

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Great City Council Meetings

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City of Auburn Washington
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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Our topics

- I. Introduction
- II. Meeting discussion, Point of Order, Appeal
- III. How to do this?
- IV. Motions and Amendments
- V. Who's in charge?
- VI. Public comment
- VII. The right kind of control
- VIII. Conclusion

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

I. Introduction

Why are we here?

To equip you to run effective meetings
to serve your community

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

After taking this training you will be able to:

1. Describe how the authority of the group is more important than any single individual, even the chair.
2. Follow best practices for discussion.
3. Respond to disorder and difficult people.
4. Make Motions and Amendments.
5. Run effective public comment sessions.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Disclaimer

The material contained in this presentation is based upon the principles and practices of parliamentary procedure. I am not an attorney and nothing in this presentation constitutes legal advice.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Call meeting to order

- Sit in the chair reserved for the person running the meeting.
- Rap the gavel lightly one time and announce, "This meeting of the Dinopolis City Council is called to order."
- Lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Ask the clerk to take the roll.
- Announce that a quorum is present (or not).

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Quorum

- The “quorum” is the minimum number of voting members who must be present for business to be done.
- Usually it is a majority (more than half) of the members in office—the members who are actually serving on the council.
- “Quorum” is different from “votes cast.”
- If you lose your quorum, you can’t do business.

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Serial meeting

- Local government bodies must not create a “walking quorum” or a “serial meeting.”
- When members of the body talk or email with each other outside of meetings, such that a quorum is discussing the body’s business, the Open Public Meetings Act has been violated.
- You can talk to other people, as long as the number is less than a quorum.

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Agenda

- Prepared by leadership, but within control of council (subject to notice requirements, of course).
- Robert’s Rules says that if you follow the standard “Order of Business,” you don’t need to vote to adopt an agenda.
- However, many bodies do vote. Takes a majority vote to adopt, and a 2/3 vote to change later in the meeting.

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Simplified Standard Order of Business

- Approval of minutes
- Officers’ remarks and reports
- Committee reports
- Unfinished business (not “old” business)
- New business (if your city includes this)

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The City Council desires to provide adequate time for administration and staff analysis, fact finding, and preparation.

Except in extraordinary or unusual circumstances, all items that are not routine in nature shall, when presented, include a completed Council agenda bill.

City of SeaTac Administrative Procedures

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Regular agenda/consent agenda

Question: *What’s the difference between the regular agenda and the consent agenda?*

- The regular agenda lays out the items to be taken up at a particular meeting.
- It follows your “Order of Business.”
- The agenda may include, as a single item, “Adoption of the consent agenda.”

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Consent agenda

- A “consent agenda” lists items that are expected not to be controversial.
- If any member requests that an item be removed from the consent agenda, it is done on request.
- The item is then placed at its proper place in the regular agenda.

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Consent agenda

- The consent agenda CANNOT BE DISCUSSED OR DEBATED.
- It is adopted with a single vote.
- The minutes must list all the items that were approved.

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Don't include reports in consent agenda

- It is fine to include vouchers and minutes on the consent agenda.
- The consent agenda should NOT include informational financial reports or reports from advisory or outside bodies.
- These can be noted as “received for filing.”

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WHY?

- A vote to APPROVE, ADOPT or ACCEPT a report means that the body accepts the report and its recommendations in their entirety.

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II. Meeting discussion, Point of Order, and Appeal

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Principle of Equality

All members have equal rights,
privileges and obligations.

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Key Point

Discussion in council meetings
IS NOT A CONVERSATION.
It is DEBATE and has its own rules.

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Fundamental guideline

**No one may speak a second
time until everyone who wishes
to do so has spoken once.**

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Why don't we follow this?

- Councils tend to discuss their affairs in conversational mode.
- In conversations, dominant people tend to dominate.
- Agreeable people tend to let them.
- Must have a structure to make sure that everyone has an equal chance to speak.
- This is both fair and efficient.

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Equity and inclusion

- This rule is also the best way to ensure that each person has an equal voice.
- The system is formal but inclusive.
- It will make for robust discussion and advance your equity goals.

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Point of Order
flying dinosaur

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Point of Order

flying dinosaur

- When ANOTHER MEMBER breaks one of the rules, a member may make a POINT OF ORDER.
- Chair rules on the point.

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Point of Order

- A motion claiming that a procedural mistake has been made.
- According to Robert, can be made only by a member.
- We recommend that key staff be authorized also.
- Public may not raise a Point of Order.

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Point of Order

- You can make this at any time, except during voting.
- Do not have to be recognized.
- May interrupt a speaker if necessary.
- Must be timely – made at the time of the offense.

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Process Point of Order

1. Member: *Point of Order!*
2. Chair: *State your point.*
3. Member: *That remark breaks our rule against interrupting.*
4. Chair: *The point is well taken. Members will refrain from interrupting each other.*

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Language tip

- Use the “third person” to keep things neutral and lessen conflict.
- Note that the chair states the general rule.
- The chair is speaking on behalf of the rules of procedure.
- DO NOT SAY “You are out of order” or “You made a mistake.”

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If someone is confused...

- If a councilmember has trouble explaining what the Point of Order is about, you can ask:

What rule has been broken?

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When in doubt, ask the group!

- Chair can always ask the group to decide if a Point of Order is correct (“well-taken”) or not.

