

Robert's Rules of Order

For Charter School Governing Boards

1. Types of meetings

- **Regular meetings:** Monthly meetings scheduled on the same day/time of the month; a schedule of regular meeting dates and times is provided at the beginning of the school year.
- **Special meetings:** Meetings called for a specific purpose; nothing can be done at a special meeting that was not *specifically* included in the notice of the meeting.
- **Annual meetings:** School bylaws may require an annual meeting; these meetings are typically to elect new board members or officers, hear reports and/or hear the auditor's report.
- **Executive session:** Only permitted if compliant with C.R.S. 24-6-402. The specific statutory reason and an agenda description of the item must be more detailed than the statute itself.

2. Notice of meetings

- State law [C.R.S. 24-6-401] requires at least 24 hours notice. School bylaws may specify a greater length of time.
- All public bodies are required to adopt a designated posting location in *January* of each year.
- The proposed agenda must be posted. Regular meeting agendas can be revised at the beginning of the meeting; although it's generally best to not add any discussion or motion that constituents will want to know about and most likely attend. These items should be addressed at the next noticed board meeting.
- Again, special meeting agendas cannot be revised.

3. Establishing a quorum

- Generally a majority of board members constitutes a quorum; however, school bylaws may specify a higher number.
- If a quorum is not established, any action taken is null and void.

4. Meeting minutes

- Meeting minutes should align with the agenda and be fairly formal. Instead of first names, the minutes should refer to Mr./Mrs./Ms. board member.
- Draft minutes should be included in board packets labeled as "draft for approval." Until minutes have been approved, they should not be distributed to the public.
- Meeting minutes can be placed on the Consent Agenda for approval.
- Since special meetings are *only* for the purpose the meeting was specifically called, minutes should never be approved at a special meeting.
- The secretary should sign the minutes after they've been approved by the board. A copy of the minutes as approved and signed, are kept in the corporate records book.

- Minutes should not be a verbatim recitation of what has been said. Rather, minutes should capture the essence of the discussion and any salient points. It's helpful to highlight motions and the outcome of the vote so that board action is explicitly evident.

5. Motions or resolutions

- Any board member that knows he will be presenting a motion, should draft it for inclusion in board packets. However, a motion can also be made after hearing a board member or committee report. Motions made as a result of a committee recommendation do not need to be seconded.
- Are worded affirmatively.
- A resolution is a more formal way for the board to take action. Resolutions are used when required for legal reasons or when the board wants to document their reasoning for taking action. The "Whereas" provisions of a resolution are used to list the reasons and the "Therefore, be it resolved" provision(s) is the action taken.
- The proper sequence of making a motion are: 1) the member states the motion; 2) another member seconds the motion; 3) the chair states the motion; 4) the members debate the motion; 5) the chair restates the motion and the members vote; and 6) the chair announces the result of the vote.
- Infrequently the board may discuss an issue without a motion being on the table. Determining the flexibility of this rule is at the discretion of the chair.
- The chair may rule an improper motion if the motion is essentially the same question that was defeated earlier in the meeting or is inconsistent with the school's charter, bylaws or policies.
- Members can explain their rationale for their vote during debate. Once the vote has been called, members may not further debate under the guise of explaining their vote.
- A motion can be amended and seconded without approval of the people making the motion (first and second). In this case, the amended motion is voted on first and then the main motion is voted on. If the amendment is approved by both the person making the motion and seconding it, then the amended motion is voted on.
- A motion to refer to committee means the committee will discuss the issue and return to the board with a recommendation at a subsequent meeting.
- A motion to postpone indefinitely can be used to get a sense of how members will be voting on the motion. The motion to PI is debated and voted on first. If the motion passed, the motion is dead. If not, the board returns to debating and voting on the main motion.
- Any member can call the previous question. This motion requires a 2/3rds vote. If the motion passes, there is no further debate and the chair calls for a vote.
- The chair can decide to break up the question into parts or any member can ask for "division of the question" in order to consider the motion in parts. This allows for members to vote differently on specific portions.
- A motion to reconsider a decision made earlier in the *same* meeting must be made by someone on the prevailing side of the vote, must be seconded, cannot be amended and requires a majority vote.
- Motions accepting resignations and electing or expelling a person from the board or office cannot be rescinded or amended.

6. Consent agenda

- A quick and easy way to process routine or noncontroversial items.
- When the agenda is approved, the Consent Agenda items are approved. Taking anything off an already-approved Consent Agenda later in the meeting requires unanimous approval.

7. Voting methods and recording

- Voting options include:
 - **Unanimous consent:** The chair asks if there are any objections and if not, the vote is recorded as being unanimous.
 - **Voice vote:** The chair asks for aye's or no's.
 - **Show of hands:** The chair calls for a show of hands to recognize votes.
 - **Roll call vote:** Members typically respond to the call by voice vote. Any member can request a roll call vote at any time, in which case the results are recorded with how each member voted.
- Bylaws determine if members can vote via proxy or by telephone. If voting by phone is permitted, everyone at the meeting should be able to hear the person voting.

8. Nomination procedures

- A motion to nominate must be seconded, isn't debatable and can be amended.
- Paper ballots can be used only if the bylaws allow. Otherwise, the procedure typically used by the board should be used.

9. Tips for the chair

- Know the charter contract, bylaws, and board policies so it's clear what can and cannot be done in meetings.
- Unless the motion was made without amendment, or was submitted in writing in the board packet, always restate the motion before calling for a vote.
- The chair rules on parliamentary issues that arise.

10. Additional notes

- If a board committee has three or more board members, the meetings must be noticed in the same manner as a regular board meeting. This is not the case if there are only two board members on a committee.
- If the chair doesn't correct bad behavior by board members or audience members, any board member can "call the member to order."