

# Introduction to Parliamentary Procedure~ also called Robert's Rules

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# When in doubt; Know your CHARTER~ and district policy

Bylaws are:

- Your Ground Rules
- Your Expectations
- Your Processes
- Your Responsibility



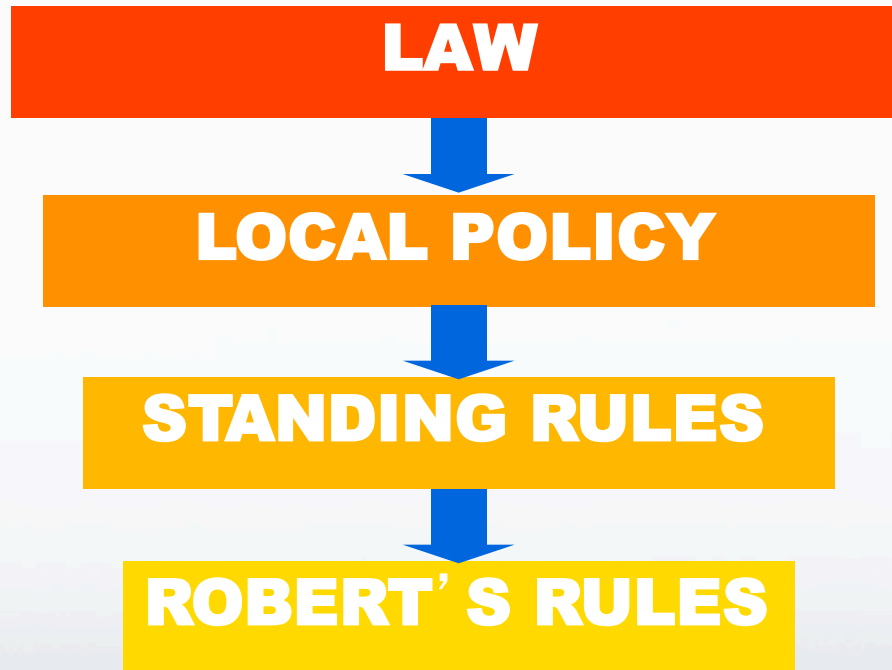
If nothing else, know your bylaws!!!

# Common Questions

- ● How to make a motion
- ● How to amend a motion
- ● How to postpone an item
- ● How to end debate
- ● How to “undo” an action
- ● How to count the vote



# Which Rules Apply?



“The great lesson for democracies to learn is for the majority to give to the minority a full, free opportunity to present their side of the case, and then for the minority, having failed to win a majority to their view, **gracefully** to submit and to recognize the action as that of the entire organization, and **cheerfully** to assist in carrying it out, until they can secure its repeal.”

—Robert’s Rules of Order,  
Newly Revised, p.xviii

# Basic Principles of Robert's Rules of Order



**KNOW THE RULES!**

- One thing at a time, one person at a time, one time per meeting
- All discussions should be germane to the pending question
- No interruptions
- Majority rules
- Silence implies consent



- No surprise
  - How can you help to avoid surprises?
- Right to know what will be discussed
- Everyone is equal (including the chair)
- Over and under dedication to Robert's Rules can be disastrous



# Robert's Rules in a Nutshell

- **C**ommon
  - **C**ourtesy
- ● **C**ommon
  - **S**ense





# Does Your Board Really Need To Follow Robert's Rules of Order?

***In small boards (less than 12), most Parliamentary Rules apply, but certain modifications permitting greater flexibility and informality are commonly allowed.***

Robert's Rules of Order~10<sup>th</sup> edition

Page 9, Line 21

# Most Common Protocol Mistakes Charter School APC's Make

- Not understanding what the chair's role is ...  
and what it is NOT
- Allowing surprises
- Poor agenda planning
- Forgetting to demand proper respect and protocol by all board members
- Forgetting that board member conduct sends messages to your community

**The board must NOT forget...**

**that someone is always  
watching!!**

# How to Make a Motion

- **Say:**
  - I Move that...  
or
  - I Move to...
- **Don't say:**
  - Why don't we...  
or
  - How about we...

# Handling motions and amendments

There are six steps for adopting a motion.

