


Conducting Effective Meetings

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Conducting an effective meeting

Why is it important?

Because.....

You are a locally elected board member and your goal is to make the best decisions for your school that result in increased student achievement.




Conducting an effective meeting

What is important?

To.....

Conduct your meeting in public and provide for public input, but remember it is **your meeting** in a public setting that provides for transparency.

Open Meetings Act [AS 44.62.310](#)




Conducting an effective meeting

What is important?

How.....


- Most school boards use of **Roberts Rules of Order**
- **facilitates** a meeting for efficiency and fairness to **each member**
- Provides the **opportunity** for **fair and respectful** participation




When in doubt; Know your Board bylaws

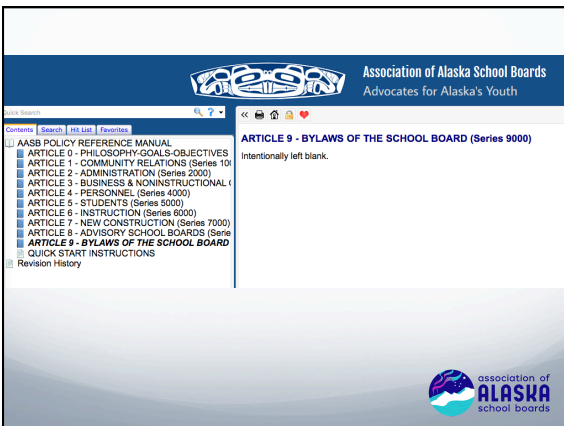
Bylaws are:

- Your Ground Rules
- Your Expectations
- Your Processes
- Your Responsibilities




If nothing else, know how to access your bylaws
(usually section 9000 of your board policies)





Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth

ARTICLE 9 - BYLAWS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD (Series 9000)
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Basic Principles of Robert's Rules of Order

- Provides a structure to facilitate the efficient, fair and respectful conduct of a meeting – **get your work done!**
- 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 (not consensus)
- No surprises
- Right to know what will be discussed (**Agenda**)
- Everyone is equal (including the chair)



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

It is usually specified in your bylaws (**BB 9323**)

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~10th edition

Page 9, Line 21




The Agenda is a Map

• **Regular Meeting**


- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Pledge of Allegiance
- 3) Roll Call
- 4) Introduction of Visitors
- 5) Persons to be Heard (public comment on non-agenda items)
- 6) Approval of Consent Agenda Items
- 7) Approval of Agenda
- 8) Communications
- 9) Reports
- 10) Unfinished Business
- 11) New Business (public may comment on each item)
- 12) Personnel
- 13) Miscellaneous
- 14) Executive Session
- 15) Future Agenda Items
- 16) Adjournment

The agenda provides structure for the board to work from, a plan for everyone to see




The Agenda is:

- Developed by the superintendent & chair
- Not final until the full board approves it
- **“Belongs” to the members – not the Chair or Superintendent**
- Once adopted, can only be changed in a regular meeting (requiring a 2/3 vote is a good idea)
- Handling board member general comments and concerns
- Is limiting in what can be proposed that evening



Agenda Continued...

- Is meant to:
 - Inform members
 - Lock in business
 - Alert the public of issues to be discussed
- **Be careful about indicating “action” items versus “information” items**
- **Asking members for agenda items should be routine**
- Consent agendas



Public Participation During Board Meetings

- A meeting held in public is not a meeting for the public meeting!
- Have sign-up procedure and other "rules" (outlined in your policies)
- Time limits – be consistent but you may need to be flexible
- **Comments limited to issues – not individuals**
- No debate with the public during the meeting
- Establish follow-up procedures -**IMPORTANT**



The agenda can provide portals of opportunity for the public to speak to the board

Regular Meeting

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Accurate board meetings minutes are critical

- Date, time and place of meeting
- Record of board members present as well as members of the public who speak
- All motions and their disposition
- Each member's vote must be recorded by name
 - Members (including chair) must vote or abstentions should be rare
- **Record of what was done, not what was said**



What to Leave Out of Minutes

- Opinion or interpretation of secretary
- Judgmental phrases
- Flowery language
- Motions that are withdrawn
- Name of person seconding the motion (*optional*)
- Language of reports (use attachments)
- Transcript-style writing



Minutes Are Critical

- Minutes are legally binding once approved
- Minutes are recording of actions of the board and not of an individual
- Everyone's job to ensure the minutes accurately reflect actions of the board
- The "I didn't mean it" board member



Robert's Rules of Order
Getting your business done!