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- Member A: *That statement is just a bunch of baloney!*
- Member B: *Point of Order!*
- Chair: *State your point.*
- Member B: *The word "baloney" is insulting!*
- Chair: *The chair is in doubt and will ask the group to decide.*

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- Chair: *All those who believe that the word "baloney" is insulting, please say "aye."*
- Members in favor: *Aye!*
- Chair: *All those who believe it is not insulting, please say "no!"*
- Members opposed: *No!*
- Chair: *The ayes have it, the word baloney is insulting and may not be used, OR The noes have it, the word baloney is not insulting and may be used.*

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Chair doesn't have to say "Point of Order"

- The chair has the duty of maintaining order and decorum, so doesn't need to say "Point of Order."
- Just needs to take appropriate action.

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Chair subject to same rules

- If the chair breaks one of the rules, a member may raise a Point of Order.
- The chair rules on own behavior, which seems odd, but is the way the system works.

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Why make a Point of Order?

- Make a Point of Order if a rule has been broken.
- DO NOT make a Point of Order because you think someone has made a factual mistake, or you disagree with what they said.
- Speak about that when it is your turn to discuss.

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No further discussion

- Once the chair has ruled on a Point of Order, the only allowable form of discussion is to appeal the ruling.

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Appeal

The most important motion in all of Robert's Rules – and the least known!

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Chair's rulings can be appealed

- The CHAIR enforces order and decorum.
- The GROUP is the final authority.
- Any TWO MEMBERS can appeal a ruling of the chair (one member appeals and one seconds the appeal).
- EXCEPTION: If the ruling is a matter on which there cannot be two reasonable interpretations, the ruling cannot be appealed.

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A simple way to appeal

Any member shall have the right to challenge any action or ruling of the Mayor, in which case the decision of the majority shall govern.

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Point of Order and Appeal are the heart of democracy



In our view, the motions Point of Order and Appeal are the heart of our democracy. They provide the mechanism to stop a dictatorial chair who's acting like a "boss." They are essential for every local

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III. How to do this?

- Seek recognition before speaking.
- No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.
- No interrupting (in general)
- No sidebar conversations.
- Set time limits.
- Courtesy and respect are required.

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Seeking recognition

- Raise your hand and wait to speak until the presider (chair) calls your name, nods at you, or gives some other sign that you have permission to speak (you "have the floor")
- Online, you can use the "raise hand" function or raise your physical hand.
- For Zoom on the telephone, press *9 (star nine).

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Duty to remain silent

- When you have not been recognized, you have a duty to remain silent.
- The exception is a Point of Order when essential.

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Rights and Responsibilities of the Member



Willdon L. Merritt, FRP, CPP, has graciously authorized Jurassic Parliament to publish this listing of the rights and responsibilities of ordinary members of an organization.

Please note that neither the list of member rights nor the list of member responsibilities is intended to be exhaustive. In addition, neither the rights nor the responsibilities are necessarily absolute in every instance. For example, the right to debate may be cut off or limited by motions for the Previous Question or to Limit Debate. And, while a member should not vote on a matter of direct personal interest, under Robert's

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Fundamental guideline

No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.

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NO CROSS TALK BETWEEN COUNCILMEMBERS!

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HOW to do this?

- Chair can keep track of who has spoken and who wishes to speak, using a chart.
- Chair can empower vice-chair to do this – good training for them.

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SPEAKING CHART

Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	etc.
Garcia							
Jackson							
Juma							
Lee							
Patel							
Smith							
Young							

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A great method – the “round robin”

- The chair goes around the table, asking each person in turn for their opinion. People may pass and speak at the end.
- Important to have a pencil in hand, to jot down points or questions for when your turn arrives.
- Chair must wait their turn also!
- This rule applies to questions and answers also, and to discussions with staff.
- Don't let any two people “hijack” the meeting.

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Interrupting

- When a member has the floor, they have the right to speak until they have completed their comments.
- Members may not interrupt each other.
- Chair may interrupt members when necessary to bring them to order.
- Members may interrupt to make a Point of Order when essential.

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No sidebars or texting

- No “sidebar conversations”
- No whispering!
- No texting to each other or people outside during meetings.
- No posting on social media during meetings.

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Keep your camera on

- Unless technical considerations prevent it, all councilmembers should keep their camera on while participating online.
- Otherwise you are “lurking,” observing your colleagues without yourself being observed.
- This is disturbing and creates an unpleasant emotional imbalance.

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Frustrating

- Structuring discussion in these ways can be frustrating.
- Councilmembers sometimes say, “I wish we could just hash it out and have a free-form discussion.”
- The Open Meetings Act, and the press of time, mean that usually, this won't serve your council well.
- However...

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An occasional exception...

- Sometimes there is benefit in the conversational style or “informal discussion.”
- It can be useful at study sessions (Committee of the Whole), or in committee meetings.
- Chair must ensure that no one dominates.
- Do not make the conversational style your ordinary or “default” style of discussion.

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It is the duty of the chair...

To expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of members.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition 47:7 (7)

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Set time limits

- Jurassic Parliament recommends that councils set estimated times for agenda items.
- We recommend time limits on individual councilmember speeches – 3 or 5 minutes.
- Time limits cannot be debated.
- They can be suspended or changed by a two-thirds vote without debate.

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Time limits create productive meetings



The mayor of Alexandria, Virginia began council meetings by responding to each person giving public comment, sometimes delaying the start of regular business three hours or more. Was this reasonable? No. We need time limits to establish structure and create productive meetings. Robert's Rules says that members have the right to an efficient meeting. It takes effort to do this, and for the chair to maintain the limits, but the effort will pay off big time.

SET AN OVERALL TIME LIMIT FOR THE MEETING
If you are a private nonprofit board, a good target for a regular board meeting is two hours. After

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Fundamental guideline

Courtesy and respect towards everyone are required.

