

ROBERTS COMPANION

for local governmental assemblies



This book is not a “make it simple” book about Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) 12th edition.

This is a book aimed at helping to demystify the authoritative book itself; hence why this is Robert’s Companion.

Further, this book points out where state requirements should be examined when they conflict with Roberts Rules, such as the Open Meetings Act.

This book focuses on local municipal government assemblies such as statutorily authorized Town Councils, and Commissions, for example Planning and Zoning; however, it is useful for any assembly of any kind.

This book takes the official book of Roberts Rules and first explains concerns that may arise in reading that tome, then it places the rules in the context of: guidance such as state statutes, and Municipal League Guidance. One section follows the sequence in the book; another repeats all that but in alphabetical order for motions or concepts.

Useful models many have found helpful in business meetings are also suggested.

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Simon Wheaton-Smith
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PREFACE

Robert's Rules should be studied in the context of higher authorities such as federal and state statutes, attorney general guidance, municipal league guidance, assembly by-laws, special and customary rules, and then the rules themselves. Open Meetings Act guidance may differ from and may limit Robert's Rules actions, so this book points out where caution may be needed.

Something missing in many governmental bodies are common business meeting models that can enhance decision quality, they complement Robert's Rules and so some are offered for your consideration.

This covers what you will wish you knew before studying Roberts Rules Of Order in detail. This is not a book on Roberts Rules as such, nor a competitor of Roberts Rules Made Simple or Robert's Rules For Dummies, but a book on intricacies not always obvious when reading Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised.

This document takes great care to be accurate. Some of the wording in RONR can be somewhat open to interpretation as the wording is at times less than entirely clear. Please verify for yourself what these notes say by using the official Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised 12th edition (RONR) book, and by verifying statutory and other information. Please notify the author of any issues you may find in this book.

This book starts with concepts and terms, addresses the key topics and motions in RONR book sequence. After that, it covers each key concept or motion in alphabetical order with more detailed discussions.

To use this book effectively, get a copy of the official Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised 12th edition (RONR) book. Then in parallel with that, please take one section of this book, read it first and do not try to remember anything. Then read it again while remembering the easy stuff. Then read it a third time this time getting into some details. Finally, read it a fourth time and digest all the points and thinking how it all fits together.

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While this document focuses on one town, Silver City, in New Mexico, the principles here should apply to other towns and states. Carefully review your own state and local references as this book uses Silver City, New Mexico only as a model.

The author of this book is not an attorney and cannot offer legal advice. The objective of this book is to look further into Parliamentary Procedure and bring into focus important issues in the context of local government. Please verify each key point for yourself, which is why references are abundant.

INTRODUCTION

The author of this document has studied Roberts Rules under highly qualified **RONR** (Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised). In addition, he has ten years working with three different editions of Roberts Rules as a Town Clerk, a Town Councilor, a Mayor Pro Tem, and as a Planning and Zoning Commissioner, Vice Chair, and Chair. The author also has ten years using and training people in another parliamentary system which employed business meeting models of various kinds for which the author was awarded a National Visionary Award in 1997. He is a member of the American Institute of Parliamentarians.

The author believes that the current version of Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 12th edition might be seen by some as perhaps not the easiest edition to navigate and understand, while accepting that it must cover meetings both small and large, of various complexities, covering diverse agenda items, using formal bodies as well as less formal committees, and in both governmental as well as business environments.

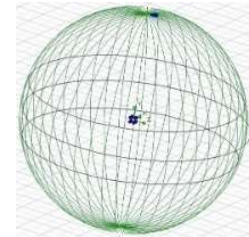
The first time the author studied Roberts Rules the book was smaller, the 12th edition is now 714 pages. The sequencing of pages as well as paragraphs may seem less effective for learning than desired. For example, there is a section on voting motions, however the section on nominations has its own subsection on voting.

Or, figuring out what "secondary" motions are allowed when no main motion is on the table requires looking in about five different places, sometimes without success. The table of motions in Table II in the t-pages of the RONR book may not clearly include some motions described in the book; and some names of motions therein may not match their names used elsewhere in the same book.

The National Association of Parliamentarians founded in 1930 is the leader involved in Roberts Rules of Order.

The American Association of Parliamentarians founded in 1958 addresses other established Parliamentary Authorities also in common use, such as the Standard Code of Parliamentary Practice.

Robert's Rules nowadays is like the universe, ever expanding and accelerating its expansion. It exists in a multi-verse because other rule systems exist such as the Standard Code of Parliamentary Practice, formerly the Sturgis rules, which is also extensively used in the US and adopted by the American Institute of Parliamentarians.



All parliamentary procedures for governmental assemblies must operate within by-laws, ordinances, state and federal statutes and guidance, it is important to know how such things interact otherwise it is possible to violate a higher authority.

There are many very good concepts employed in Roberts Rules, yet it takes several readings to discover the significance of things in the system that initially may not seem crucial at the time in understanding the rules. This means the learning **law of primacy** can get violated since impressions may be formed early that last, which in retrospect may be incorrect.

Pictorials that could simplify concepts are seldom used in RONR, and run on sentences make exceptions hard to detect. Some terms may at times seem confusing. This book aims to help in that area.

