictator." It isn't easy to do this! However, you will serve your organization well when you do.
- 10) **No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.** This is a fundamental guideline that ensures fairness in discussion. It's so different from our ordinary, conversational style of discussion! Yet it is critical. In order to ensure this, members must "seek recognition" before speaking. In a video meeting, you can use the "raise hand" feature.
- 11) **Use the round robin.** To use this method, the chair prepares a "speaking chart" listing everyone's name, and then calls on everyone in turn. People may pass, and speak at the end of the round. Jurassic Parliament recommends that the chair speak last (this is our

suggestion and does not come from Robert's Rules of Order). If a second round is necessary, that's fine. You can learn more about the round robin [in this article](#). Here's a sample of a speaking chart:

SPEAKING CHART

Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	etc.
Garcia							
Jackson							
Juma							
Lee							
Patel							
Smith							
Young							

A speaking chart is very helpful in a hybrid meeting, where some members are there in person and some are on the telephone. It's all too easy to forget to call on the people on the phone.

- 12) **No one can dominate the discussion.** If your members decline to use the Round Robin, it's still essential to prevent anyone trampling on the rights of others. The chair must be strict in recognizing people. Everyone must state their name before speaking. Again, no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.
- 13) **Don't allow interruptions.** In everyday life we interrupt each other all the time, but it's forbidden in Robert's Rules. Robert even says that the chair may not interrupt a member just because the chair knows more about a topic than the member! The exception is when an important rule is being broken, so the chair intervenes, or a member makes a Point of Order.
- 14) **Don't allow inappropriate remarks.** Certain kinds of remarks are inappropriate in your meetings because they are not germane (relevant). Read [Inappropriate remarks on local government councils](#). The chair must stop them when they occur, or a member may raise a Point of Order. Note that these requirements for good decorum apply to the members of the body when they are in a meeting, but do not apply to the public giving [public comment](#).
- 15) **Members may use Point of Order and Appeal if they disagree with the chair's decision.** When the chair makes a ruling or a decision that seems wrong to a member, they can raise a Point of Order, which can be Appealed. In Jurassic Parliament's view, these two motions are critical to the democratic process, as explained in our article, [Point of Order and Appeal are the heart of democracy](#).

- 16) **Use a voting chart.** Likely your clerk already has this chart in the tool kit, but just in case here is a sample.

VOTING CHART

MOTION	#1			#2			etc.
	Aye	No	Abstain	Aye	No	Abstain	
Garcia							
Jackson							
Juma							
Lee							
Patel							
Smith							
Young							

Well, it's quite a list, but with energy, attention, and good will, you can run effective remote meetings that will continue your vital service to our communities. Let me know how these ideas work for you!

Tips for government bodies meeting remotely

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CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC MEETINGS USING PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AND ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER IN WASHINGTON STATE



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This guide has been prepared to assist citizens and residents who want to know the expectations for public meetings under parliamentary procedure and Robert's Rules of Order in Washington State. We use the example of a city council; these questions are also relevant to other local government bodies such as county commissions, school boards, special districts, etc. We are parliamentarians and nothing in this guide constitutes legal advice.

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INTRODUCTION

This material is general and educational in nature. The answers are based on *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition* (abbreviated RONR) and our own experience. The National Association of Parliamentarians (parliamentarians.org) and the American Institute of Parliamentarians (aipparl.org) provide extensive information on parliamentary procedure. For additional information on many of these questions, MRSC (Municipal Research and Services Center) has valuable reference materials available for free download (mrsc.org).

In this guide we talk about “mayor-council” cities, in which the mayor is elected by the people, and “council-manager” cities, in which the city council elects the mayor from among its own members. Charter cities are governed by the contents of their charter and state law. Throughout this guide, the term “mayor” means “presiding officer” (the person in charge of running the meeting).

In every state, state law governs the actions of local government. Many states give access to their relevant statutes online. The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) is mentioned for reference purposes only. Nothing in this guide constitutes legal advice. Consult your attorney or another qualified authority if you have questions about how these general principles apply in a specific situation.

PRP	Professional Registered Parliamentarian (NAP)
CP	Certified Parliamentarian (AIP)
CPP	Certified Professional Parliamentarian (AIP)
CP-T	Certified Parliamentarian-Teacher (AIP)
CPP-T	Certified Professional Parliamentarian-Teacher (AIP)

Excerpts from the Revised Code of Washington (RCW):

RCW 35A.12.100 (Mayor-council) The mayor shall preside over all meetings of the city council, when present, but shall have a vote only in the case of a tie in the votes of the councilmembers with respect to matters other than the passage of any ordinance, grant, or revocation of franchise or license, or any resolution for the payment of money.

RCW 35A.13.030 (Council-manager) The chair of the council shall have the title of mayor and shall preside at meetings of the council.

RCW 35A.12.120 The council shall determine its own rules and order of business, and may establish rules for the conduct of council meetings and maintenance of order. (Note: This applies to both mayor-council and council-manager cities.)

I. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

I thought state law governed the conduct of city council meetings. Why do mayors and members of city councils have to follow parliamentary procedure?

Under Washington State law, councils determine their own rules:

RCW 35A.12.120 “The council shall determine its own rules and order of business, and may establish rules for the conduct of council meetings and the maintenance of order.”

The set of ordinary and customary rules that councils usually choose for their meetings is “parliamentary procedure.” These customs, rules and guidelines have evolved over the last 500 years to govern the conduct of public meetings. They form part of the common law. The courts have found that public bodies must follow parliamentary principles. In some states, the requirement to follow parliamentary principles is specifically included in state law.

If a council hasn’t adopted Robert’s Rules of Order, can it run its meetings the way it likes?

No. Robert’s Rules of Order is one widely-used authority summing up the general understanding of parliamentary procedure. There are other authorities as well. Even if a council has not adopted any authority, it is still bound by parliamentary principles as part of the common law.

What does the principle of majority rule mean?

The principle of majority rule means that the decision of a majority of the members of the body (more than half of those present and voting) is the decision of the entire council. The minority must make it their own, or at a minimum, may not take actions to prevent the council from carrying out its decision.

What is a quorum?

A quorum is the minimum number of voting members who must be present for business to be done. Unless otherwise specified, it is a majority of the members then in office. In a mayor-council city, the mayor is not counted towards the quorum. RONR pp. 345-351

Can a council suspend all of Robert’s Rules?

No. RONR p. 263-265

How can a rule be suspended?

If a member wishes to suspend a rule, for instance, to allow a member of the public to speak longer than the allotted time, he says, “I move to suspend the rules in order to allow the citizen to complete his remarks.” This motion needs a second and cannot be debated. It usually takes a two-thirds vote to pass. The specific rule being suspended is not mentioned, only the purpose. Some rules cannot be suspended. RONR pp. 260-267

II. PRESIDING

Who is in charge of running a public meeting, such as a city council, school board or special district meeting?

For each body, there is a specific individual who has authority to run the meeting, either by election or appointment. This person’s personal authority is subject to state law and regulations, any bylaws or guidelines adopted by the body, and the will of the body itself. Depending on the body, this individual will have the title of mayor, president, chair, etc. In a city council, the mayor has the duty of running the meeting.

Under the Revised Code of Washington, a mayor elected by the people is supposed to run the meeting. Doesn't he have the right to run it the way he likes?

No. The mayor in a mayor-council must follow the principles outlined in parliamentary procedure. During the meeting, he is the servant of the group, and the group is the final authority. The group's final authority is exercised by using the motion to appeal.

III. MAYOR

What are the obligations of the mayor during a meeting?