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These remarks are inappropriate

1. Personal remarks about other members (except for conflict of interest)
2. Discourteous remarks – insulting language, attacks
3. Inflammatory language
4. Criticizing past actions of the group (unless subject is under discussion, or member is about to propose to amend or rescind the action at the end of their speech)
5. Remarks that are not germane (relevant) to the discussion

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Inappropriate Remarks on Local Government Councils



If you serve as an elected official on a local government council or board, you should know the types of remarks that are inappropriate during discussion at a meeting. Robert's Rules of Order and the common parliamentary law it is based on require that:

- Members of a council or board must be courteous to one another.

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Personal remarks

The measure, not the member, is the subject of debate...The moment the chair hears such words as "fraud," "liar," or "lie" used about a member in debate, he must act immediately and decisively to correct the matter and prevent its repetition.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition, Section 43:21

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CHEAT SHEET

WAIT! WAIT! WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

	If you are the chair, say...	If you are a member speaking about another member, say...	If you are a member speaking about the chair, say...
BIG MISTAKES			
speaking twice in a row	Members are reminded that no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.	Point of order. The member has spoken twice while others are waiting to speak.	Point of order. The chair does not have the right to dominate the discussion, but must speak in turn.
not seeking recognition	Members will kindly seek recognition before speaking.	Point of order. Members must seek recognition before speaking.	(not applicable)
speaking directly to another member	Members will kindly address all remarks to the chair.	Point of order. Members are supposed to speak to the chair.	(not applicable)
interrupting another person	Members will kindly refrain from interrupting one another.	Point of order. Interrupting is not allowed.	Point of order. The chair does not have the right to interrupt a member.
INAPPROPRIATE REMARKS			
personal remarks	Members will refrain from making personal remarks.	Point of order. Personal remarks are not allowed.	Point of order. Personal remarks are not allowed.
insulting language, vulgarly, or badly	Insulting or vulgar language is not allowed at our meetings.	Point of order. The language used by the member is insulting/vulgar.	Point of order. The chair is using insulting/vulgar language.
informatory language	Informatory language is not allowed.	Point of order. That remark is informatory.	Point of order. That remark is informatory.
criticizing past actions	Members may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.	Point of order. Members may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.	Point of order. The chair may not criticize a past action of the group during a meeting, with two exceptions.

Note that this is proprietary information. Do not duplicate.

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The focus of our meeting is...

- Words on paper.
- Focus on the motions and not on the people who make the motions.
- We recommend that councilmembers take this approach outside the meeting also.
- Focus on actions taken and do not criticize colleagues outside the meeting.

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Who decides?

- If any question arises whether a remark is appropriate or not, or a comment is germane, the chair rules, subject to appeal.
- The chair may also turn immediately to the group to ask the members to decide.
- Ultimately it is the GROUP'S CALL.

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Important note

- We are speaking here about discussion within council meetings.
- These prohibitions DO NOT APPLY to the public when they are giving public comment.

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SAMPLE DISCUSSION GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Permission is granted to modify these guidelines as your organization prefers. Note that these guidelines refer to discussion within the body, not to comment by the public.

1. The chair of the meeting runs the meeting in the service of the body. The chair serves as the facilitator for the meeting and has the primary responsibility for maintaining order. The chair may take part in discussion, but may not answer each individual speaker back, nor lecture or criticize the members. When discussing substantive questions, the chair will usually speak and vote, if entitled to do so, after others have spoken.

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IV. Motions and Amendments

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Main Motion


Tyrannosaurus rex

- A main motion is the usual and customary way to start the action of discussion and decision-making.
- For small boards (up to about 12 people), it is OK to have discussion before a motion is moved. Jurassic Parliament recommends moving the motion before discussing it whenever possible.

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Main Motion
Tyrannosaurus rex

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Main Motion

We recommend this sequence:

- Staff presents proposal in writing and answers any questions. Each councilmember may ask one or two questions, then the next member has a turn.
- Motion is moved and seconded.
- Members discuss motion and may amend it.
- Members vote on motion.

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Draft motions

- It is perfectly fine to include proposed or “draft” motions in an agenda.
- This can be very helpful in advancing the work of the body.
- The body is not obliged to take them up.
- Someone must “move” the motion – propose it – for the body to consider it.

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When can you make a new motion?

- 1) If the agenda contains a draft motion in an agenda bill, you can move it at the proper time.
- 2) You can make a motion spontaneously when a subject is being discussed, if it is germane.
- 3) You can make a motion spontaneously under “New Business,” if your council includes that heading in its agenda.

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- *The City Council desires to provide adequate time for administration and staff analysis, fact finding, and preparation.*
- *Except in extraordinary or unusual circumstances, all items that are not routine in nature shall, when presented, include a completed Council agenda bill.*

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Characteristics of Main Motion

- It should be in writing if at all possible (project on screen, use 3-part form).
- It should be **clear** and unambiguous. Don't say, "I move what he just said," or "so moved."
- It should be phrased in the grammatical **positive**.
- It must comply with the **bylaws** and the **procedural** law of the land.
- You can have only **one main motion** at a time.

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Fundamental guideline

One thing at a time.

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How do you introduce a Main Motion?

Three little words:

I move that...

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Member must be clear

- The member has the responsibility of formulating the motion.
- Don't mix up your ideas about the subject with the motion itself. Save those for debate.

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I've been noticing that the number of wild cats is increasing in our city, and they're getting stomped on by bigger dinosaurs. It's important that the city do something to protect them, so I think allowing catios would be great, this fits in with our mandate to serve all species and it will make the little kitties safer.

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State the exact motion clearly

I move that residents be authorized to build catios in their private yards.

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You can request a moment to write it down

- May I have a few minutes to write this motion down?
- Chair may also request that motion be written.
- Can use 3-part motion forms.

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Second

Councilmember Smith seconds the motion!