Robert's Rules do not work well in some settings, for example while motions are wisely phrased in the positive, the mover of a motion cannot argue against their own motion; which can make a quasi judicial process difficult when a motion might at times be expected to fail.

Further, the rule of no debate and only limited discussion before making a motion (RONR 4:7)(§4:7)(Sec. 4:7) makes clear and easily understandable motions hard to form without several "**amend**" motions because there can be **no debate without a main motion**.

New Mexico Statutes Annotated 1978 (NMSA 78), the NM Attorney General Guides, NM Municipal League guidance, Town Ordinances, and various by-laws use some terms that may not match the Roberts Rules definitions, for example "**recess**"; one must be aware of the differences.

This document is an analysis of the Robert's Rules Newly Revised 12th edition (**RONR**), and it covers key concepts such that when reading the sections sequentially they make sense; and pictorials are used to show how motions interact as well as any requirements for timing.

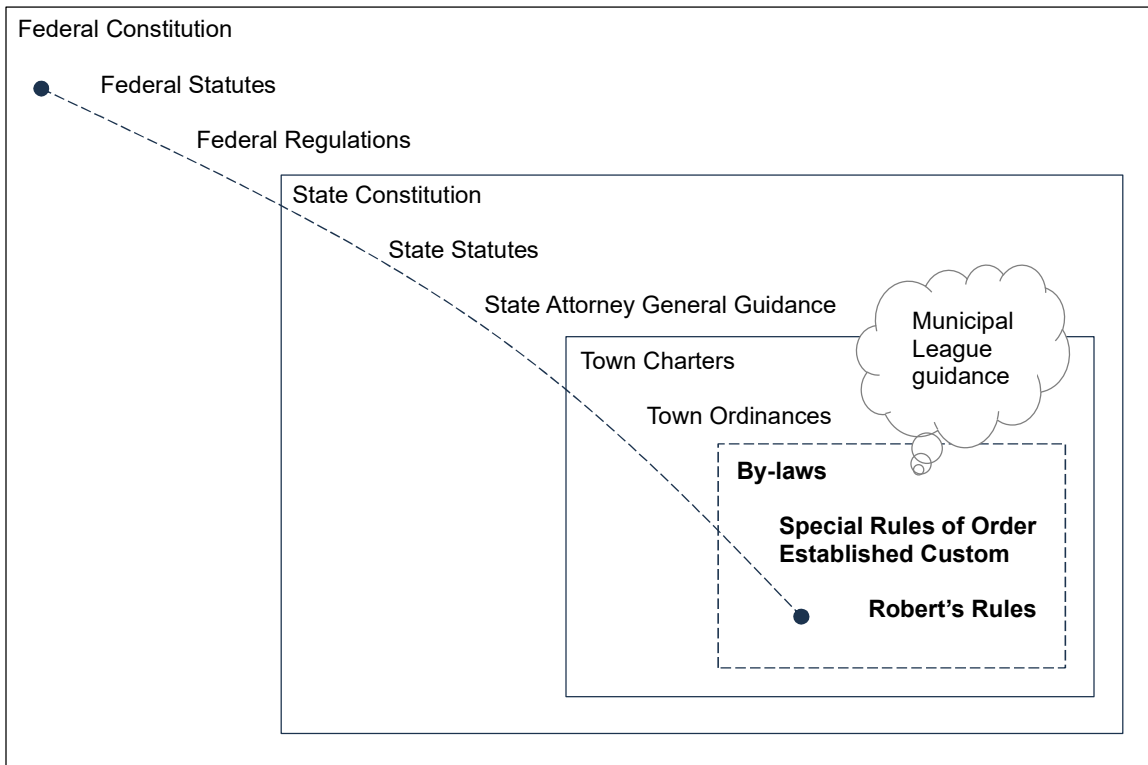
PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES AND HIGHER AUTHORITIES

A Parliamentary Procedure is the **foundation of getting work done efficiently** while balancing efficiency with supportable solutions to issues. Parliamentary Procedures do not operate in a vacuum.

Parliamentary Procedures are just one part of the puzzle, they are subservient to modification by customary rules, special rules of order, and by-laws. And those are subservient to municipal ordinances and town charters. And those are subservient to state requirements which in turn are subservient to Federal requirements.'

In this book, the Parliamentary Procedures discussed are Robert's Rules of Order, developed by Major Henry Robert in 1876. In particular, this book focuses on Roberts Rules Of Order Newly Revised 12th Edition abbreviated to **RONR**.

Robert's Rules developed out of confusion surrounding Cushing's Manual from 1845, and Jefferson's Manual from 1801. They in turn leaned heavily on the work of the Parliament in London, England which was refined between about 1580 to 1640.



Robert's Rules consists of processes, concepts, rules, motions, and the like which consume 714 pages in the official RONR (Robert's Rules Newly Revised).

This book focuses on one state, New Mexico, and on one town in that state, Silver City. Silver City is the only town in New Mexico that still operates on a Territorial Charter. Having said that, the principles in this book should apply to other towns and states. The author is not an attorney, so this book offers no legal advice, and the reader is asked to locate equivalent guidance for their town and their state, and then to locate specific sections to bring them into focus.