The mayor has the following duties. RONR pp. 449-450

Open meeting	To open the meeting at the appointed time by taking the chair (sitting in the seat reserved for the presiding officer), after finding that a quorum is present, and calling the meeting to order.
Announce next activity	To announce in proper sequence the next activity before the council in accordance with the prescribed order of business.
Recognize members	To recognize council members who are entitled to the floor (who have the exclusive right to be heard at that time).
State questions and put to vote	To state and put to vote all questions that legitimately come before the council as motions or that otherwise arise in the course of proceedings, and to announce the result of each vote; or, if a motion that is not in order is made, to rule it out of order.
Refuse to recognize dilatory motions	To protect the council from obviously dilatory (recurrent time-wasting or obstructive) motions by refusing to recognize them.
Enforce order and decorum	To enforce the rules relating to debate and those relating to order and decorum within the council.
Expedite business	To expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of council members and the council rules.
Decide all questions of order	To decide all questions of order subject to appeal — unless, when in doubt, the mayor prefers initially to submit such a question to the council for decision.
Respond to inquiries	To respond to inquiries of council members relating to parliamentary procedure or factual information bearing on the business of the council.
Authenticate documents	To authenticate by his signature, when necessary, all acts, orders and proceedings of the council.
Close meeting	To declare the meeting adjourned when the council so votes or — where applicable — at the time prescribed in the agenda, or at any time in the event of a sudden emergency affecting the safety of those present.

Is the mayor a member of the city council?

In Washington State, the mayor of a council-manager city is a member of the city council, but the mayor of a mayor-council city is not.

What right does the mayor have to speak at a city council meeting?

- The mayor must, of course, speak about procedural matters in order to carry out the duties outlined above.

- The mayor in a council-manager city has the same right to speak about issues facing the council as any other council member.
- RONR has special rules for small boards (up to about 12 members). In a mayor-council city with a small council, the elected mayor customarily has a right to speak on matters pending before the council, even though technically not a member. In a larger council, if the elected mayor wishes to speak on substance, he should step down from the chair in order to participate in debate, while another who has not and will not speak on the matter presides, resuming it only when the item has been dealt with. RONR pp. 394-395.

Can the council remove the mayor as presiding officer during a city council meeting and appoint someone else in his place?

This is primarily a legal and not a parliamentary question.

IV. MEETING NOTICES AND AGENDA

Who authorizes the notice of a special meeting?

Issuing notices of a meeting is part of the administrative duties of the mayor. The mayor is bound to issue notices of special meetings that are called according to state law and council rules.

Who decides what goes on the agenda of a public meeting?

The mayor prepares the draft agenda of a public meeting, but the final content of the agenda is subject to the vote of the council. RONR p. 372-373

V. DEBATING

Who decides who may speak in debate and in what order?

The mayor recognizes council members (gives them permission to debate) in accord with the rules of parliamentary procedure. For example:

- The person who makes a motion has the right to debate first if he wishes to. RONR p. 379
- No one may debate a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once. RONR pp. 379, 388-389
- The mayor may not refuse to recognize council members based on personal preference. RONR pp. 376-377

May council members interrupt each other or the mayor?

No. Interrupting is forbidden under RONR. An exception is that a council member may interrupt to raise a “point of order” if a procedural rule is being broken that needs immediate attention. RONR pp. 383-385

May the mayor interrupt a debater?

No. RONR says specifically that the chair may not interrupt a debater except for a point of order, so long as no council rules are broken. The mayor may not interrupt even if he knows more about a given subject than the debater. RONR pp. 43-44

May the council members debate directly to each other?

It depends. In a large council, council members must address all remarks to the chair. In a small council (up to about 12 members) council members may speak directly to each other. However, the rule that no one may

debate a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once still applies. Allowing members to debate to each other often leads to one-on-one conversations that violate this rule. RONR p. 392; pp. 487-488

What kinds of remarks are forbidden at city council meetings?

There are certain types of unacceptable remark under RONR. Council members may not make such remarks, which are considered to be irrelevant (not germane) to debate. (Members of the public are not bound by these restrictions.) RONR pp. 392-393

- Personal remarks (remarks about a person's individual qualities, rather than his views)
- Insulting language, personal attacks, profanity and vulgarity
- Inflammatory remarks
- Criticizing a past action of the group, unless the topic is under discussion by the group as a whole, or the member plans to introduce a motion to amend or rescind the action at the end of his speech.
- Remarks that are not germane (relevant) to the topic under discussion.

Who decides whether a remark is forbidden under these rules?

The mayor issues a ruling about improper remarks, subject to appeal. A council member may also object to an improper remark.

May the council invite a member of the public to speak at a public meeting?

Yes. The council may invite anyone it chooses to address it.

VI. VOTING

How many votes does it take to pass a motion or resolution?

In most cases it takes a majority vote to pass a motion or resolution. RONR pp. 400-429

What is a majority vote?

This is a vote in which more than half of the members who cast a vote vote in favor of the motion:

2 or 3 members vote	2 in favor
4 or 5 members vote	3 in favor
6 or 7 members vote	4 in favor
8 or 9 members vote	5 in favor

What is a two-thirds vote?

This is a vote in which at least two-thirds of the members who cast a vote vote in favor of the motion:

2 or 3 members vote	2 in favor
4 members	3 in favor
5 or 6 members vote	4 in favor
7 members vote	5 in favor
8 or 9 members vote	6 in favor

Who decides what the outcome of a vote is?

The mayor announces the result of a vote and has a special obligation to verify it beyond reasonable doubt. RONR p. 48

If the mayor announces the result of a vote, and it seems to a council member that he made an error, what should the council member do?

If the vote was taken by voice, the council member should call out “division.” The mayor must then retake the vote by raising hands or asking council members to stand. At the request of any council member, the vote must be taken by roll call. RONR p. 52

Can the mayor vote at council meetings?

In a council-manager city, the mayor may vote.

In a mayor-council city, the mayor ordinarily has no vote. However, the mayor may vote in one instance: to break a tie in a matter that is NOT the passage of an ordinance, grant, or revocation of franchise or license, or any resolution for the payment of money.

If the council passes a resolution or motion, can the mayor veto it?

Mayors in mayor-council code and second class cities can veto ordinances passed by the council, but such a veto may be overridden by the vote of a majority of all council members plus one more vote. The mayor does not have the power to veto other actions of the council. Mayors in towns do not have a veto power. In a council-manager city, mayors also do not have a veto power. The veto power of mayors in the ten first class cities are detailed in their city charters.

VII. POINT OF ORDER AND APPEAL

What should a council member do when someone breaks one of the rules?

A council member can make a point of order. This is a motion that requires another council member, or the chair, to abide by the council’s rules or parliamentary rules. If an error isn’t obvious, the council member may have to briefly explain how the rules are being broken.

This motion is made by just one council member and in most circumstances the motion must be made at the time of the rule violation. When this motion is made it immediately and temporarily stops business until the point is ruled on by the chair, who will either agree with the council member and enforce the rule, or may disagree with the council member. Once the chair rules that the point of order was well taken (correct) or not well taken (incorrect), the business that was interrupted then continues (unless the chair’s ruling is immediately appealed). RONR p. 247, 255

How does a council member raise a point of order?

The council member who sees a rule violation and wants the rule enforced should stand up, interrupt the chair or a speaker if necessary, and without waiting to be recognized, call out, “Point of order!” or “I rise to a point of order.” RONR p. 253

Can a council member raise a point of order about the chair’s actions?

Yes. Everyone in the meeting must follow the rules. If this happens, the chair issues a ruling on his own action.

Can a member of the public raise a point of order?

No. Only a council member can raise a point of order.

What should council members do when they disagree with a ruling by the mayor?

A council member can appeal the chair's ruling, which then tells the chair that the council member is in disagreement with the chair's interpretation and that he wants the council to decide it for themselves. The appeal must be made immediately. If other business intervenes, then it is too late to appeal the chair's decision or ruling.

