

Robert's Rules of Order is a widely used guide for running meetings and making group decisions. It provides a set of procedures for organizing and conducting meetings in a structured and democratic manner. These rules ensure that everyone in a group has a chance to speak, that discussions remain orderly, and that decisions are made efficiently and fairly. Here are some of the key principles:

Key Principles of Robert's Rules of Order:

1. **Call to Order:** The chair or leader of the meeting starts the session.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes (record of the previous meeting) are reviewed and approved.
3. **Motions:** A formal proposal (motion) is made by a member for a group action or decision. A motion must be seconded by another member before discussion or voting.
 - Types of motions include:
 - **Main motion:** Introduces new business or proposes a decision.
 - **Amendments:** Changes to the main motion.
 - **Subsidiary motions:** Affect how a main motion is handled (e.g., postponing, referring to a committee).
 - **Privileged motions:** Deal with urgent matters unrelated to the business at hand (e.g., a motion to adjourn).
 - **Incidental motions:** Address procedural questions or issues (e.g., points of order).
4. **Debate:** Once a motion is introduced and seconded, members discuss the issue. Debate follows rules that ensure everyone has a chance to speak and that discussions are focused and respectful.
5. **Voting:** After debate, the group votes on the motion. Common voting methods include voice vote, show of hands, roll call, or ballot.
6. **Adjournment:** The meeting is formally ended by a motion to adjourn.

Basic Meeting Procedure:

1. **Start the meeting:** The chair calls the meeting to order.
2. **Approval of minutes:** Approve or amend the minutes of the last meeting.
3. **Officer/Committee reports:** Hear reports from officers or committees, if applicable.
4. **Old business:** Discuss unfinished business from the last meeting.
5. **New business:** Introduce new topics.
6. **Adjourn:** End the meeting.

Robert's Rules is often used by non-profit organizations, boards, clubs, and associations to ensure fair decision-making. It emphasizes respect, order, and the rights of the majority while protecting the voice of the minority.

An outline for using *Robert's Rules of Order* in a **County Board** meeting provides structure and ensures that the board's business is conducted efficiently and fairly. Here's a general guide to structuring a county board meeting following *Robert's Rules of Order*:

1. Call to Order

- The chair or presiding officer officially begins the meeting.
- Example: "The meeting of the [County] Board is called to order at [time]."

2. Roll Call

- The clerk calls the roll to establish a quorum (the minimum number of members required to conduct official business).
- The presence of a quorum is announced by the chair.

3. Approval of the Agenda

- The agenda for the meeting is presented for approval. Any amendments can be made at this time.
- Motion: "I move to approve the agenda as presented (or amended)."

4. Approval of Minutes

- The minutes from the previous meeting are reviewed, corrected if necessary, and approved.
- Motion: "I move to approve the minutes of the last meeting."

5. Public Comments

- A period where the public may address the board on issues not on the agenda, usually with a time limit for each speaker.

6. Reports

- **Officers' Reports:** Chair, treasurer, or other officers present their reports.
- **Committee Reports:** Standing or special committees give updates or findings.
- **Department Reports:** County departments (e.g., public works, health) provide updates.

7. Old (Unfinished) Business

- Items or motions that were pending from previous meetings are discussed and resolved.
- Any item previously tabled or postponed is reintroduced here.

8. New Business

- New motions, resolutions, or ordinances are introduced for discussion and action.
- Motions are made by members to bring business to the floor:
 - **Making a motion:** “I move that the County Board approves...”
 - **Seconding a motion:** Another member seconds the motion: “Second.”
 - **Debate:** The board discusses the motion. Members may speak in favor or against the motion.
 - **Amendments:** If needed, the motion can be amended with a majority vote.
 - **Voting:** Once debate concludes, the chair calls for a vote (voice vote, roll call, etc.).

9. Special Orders

- Items that must be addressed at the meeting by rule or by previous designation. This could include legally required matters like elections or budget hearings.

10. Announcements

- Any announcements regarding upcoming meetings, events, or relevant news.

11. Adjournment

- When all business is completed, the meeting is officially ended.
- Motion: "I move to adjourn."
- The chair calls for a vote on adjournment, and the meeting is closed.

Example Flow of a Motion (Using Robert’s Rules)

1. **A member makes a motion:** “I move that the County Board allocates funds for road improvements.”
2. **Another member seconds the motion:** “Second.”
3. **Chair opens the floor for debate:** Members discuss the pros and cons.
4. **Amendment (if any):** “I move to amend the motion to specify an amount of \$500,000 for road improvements.”
5. **Vote on the amendment:** Members vote on the amendment.
6. **Vote on the main motion:** Once discussion concludes, the board votes on the motion (as amended, if applicable).

This structure keeps the meeting organized, allowing for input while ensuring decisions are made efficiently.