BUSINESS MEETING MODELS

“Making haste only creates the illusion of speed”

Just as Parliamentary Procedure **is the foundation of getting work done efficiently**, so also are business models that **ensure work done will be wise and effective**, and not need to be redone.

The New Mexico Municipal League guidance (NMML) “Coordination With Governing Body, Staff, and Others”, found in NMML CHAPTER IV, D,1-7nsuggests “**analytical problem solving**” is essential. The models below are not from the New Mexico Municipal League, they are simply a recommendation to use to provide analytical problem solving. A public body **should adopt whatever models** it feels most appropriate.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND OR BE INVOLVED

You exclude people at your peril, varying perspectives are essential.

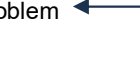
- Those planning the change
- Those making the change
- Those affected by the change
- Those with a legal, moral, or ethical interest in the change

WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE A MEETING


This model helps verify the bases are covered before the meeting starts.

- E experts needed?
- L location ~ *usually covered by the meetings legal notice*
- P purpose of the meeting ~ *ditto*
- A agenda designed to achieve this ~ *ditto*
- T timing ~ *ditto*
- I what information should people bring to the meeting?
- O what are the desired outcomes

PROBLEM SOLVING MODEL

- D Define the problem
 - A Analyze it for critical causes and factors
 - D Dialog various solutions for each identified problem
 - I Implement each solution, on paper first
 - E Evaluate the effectiveness of each solution
- 

POSITIONAL ISSUES

- P Clarify a persons position
 - I Using “why”, identify the underlying interests
 - D Dialog to resolve the interests, not wishes
- 

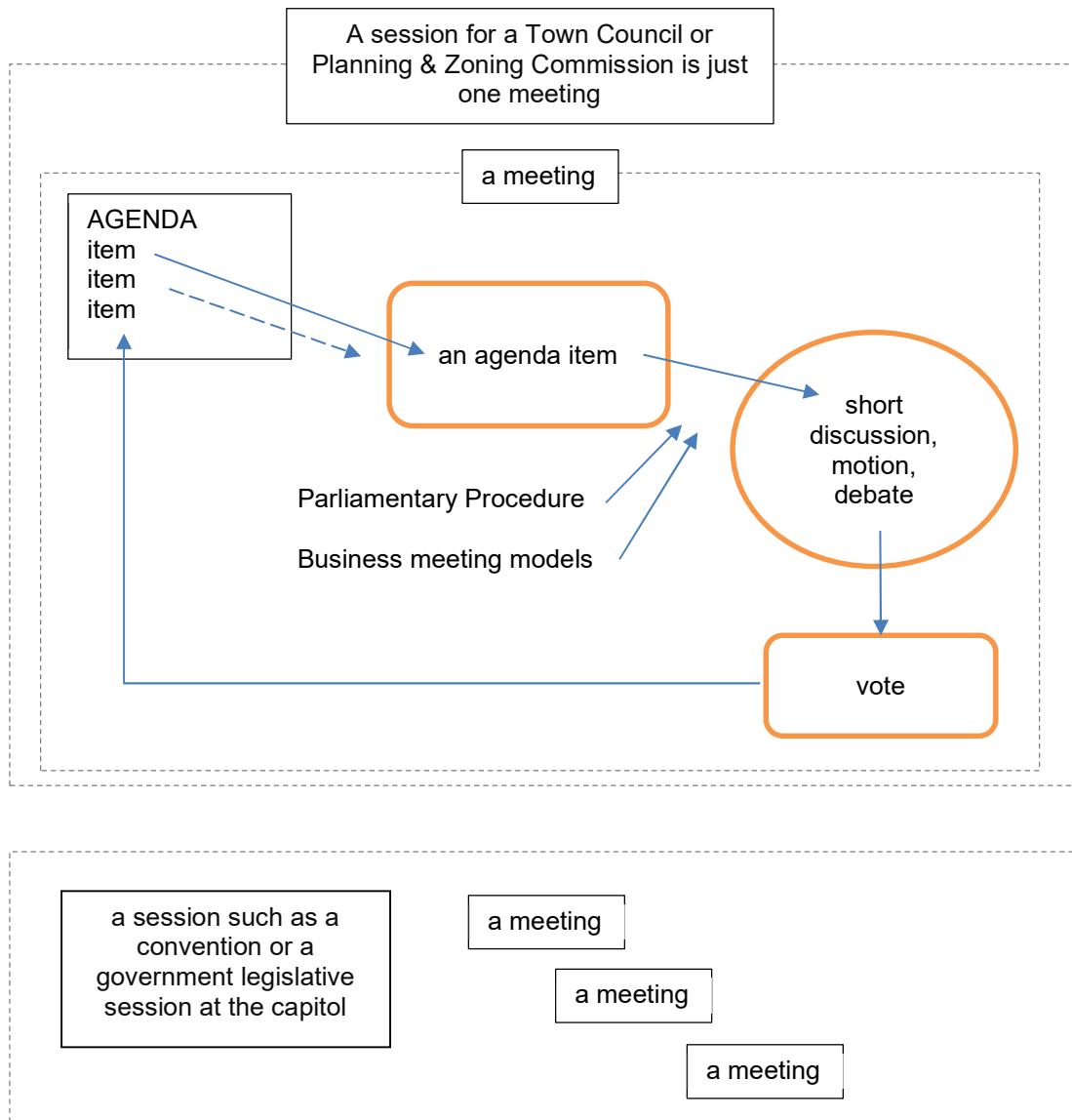
BRAINSTORMING MODEL *Alex Osbourne’s well established process.*