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



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 but most do and most record it in the minutes




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 and must remain germane
- **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 cannot not be used
- The vote of each member on each item required in the minutes. The chair may ask for unanimous consent or "without objection" to speed things along.
- All votes regarding fiscal issues require a roll call vote.




Members Vote

- Announce vote totals for the minutes
- Chair should vote on all matters
- Tie vote means the motion failed? Yes or No?



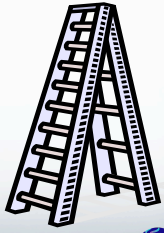

Step 6
Announcing the Vote

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



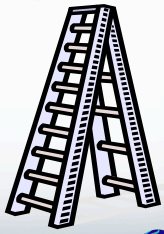

The 10 “Must-Know” Motions for School Board Meetings

1. Adjourn
2. Recess
3. Lay on the table
4. Previous question
5. Limit/extend limits of debate

The 10 “Must-Know” Motions for School Board Meetings

6. Postpone to a certain time
7. Commit or refer
8. Secondary amendment
9. Primary amendment
10. Main motion

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

Simplified Chart of Common Procedural Motions

Motion	Debatable	Amendable	Vote
Amend previously	Yes	Yes	2/3 or majority adopted w/ previous notice
Rescind	Yes	Yes	2/3 or majority w/ previous notice
Reconsider	Yes	Yes	2/3
Divide question	No	Yes	Majority
Suspend	No	No	2/3
Appeal	Yes	No	Majority


ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

Motion	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Appeal	"I appeal the decision on..."	No	No	No	No	Majority
Complete about rules, room temp., etc.	"I vote of privilege!"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it!"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Table (Suspend)	"I move the previous question!"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Revoke business (in primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

Motion	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Order of precedence or personal affairs	"Point of order!"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request of information	"Request of information..."	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify motion	"I call for a division of the house!"	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	Roll call unless someone objects
Order to consider some unfinished or "previous matter"	"I object to consideration of this question!"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we rise (or later) reconsider our action on..."	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision!"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority


The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Revoke or Point of Privilege).



Conducting a good meeting

Characteristics of a well run meeting:

- A well developed, **clear agenda** is available well prior to any meeting
- **Appropriate materials** are available for board members and the public
- Board members have **done their homework** and are prepared



Conducting a good meeting

Characteristics of a well run meeting:

- The **board chair understands their role** is to serve the board
- Be familiar with **Robert's Rules** and be prepared to keep the meeting on track with **respect, civility** and a **firm hand**.



Conducting a good meeting

Characteristics of a well run meeting:

- The **chair ensures all members** get the opportunity **to be heard**
- limits unnecessary duplication of comments
- keeps the discussion **germane to the topic** at hand.
- **Board members understand** the role of the chair and the meeting rules



Conducting a good meeting

Characteristics of a well run meeting:

- The board cultivates and demonstrates a **decorum of respect** even during vigorous debate and disagreement.
- When a **decision** is made it **belongs to the entire board** even if you did not agree with it



Conducting a good meeting

Characteristics of a well run meeting:

- **Only the board** acting as one legal unit **has authority**, no single member has any more authority than another.
- The board works and acts in an **ethical manner** (as per policy and bylaws) that is transparent to the public.



References:

Ann Macfarlane, Jurassic Parliament – www.jurassicparliament.org

Board Basics – A primer for nonprofit board members, Jerry Covey

www.rulesonline.com - Eleventh Edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*



Recommended Reading