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Clerk should speak up

- If the clerk did not hear who seconded the motion, they should speak up.
The clerk inquires, who seconded this motion?
- In general, clerk MUST do this when lack of clarity prevents doing the job, and council must be patient!

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Second the motion

- You “second a motion” to show that you would like to talk about it.
- No need to be recognized. Just call out “second.”
- It is OK to second a motion you disagree with, if you want to explain why it’s a bad idea.

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If no second...

- If there is no second, the chair says:
There being no second, the motion will not be considered.
- Then moves immediately to next item of business.

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You can't speak against your own motion

- Under Robert's Rules, the maker of the motion cannot speak against it.
- If the discussion has changed their mind, they should request permission to withdraw the motion.
- The maker CAN vote against their own motion.

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Eight steps to process a motion

1. **Member makes motion.**
2. Another member seconds motion.
3. **Chair states motion.**
4. Members debate and/or amend motion.
5. **Chair restates motion and calls for vote.**
6. Members vote on motion.
7. Chair states results of vote, whether motion passes or fails, and what happens next as a result of the vote.
8. Chair states next item of business.

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Main Motion *Tyrannosaurus rex*

Residents will be authorized to build catios in their private yards.

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Main Motion
Tyrannosaurus rex

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Point of Information

Friendly member: *Chair, I'm confused!
What exactly IS a "catio"?*

Chair: *A catio is a patio for cats. Here's an example.*

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Point of Information

Note that "Point of Information" is a QUESTION. It is also called "Request for Information." It cannot be used to GIVE information.

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Language tip

If someone uses this motion incorrectly, chair can ask:

What information does the member need in order to decide how to vote?

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Step #3 is very important!

- Presider **MUST** repeat the motion, or have the clerk repeat it.
- After step #3, the motion belongs to the group as a whole, not to the person who made it.
- **WHY?** So that everyone knows what we are actually discussing.

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General contractor

I feel that catios will allow our dear feline friends to experience the outdoors without getting hurt or endangering other wildlife.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this motion.

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Photographer

I'm in favor! My cousin has built a catio, and her little pet Fuzzy is completely at home in it, as you can see from this picture.

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Architect

I think this is a terrible idea! Catios are intrusive and will ruin the look of our city. Here's an example I saw when I visited Dinodome last week. We don't want this kind of ugly building in beautiful Dinopolis.

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Moving to vote

- When it seems that discussion is finished, chair asks, "Is there any further discussion?" or "Are you ready to vote?" and then, if no one speaks up, takes the vote.
- These are rhetorical questions.

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Step #5 is also very important!

- Chair must repeat the motion before the vote is taken.
- Have you ever been at a meeting when once the vote is taken, someone says, "What did we just approve?" and no one knows exactly what it was?
- WHY? So that everyone knows what we are actually voting on.

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Voting

- Chair repeats the motion.
- Chair says, "All those in favor say 'aye,' all those opposed say 'no.'"
- Chair announces results of vote, whether motion passes or fails, and what will happen next as a result of the vote.
- Chair announces next item of business.

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Voting

The "ayes" have it, the motion passes, and residents will be authorized to build catios in their private yards,
OR

The "noes" have it, the motion fails, and we will not implement this proposal.

- Note that on a voice vote, the chair must call for the negative vote, even if it seems obvious that the motion is unanimous.

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Voting

- There is no fixed rule about recording the vote in the minutes.
 - The motion passed/the motion failed.
 - The motion passed by 3 votes to 2.
 - The motion passed with members Smith, Jones and Robinson voting in favor, and members Green and Black voting against.

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Don't do this!

- The motion passed with members Green and Black voting against.

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No debate during voting

- Nothing can interrupt the voting process.
- Members are not allowed to explain their vote during the vote, or afterwards.
- Even a Point of Order must wait until the result of the vote is announced.

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Changing your vote

- A member may change their vote up until the time the chair announces the result.
- After that time, it takes unanimous consent of the body (everyone agreeing) for the member to change their vote.
- Once the chair has moved on to the next item of business, it is too late to change a vote.

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Abstain

- Under Robert's Rules, to abstain is to do nothing.
- Abstentions are not counted.
- The chair does not call for abstentions.
- However, if you are a public body, likely you will count abstentions.

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Abstain

- Some councils have a rule that an abstention is counted as a "yes" vote.
- Some councils have a rule that an abstention is counted as a "no" vote.
- We recommend against these approaches. We like Robert's guidance of giving the member freedom to abstain at his or her discretion.

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Conflict of interest

- If you have a conflict of interest, you should "recuse" yourself from the vote.
- Recusal is a special form of abstention.
- Talk with your attorney before the meeting! Don't spring it during the meeting itself.
- It may be that recusal is not enough.

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See new MRSC post

Resolving Financial Conflicts of Interest:
Is Abstaining from Voting Enough?

www.mrsc.org

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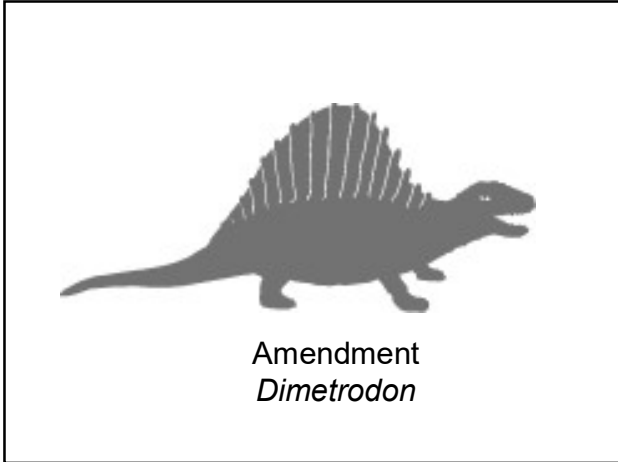
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Unanimous consent

- Form of voting—a type of "fast track."
- Very efficient for minor procedural matters.
- Presider suggests something, and if you agree, REMAIN SILENT. Silence means consent.
- If you don't want to proceed in this way, say "OBJECTION."
- Presider then abandons the fast track to use the regular method.