- think a few days before the session, think about the project
- F Flood ideas with **no** evaluation and **no** explanation
- C Clarify with explanations after flooding dies down
- C Condense by merging duplicates
- then present results to appropriate parties

WHAT IS A GOOD SOLUTION *Metrics based on Harvard’s Project on Negotiation.*

- F fair to participants
- E efficient solution
- W wise based on legal or other standards
- S supportable by participants
- E effective solution
- A adaptable as situations change
- P participative by all stakeholders
- D data driven before and after the solution is implemented

AN OVERVIEW OF A MEETING



Robert's Rules is a system for organized business meetings balancing efficiency with effective outcomes.

The system has concepts and rules. The concepts need to be understood in order to make sense of the rules. The rules use those concepts to manage workflow.

- **The abbreviation RONR** means Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised 12th Edition.
- **The abbreviation RONRIB** means Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief.
- **The word Member** means a Councilor, a Commissioner, or a Committee member.
- **The Presiding Officer** may be referred to as a Mayor or a Chair.
- **The word Assembly** usually means a Town Council or a Commission.
- **RONR** sections may appear as: **RONR Sec.n.n, RONR §n.n, §n:n, Sec.n.n**

ROBERTS RULES IN THREE PAGES

Please consider viewing the two local government trainings which are free on YouTube and whose internet links and QR codes are included herein; all QR codes in this document were created and checked by the author. References are given throughout so you can and should verify the information in this book. RONR references are shown as **RONR Sec.n.n**, **RONR §n.n**, **§n:n**, **Sec.n.n**.

The general philosophy for Roberts Rules is summed up as:

A deliberative assembly is free to do what it wishes with consideration for the rights of its members. Rules of parliamentary law as found in RONR *page xlix* are “based on a regard for the rights of”:

- the majority,
- the minority, especially a strong minority (one-third plus),
- individual members, and
- absentees

The above principles are achieved by the following guidance:

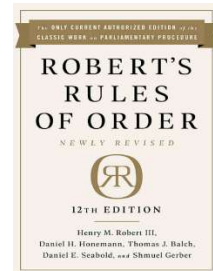
- Everyone has the right to participate in the discussion, all members are equal.
- The “Presiding Officer” generally ensures members speak in turn ensuring equal participation. An orderly flow results when the Presiding Officer (“Mayor” or “Chair”) manages the meeting’s flow by “recognizing” each speaker who is then given the “floor”.
- The member who moved the motion can speak first RONR §4:6; no member can speak a second time until all other members have had the chance to speak once. RONR §3:33
- Only one topic or “motion” is generally discussed at a time. RONR §43:20
- Members talk to other members and people through the Chair. RONR §43:22
- Speeches are often limited to ten minutes with no more than two such speeches for each topic.
- Issues are not in order if similar to an issue disposed of earlier in the same session RONR §10:26 3

RONR

RONR, Roberts Rules Of Order newly revised 12th edition is the Parliamentary Authority referred to in this book.

It has a wealth of information, yet is not quite as easy to comprehend for a first time reader.

It is hoped that when read, RONR will be more easily understood by the guidance in this book you are reading now.



These notes are simplified so there are exceptions. If there are exceptions then the Presiding Officer (Mayor or Chair) would clarify them. These notes focus on a governing body such as a **Town Council**, and the most common municipal Commission such as **The Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z)**. In small commissions, or boards of 12 or less there can be more flexibility using the rules. RONR §49:21

The **Presiding Officer** is the traffic controller in that **when an assembly member wishes to speak** they must be “**recognized**” RONR §4:28; they do this by catching the Presiding Officer’s attention verbally or by a hand signal. The recognized person then has the “**floor**”. RONR §43:12.

A **Member** (Councilor, Commissioner, or Committee Member) may ask a question or raise an issue, and a follow up but then “**yields**” the floor back to the Presiding Officer (Mayor or Chair) for other member’s questions or comments. This ensures everyone has an equal opportunity to participate, it ensures an orderly flow which paces discussions.

Decorum means being orderly and respecting rules. RONR §43

A wise presiding officer might encourage the use of “**business models**” in the formulation of public policy.

If a member (Councilor or Commissioner) wishes a topic discussed, **and** there isn't a current motion, they attract the Chair's attention and when **recognized** they are given the **floor** and can make a **"motion"**. As a general rule, a motion needs a **"second"**; if there is no second, the motion usually dies for lack of interest.

In local government, discussions and debates must be publicly **"noticed"** so the public can attend and see government in action. This is the result of a state's **Open Meetings Act**. In other words, a member cannot normally make a substantive motion to discuss something unless it has been publicly noticed.

Motions that relate to agenda items are called **original main motions**; other **main** motion types exist such as **incidental-main** and **bring-back** motions.

