

Conducting Effective Meetings

Lon Garrison
School Improvement Coordinator
AASB



Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth

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.



**Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth**

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.



Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth

Conducting an effective meeting

What is important?

How.....

Most school **boards** have adopted as policy the use of ***Roberts Rules of Order*** (for small boards) which is intended to ***facilitate*** a meeting that is efficient and provides ***each member*** of the board and the public (as needed) the ***opportunity*** to participate in a ***fair and respectful*** manner.



Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth

When in doubt; Know your Board bylaws

Bylaws are:

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



If nothing else, know your bylaws!!!



Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth

Basic Principles of Robert's Rules of Order

- 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 surprises
 - 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



**Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth**

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

It is usually specified in your bylaws

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



**Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth**

Most Common Protocol Mistakes School Boards Make

- Understanding what the chair's role is ...
and is NOT
- Allow surprises
- Poor agenda planning
- Forget that your school board is a corporate board
- Forget to demand proper respect and protocol by all board members
- Forget that board member conduct sends messages to your community



The board must NOT forget.

**that someone is always
watching!!**

The Agenda is a Map

- 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 public meeting!
- Have sign-up procedure and other “rules” (outlined in your policies)
- Time limit – stick to it
- Comments limited to issues – not individuals
- Don’t debate the public during the meeting
- Establish follow-up procedures



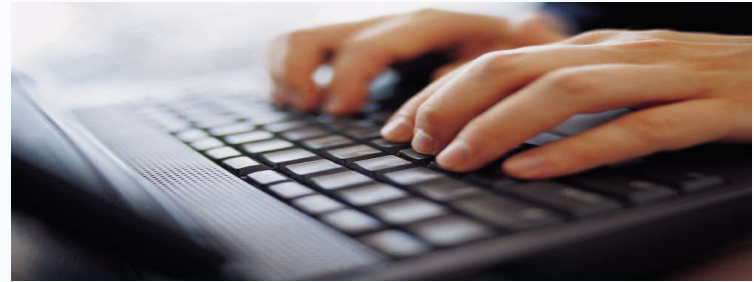
Accurate board meetings minutes are critical

- Date, time and place of meeting
- 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 abstain
- **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



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



Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth

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 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 should 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 is a lost vote



Step 6

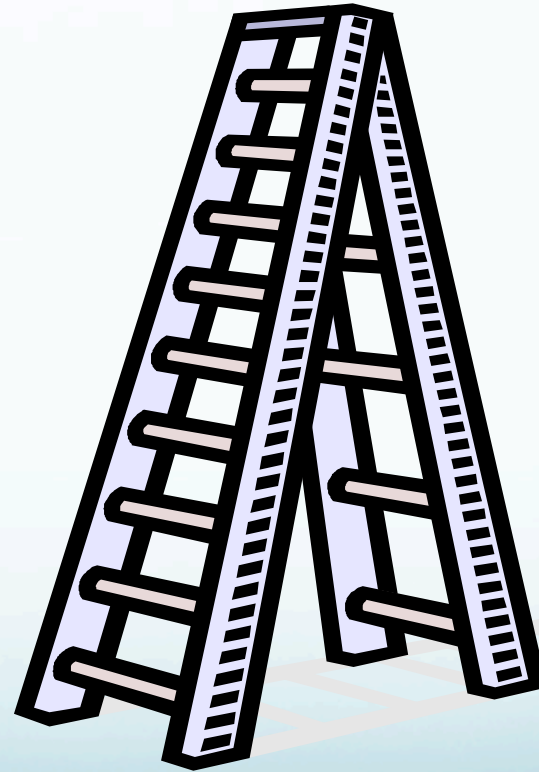
Announcing the Vote

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



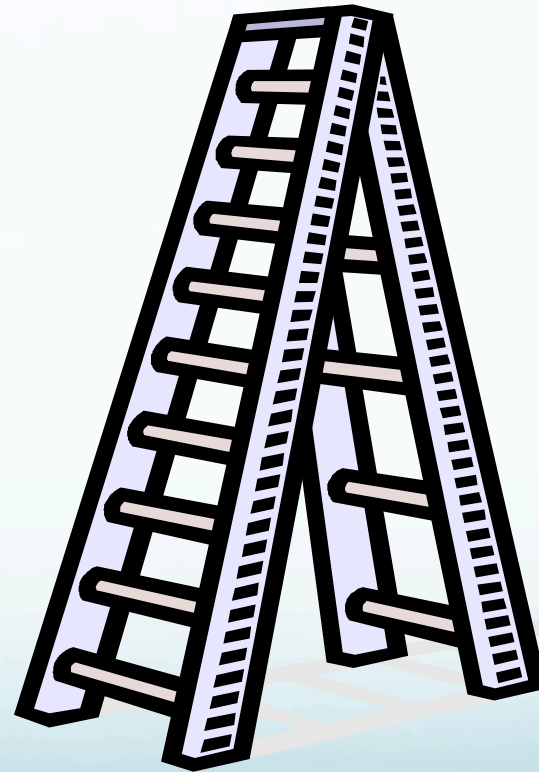
The 10 “Must-Know” Motions for School Board Meetings