Step 1~ A member makes a motion

Step 2~ A member seconds a motion

Step 3~ The chair states the question

Step 4~ The members debate

Step 5~ The members vote

Step 6~ The chair announces the vote



# Types of Motions

- Main
- Subsidiary
- Privileged
- Incidental



# Using the Motion Chart

- **Principle requirements for motions:**
  - ● Recognition
  - ● Second
  - ● Debatable
  - ● Amendable
  - ● Vote Required
  - ● Reconsiderable

## Step 1

# A Member Makes a Motion

- ● Motions written out to avoid confusion
- ● When motion poorly worded, chair has the option to assist in clarifying
- ● **Maker says a few brief words if needed**
- ● Chairs CAN make motions – cautiously
- ● Be Precise



# Main motions are out of order if:

- ● Not germane to the pending question
- ● Conflicts with local, state or federal law
- ● Presents same question dealt with earlier in that meeting
- ● Action outside the scope of the organization



## Step 2

# Second the Motion

- ● Implies a member wishes to hear discussion not necessarily that they are in favor
- ● If no one seconds the motion, it FAILS
- ● Some items do not require a second
- ● Any ideas on what those are?
- ● No need for recognition for seconds

## Step 3

# Chair States the Motion

- ● Formally places motion before members
- ● Transfers ownership to the full board
- ● Chair should restate the motion during debate
- ● Chair reminds board if straying from question
- ● After this step, the board must do “something” with the motion

## Step 4

# Members Debate

- Maker of motion should speak first
- Debate focus on immediate pending question
- Debate alternated between pros & cons
- Members who have not yet spoken recognized before members speaking a second time





## Step 5

# Members Vote

- The chairperson repeats motion before calling for vote
- Secret ballots should not be used
- The vote of each member on each item required in the minutes



"I propose a cooling-off period of 100 years."

# Members Vote

- ● Announce vote totals for the minutes
- ● Chair should vote on all matters
- ● Tie vote is a lost vote



## Step 6

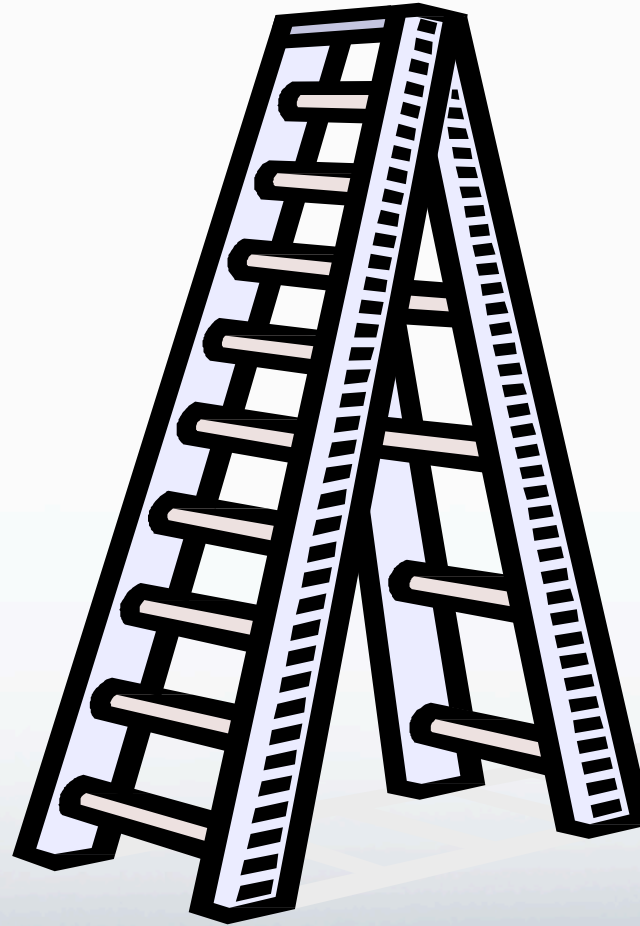
# Announcing the Vote

- Announce outcome of vote - give number of those in favor and those opposed
- Announce “next steps”



# The 10 “Must-Know” Motions for Meetings

1. Adjourn
2. Recess
3. Lay on the table
4. Previous question
5. Limit/extend limits of debate
6. Postpone to a certain time
7. Commit or refer
8. Secondary amendment
9. Primary amendment
10. Main motion