When the motion is made, it immediately and temporarily stops the pending business until a decision is reached on the appeal. After a vote is taken on the appeal by the council members, the business that was interrupted then continues. RONR pp. 255-56

How is an appeal conducted?

A council member stands and without waiting to be recognized says: "I disagree with the ruling by the chair." The chair should recognize an appeal, even if worded simply as, "I don't think that's right – I disagree with you." The formal wording is, "I appeal from the decision of the chair." The chair then processes the motion. RONR p. 259

Can appeals be debated?

Appeals pertaining to language and decorum may not be debated. In general, other appeals can be debated. There is a special process for debating an appeal. RONR p. 257

Are there rulings that cannot be appealed?

Yes. A point of order that was raised while an appeal is pending cannot be appealed, nor can a ruling by the chair for which there cannot possibly be two reasonable opinions. RONR p. 256

What should the council members do if the mayor ignores an appeal?

This is a highly significant violation of parliamentary procedure which should never happen. The council member may stand and take the vote himself. Education is critical so that all involved understand how this process works. Consult an attorney if legal action is needed. RONR p. 651

VIII. ADJOURNMENT AND ORDERING A MEMBER TO LEAVE THE MEETING

May the mayor adjourn the meeting when he chooses?

No. The mayor may adjourn the meeting on his own initiative only in two instances:

- If the council has come to the end of its agenda and there is no further business.
- If a riot or other dangerous situation has arisen. RONR p. 233-242

May the members adjourn the meeting when they choose?

Yes. When the council votes in favor of adjournment, the meeting ends, even if there is unfinished business. This motion cannot be debated and requires a majority vote.

May the mayor order a member of a city council to leave the meeting?

No.

May the council members order one of their own members to leave the meeting?

Yes. In situations where disruption or disorderly conduct by a council member warrants it, the other members may direct that he leave the meeting. Usually warnings are given first. The removal can be ordered only for a single meeting, not for future meetings. It is best to have adopted policies in place that state when and how such an event might occur. RONR pp. 643-653

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

What is the purpose of the public comment period at public meetings?

The purpose of the public comment period at public meetings is for the public to inform the council about their views on matters before the council. It is not intended for debate and discussion with the public. When back-and-forth exchanges occur, it can become a challenge to describe the council's position correctly and accurately, and substantial confusion may result.

Councils should have other channels in place to answer questions, address concerns, and dialogue with the public—community forums, surveys, personal discussions, a form on the website to contact council members or staff, etc.

May the council place limits on the public comment period?

Yes. The council may place reasonable limits on when public comment is taken, how long people may speak, and how long the public comment period will be; the council may also require that the subject matter pertain to the council's work. All such rules must be “viewpoint-neutral,” that is, they may not favor one opinion over another.

Should the public in attendance clap, boo, hiss or speak over other people during the meeting?

No. This should never happen. Expressions of opinion of this type, whether positive or negative, are intimidating to others and may lead to the suppression of free speech. They also impede the council from doing its business.

May the mayor or members encourage the crowd to clap, boo, hiss or speak over other people during the meeting?

No.

What should the mayor and council do if the public becomes rowdy and unruly during a meeting?

The mayor should explain firmly to the public that they have an obligation to allow the council to do its business. In cases of severe disruption, the council may order the room cleared, or may move to another location (see RCW 42.30.050). Advice from the attorney is helpful in such cases.

Can the mayor order a member of the public to leave the meeting?

State and Federal law and court cases pertaining to open meetings and free speech govern this question.

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MOTIONS CHARTS

	Rank	Second?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote?
PRIVILEGED MOTIONS					
Fix time to which to adjourn	13	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Adjourn	12	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	11	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Raise a question of privilege	10	No	No	No	Chair decides
Call for orders of the day	9	No	No	No	At request of one member
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS					
Table	8	Yes	No	No	Majority
Previous question or call the question*	7	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
Limit or extend limits of debate	6	Yes	No	Yes	Two-thirds
Postpone to a certain time	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to committee	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Secondary amendment		Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Primary amendment		Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amendment*	3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone indefinitely	2	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
MAIN MOTION					
Main motion	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

* Amendment and previous question may be applied to motions higher than themselves.

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS				
	Second?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote?
Request for information	No	No	No	Chair responds
Point of order	No	No	No	Chair rules
Appeal	Yes	It depends	No	Negative

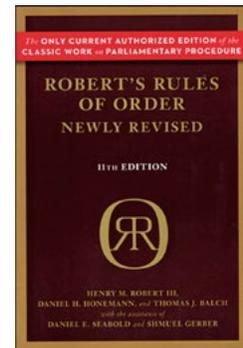
BRING-BACK MOTIONS				
	Second?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote?
Reconsider	Yes	It depends	No	Majority
Rescind	Yes	Yes	Yes	§
Amend something previously adopted	Yes	Yes	Yes	§
Take from table	Yes	No	No	Majority

§ Majority with previous notice, two-thirds without notice, or majority of entire membership

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Precedence of motions in Robert's Rules of Order



People are sometimes confused about precedence of motions in Robert's Rules of Order. In essence it is rather simple. The principle is that **each motion has a number or rank**. When motions are pending, motions with a higher rank may be made, but motions with a lower rank are out of order (not allowed). **The main motion has the lowest rank**. It can be made only if there is no other motion pending (being discussed).

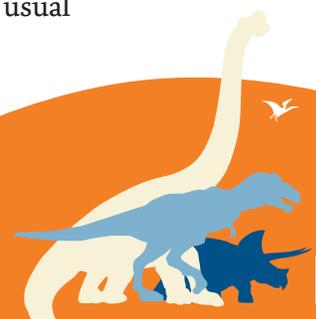
There are **13 motions with ranks**. "Point of Order" and "Request for Information" do not have ranks, but are dealt with immediately. Contrariwise, the "bring back" motions (Reconsider, Rescind, Amend Something Previously Adopted) have no rank and can only be made, in general, if there is no other business on the table, no motions under consideration. There are other motions as well, but the ranking motions are the key ones to learn about.

The real skinny about precedence of motions in Robert's Rules of Order

The truth about this system is that **it isn't difficult, it's just a little strange**. Someone who takes the time to learn about these ranks, and to apply them, will have greater success in dealing with board or council matters. Someone who yields to internal bafflement and avoids the entire subject will have less.

If you use another parliamentary authority, it will likely have the same order of ranks, since the system has been established for a long time as part of common parliamentary law and the system of [parliamentary procedure](#).

Note also that the word is **pronounced "pree-SEE-dence,"** rather different from our usual pronunciation of "PREH-sih-dence."



We invite you to download our “Motions Chart,” a PDF file that gives the key information on this topic in concise form. You can learn more about the most commonly used motions in our book, [Mastering Council Meetings](#).

[Download Motions Chart](#)

Example of precedence of motions in action

PROPOSE AN ACTION

If a member wants the organization to do something, he proposes a **Main Motion**. For example,

“I move that we hold an Arts Festival this summer.”

If another member wants to talk about this idea, that person says “Second!” The chair then says,

“It has been moved and seconded that we hold an Arts Festival next summer. Is there any discussion?”

The group then discusses the Main Motion. The person who made the Main Motion has the right to speak first, if he chooses.

This is the Main Motion, a proposal for action.

(If no one seconds the Main Motion, the chair says, “There is no second, so the motion will not be considered,” and moves immediately to the next item of business.)

MOVE TO CHANGE THE PROPOSAL

Suppose that during discussion, one member realizes that this summer is too soon. She can move to **Amend the Main Motion**. This is a motion that suggests changing the Main Motion to improve it. She would say,

“I move that we amend the main motion by striking the words ‘this summer’ and inserting the words ‘next summer.’”

If another member wants to talk about this amendment, she says “Second!” The chair then says:

“It has been moved and seconded that we amend the motion by striking the words ‘this summer’ and inserting the words ‘next summer.’ Is there any discussion?”

