

EBOOK

A Quick Guide to

*Robert's Rules of Order & Parliamentary
Procedure for HOA Boards*



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CAMS Trusted Guidance

At CAMS, we believe educated boards lead with confidence and govern more effectively. Productive meetings don't just happen; they rely on a clear framework, a defined process, and a shared understanding of how decisions are made.

Without these fundamentals, even the best intentions can give way to side conversations, unfocused discussions, and meetings that run too long. This e-book is designed to empower board members with practical insight into *Robert's Rules of Order*, helping meetings stay organized and efficient.

INTRODUCTION

What is *Robert's Rules of Order*?

Robert's Rules of Order is the most widely used system of parliamentary procedure in the United States. [Created in 1876 by Henry Martyn Robert](#), a U.S. Army officer frustrated by chaotic meetings, *Robert's Rules* gives organizations a consistent, fair, and orderly way to conduct business.

What Is Parliamentary Procedure?

Parliamentary procedure is the broader framework of rules, ethics, and customs that guide meetings. *Robert's Rules* is the most common version of this framework.

Why Does This Matter for HOAs?

For homeowner's associations (HOAs) boards, *Robert's Rules* helps:

- Run efficient meetings
- Keep discussions on track
- Reduce conflict
- Ensure decisions are transparent and legally defensible

When board members understand *Robert's Rules*, meetings become smoother, faster, and more productive - and the community notices.

The ONLY CURRENT AUTHORIZED EDITION of the
CLASSIC WORK on PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

NEWLY REVISED



12TH EDITION

Henry M. Robert III,
Daniel H. Honemann, Thomas J. Balch,
Daniel E. Seabold, and Shmuel Gerber

KEY PRINCIPLES OF *ROBERT'S RULES*

These core ideas form the foundation of all meetings that are compliant with *Robert's Rules*:

- 1 Equal Rights for All Members**
Every board member has equal authority - equal voice, equal vote, equal access to participate. Titles don't supersede fairness.
- 2 One Item at a Time**
To avoid confusion, only one motion or topic is discussed at time. This keeps meetings focused and prevents side conversations from derailing progress.
- 3 Orderly Debate**
Only one person may speak at a time, and only after being recognized by the chair. This prevents crosstalk and ensures everyone can be heard.
- 4 Respectful Conduct**
Debate should focus on issues, not personalities. Personal attacks or emotional arguments undermine the board's professionalism.
- 5 Majority Rules**
Unless governing documents say otherwise, the majority decides. This preserves fairness and reflects the community's overall will.

BEST MEETING PRACTICES FOR HOA BOARDS

Even a basic understanding of *Robert's Rules* [can transform meeting flow](#).

Follow these simple habits:

- › **Stick to the agenda.** Prevent surprises and tangents.
- › **Cover one matter at a time.** Stay focused and efficient.
- › **Give every member a chance to speak.** Equal participation reduces conflict.
- › **Direct comments to the chair.** This keeps order and prevents personal back and forth.
- › **Use motions, seconds, and votes.** Clear decisions → clear minutes → clearer accountability.

These small practices build trust and professionalism.



UNDERSTANDING MOTIONS

A motion is simply a formal proposal for the board to take action.

When making a motion, be specific.

A proper motion includes:

- › Clear action (what is being done)
- › Subject (what the action applies to)
- › Specific details (times, location, deliverables)
- › Financial impact (if applicable)
- › Who is responsible for executing the motion?

This clarity protects the board and helps ensure accurate minutes.

COMMON MOTIONS FOR BOARDS

Motion to Introduce

Used to propose an action or decision. Must be seconded. Passes by majority or per your bylaws.

Motion to Adopt

This finalizes the decision after discussion. It's the "we approve this plan" motion.

Motion to Amend

Changes the wording or details of a motion currently on the floor.

Motion to Table

Postpones discussion until more information is available or time allows.

Motion to Adjourn

Ends the meeting. Requires a second and a vote.

HOW A MOTION IS PROCESSED

Robert's Rules provides a predictable flow:

- 1 A member makes a motion**
"I move that we approve the landscaping contract with ABC Lawncare for \$25,000 for 2026."
- 2 Another member seconds it**
This shows that at least two people think it's worth discussing.
- 3 The chair restates the motion**
Ensures everyone hears the same wording.
- 4 Members discuss, ask questions, or suggest amendments**
- 5 The chair calls for a vote**
If no objections remain, the vote proceeds.

This structure protects fairness and keeps meetings moving.

SECONDING, DEBATING, AND VOTING

Seconding a Motion

Any member *other than* the maker may second. A second simply means:

“I agree this is worth discussing.”

Without a second, the motion dies.

Debating a Motion

Discussion must:

- › Be relevant
- › Go through the chair
- › Allow each member a turn

Depending on your bylaws, voting might be:

- › A show of hands
- › Voice vote
- › Secret ballot for sensitive or complex matters

Following *Robert's Rules* ensures debates stay productive and inclusive.

ENDING DEBATE (CALLING THE PREVIOUS QUESTION)

When debate runs long, or members feel ready to vote, a member may say: “I move to call the previous question.”

This motion:

- › Requires a second
- › Requires a two-thirds vote
- › Immediately ends the discussion if approved

It's the board's tool for preventing circular conversations and endless debate.

MEETING MINUTES: WHAT TO INCLUDE (AND AVOID)

Minutes are the official legal record of your HOA meetings. They should reflect actions taken, *not conversations had*.



Robert's Rules states minutes should include:

- › Name of the association
- › Type of meeting (board, annual, special, etc.)
- › Date, time, and location
- › Presence of the president and the secretary
- › Approval of prior minutes
- › All decisions and vote outcomes
- › Time of adjournment



What should NOT appear in minutes:

- › Names of those who seconded motions
- › Personal opinions or debates
- › Rationale behind decisions
- › Summaries of reports or speeches

Stick to facts. Minutes protect your association when they're clear, simple, and neutral.

CONCLUSION

Following *Robert's Rules* doesn't need to be complicated. By focusing on fairness, structure, and efficiency, your HOA board can run smoother meetings, make clearer decisions, and build stronger trust with your community.

Mastering *Robert's Rules* is simply mastering good leadership — and your residents benefit from every well-run meeting.

**Interested in exploring *Robert's Rules* further?
Consider these resources:**

- [Official website of Robert's Rules of Order](#)
- [Attorney Jim Slaughter's Parliamentary Blog](#)



At CAMS, our top priority is keeping all aspects of your community running seamlessly. We make leading and living in a managed community better and easier than ever.

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