# Handling Amendments

- A main motion is limited to primary & secondary

amendment

- A primary amendment modifies the main motion
- A secondary amendment modifies the primary amendment (amending the amendment)

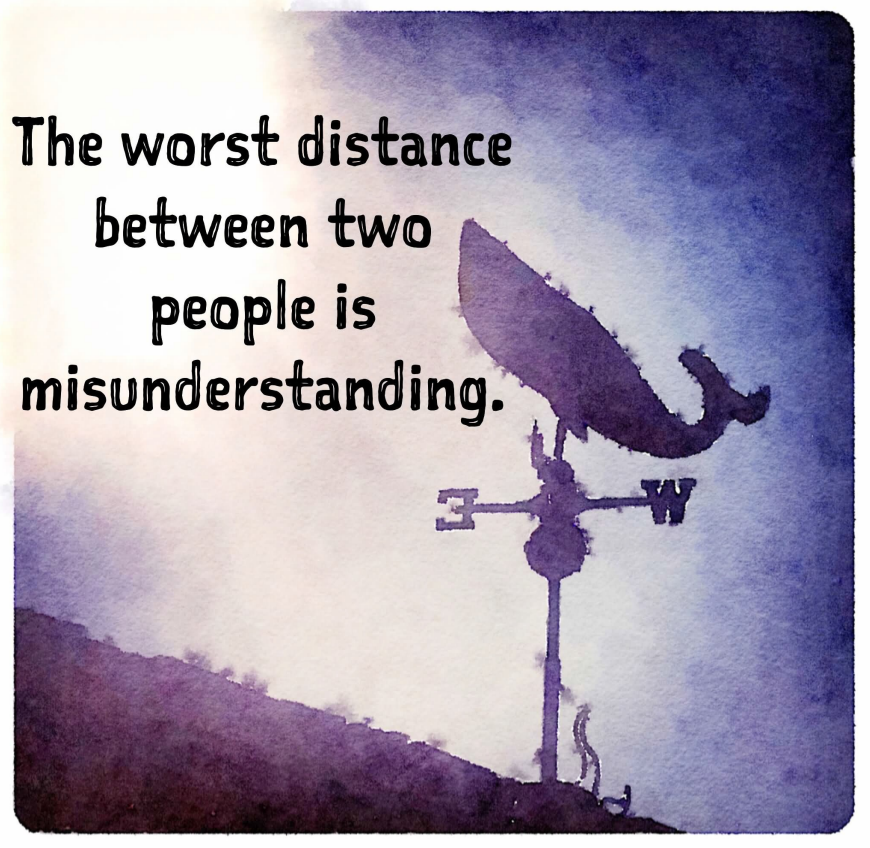




# Misunderstood Motions

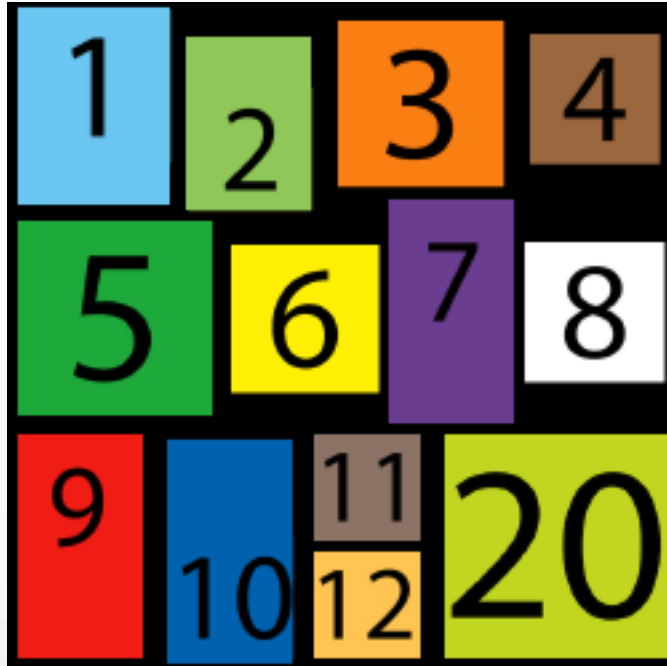
- Lay on the table
- Previous question
- Reconsider
- Rescind
- Withdraw a motion

The worst distance  
between two  
people is  
misunderstanding.