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Amendment

Dimetrodon

- You amend a motion to improve it.
- The Amendment applies to the main motion.
- The Amendment must be germane (relevant).
- Anyone may move to amend, even the person who made the motion.

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Amendment

Engineer: *I move that we amend the motion by adding the words, "Provided that the plan for each catio is approved by the Design Review Board."*

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If adopted, will read:

Residents will be authorized to build catios in their private yards, **provided that the plan for each catio is approved by the Design Review Board.**

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Four ways to amend

1. Add or insert words.
2. Strike out words.
3. Strike out words and insert words in their place.
4. Substitute (tricky!).

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Process Amendment

- The Amendment is processed using the same eight steps that we just saw for a main motion.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

The challenge is...

- We vote on amendments BEFORE we vote on the main motion, in order to make the main motion as good as possible—to PERFECT the motion.

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Amendment blocks Main Motion

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Fate of the Amendment

- People sometimes get confused, and don't realize that after voting on the amendment, the process continues.
- Once the fate of the amendment has been decided, debate continues on the main motion.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

More amendments are possible...

- Once you've dealt with one amendment, you may have others...
- provided that they apply to a *different aspect* of the main motion.
- It takes special actions (reconsideration) to go back and change something we've already amended.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

The process continues

- After all amendments have been processed, the body still must vote on the AMENDED MAIN MOTION.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

"Friendly amendment"

- People often process "friendly amendment" the wrong way.
- DO NOT turn to maker and seconder to ask if they accept the amendment – this give them improper power.
- Handle this the same as any other amendment.
- Ask, "Is there a second?" etc.
- Once a motion has been stated by the chair, the maker and seconder have same rights as any other member.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Secondary amendment

- When an amendment has been proposed, it is called a "primary amendment."
- It is also possible to amend the amendment, which is called a "secondary amendment."
- This is processed just like the main motion, EXCEPT that no further amendments are possible—no "tertiary" amendments.


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Primary Amendment
Dimetrodon

122



Secondary Amendment
Small Dimetrodon

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Amend the Amendment

Architect: I move that we amend the amendment by striking the words "Design Review Board" and inserting the words "a licensed architect."

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

If adopted, amendment will read:

provided that the plan for each catio is approved by ~~the Design Review Board~~ a licensed architect.

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Secondary amendment
Secondary amendment
blocks primary amendment

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Sequence

- Discuss and vote on the secondary amendment.
- Discuss and vote on the primary amendment.
- Discuss and vote on the Main Motion.

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No amendments in minutes

- According to Robert's Rules of Order, details of each amendment and how it was voted on ARE NOT INCLUDED in the minutes.
- "After discussion and amendment, the following motion was adopted..."

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Call the Question *Triceratops*

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Call the Question *Triceratops*

- People often process this motion wrong.
- You cannot simply cut off debate by saying "question."
- You must be recognized to make this motion.
- It requires a **second**.
- It cannot be **debated or amended**.
- It takes a **two-thirds** vote to pass.

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EXERCISE Motions practice

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EXERCISE
Using the surplus
Dinopolis has a \$10 million surplus this year.
What will the city do with it?

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Performing Arts Center

Moved and seconded: That the city build a performing arts center at a cost not to exceed \$10 million.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

V. Who's in charge?

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Note on role of chair

- Robert has different rules for small boards (up to about 12 people).
- In a small board, chair may make motions, discuss, and vote, unless law, regulations or bylaws say otherwise.
- We recommend that chair speak and vote last (this is a Jurassic Parliament suggestion).

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules


Can mayor take part in discussion?

- YES in a council-manager city.
- In Washington State, a "strong mayor" by custom can take part in discussion, even though technically not a member of the council.
- Nevertheless, the mayor must remain the servant of the group, and may not dominate the discussion.
- See our "Citizens Guide" for more on this.

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CITIZEN'S GUIDE
TO EFFECTIVE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC MEETINGS
USING PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AND
ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER
IN WASHINGTON STATE



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This guide has been prepared to assist citizens and residents who want to know the expectations for public.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

The president...should, of all the members, have the least to say upon the substance of pending questions.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th ed., Section 47:19