This is the Motion to Amend, a proposal to change a Main Motion.

The confusing part is that **the group discusses and votes on the Motion to Amend BEFORE voting on the Main Motion**. The reason for this pattern is in order for the members to make the Main Motion as good as it can be—to “perfect” the Main Motion. Read our article [Amendment in Robert’s Rules](#) for more information on this.

MOVE TO POSTPONE THE PROPOSAL TO THE NEXT MEETING

Now, in the course of discussion, another member thinks that the group needs more time to research festivals in the area before making a decision. That member moves to **Postpone the Motion** to the next meeting.

If another member wants to talk about this, he says “Second!” The chair then says:

“It has been moved and seconded that we postpone this Main Motion to our next meeting. Is there any discussion?”

This is the Motion to Postpone to a Certain Time.

HOW MOTIONS WORK IN THIS EXAMPLE

In this example, **each type of motion has a number or rank attached to it.**

- Main motion – Rank 1
- Motion to Amend – Rank 3
- Motion to Postpone to a Certain Time – Rank 5

There are 13 motions with ranks in all, but some of them are seldom used. **The Main Motion has the lowest rank of all**, Rank 1, which seems odd, but is how the system works.

The principle is that WHEN A MOTION IS PENDING (under consideration), **any motion with a higher rank may be made, but any motion with a lower rank is out of order.** And in general, the group may discuss only the pending motion.

We process each motion in reverse order from when it was made. It is a “LIFO” system—Last In, First Out.

For example, if we are discussing postponing this motion to the next meeting, which has a rank of 5:

- No one can move to refer the motion to a committee, since the Motion to Refer to Committee has a rank of 4.
- No one can argue that this summer is soon enough, since that pertains to the Motion to Amend, with a rank of 3.
- No one can say that we should have a Racing Car Festival because an Arts Festival is a waste of time, since that pertains to the Main Motion with a rank of 1.

HOW MOTIONS WORK IN THIS EXAMPLE

In the sequence given above, this is what would happen:

- We discuss and vote on the Motion to Postpone to the next meeting. If it passes, the matter is finished with for now, and will be taken up at the next meeting.
- If it fails, we discuss and vote on the Motion to Amend the Main Motion. If it passes, the Main Motion now reads:

“That we hold an Arts Festival NEXT SUMMER.”
- If it fails, we go back to discussing the Main Motion, namely, “that we hold an Arts Festival THIS SUMMER.”
- Finally, at the end of the process, we get back to the Main Motion and vote on it, and then we are done.

Related articles:

[Making a motion is a power move](#)

[Processing motions in Robert’s Rules](#)

[Amendment in Robert’s Rules](#)

Precedence of motions in Robert’s Rules of Order

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Reconsider, Rescind, or Amend previous decision



By Ann G. Macfarlane, Professional Registered Parliamentarian

Some years ago, I had a dramatic exposure to the motion to “Reconsider.” At a 2-day meeting of our professional society board, one member (I’ll call him “Alex”) proposed that our society spend \$4000 on radio spots in Washington, DC. He felt that we needed to develop a public relations strategy, and that this would be a great entry into the market. The motion passed.

At the board dinner that evening, people who knew something about PR complained that this would be a waste of money, since it was not “targeted marketing.” Alex, however, argued that not only was it a great move, in fact, we should increase the amount.

The next morning, Alex asked how we could add more money to the PR effort. I suggested that he move to “Reconsider” the motion. The board agreed to reconsider, and we continued our discussion. During the discussion, Alex moved to amend the motion by increasing the amount to \$8000, and the amendment passed. But when it came time to vote, the amended motion failed. In other words, Alex had gone “double or nothing,” and lost everything.

On the plane flight home, I started digging into Robert’s Rules of Order to better understand what had happened. I realized that if I had suggested that Alex move to “Amend Something Previously Adopted,” he would have been able to propose amending the amount to \$8000. If that amendment had failed, however, he still would have kept the \$4000 that was originally approved.

If you’re wondering about the people who voted to increase the amount, but then voted against the motion as amended, all I can say is that people are fickle! Maybe the board members were swept up in Alex’s enthusiasm, so they voted to increase, but in the end, decided they couldn’t swallow the larger sum. Voting one way on an amendment does not require you to vote a certain way on the motion once amended.



That incident made me decide I really had to learn more about parliamentary procedure, which in turn led to my studying Robert's Rules, which in turn led to the idea of "Jurassic Parliament." So I'm grateful to Alex for starting me on this path!

Let's review how you can change your mind.

If the decision was positive and the motion passed

If your body approved a motion, there are three ways you can change your mind.

1. AMEND SOMETHING PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED

The easiest way to change your mind is to "Amend Something Previously Adopted." A member proposes "to amend Motion X by the amendment Y." This requires the standard steps to process a motion. (Read our articles [Processing motions in Robert's Rules](#) and [Amendment in Robert's Rules](#).) There are three ways that this motion can pass:

- 1) With a two-thirds vote.
- 2) With previous (advance) notice and a majority vote.
- 3) With a majority of the entire body.

One interesting point is that in a small board (up to about 12 people), it may be easier to obtain a "majority of the entire body" than to obtain a two-thirds vote. Learn more in our article [Counting a vote wrong is dangerous](#).

Read more about "Amend Something Previously Adopted" in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition*, pp. 305-309.

2. RESCIND

The next way to change a decision is to "Rescind" the motion. When you do this, the motion is revoked or canceled.

The motion to "Rescind" requires one of the same three methods described above in "Amend Something Previously Adopted."

Note that you cannot rescind a motion when something has been done, as a result of the vote on the main motion, that it is impossible to undo. I had an inquiry from a clerk about a decision taken at the previous week's meeting. The vouchers had been approved and the checks cut, but a councilmember had a question about one of the bills.

From a parliamentary perspective, it was not possible to "Rescind" the motion approving the checks. Some other action was called for. Perhaps the body could move to put a stop on the check, or to appoint a committee to investigate the bill. If you're in this situation, if contract has been signed, for example, speak with your attorney.

Read more about "Rescind" in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition*, pp. 305-309.

3. RECONSIDER

Your third option is to “Reconsider” the motion. The British don’t like this — they call it “the American motion.” This motion has two steps:

- 1) A member moves to reconsider.
- 2) If the body agrees, the previous decision is canceled, and the body takes up the matter where it was just before the vote was taken.

I like to think of this as the “Groundhog Day” motion. There we are with Bill Murray at 6:17 am, starting over again, at the point of discussion reached just before the vote.

The purpose of reconsidering a vote is to permit correction of hasty, ill-advised, or erroneous action, or to take into account added information or a changed situation that has developed since the taking of the vote.

Note that a member must have voted “with the prevailing side” in order to move reconsideration. This means that if the motion passed, the member voted for it. If the motion failed, the member voted against it. If the vote was tied, so that it failed, the member voted against it. The reason for this requirement is obvious: to prevent a disgruntled minority from bringing something up over and over again.

If the original motion was debatable, then the motion to reconsider, and the motion itself, can be debated. If the original motion could not be debated, then the motion to reconsider cannot be debated. I learned this rule at a convention in Washington DC, when the body “moved the previous question,” that is, decided by a two-thirds vote to stop debate and vote immediately. (This motion is often referred to as “[call the question](#)” and cannot be debated.) A member moved to reconsider on the grounds of new information, and the body agreed to reconsider the motion. But they couldn’t DISCUSS whether they should reconsider or not.

According to Robert’s Rules of Order, the motion “to reconsider” can be made ONLY on the same day or the next day, if a meeting continues to a second day. However, sometimes public bodies have rules of procedure allowing someone to move reconsideration at the next business meeting. Your own rules of procedure have more authority than Robert’s Rules.

As with Rescind, you cannot reconsider a motion when something has been done, as a result of the vote on the main motion, that it is impossible to undo.