# Counting Votes



## A majority is:

- One more than half
- Of those present and voting
- During a legally called meeting

## Votes Necessary to Pass a Motion

<b>Board Membership</b>	<b>Majority</b>	<b>Two-thirds</b>
5	3	4
7	4	5
9	5	6

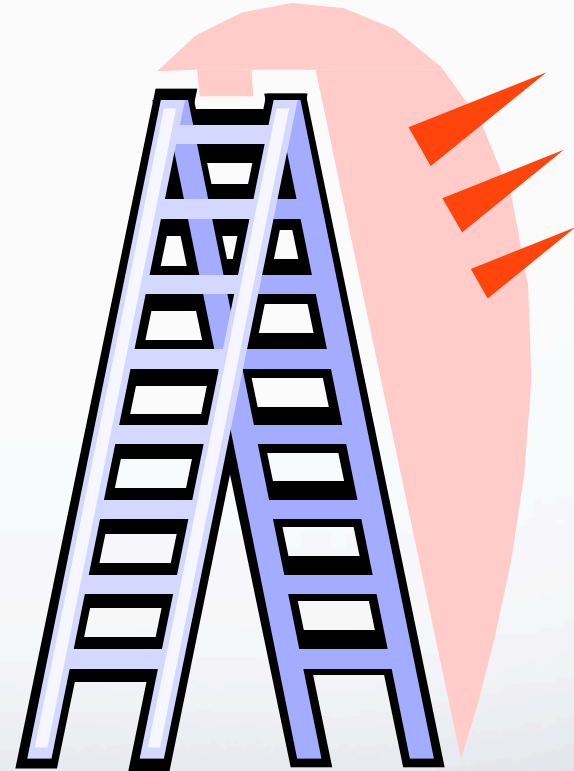
# Does It Pass?

	Present	Voting	For	Against	Pass?
5-member	5	3	2	1	Yes
5-member	4	4	2	2	No
7-member	6	4	1	3	No
7-member	4	3	2	1	Yes

# Simplified Chart of Most Used Parliamentary Motions

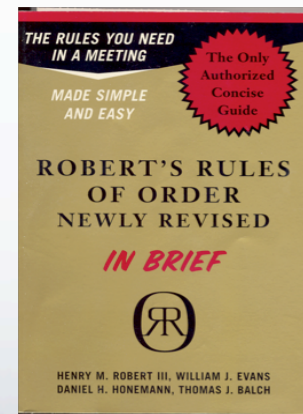
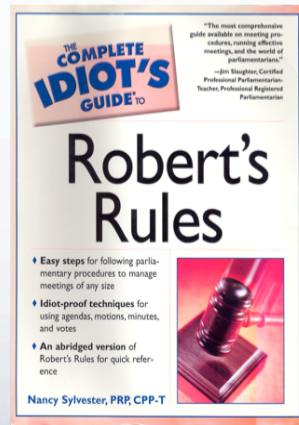
Motion	Debatable	Amendable	Vote
Adjournment	no	no	majority
Recess	no	yes	majority
Lay on the table	no	no	majority
Close debate	no	no	2/3
Postpone definitely	yes	yes	majority
Refer to committee	yes	yes	majority
Second amendment	yes	no	majority
Primary amendment	yes	yes	majority
Main motion	yes	yes	majority

Remember



# Books

- ● *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, Tenth Edition*
- ● *Robert's Rules of Order in Brief*
- ● *Notes and Comments on Robert's Rules*, Jon L. Ericson







Thanks to Texas Association of School Boards

&

Dr. Paul Krohne, Executive Director

South Carolina School Boards Association



# Related Web Sites

- ● The Official Robert's Rules of Order Web site
- ● <http://www.robertsrules.com/>
- ● The American Institute of Parliamentarians
- ● <http://www.aipparlipro.org>
- ● The National Association of Parliamentarians
- ● <http://parliamentarians.org>
- ● James Slaughter's Web site
- ● <http://www.jimslaughter.com>