138

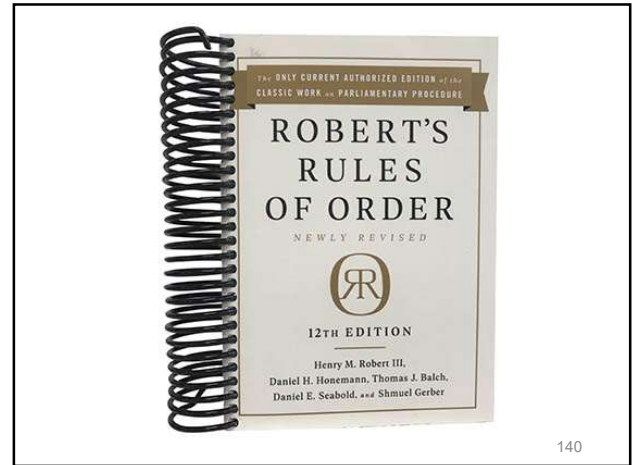
138

Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

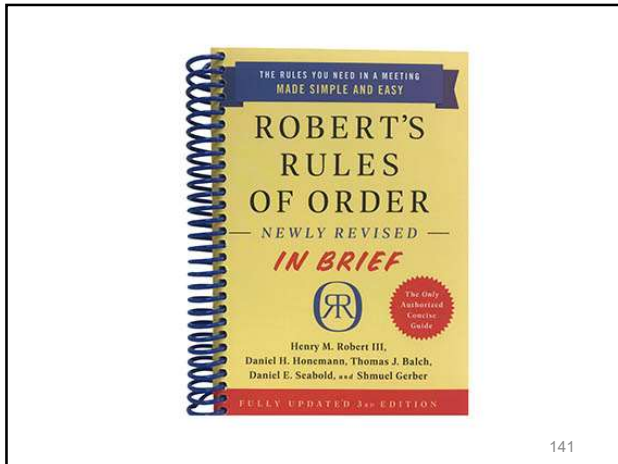
Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition
Abbreviated RONR
"Rules of Order Newly Revised"

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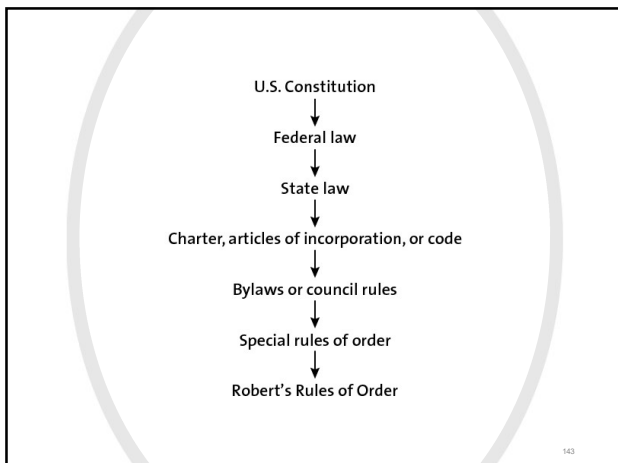
Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

We recommend spiral-bound editions,
available only from the
National Association of Parliamentarians

www.parliamentarians.org

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Your rules have higher authority

- You may choose the rules that suit the Council best, and they have higher authority than Robert's Rules.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Accountability Hierarchy

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Voluntary Association

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Key Point

Each member has an equal right to speak and to try to persuade others to accept their view.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Key Point

During meetings, the chair controls the process so the group can make the decisions.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Fundamental guideline

During meetings, the chair is the servant of the group, and the group is the final authority.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

You have both types of structure

- The council forms a voluntary association.
- The mayor and staff form an accountability hierarchy.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

What is each person's individual authority?

All members of a governing board share in a joint and collective authority which exists and can be exercised only when the group is in session.

The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure

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LEGISLATION is the prerogative of the council. Mayor supports council, but does not decide.

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ADMINISTRATION is the prerogative of the mayor.
Council may not interfere.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Councilmembers may not do the work of the city

- Elected officials care deeply about their city.
- Sometimes they have special knowledge and expertise.
- They may make suggestions to the mayor, but they may not do the work of the city themselves.
- Why? They must not cross the line between legislation and administration.
- This is a legal requirement!

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Your duty as a councilmember

- **Debate and determine overall strategy, policy, and legislation for your city.**
- **Leave the details of operations to the mayor and staff.**

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Vigorous discussion

- Discussion on council motions can and should be vigorous!
- Express your views freely and don't hold back.
- Once the vote has been taken, however, things change.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

It's OK to disagree

- The fact that people have different opinions is a strength. It's a good thing!
- BUT we tend to identify with our own position.
- When we are defeated, we sometimes take it personally.
- This is a mistake.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

At the end of the day, the body must unite behind its decision.

- It is a basic democratic principle that the decision of the majority, voting at a properly called meeting, is the decision of the body as a whole.
- The minority must make it their decision as well.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Democracy is the worst system of government in all the world, with the exception of those others that have been tried from time to time.

Winston Churchill

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Bottom line

- In a democracy, HOW we decide things is more important than WHAT we decide.
- Courtesy and respect, no surprises, no unilateral action, no end-runs...these are essential for the system to work.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Members have a duty

- When serving on a public body, members have a duty to uphold the decision of that body, even if they disagree with it.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Disagreement

- Members may express their disagreement in public, but may not attempt to UNDERMINE the decision.
- They are free to try to persuade their colleagues, during the meeting, to change the decision (within limits).

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

We all want to be right

- It's human nature to be unhappy when you oppose the decision.
- Our current culture places a strong premium on individuality.
- I invite you to commit yourself to a bigger principle than your own views.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

WHY?

After everyone's voice is heard, including the minority, it is the majority that make the decision.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Lost the vote? Don't sabotage the council's action



We've had inquiries recently about elected officials who lost a vote, and then actively worked against the outcome. This amounts to trying to sabotage the council. It is wrong, wrong, wrong.

THE MAJORITY RULES
General Henry Martyn Robert, the original author of *Robert's Rules of Order*, expresses it this way:

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

What is the alternative?

The ballot box is sacred because the alternative is blood.

Elias Canetti

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

VI. Public comment

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Another disclaimer

Robert's Rules of Order contains very little guidance on public comment. In general, this information comes from Jurassic Parliament's experience over 15 years of working with local governments.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Public hearing vs public comment

- A PUBLIC HEARING is an administrative procedure governed by state law and your council rules.
- You must include testimony in the minutes.
- The PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD is an agenda item governed by your own rules.
- We strongly recommend NOT including public comment in your meeting minutes.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

WHY public comment?