Read more about “Reconsider” in *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition*, pp. 315-335.

If the decision was negative and the motion failed

If your body defeated a motion, you have two options:

RECONSIDER – see item 3 above

4. RENEW

Robert’s Rules encourages bodies to make up their mind and stick to it—during the meeting! The idea is to keep meetings efficient, and prevent endless backtracking. However, if a motion is defeated, a member has the right to RENEW it, that is, to bring it up at a future meeting. You can read about renewal in our article, [Renewing a defeated motion at a future meeting](#), and in *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition*, pp. 336-342.

General thoughts on Reconsider etc.

I hope this article brings clarity to a murky subject. Part of the problem is that in ordinary speech, we use “reconsider” differently from the specific motion described in Robert’s Rules. It will help your group if you master the three different ways that a body can change its mind during a meeting:

1. Amend Something Previously Adopted
2. Rescind
3. Reconsider

And while it’s technically feasible to “renew” motions, I encourage you to refrain from doing so. It’s not a good use of your group’s time to go round and round the mulberry bush, hashing out things that were already decided once.

Respect for the majority decision is a key principle of Robert’s Rules. Observing it will help your group function well, and earn you the respect of your colleagues. As Cornell Clayton of Washington State University says, “The willingness to engage in honest debate and lose, on issues you care deeply about, reaffirms your commitment to common citizenship.”

Reconsider, Rescind, or Amend previous decision

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Examples of Censure Motions

1. Public Hospital District
2. City of Tacoma Washington
3. City of Yakima Washington
4. Skagit County Planning Commission

Censure Example – Public Hospital District

A motion was made and seconded to censure Commissioner X for breaking protocol and going outside of the commission's governing duties, specifically (1) directing operations of staff members by sending negative messages and instructions by email, and (2) failure to participate in the hospital administrator evaluation per our bylaws and the Revised Code; and further, to remove Councilmember X from the Operations Committee.

Mayor Baarsma moved, “pursuant to Rule 3D of the Rules of Procedures of the Council of the City of Tacoma, that the Council issue a written reprimand to Councilman Tom Stenger, remove him from his duties as Chairperson of the Environment and Public Works Committee, and place him on probation as to his appointments on the Pierce Transit Board, Puget Sound Regional Council Transportation Policy Board, and as alternate for the Puget Sound Regional Council Executive Board, through the end of this calendar year. This proposed action is based on Councilman Stenger’s transgression of the Council Rules, specifically for his discourteous conduct at the last meeting of the Neighborhoods and Housing Committee which involved repeated derogatory remarks directed toward a member of the public, and failing to come to order at the request of the presiding officer. It is my hope, and I believe the hope of the Council as a whole, that this sanction will result in positive change for the Councilman and for this body, and this proposed action is presented with full acknowledgement of the encouraging steps that Councilman Stenger has taken following the events in question, including his public recognition of his transgressions, his personal apology to the citizen involved, his commitment to correct his behavior, and his openness to accepting the sanction approved by this body.” Seconded by Deputy Mayor Lonergan. Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

REPORTS BY THE CITY MANAGER

There was no report given.

COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Economic Development Committee:

Chair Talbert reported that at the July 18th meeting, the Committee heard the Tacoma Rail Business Opportunities update, the University of Puget Sound Master Plan update and the University’s economic impact on the City, and the Hilltop Renaissance Project Request For Proposal Update and the recommendation to proceed with Prium Companies as the developer. He said the Committee discussed at its August 8th meeting the Water Service Charges/Fee increases and that it’s recommending a “do pass” when the ordinance comes before Council for approval. Council Member Talbert stated that at the August 15th meeting, the Committee heard the Downtown Parking System Business Plan Update.

RESOLUTION NO. R-2019-041

A RESOLUTION authorizing the removal of City Council Member Kay Funk from participation in all City Council Committee assignments and non-City boards, committees and commission assignments for a period of six months

WHEREAS, the City Council adopted the applicable Rules of Procedure of the Yakima City Council, effective in October, 2018, and

WHEREAS, Section K of the Council Rules of Procedure provide remedies for Council members' violations of the Council Rules of Procedure, the Council Code of Ethics, the Council Principles of Conduct and other applicable laws and/or regulations, and

WHEREAS, on April 2, 2019, the City Council adjourned to an executive session called by the Mayor during a regular City Council business meeting in accordance with RCW 42 30.110(f), to receive and evaluate complaints or charges brought against a public officer; and

WHEREAS, following the executive session the City Council resumed its business meeting, at which time Council Member Hill made a motion to remove Council Member Funk from all City Council committee assignments and non-City board, committee and commission assignments for a period of six months, and

WHEREAS, Council Member Hill's motion stated that after Council Member Funk's untimely, inappropriate and embarrassing comments during the press conference called to announce the appointment of the police chief, a recent inappropriate and insensitive statement to the media that Yakima is not a glamorous location, numerous online comments on various news articles that included statements inconsistent with the position of the majority of the Council, a continuous verbal campaign against YVCOG, Transform Yakima and its staff members, completely inappropriate comments about the mental health of a city resident during a March 14 Healthy Communities and Neighborhood Building committee meeting and during the same meeting making a comment to an older male resident in attendance that he should report to her if a female staff member was being naughty while working on an ordinance revision, and generally behaving in a combative and contradictory manner during Council meetings, he believes that Council Member Funk had brought discredit to herself and the City and that it was time for the Council to take action, and

WHEREAS, Council Member Hill stated that he believed Council Member Funk had violated Sections III, IV, VI and VII of the Yakima City Council Principles of Conduct, which provide that a Council member should be

- III Committed to acting and being seen as acting with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest scrutiny
- IV Committed to working with City officials and staff in a conscientious and respectful manner
- VI Support a positive and constructive environment for residents, businesses, and City employees.
- VII Refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges, or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of the City Council, boards, commission, committees, staff, or the public.; and

WHEREAS, Council Member Hill further stated that he believed Council Member Funk had violated sections I, II and III of the Yakima City Council Code of Ethics, which provide

- I Council members shall maintain decorum and set an example for conduct when representing the City, and endeavor not to disgrace or embarrass the City while acting in an official capacity
- II Council members shall represent that opinions stated are the member's own and do not necessarily represent those of the Council unless the Council has voted and passed an ordinance, resolution or motion that so states the expressed policy
- III Council members shall not divulge information discussed in executive session; and

WHEREAS, following the Council members' discussion on the motion, including responsive statements by Council Member Funk, the City Council voted by a super-majority vote of five members in favor and two members opposed, to remove City Council Member Kay Funk from participation in all City Council Committee assignments and non-City boards, committees and commission assignments for a period of six months,

WHEREAS, as required by the Rules of Procedure of the Yakima City Council, Section K(2)(iii), this formal resolution of the Council action is necessary; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YAKIMA:

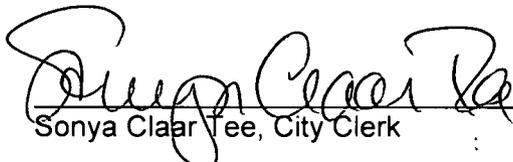
In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Yakima City Council, Section K(2)(iii), City Council Member Kay Funk is hereby removed from participation in all City Council Committee assignments and non-City boards, committees and commission assignments for a period of six months

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL this 16th day of April, 2019

ATTEST



Kathy Coffey, Mayor



Sonya Claar Tee, City Clerk





**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
YAKIMA, WASHINGTON
AGENDA STATEMENT**

Item No. 5.B.
For Meeting of: April 16, 2019

ITEM TITLE: Resolution authorizing the removal of City Council Member Funk from participation in all City Council Committee assignments and non-City boards, committees and commissions for six months

SUBMITTED BY: Cliff Moore, City Manager

SUMMARY EXPLANATION:
Per the City Council's Rules of Procedure, the Council voted 5-2 to remove Council Member Funk from City Council Committee assignments and non-City boards, committees, and commissions for six months at its April 2, 2019 City Council meeting.