Sometimes a motion needs fine tuning by a **subsidiary motion** to amend RONR §4:20, §10:30 1), §12:91

If someone jumps in before a "second" then they can offer a **"friendly"** amendment to a motion.

Motions must be specific, and should be **phrased positively**. The benefit of positively phrased motions is to avoid confusion. If they are phrased negatively then to pass an idea means using a no vote, and to reject it means a positive vote; I actually watched a councilor vote against his own cherished ordinance!

Motions are **phrased positively**, so even if a member intends to vote down an issue, they still make the motion to approve it, e.g., "I move to approve such and such". How one votes and how one makes a motion, may at times seem at odds. In Roberts Rules, a speaker may not speak against their own motion, however quasi-judicial debates might never happen if the members think they may vote an issue down; so in quasi-judicial hearings that rule is often not followed by **custom**. **Rules of custom** are ones that have become commonplace locally and thus override Roberts Rules, but when challenged, they **"fall to the ground"**.

When **a motion is seconded**, the chair states **"the question"** and debating follows amongst the members, managed by the Presiding Officer (Mayor or Chair).

Once a motion is debated, **discussion is focused on the topic alone**, and the discussion is amongst members only, except a member may ask questions of staff or of any citizen who had spoken earlier on the topic. Unrelated questions or comments are not appropriate, they must be **germane**.

When discussion **dies down**, the **Chair** should **repeat the motion**, and then call for a **"vote"**. Some votes may be voice votes (**viva voce**), and in rare circumstances a hand raised may be used. However, some **laws** may require the minutes reflect each member's vote RONR §45:45 and that triggers a **"roll call"** to see who voted **AYE** or **NO**. When voting motions down, remember that future issues are normally not in order if similar to issues voted down in the same **"session"** RONR §10:26 3

Some topics require a "super" majority vote (often 2/3), not just a simple majority. That is usually a balance between individual and assembly rights which could be impacted by the vote's outcome. RONR p t48-t49

Some ordinances and by-laws may not clearly define a majority vote. A vote definition should address (1) the ratio of AYES to NOs required to pass a motion (the majority), (2) in the context of either members present, or of votes cast, and (3) how abstentions will be handled. RONR §44:1 and 7

AYE and **NO** votes are what counts as the standard in Roberts Rules is that an abstention is a non-vote and is not counted RONR §44:1. So usually there is no reason for the presiding officer to ask for any abstentions RONR §4:35 For example, Planning and Zoning (**P&Z**) by-laws based on NM Municipal League (**NMML**) guidance only allow abstentions if there is a conflict of interest, members are thus required to adopt a position.

For governing bodies (Town Councils), NMML guidance is that abstentions are also not allowed except for conflicts of interest, however if abstaining, the reason must also be entered into the minutes.

There can be **"special rules of order"** built by the assembly to override established Roberts Rules. Special Rules of Order allow things like defining how a majority is to be determined if the assembly believe the Roberts Rules default does not meet their needs, but such changes are deemed undesirable RONR §44:9 To change the rule of the majority of votes cast ignoring abstentions, a **Special Rule of Order** should be adopted by a resolution or a by-law amendment; each has pros and cons. RONR §2:17 2:20 and RONR §44:10

A suspension of the rules RONR §25:1 cannot suspend **by-laws**, ordinances or statutes; only Roberts Rules and **Special Rules of Order** or **Rules of Custom** may be suspended, and the reason must be stated in the motion to suspend, and the rule suspension is usually for the current agenda item only.

That is why “special rules of order” for meeting procedures are better than “by-laws”; because by-laws cannot be suspended whereas special rules of order can. RONR §2:17 2:20 and RONR §44:10

Of course, no business may be transacted unless there is a **quorum** RONR §40:1

Members may move to **amend** a motion RONR §12, **postpone** discussion to a definite time and place RONR §14 & §11, limit or end debate (“**calling the question**” or “**previous question**”) RONR 16:6, or “**table**” the motion RONR §17:8.

Lay on the table (tabling) and its partner “**Take From the Table**” have **rules about time lines**, as does the motion to postpone to a definite time and place.

Postponing an agenda item to a time not yet scheduled often needs an “**adjourned meeting**” to be created by “**Fix the time to which to adjourn**”, it has to do with **sessions vs meetings**. It is not a big deal. Remember that an adjourned meeting is not a meeting that is ended, but rather it is a future meeting created to hold a postponed issue or set of issues.

If something is out of order, a Member or Staff can call “**Point of Order**” RONR §23, the Presiding Officer then says “state the point” and then rules on the issue which can be appealed to the entire commission.

The motion list below is **not** complete, it only covers the most common motions and features that a Council or Commission may be likely to use. **Privileged** motions focus on the meeting and are the most important to address as a rule. **Subsidiary** motions treat or dispose of the main motion. Privileged and subsidiary motions have an order of precedence defining when they are in order. **Incidental** motions have no predefined precedence and must also be processed immediately like their privileged cousins, and they have their own special rules about how they interact.

In small meetings, usually only 9 or 12 of the 23 possible secondary motions are used depending on complexities, and often even less than that.