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

<u>Motion</u>	<u>Debatable</u>	<u>Amendable</u>	<u>Vote</u>
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

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 by facilitating a good meeting. They should 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** but limits unnecessary duplication of comments and 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

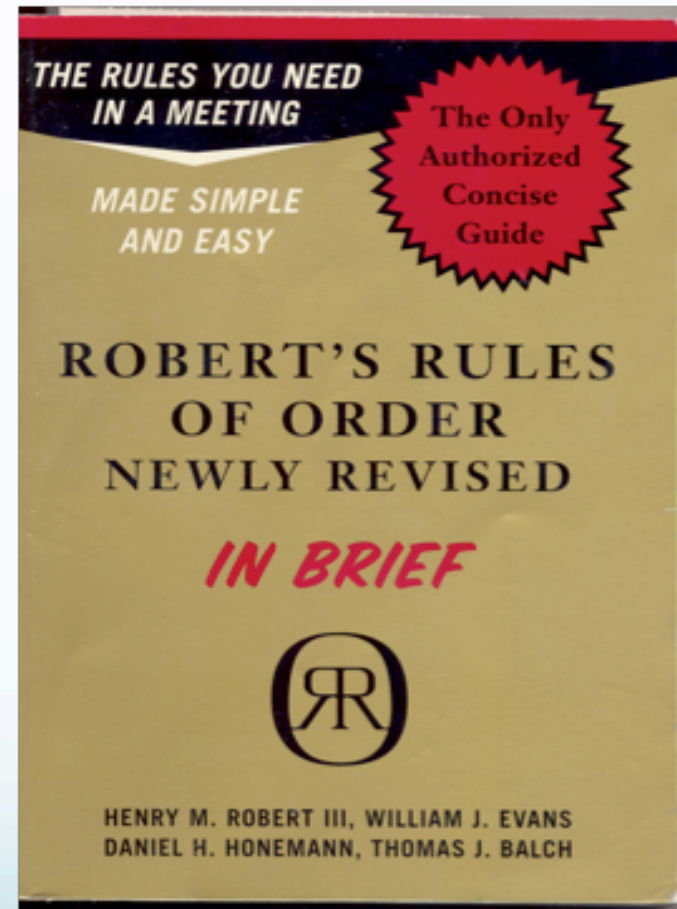
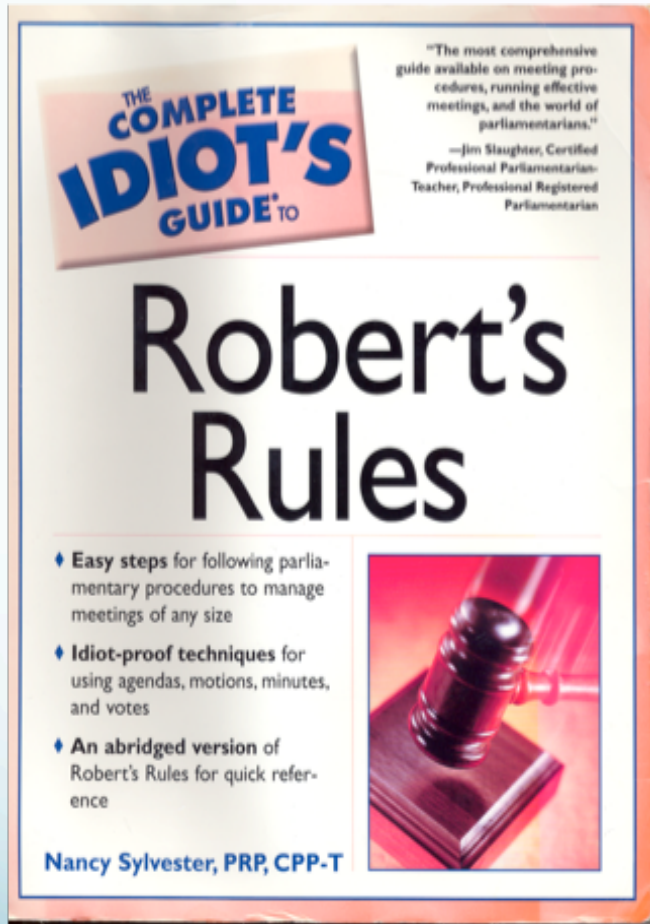
Board Basics – A primer for nonprofit board members, Jerry Covey

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



**Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth**

Recommended Reading



**Association of Alaska School Boards
Advocates for Alaska's Youth**