The attached resolution is required, per the Council's Rules of Procedures, to complete the removal of a Council member from his or her committee assignments.

ITEM BUDGETED:

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:  City Manager

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

BOARD/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Upload Date	Type
□ resolution	4/9/2019	Cover Memo

CENSURE OF COMMISSIONER MARK LUNDSTEN

On September 22, 2020, at a meeting of the Skagit County Planning Commission, the commission passed a motion to censure Commissioner Mark Lundsten, specifically citing page 5 of Appendix A section C(3)(e); the clause requiring members to be respectful and to lose gracefully and the general duty of loyalty under Robert's Rules of Order.

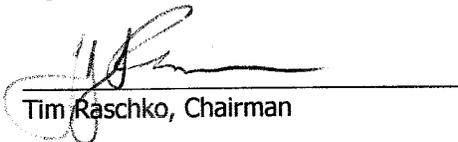
The commission specifically found conduct objectionable to include:

- 1) Using his Commissioner title to further personal views against the vote of the commission
- 2) Disparaging the Commissions deliberation
- 3) Disparaging the members of the public who spoke against the Commissioner's viewpoints by indicating that their beliefs were based on false or misrepresented information.
- 4) Failure to disclose affiliations
- 5) Failure to cc planning commission on letters

The motion passes by a vote of 7 to 2 with Commissioner Lundsten participating in such vote.

Commissioner Lundsten is hereby put on notice that if he continues to breach his duty of loyalty to the Planning Commission as noted above, the Planning Commission may recommend that the Board of County Commissioners take further action under SCC 14.02.080.

Signed,



Tim Raschko, Chairman



Port Angeles City Council Rules of Procedure

most recently updated on July 3, 2018

Section 1 - Rules. These Rules shall govern the procedures followed by the City Council of Port Angeles, Washington, for the conduct of Council meetings and the maintenance of order, pursuant to RCW 35A.13.170.

Section 2 - Open Public Meetings Act. The Council shall comply with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 42.30 RCW, in the conduct of all meetings to which said Act is applicable.

Section 3 - Executive Sessions. The Council may discuss topics in executive session, which topics are specified in RCW 42.30.110 or relate to potential or pending litigation and are subject to attorney-client privilege. The City Attorney shall inform the Council whenever any proposed discussion in executive session is not legally allowed.

No member of the City Council, employee of the City, or any other person present during executive session of the City Council shall disclose to any person the content or substance of any discussion or action that took place during said executive session.

Section 4 - Work Sessions. Special meetings designated as work sessions shall be advertised and conducted in the same manner as special meetings. Work sessions are for the purpose of in-depth review and discussion of specified issues. Final disposition shall not be taken at designated work sessions.

Necessary work sessions will be held at 5:00 p.m. on the 4th Tuesday of the month, or at another time if approved by a majority of the Council.

Section 5 - Attendance.

A. Attendance, Excused Absences. RCW 35A.12.060 provides that a Councilmember shall forfeit his/her office by failing to attend three consecutive regular meetings of the Council without being excused by the Council. Members of the Council may ask to be excused by following the procedure described in this paragraph. The member shall contact the Mayor prior to the meeting and state the reason for his/her inability to attend the meeting. If the member is unable to contact the Mayor, the member shall contact the City Manager or City Clerk, who shall convey the message to the Mayor. Following roll call, the Mayor shall inform the Council of the member's absence, state the reason for such absence, and inquire if there is a motion to excuse the member. This motion shall be non-debatable. Upon passage of such motion by a majority of members present, the absent member shall be considered excused and the Clerk will make an appropriate notation in the minutes.

B. Attendance Via Speaker phone (AVS). From time to time, a Councilmember may not be able to be physically present at a Council meeting, but will want to be involved in the discussion and/or decision on a particular agenda item. The procedure and guidelines for permitting a Councilmember to attend a Council meeting via Speaker phone are as follows:

Attendance via Speaker phone should be the exception, not the rule, and AVS is limited to three Councilmembers per meeting. Examples of situations where AVS would be appropriate include, but are not limited to:

- An agenda item is time sensitive, and AVS is needed for a quorum;
- An agenda item is of very high importance to the Councilmember that cannot be physically present;

- It is important for all Councilmembers to be involved in a decision, but a Councilmember is unable to be physically present;

Examples of situations where AVS would not be appropriate include, but are not limited to:

- Quasi-judicial and other hearings when the Councilmember is unable to see presentations or read materials that are distributed during the hearing.
- Participation in an executive session, unless the Councilmember can assure that he or she is in a secure location and able to maintain confidentiality.

Attendance - Procedure:

1. Each Councilmember attending via Speaker phone:
 - a. Must be able to hear the discussion on the agenda item taking place in the Council chambers, and
 - b. Must be able to be heard by all present in Council chambers.
2. At the beginning of the Council meeting the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor, if the Mayor is not physically present) should state for the record:
 - a. Let the record reflect that Councilmember_____is attending via Speaker phone.
 - b. Councilmember_____, can you hear me? [There must then be a clearly audible response in the affirmative.]
 - c. Let the record reflect that Councilmember_____, who is attending via Speaker phone, can be heard by all present in Council chambers.

Notification:

If a Councilmember wishes to attend a Council meeting via Speaker phone, the Councilmember should notify Council of his or her intent at the Council meeting prior to the meeting for which he or she wishes to attend via Speaker phone.

If that is not possible, the Councilmember should notify the City Manager of his or her wish to attend the Council meeting via Speaker phone not later than the business day prior to the Council meeting for which he or she wishes to attend via Speaker phone.

Section 6 – Presiding Officer. The presiding officer at all meetings of the Council shall be the Mayor, who shall conduct the business and deliberations of the Council under these rules. In the physical absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor shall conduct the business and deliberations of the Council under these rules. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor shall be elected biennially by a majority of the Councilmembers at the beginning of the first Council meeting of the new year of all even numbered years. If both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are physically absent and a quorum is present, the Council shall, by motion, appoint one of its members to serve as presiding officer of the Council until the return of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

The presiding officer shall:

1. Preserve order and decorum in the Council Chambers;
2. Observe and enforce all rules adopted by the Council for its governance;
3. Decide all questions on order, in accordance with these rules, subject to appeal by any member of the Council; and
4. Recognize members of the Council in the order in which they request the floor.

No member shall be recognized and given the floor to speak on the same matter more than once until after all other members of the Council have had an opportunity to be recognized and be heard.

5. During Public Comment, determine whether a speaker or members of the audience fail to comply with these Rules or exceed the scope of the limited forum provided for Public Comment, and the presiding officer shall have the authority to suspend such person's right to speak and to require that non-conforming audience behavior cease, subject to the Council's right to overrule such decision.

If such conduct continues and prevents the Council from accomplishing its business in a reasonably efficient manner, the presiding officer may call a recess, may request the removal of such person(s) from the Council Chambers, may remove all persons from the Council Chambers, may move the meeting to a different location, may adjourn the meeting, or may take such other appropriate action as permitted by the law, subject to the Council's right to overrule such as decision.

In the event of an emergency such as a fire or other natural or catastrophic disaster, threatened violence, or inability to regain or retain good order, the presiding officer shall forthwith declare a recess, adjourn, or continue the meeting, and the City Council as well as everyone in the room shall immediately leave the meeting room. The presiding officer may reconvene the meeting when it has been determined by the appropriate safety officials that it is safe to do so.

The presiding officer shall have only these rights, and shall be governed in all matters and issues by the same rules and restrictions, as other Councilmembers.

The presiding officer may vote on all matters coming before the Council.