MAIN MOTION	SOME COMMON SECONDARY MOTIONS			RONR Sec.	Standard Descriptive Characteristics					
	PRIVILEGED	SUBSIDIARY	INCIDENTAL		int	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	recon
1 Original				§10	n	y	y	y	majority	y
	13 Fix Time To			§22:3	n	y	n	y	majority	y
	12 Adjourn			§21	n	y	n	n	majority	n
	11 Recess			§20	n	y	n	y	majority	n
	10 Qn Privelege			§19	maybe	n	n	n	chair	n
	affects	8 Lay On The Table		§17:8	n	y	n	n	majority	y
	entire meeting	5 Postpone to later		§14:1	n	y	y	y	majority	y
		3 Amend		§12	n	y	y	?	majority	y
		treats or	Rqst information	§33	y	n	n	n	Chair	n
		disposes of	Division: question	§27:1	n	y	n	y	majority	n
		main motion	Suspend Rules	§25:4	n	y	n	n	2/3	n
			Appeal	§24	y	y	y	n	majority	y
			Point of Order	§23	y	n	n	n	Chair	n
			questions of procedure							
										recon=reconsider

INCIDENTAL MAIN MOTIONS

1 Incidental | Point of Order, Appeal, Suspend rules, Request info, Recess, Adjourn, and more

MOTIONS BRINGING QUESTIONS BACK AGAIN

1 Bring back | Take from table §34, Rescind/Amend §35, Discharge §36, Reconsider §37

02/24/25

Bothell Council RONR Training (free)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7j_Wa5HM1Gs



Port of Olympia RONR Training (free)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBaifHMo5a8>



KEY CONCEPTS, TERMS, AND SESSIONS

The following terms are used. Notice that it is very significant that **making** a motion is very different from it being **called** or **taken** up later; that has caused confusion in some readers of RONR.

Moved	A motion is moved when it is made. This is different from when a motion is taken up or called up, being a result of some delay after the motion was made..
Called up	The phrases “call up” or “called up” are used for a couple of purposes. One is the case where “reconsider” was made during a debate and the motion was kept pending, to be “called up” later. The other is for items on a consent calendar. Both cases involve taking up a motion that was in abeyance.
Taken up	The phrases “take up” and “taken up” are also used for “reconsider”, as well as for postponed items, tabled items, and orders of the day, among other things.
Question	A question is a motion that has been seconded if required, and then stated by the chair.
Adhere	Is used to describe motions that stick together when shoved out of the way by . To be more technical, 10:35 Subsidiary or incidental motions adhere to a main question if it is related to the main question in such a way that once introduced it must be decided before the main question can be decided. §10:35
Order	Some motions create an “order”, such a limit or extend, previous question , and so on. This is not an order of the day, a special rule of order, about being in order, it is the hangover of a specific motion, and when that order has served its purpose, it is “exhausted”.
Floor	The “floor” is given by the chair to the next person who wishes to speak. It is also where motions go to be worked upon.

Some abbreviations are used:

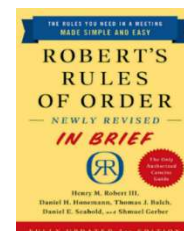
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- **Presiding Officer** may be referred to as a Mayor or a Chair
- **Assembly** usually means a Town Council or a Commission
- **References** RONR sections may appear as RONR Sec.n.n, RONR §n.n, §n:n, Sec.n.n.

How to read this chapter:

- read it first and do not try to remember anything. Then
- read it again while remembering the easy stuff. Then
- read it a third time this time getting into the details. Finally
- read it a fourth time and digest all the points and thinking how it all fits together

The RONRIB 3rd edition is very simplified:

- The authority itself is Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised 12th edition, known as **RONR**
- Robert’s Rukes Of Order Newly Revised In Brief, however, is not a Parliamentary Authority itself, it is only a supplement to **RONR**. While helpful, it does not address important areas that many find confusing.



LEGISLATIVE BODIES, BOARDS, AND COMMITTEES

A **Deliberative Assembly** may exist in many forms RONR §1:9. Among the principal types Roberts Rules consider are:

- A **Legislative Body** is a constitutionally established **public lawmaking body** of members chosen by the public voters for a term of office. A **Town Council is a legislative body**. RONR §1:19-21
- A **Board** is an **administrative** or **quasi-judicial** body of elected or **appointed** members whose function is determined by powers delegated to it by authority outside itself. **Commissions such as Planning and Zoning (P&Z) are board**. RONR §1:22-23
- A **Committee** is not considered by Roberts Rules to be a form of assembly, however they often use many of Roberts Rules. RONR §1:24

CONFUSING TERMS EXIST ~ RECESS AND ADJOURN

Roberts rules uses many terms and confusion can arise. For example, **meetings** are a subset of **sessions**, the terms have specific meanings. Another example is **recess vs adjourn**; in RONR a recess is short and does not span meetings or days, whereas adjourn ends meetings and can also also sessions. To add to that, NMSA 78 (NM Statutes Annotated 1978) and the NM AG (Attorney General) as well as some NMML (New Mexico Municipal League) use the word recess to span meetings where a parliamentarian (some one who loves Parliamentary Procedures) would suffer some form of cardiac disruption. The words **“adjourned meeting”** does not mean a meeting that adjourns RONR 8:4, rather it is a meeting that will come into play after the current meeting adjourns. Take very seriously the meaning of terms RONR uses.

