**Abridged Robert’s Rules of Order**

I. Proper Notice and Agenda for a Meeting:

1. All meetings must be preceded by adequate notice. This is generally 24 hours.
2. The notice must include all items to be taken up at the meeting.
3. Except for meetings that provide for “public comment,” there can be no discussion of any item not on the agenda, nor can there be action on any item not on the agenda.
4. There may be action on any item on the agenda, unless the agenda explicitly states something to the effect of “for information only—no action.”

II. Motions.

The most basic element of RR is that matters come before the body by motion. A member makes a motion simply by saying “I move that,” or “Move adoption of,” or “Move referral of,” or “I move to amend.”

III. Role of the Chair.

It is the obligation of the Chair to run an orderly meeting. Members are not to speak until they have been recognized by the Chair. Except for a limited class of motions, a member may not interrupt another member when they have the floor. The Chair also rules on any votes and rules on any questions of proper procedure. In the event of a disruption in the meeting, the Chair may call on the sergeant at arms to return the meeting to order. Generally, under RR, the Chair does not participate in debate or vote unless the chair’s vote affects the outcome of the motion. Committees can change this rule and always allow the chair to vote.

IV. Types of Motions. Motions generally fall into one of four classes.

1. The Main Motion

This is the matter that is before the body at that moment. Nearly all other motions bear some relation to the main motion.

1. Subsidiary Motions

These are a series of motions which propose to do something to or with the main motion. Examples include amendment, referral, laying on the table, calling the question. These motions are all subject to an order of precedence which will be discussed below.

Note that what is the “main motion” for application of the rules of precedence may change during the course of consideration of a matter. For example, if the main motion is to adopt a resolution, and a member offers a subsidiary motion to amend the resolution, the proposal for amendment becomes the main motion for purposes of consideration of the order of precedence of other motions. That is, the motion to amend is subject to further amendment, referral, laying on the table, etc. It is only when that motion has been disposed of that the motion to adopt is then back before the body for consideration.

1. Incidental Motions

Incidental motions relate to the pending matter, but generally relate to it in a procedural way such that the incidental motion must be dealt with before the body may return to either the main or subsidiary motion before it. Incidental motions take precedence over whatever motion is before the body, and in some instances, may be made when the mover does not have the floor. Examples of incidental motions are a point of order or procedure, or the appeal of a ruling on a point of order or procedure.

1. Privileged Motions

These are very few motions that take precedence over all other motions. They include motion to recess, and motion to adjourn.

V. Common Motions

1. Adjourn

To end the meeting. Not debatable.

1. Adoption:

This is to adopt the matter before the body.

1. Amendment:

To modify the main motion before the body.

1. Division of the Question / Separation:

This is a request to have separate votes on different paragraphs or portions of the proposal before the body. It is not debatable, but does require a second.

1. Lay on the Table / Take off the Table:

This is a motion to temporarily defer consideration of a matter and then to ask that the matter be taken up again. It is often used, when, for some reason, a member of the assembly or some information necessary for consideration is temporarily unavailable. Motions to lay on the table or take off the table are not debatable. The motion is often made simply as a motion to “table.” The motion should not be used if the intent is essentially to kill a proposal.

1. Point of Order or Procedure

This is another incidental motion and again is not subject to a second or a debate. It raises a question about the procedure being followed by the body. The ruling on the Point of Procedure is committed to the Chair. If a member disagrees with the ruling, they may appeal the ruling of the Chair to the full body. An appeal does require a second, and a majority must disagree with the Chair’s ruling for it to be reversed.

1. Calling the Question

This is a motion requesting that the body immediately vote on whatever matter is otherwise before it; it cuts off debate and proceeds to an immediate vote. The motion can be made either by “calling the question”, “moving the previous question,” or simply stating “Question.” The motion requires a second and is non-debatable and requires a two-thirds vote.

1. Motion to Refer/Commit

This is a subsidiary motion which asks that a matter be referred to another body, or to another meeting of the same body.

VI. Debate

Once a debatable motion is before the body, members proceed to debate. In both the making of motions and in debating the motions, members should wait to be recognized by the Chair. The department should decide on the number of times and length of time that a member may participate in debate.

VII. Unanimous Consent

Asking for unanimous consent is a quick way to dispose of non-controversial items. This may be done by proposing a “consent agenda” near the beginning of every meeting. Items that no member objects to are disposed of by unanimous approval. The Chair may ask for unanimous consent, or a member may ask for it on any pending matter. The Chair may do this by asking: “Is there any objection to recording a unanimous vote on item?”

VIII. Precedence of Motions

Some common motions are listed in descending order of precedence, that is, a motion is not in order if it has a higher number than the pending matter.

1. Undebatable Motions

1. Adjourn

2. Recess

3. Lay on the Table

4. Calling the Question

5. Limit or Extend Debate

1. Debatable Motions

1. Postpone to a Definite Time

2. Refer or Commit

3. Amend

4. Postpone Indefinitely / Place on File

5. Main Motion

1. Incidental Motions

Point of Order, Point of Information, Suspend the Rules, Division of the Assembly or of the Question, for example, take precedence over whatever matter is pending.

IX. Amendments to procedural documents

An Amendment to Rules of Order, By-Laws or a Constitution shall require previous notice and a two-thirds vote for its adoption.