Section 7 - Agenda. The City Manager shall prepare the agenda of business for all Council meetings. Topics may be added to the agenda 1) when deemed appropriate by the City Manager, 2) at the direction of the Mayor, or 3) by motion approved by a majority of City Councilmembers attending a regular Council meeting.

Every agenda item must be supported by a written explanation informing the Council and staff of the issue, background, analysis, financial impacts, and recommendation and/or conclusion, unless the item is self-explanatory or unless the Mayor or City Manager has waived this requirement. All written materials for the agenda shall be delivered to the City Manager by five p.m. on the Wednesday preceding the Council meeting. Except for announcements, late

items that the City Manager does not receive by the stated deadlines shall not be considered by the Council except upon a majority vote of the members present.

Each agenda shall reference all ordinances to be considered by the City Council. No ordinances shall be acted upon unless notice of the preliminary agenda referencing such ordinance has been made available to the public in advance of Council meetings, as set forth below. Except in cases of emergency and of final approval of subdivisions, a proposed ordinance shall be presented to the Council at a regular meeting, and the Council may then act to adopt the ordinance at any subsequent regular meeting.

Agendas for all meetings of the City Council shall be made available at least 24 hours prior to the time scheduled for such meetings. The agenda will be made available to the public in the following ways:

1. A copy is placed on the City website at www.cityofpa.us.
2. Several copies are placed on the front counter at City Hall.
3. A copy is posted on the bulletin board outside the Council Chambers.

Section 8 - Order of Business. The Mayor may determine the order of business for a particular City Council meeting. The agenda should be arranged to best serve the needs and/or convenience of the Council and the public. The items of business for regular Council meetings may include the following:

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Ceremonial Matters/Proclamations/Employee Recognition
- C. Public Comment

D. Items to be Placed on This or Future Agendas, including any executive session needed during or at the end of the meeting.

E. Consent Agenda

F. Public Hearings

G. Ordinances Not Requiring Public Hearings

H. Resolutions Not Requiring Public Hearings

I. Other Considerations

J. Contracts & Purchasing

K. Council Reports

L. Information

M. Second Public Comment Period

Adjournment

Section 9 – Council Action Procedures. At all meetings of the Council, four (4) Councilmembers, who are present and eligible to vote, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

The passage of any ordinance, grant or revocation of franchise or license, and any resolution for the payment of money shall require the affirmative vote of at least a majority of the whole membership of the Council. RCW 35A.12.120.

Unless otherwise provided for by statute, ordinance, resolution, or these Rules of Procedure, all votes shall be taken by voice, except that at the request of any Councilmember, a roll call vote shall be taken by the City Clerk.

Prior to discussion of an action item, a Councilmember should make a motion.

Three steps required to bring a motion before the Council for its consideration:

1. A Councilmember makes a motion;

2. Another Councilmember seconds the motion, and
3. The chair states the motion.

The purpose of a second is to prevent time being spent on motions that only one person wants to discuss. If the motion is not seconded, it dies. Some motions do not require a second: nominations, withdrawal of a motion, request for a roll call vote, and point of order.

Councilmembers should attempt as much as possible to state motions in the positive form--that is, "I move to..." rather than "I move not to..." Motions where one must vote "yes" to vote against a proposal are confusing not only for Councilmembers, but also for staff and citizens.

Motions should be clear and concise and not include arguments for the motion.

No person shall address the Council without first securing the permission of the Mayor or Council to do so.

If a proposal has only minimal support, a Councilmember might state "I make this motion in order to put it on the floor for discussion. I am not sure of my position on it at the present time."

After a motion has been made and seconded, Councilmembers may discuss their opinions on the issue prior to the vote. If they wish to do so, they may state why they will vote for or against the motion.

Once recognized, a Councilmember should not be interrupted while speaking, except for a point of order or personal privilege. If a Councilmember is called to order while speaking, the individual shall cease speaking until the question of order is determined.

Upon being recognized by the presiding officer, members of the Council shall hold the floor until completion of their remarks or until recognition is withdrawn by the presiding officer.

A Councilmember should not speak more than once on a particular subject until every other Councilmember has had the opportunity to speak. Councilmembers are encouraged to

discuss items during the decision-making process.

A motion may be withdrawn by the maker of the motion, at any time, without the consent of the Council.

A motion to table is non-debatable. It requires a majority to pass. If the motion to table prevails, the matter may be "taken from the table" only by adding it to the agenda of a future meeting, at which time discussion can continue. If an item is tabled, it cannot be reconsidered at the same meeting.

A motion to postpone to a specific time is debatable, is amendable, and may be reconsidered at the same meeting. It requires a majority to pass. The motion being postponed must be considered at a later time in the same meeting or a specific future meeting.

A motion to postpone indefinitely is debatable, is not amendable, and may be reconsidered at the same meeting. It requires a majority to pass. The merits of the main motion may be debated.

A motion to call for the question shall close debate on the main motion and is non-debatable. This motion must receive a second and fails without a two-thirds (2/3) vote. Debate is reopened if the motion fails.

A motion to amend is defined as amending a motion that is on the floor and has been seconded, by inserting or adding, striking out, striking out and inserting, or substituting.

When the discussion is concluded, the motion maker, Mayor, or City Clerk, shall repeat the motion prior to voting.

The City Council votes on the motion as restated. The Mayor shall state the number of Councilmembers voting in the affirmative and the number voting in the negative and whether the motion passes or fails.

Each Councilmember shall vote on all questions put to the City Council, unless a conflict of interest or appearance of fairness issues requires a Councilmember to excuse him/herself.

If a member of the Council who is eligible to vote does not vote, his or her silence shall be recorded as an affirmative vote.

No vote may be cast by proxy.

When the debate appears to be over and if no one indicates a desire to continue discussion, the chair puts the motion to a vote by stating, "If there is no further discussion, we will vote."

Only those motions that receive an affirmative vote by the majority of the present and voting members of the City Council who also constitute a quorum shall be passed or become effective unless other voting requirements are provided by Washington State law in which case Washington State law shall prevail. In order for an ordinance or resolution to become effective immediately, the City Council must declare that an emergency exists and approve the ordinance or resolution by the affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members of the City Council. A tie vote results in the motion having failed. The presiding officer may publicly explain the effect of the tie vote for the audience.

After the question has been decided, any Councilmember who voted in the majority may move for a reconsideration of the motion. A member of the prevailing majority must make a motion for reconsideration when the previous vote was taken.

Once the vote has been taken, the discussion is closed. It is not necessary for Councilmembers to justify or explain their vote. If they wish to make their positions known, this should happen during the discussion preceding the vote.

The presiding officer shall decide all questions of procedures and other questions of a parliamentary nature that may arise at a Council meeting. All cases not provided for in these rules shall be governed by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order. In the event of a conflict, these Council Rules of Procedures shall prevail.

If a Councilmember has a conflict of interest or an appearance of fairness disqualification, the Councilmember should recuse him or herself from the issue and shall leave the Council chambers during discussion and voting on the issue. That Councilmember shall be considered absent when voting occurs.

If a member asserts a conflict of interest or appearance of fairness disqualification, and it is not apparent to all Councilmembers present, the member shall be excused from voting on an issue only by majority vote of the Councilmembers present.

If it is determined by majority vote of the City Council as a whole, plus one, that a Councilmember has a conflict of interest or would violate the appearance of fairness doctrine by participating in, and/or voting on, a matter coming before the Council, then the member determined to have the conflict of interest or appearance of fairness doctrine violation shall not participate in or vote on said matter. In the event a challenged member or members requests additional time prior to the challenge having been voted on by the City Council in order for the Councilmember to present further information to the Council, then the City Council's determination with respect to the challenge shall be continued to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the City Council, at which time the member or members requesting the additional time shall present such additional information. At the conclusion of the presentation, the City Council shall make its determination as provided hereinabove.