- A council meeting is NOT A MEETING OF THE PUBLIC.
- It is a MEETING OF THE COUNCIL that is held in public.
- The purpose of the “public comment” period is to allow the councilmembers to become informed about the views of the public.
- It should be carefully structured.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Be consistent

- Best to announce rules at beginning of each session, and provide written handout.
- For the sake of fairness, rules for public comment MUST be enforced consistently.
- Public must address remarks to chair, not to individual councilmembers or the audience.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Follow time limits

- Ask staff to time speakers so chair is not distracted.
- Some bodies have a visible timer so speakers know when their limit is approaching.
- Speakers may not donate their time to someone else.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Do not dialogue

- This is not a dialogue.
- Do not get into back-and-forth with the public. If chair starts dialoguing with the public, the situation can quickly become confusing.
- If you respond to some speakers but not to others, it can be interpreted as showing bias.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

We tell the public it is a one-way communication to the council.

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Differing expectations

- The public may have different expectations.
- They may come to the meeting looking for answers to specific questions.
- They may want to argue.
- They may want their remarks “on the record.”
- They may want to raise a “Point of Order,” which they cannot do.
- Education is critical!

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Audience relations

- Only the chair may speak to the audience as a whole.
- Individual councilmembers may not speak to the public or recognize people in the audience.
- Discourage demonstrations—clapping, booing, whistling, stamping of feet, etc. These can chill free speech, both for councilmembers and public.

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Time, place and manner

- The courts have found that local governments may limit the time, place and manner of public comment.
- All such restrictions must be viewpoint-neutral.
- We recommend setting a time period for public comment (for example, 30 minutes).
- We recommend setting a 3-minute limit for individual speakers.

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If a speaker runs over...

- If a speaker runs over the limit, interrupt and request that they conclude their remarks, or simply inform them, “Your time is up.”

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Comment vs. disruption

- Attendees do not have the right to DISRUPT the meeting.
- However, the courts have found that mere words do not usually constitute disruption.
- In general, residents can say whatever they like during public comment.

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Your rules

*Any person who causes **actual disruption** by failing to comply with the allotted time established for the individual speaker's public comment, **making personal attacks, using hate speech, making slanderous remarks** or other disruptive conduct while addressing the Council shall be barred from further participation by the Presiding Officer, unless permission to continue is granted by a majority vote of Councilmembers present.*

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

How to act on dais?

- Chair and members convey interest and concern by their body language.
- They should listen to each person speaking as if there were no one else in the room (this is hard!).
- Keep a warm and pleasant expression, or a neutral face if speaker is not complimentary.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

How to respond?

- Best approach is to thank each speaker, even if negative, and move on.
- Chair may provide brief factual information, if appropriate, which must not degenerate into lecturing or criticism.
- Don't put staff on the spot. Invite people to address questions to staff separately.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Attacks on staff

- Councilmembers should not criticize staff in public and must be courteous to them.
- If public attacks staff, do not get defensive.
- Do not get in a hostile exchange.
- Be prepared if appropriate to defend the staff in a calm, positive manner.
- Why? If no response is made, it can seem as if the body agrees with the criticisms.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Conclude with thanks

- At the end of the public comment period, the chair should thank the public for attending.
- Explain again that while this is not a time for dialogue, all comments and questions are taken seriously by the body.
- Sincerity and warmth on the part of the chair will make a big difference to the experience the public has at your meeting.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Other channels


- It is essential for you to be in touch with your public, to be responsive, and to appear responsive.
- Given the limitations of the public comment period, we recommend maintaining other channels for dialogue with the public.
- Community forums, personal discussions, "coffee with the council" (always less than a quorum), a form on your website, surveys, etc.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Guidelines for Public Comment in Local Government



The public comment period is an essential part of local government meetings. These are our guidelines for public comment periods in local government. They refer to ordinary business and work or study meetings of councils, boards and committees. Public hearings and quasi-judicial hearings are governed by different rules.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

SAMPLE PUBLIC COMMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Now is the time to hear from our public. We welcome your comments which are very important to us. Please go to the podium, speak into the microphone, and give your name and city of residence. Address your comments to the mayor/council as a whole, not to individuals. Courtesy is appreciated. Comments are welcome on general city business or specific agenda items. Each speaker is limited to 3 minutes. You may not donate your time to another speaker. If several people are here to speak on the same subject, we invite you to choose a single representative who may speak for 5 minutes.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

VII. The right kind of control

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Three things you must have:

1. Knowledge of how this system works
2. A majority on your council in favor of civility and this system.
3. The personal moxie, chutzpah, energy and drive to put it all into practice.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Chair must control who speaks when

- The chair serves as a BENEVOLENT DICTATOR, enforcing the rules the group has chosen.
- Individual members must SEEK RECOGNITION before speaking.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Chair controls who speaks when

- If someone speaks up without being recognized, STOP THEM.
- If someone speaks out of turn, INTERRUPT THEM.
- If someone makes insulting remarks, CUT THEM OFF.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Duty to obey the chair

- Members have a duty to obey the chair's directions.
- If they disagree, they can't argue back.
- What can they do?

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Guide your members by stating the obvious

- You as chair know more about the process than anybody else.
- You must repeat yourself, and state the obvious, to help bring everyone along.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Keep things moving! Be brisk! Speak crisply!

- Well, I guess the agenda is adopted...*
- I'll kind of get a thumbs up from the board next week...*

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Firm but not harsh.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

CHEAT SHEET

LANGUAGE TIPS FOR MEETING MANAGEMENT

SITUATION	CHAIR CAN SAY
Call to order	<i>This meeting of the [name of organization] is called to order.</i>
Unanimous consent	<i>Without objection... if there is no objection...</i>
To begin discussion	<i>It has been moved and seconded that... Is there any discussion?</i>
If there is no second	<i>Since there is no second, the motion will not be considered.</i>
To end discussion	<i>Is there any further discussion? or Are you ready to vote?</i>
Process Point of Order	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Member says, "Point of Order" Chair says, "State your point." Member explains issue. Chair says, "The point is well taken," or "The point is not well taken."
When someone says "Point of Order" but can't explain what they mean	<i>What rule has been broken?</i>
Process Point of Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Member says, "Point of Information." Chair replies, "State your question."