CONFUSING TERMS EXIST ~ THE WORD “ORDER”

Several key motions or terms are used which have the word “order” in them. **Point of Order** is a motion made when a rule is being violated, such as speaking without being recognized. **Orders Of The Day** is a motion to bring the assembly back to following the agenda. **Special Rules Of Order** are rules the assembly has decided to use to override some of Robert’s Rukes. **Special Orders** and **General Orders** are agenda items created in an earlier meeting for subsequent discussion or debate. And some normal motions create an **Order** that will control some actions and when its job is done, then it is exhausted; such motions include Limit Or Extend §15 or Previous Question §16.

MEETINGS VERSUS SESSIONS

A session is a series of connected meetings such as a convention or a state or national legislative body. Within a session, the meetings can interact, and **while** RONR §8:12 says that **as a rule one session is limited on how it can interact with another session**, there are at least 5 ways it can RONR §9:7-9.

The purpose of sessions is to place boundaries on wasting time by bringing up dead issues yet again; and that boundary is the session.

In support of that, some motions have specific rules such as how far out they can **“postpone”** something.

Those valuable boundary rules can sometimes make life difficult especially for sessions of only one meeting, and the way that is handled is to allow the one-meeting session be expanded to have another meeting. It seems artificial, but the benefit is a consistent approach regardless of whether a session is one or many meetings.

Rules do not allow dead issues to be re-introduced in a session RONR §38:4, however the next session can take up a preceding session’s dead issues. And of course there are ways around most restrictions but it takes a good working knowledge of Roberts Rules to do that.

As mentioned, a meeting can be one of many in a session, however for **bodies with regular meeting schedules** then a meeting is a session and a session is a meeting; Town Councils and their Commissions thus have **one meeting per session**. There are times when a second meeting can be connected to the previous one for a Town Council or its Commissions, and that is often done when postponing an agenda item by extending the session.

A Town Council or a Commission's session can be extended with the motion to "Fix The Time To Which TO Adjourn" and then by a motion to "postpone to that definite time and place" the agenda item to be continued later in an "adjourned meeting".

In real life on this planet, local governmental assemblies often skip the "Fix The Time To Which TO Adjourn" step and simply agree to postpone the agenda item while naming the time and place. It works, and often has become a custom. Roberts rules do allow for rules of custom as long as no one challenges them.

Another solution is to use the "suspend the rules" motion RONR §25.

As an aside, there are a number of rules that are capable of suspension anyway for assemblies made of twelve or less members RONR §1:24 49:21.

Also, remember that statutes and attorney general guidance such as the Open Meetings Act Guide can play a part in such postponements. The Presiding Officer, usually the Mayor or Chair, is responsible for complying with the statutes, attorney general guidance, Land Use and Zoning Codes or ordinances, Commission by-laws, as well as the rules of order such as Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised, or RONR.

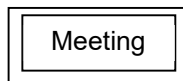
THIS MAY SEEM REPETITIVE HOWEVER THE CONCEPT IS EMBEDDED IN ROBERT'S RULES

A meeting begins with a call to order and ends with adjourning (not with a recess). Recess is used for coffee breaks and the like, and for an occasional "executive session".

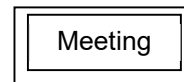
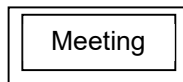
For councils, commissions, and such deliberative assemblies that have regular meetings such as weekly or monthly, one meeting is one session. For committee, the session is the collection of their meetings.

The distinctions are important because some motions that may fail or die in a meeting cannot easily be raised again in the same session. For state legislative bodies, that means dead issues are usually dead until the next session. For Town Councils and their Commissions with one session equaling one meeting, dead issues are usually dead for the rest of the meeting; they can come back in the next meeting because that is a new session.

A County or Municipal session...
one meeting is one session



two meetings are normally two sessions



however, ...

A state legislative session, or a convention...
have many meetings in a session



An example of why this is relevant is the "Lay on the Table" motion RONR §17, and the rule about how long something can lie on the table before it dies. Another example is when "postponing" RONR §14 an agenda item to another day.

Yet another is the motion to "reconsider" which has its own special rules about how it works §37:10(b) 37:15.

In other words, pay attention to sessions, meetings, and motions that deal with past or future issues.

Pay attention to state statutes including the Open Meetings Act which has noticing requirements over and above those specified in Ordinances, and Ordinances override by-laws. They all override Roberts Rules.

Another interesting concept is that **one session cannot normally bind another session** in what it does, that is true for most assemblies or public bodies. RONR §8:12 addresses good reasons why, however RONR §9:7-9 **shows 5 ways of session to session** communication if the sessions are within a quarter (three months) of each other, but only shows one way if they are further apart.

To get stuff from one session to another use: postpone, table, unfinished business, commit, and reconsider motions if the sessions are not further apart than one quarter. But if the sessions are further apart than one quarter, then the only way to communicate to a distant session is by using the motion “**commit**” to give the agenda item to a committee.