Section 10 – Adjournment. A Councilmember may propose to close the meeting by moving to adjourn. The meeting will close upon the majority vote of the Council. A motion to adjourn will always be in order and decided without debate.

Upon adjournment, Councilmembers shall immediately leave the Council chambers, to avoid what could constitute a meeting with a quorum of Councilmembers present in violation of

the Open Public Meetings Act.

No meeting shall be permitted to continue beyond 10:00 p.m., without the approval of a majority of Councilmembers present and eligible to vote. A new time limit must be established before taking a Council vote to extend the meeting. The items not acted upon or considered shall be deferred to the next regular Council meeting, as unfinished business, unless the Council, by a majority vote of Councilmembers present, determines otherwise.

Section 11 – Respect and Decorum. Neither Councilmembers nor the public shall disrupt the proceedings of the Council or refuse to obey the orders of the presiding officer or the rules of protocol.

Any person disrupting the business of the Council, either while addressing the Council or attending its meetings, shall be asked to cease such disruption.

For clarification, disruption of a City Council meeting does not require behavior that constitutes a breach of the peace, although a breach of the peace would constitute a disruption of a City Council meeting. Rather, disruption of a City Council meeting is any behavior that interrupts the Council meeting or prevents the Council from accomplishing its business in a reasonably efficient manner. For purposes of illustration only, such disruption may include, but is not limited to:

- irrelevant or repetitious speech
- continuing to speak after the allotted time has expired
- audience demonstrations such as booing, display of signs, or any other conduct that disrupts the Council proceedings.
- continuing to speak after being ruled out of order by the presiding officer
- other speech or behavior that disrupts the orderly conduct of the Council meeting.

It is the duty of the Mayor and each Councilmember to maintain dignity and respect for their offices, City staff and the public. While the Council is in session, Councilmembers shall behave with order and decorum, and a Councilmember shall neither by conversation or otherwise, delay or interrupt the proceedings of the Council, nor interrupt or disparage any Councilmember while speaking, nor use profanity.

At any time during any Council meeting, any Councilmember may object to a personal affront or other inappropriate comments, by calling for a "point of order." After the Councilmember is recognized by the presiding officer and the Councilmember explains his or her point concerning respect and decorum, or lack thereof, the presiding officer shall rule on the remark and may ask the person making the disturbance to cease or leave the room. Continued disruptions may result in a recess or adjournment as set forth above.

In order to maintain decorum and good working relationships, Councilmembers should not criticize the vote of another.

Councilmembers shall respect the decision once a policy is passed or defeated by a majority vote.

If a member of the Council shall transgress these rules, the presiding officer shall call such member to order, in which case such member shall be silent except to explain or continue in order. If the presiding officer shall transgress these rules or fail to call such member to order, any other member of the Council may, under a point of order, call the presiding officer or such other member to order, in which case the presiding officer or such member, as the case may be, shall be silent except to explain or continue in order. By a majority vote, the Council can impose additional sanctions that may include an oral admonition, written reprimand, censure, expulsion from the meeting at which the conduct is occurring, removal of the Councilmember from the Council committee chair positions or committee memberships, or removal of intergovernmental duties.

Section 12 – Public Comment. Members of the public may address the City Council at the beginning and end of any Regular Meeting under "Public Comment." During the "Public Comment" portion of the meeting, individuals may speak to agenda items, except those scheduled for a Public Hearing.

The City Council desires to allow the opportunity for Public Comment. However, the business of the City must proceed in an orderly, timely manner. At any time, the presiding officer, in the presiding officer's sole discretion, may set such reasonable limits as are necessary to prevent disruption of other necessary business.

At its most restrictive, Public Comment shall be limited to a total of 15 minutes for the first Public Comment period and shall be concluded not later than 9:45 for the second Public Comment period.

Individuals may speak for three (3) minutes or less, depending on the number of people wishing to speak. If more than 20 people are signed up to speak each speaker may be allocated two (2) minutes.

Individuals are asked to sign up prior to the start of the Public Comment period.

Individuals who are residents of the City or own businesses within the City will be called to speak first, with preference given to those who wish to speak to an item on the meeting's agenda. If time remains, the presiding officer will call other individuals wishing to speak, generally in the order in which they have signed. If time is available, the presiding officer may call for additional unsigned speakers.

Persons speaking shall state their name, whether they reside within the City limits, whether they have any other pertinent connection to the City, and whether they are appearing as the representative of an organization.

All comments shall be addressed to the Council as a whole and not to individual members thereof.

The Clerk shall be the timekeeper for all Public Comment. Time cannot be donated by one speaker to another.

Written comments may be submitted into the record of a Council meeting by presenting the written document to the Clerk prior to the meeting, in which case a copy of the document will be provided to each Councilmember, but the document will not be read aloud; or a document may be distributed to the City Council, with a copy to the clerk, by a speaker while the speaker is addressing the Council.

City Council meetings are not public forums for addressing the audience. All speakers must address the Council, not staff or the audience.

Speakers may not comment on any matter for which a quasi-judicial hearing is required.

Section 13- Board and Commission Vacancies. The selection process for filling board and commission vacancies shall be as follows. Provided, however, that in specific situations, the Council may by majority vote revise the process:

A. The City Manager or his designee will solicit in the City's official newspaper, and on the City website, volunteers who wish to serve on boards and commissions.

B. The City Manager or his designee will mail application forms and specific information as to functions of the preferred board(s) or commission(s) to interested citizens.

C. The City Manager or his designee will submit application forms, questionnaires, and/or related information, to the designated interviewing body.

D. The designated interviewing body will interview candidates in open public session. Candidates who have not been interviewed will be excluded from attending the prior interviews.

E. The designated interviewing body will forward a recommendation to the City Council as to the preferred candidate(s) for appointment to a board or commission. The City Council will make appointments by a majority vote. If the City Council is the designated interviewing body, the Council will select its preferred candidate in an open public meeting by roll call vote and the Mayor will make the appointment.

F. The City Manager or his designee will provide written notice of appointment and confirmation, provide introduction to the chairperson of the respective board or commission, and provide introductory and educational information to the newly appointed member.

In the event the number of members of any board or commission fall to the number required for a quorum plus one, the City Manager, or mayor, shall have the authority to make an interim appointment, subject to confirmation by the City Council. The term of an interim appointment shall be for (a) the remainder of the vacant term, (b) 6 months, or (c) until a permanent appointment is made by the City Council, whichever is less.

Section 14 - Notice of Public Hearings. Notice of all public hearings to be conducted by the City Council or any of its advisory boards and commissions shall be given either by publishing written notice at least once in the City's official newspaper prior to the date of the hearing, or by complying with any specific statutory requirements for such notice that may be applicable to the particular type of hearing involved.

Section 15 - Council Vacancies. The selection process for filling Council vacancies shall be as follows, provided, however, that the Council may by majority vote revise the process:

Notice of the vacancy and the procedure for filling the vacancy shall be published twice in the City's official newspaper.

The Council will open a filing period of not less than 10 days for the vacancy and request

each candidate to complete an application form or submit a letter of interest.

The candidates will then be interviewed during a public Council meeting.

The Council may deliberate on the qualifications of the candidates in a closed session and then vote on the appointment in an open meeting.

In all other respects, the procedure for filling a Council vacancy shall be as provided in State law.

Established/Amended by Resolution Nos.: 21-84, 13-86, 9-87, 2-88, 3-88, 19-88, 37-91, 5-92, 2-95, 5-95, 4-96, 20-96, 11-97, 2-98, 6-98, 15-99, 17-04, 2-05, 10-05, 2-06, 11-06, 12-06, 8-07, 3-08, 10-09, 5-10, 2-12, 6-12, 09-15, 16-15, by Council Adoption on August 16, 2016, and Resolution 08-18.