

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER OVERVIEW

The following summary embodies the basic provisions of parliamentary procedures:

1. The primary vehicle of action is a motion which is supported by a second.
2. Each motion may deal with only one issue or idea. A chair or a member may ask that a motion be rephrased or rewritten if it deals with two or more different matters.
3. Debate should follow, not precede, a motion. The chair should require a motion be stated and seconded before debate is allowed.
4. Debate must be limited to the motion at hand. Speakers who wander or attempt to enter new matters should be ruled out of order.
5. When a motion is on the floor, no new motions may be made.
6. Main motions may be amended. Votes on amendments must be taken before the original motion is voted upon.
7. Before a vote on a main motion is taken, business may be interrupted by a motion to table, to postpone action, to refer to a committee, to maintain the motion, or to adjourn the meeting.
8. Debate may be formally closed only by a motion to close debate or to move the previous question passed by a two-thirds affirmative vote. In cases in which the chair believes discussion to have ended, a vote on the main motion may be taken without a formal motion to close debate unless a member objects.
9. Before main motions are voted upon, the motion should be reread/restated.
10. Motions turned down at a meeting may be reconsidered only with the consent of the majority. Action should be initiated only by a member who was in the majority when the issue was first voted down.
11. Each speaker should be allowed only one hearing on a subject under debate. The chair may refuse to call on a speaker for a 2nd hearing until all others have had a chance to speak.
12. The chair has the right to appoint committees unless the board directs otherwise. The first-named person is considered the chair of a committee and the second-named person the vice-chair (unless otherwise stated).

13. It is appropriate for the chair to make motions, seconds and vote on all questions. The chair does not have to surrender the gavel or “step down” before speaking or making a motion.
14. A chair, in view of his/her position as an elected representative to the RSU #23 Board of Education, should vote on every issue, unless there is a statutory or ethical conflict of interest. Not to vote is to abstain.
15. Because of the complexity of Robert’s Rules the RSU #23 Board of Education may not adhere to each detail. The hazard of strict interpretation of the rules is that it may tend to make procedure more prominent and more important than the substantive issue under discussion. However, a general knowledge of the principles mentioned above can help ensure that RSU #23 Board of Education meetings will be smooth and productive.

Adopted: March 17, 2009