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

When in doubt, ask the group!

- Chair can always ask the group to decide a question.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

- Chair: The chair believes that remarks about UFOs landing at our airfield are not germane, and will ask the Council to decide whether the Councilmember may continue speaking on this topic. All those who believe that the Councilmember may continue speaking, please say "aye."*
- Councilmembers in favor: Aye!**

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

- Chair: *All those who believe that the Councilmember may not continue, please say "No."*
- Councilmember opposed: *"No."*
- Chair: *The ayes have it and the Councilmember may continue speaking, OR the noes have it and the Councilmember will cease from speaking.*

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

HOW to control?

The chair should never get excited.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th edition, 47:19

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

WHY do we need rules?

Win/lose is the only game most of us understand. We have a constant unspoken need for domination and actually find no enjoyment in win/win situations.

Richard Rohr, Franciscan author

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Vision phase one

- Each member expresses their personal views on topics before the council with vigor, energy, commitment, and respect.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Vision phase two

- Once the vote is taken, personal opinions and political views are **LESS IMPORTANT** than the majority vote of the council.
- Members accept the decision and move on without rancor or bitterness.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

VIII. Conclusion

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Keep in touch!

- You are invited to subscribe to our monthly eNewsletter.
- Subscribe to the blog on our website for insight, tips and inspiration, including our new advice column, "Dear Dinosaur."
- Email any time.

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MASTERING COUNCIL MEETINGS
 A GUIDEBOOK FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Ann G. Macfarlane, PRP, CAE
 and Andrew L. Estep, CAE

Jurassic Parliament

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

After taking this training you will be able to:

1. Describe how the authority of the group is more important than any single individual, even the chair.
2. Follow best practices for discussion.
3. Respond to disorder and difficult people.
4. Make Motions and Amendments.
5. Run effective public comment sessions.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

The purpose of your meetings under Robert's Rules?

- Debate and determine overall strategy, policy, and legislation for your city.
- Leave the details of operations to the mayor and staff.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

The chair is not in charge of your meeting

It is a little-known fact that ultimately it is the board that is in charge of your meeting, not the chair. According to the principles of parliamentary procedure and Robert's Rules of Order, the chair runs the meeting while subject to the will of the body as a whole.

This is very different from the workplace, the military, or many other institutions in our society. These institutions are structured as an ACCOUNTABILITY HIERARCHY, in which everyone reports, through the appropriate channels, to the BOSS at the top of the pyramid. The boss makes the ultimate decisions and is responsible for the organization's performance.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Follow four fundamental guidelines for successful meetings

Og Harbor, Washington City Council. ©Jurassic Parliament 2008.

Robert's Rules of Order includes **four fundamental guidelines** that will create successful meetings. They are easy to say but take some effort to apply, since prevailing culture is often very different. Run your meetings according to these guidelines so your meetings—and your organization—will flourish.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Essential Guidelines for City Councils



Follow these essential guidelines of parliamentary procedure to take the pain out of your meetings, hold productive discussions, and serve your community better.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

These remarks are inappropriate

1. Personal remarks about other members (except for conflict of interest)
2. Discourteous remarks – insulting language, attacks
3. Inflammatory language
4. Criticizing past actions of the group (unless subject is under discussion, or member is about to propose to amend or rescind the action at the end of their speech)
5. Remarks that are not germane (relevant) to the discussion

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Motions review

- At the right time, seek recognition from the chair.
- State your motion.
Chair, I move that we issue each councilmember a \$500 bonus in recognition of their service during this pandemic.
- After the motion is seconded by another member and stated by the chair, explain why you think it's a good idea.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Seconding a motion

- After another member makes a motion, just call out "second!"
- You do not need to be recognized.

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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Eight steps to process a motion

1. **Member makes motion.**
2. Another member seconds motion.
3. **Chair states motion.**
4. Members debate and/or amend motion.
5. **Chair restates motion and calls for vote.**
6. Members vote on motion.
7. Chair states results of vote, whether motion passes or fails, and what happens next as a result of the vote.
8. Chair states next item of business.


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Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Amending a motion

- During discussion on the motion, seek recognition.
- Once recognized, state your proposed amendment.
Chair, I move to amend the motion by striking out the number \$500 and inserting the number \$5000.
- Once another member seconds the amendment, explain why it's a good idea.

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Remember...

- The amendment is voted on first.
- Once the amendment is resolved, discussion may continue on the main motion.
- Further amendments may be made.
- Finally, the vote will be taken on the MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED.

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Best practices for public comment

1. Set time limits for public comment and for individual speeches.
2. Have the public address the chair, and have the chair respond.
3. Don't engage in dialogue with the public, but have arrangements to answer their questions afterwards.
4. Speakers may not donate their time.
5. On the dais, make the effort to be, and to appear to be, listening intently to all speakers.

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

*Kindness is within our power.
Liking is not.*

Samuel Johnson, British author

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

*Serving on a local government board
is like being in a marriage
arranged by the citizens.*

Tami Tanoue, Colorado Intergovernmental
Risk Sharing Agency

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Why are we here?

To equip you to run effective meetings
to serve your community

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 Jurassic Parliament Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

Disclaimer: Nothing in this presentation constitutes business or legal advice.

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