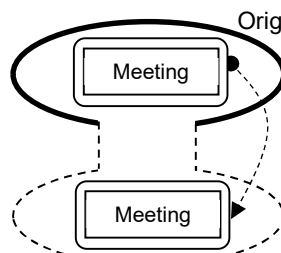
It is important to know how far apart two sessions are since the rules change for session to session communication; see later for simple graphical examples under “POSTPONE TO A CERTAIN TIME OR POSTPONE DEFINITELY”.

GETTING TECHNICAL ~ THE ADJOURNED MEETING

For Town Councils and their Commissions whose sessions are only one meeting, the motion to “**Fix The Time To Which To Adjourn**” can extend a session. That motion extends the session to include a convenient vacant space for a meeting before the next regular meeting. Then a postponed item gets put into that space using the motion to “**Postpone To A Certain Time**” which takes the agenda item needing more work and puts it into the now extended session, and that future meeting is called an “**adjourned meeting**” because it comes into play when the current meeting itself adjourns. In so doing, that agenda item cannot be brought up again in the current meeting, Roberts Rules prohibits that.

Under RONR, such an “adjourned meeting” does not need new noticing. However, the NMAG Guidance about the Open Meetings Act provides a **special abbreviated noticing** option if that adjourned meeting is within about a couple of days; if the delay is extended then normal Open Meetings Act rules apply and normal longer noticing rules are followed.

A county or municipal session is only one meeting, so how do you increase that?



Original session had one meeting

You need two motions.....

“To Fix The Time To Adjourn to” extends the session a few days!

then a “postpone to a certain time” to complete the movement and thus extend the session with a new “adjourned meeting”

Session now extended for a new meeting

Thos previous sections are somewhat involved, yet they are foundational to understanding the intricacies of a number of common motions.

MOTIONS AND AGENDA TYPES

THE MAIN MOTION, AND MOTIONS CALLED SECONDARY MOTIONS THAT AFFECT IT

The building block of a meeting is the agenda which is worked using a sequence of motions. **Main motions** are often created from an agenda. Once the meeting approves the agenda, it must normally be followed in the agreed upon sequence. Roberts Rules do not demand an agenda, but Open Meetings Acts do so the public knows what is going on.

There are two frequent kinds of main motions; one is the “**original main motion**” which comes from the agenda, and the other is the “**incidental main motion**” which happens in the pauses between agenda items.

More on kinds of motions later, but a quick note, there are **secondary motions** that affect main motions as well as the meeting itself, and those secondary motions are also discussed in RONR §5:2

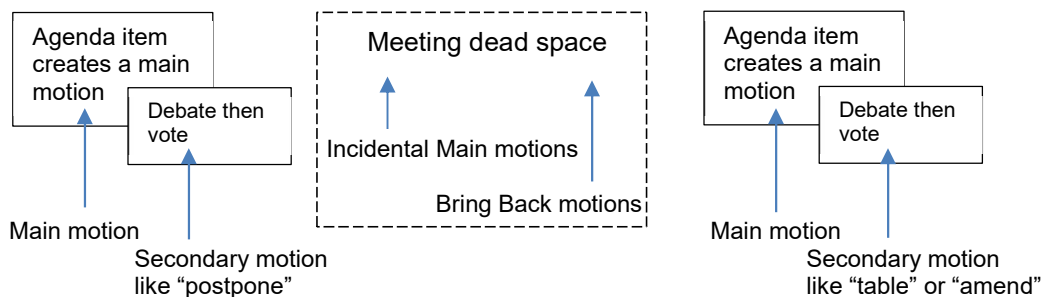
CLASSES OF MOTIONS

Main motions often come from the meeting’s approved agenda. Those main motions are what Robert’s Rules uses to allow debate. And the debate can modify, or “**amend**” that main motion to fine tune it. The motions like “amend” are called **secondary motions**, they are second behind the main motion.

- **Original main motions** are affected by...
 - **Secondary motions** consist of three kinds...
 - **privileged** motions ~ affect the meeting itself and are dealt with when moved, like “**recess**”
 - **subsidiary** motions ~ affect the agenda item itself, like “**amend**”
 - **incidental** motions ~ are like privileged motions with slight differences like “**point of order**”
 - **Incidental main motions**, like “**recess**” and “**point of order**” motions, usually occur in dead space.
 - **Bring back motions** act **like main motions**, they occur in dead space, and examples are: “**take from the table**”, “**amend something previously adopted**”, and so on. Bring back motions can generate new main motions, it is what they do in fact.

When one agenda item has been finalized and before the next agenda item is called up by the Presiding Officer (Chair or Mayor), there is dead space. In that dead space “**incidental main motions**” can be made, examples are “**recess**” and “**point of order**”. They are called “**incidental main motions**” to differentiate them from the “**original main motions**” and also from “**secondary incidental motions**”.

A simplified small meeting with two agenda items and some dead space between them.



The key point is that the only thing in common with the secondary-incidental motions and the incidental-main motions is the name; they are different. Incidental main motions are made up of some of the secondary privileged, secondary subsidiary, and secondary incidental motions, but they are adjusted to work in the dead space in a meeting; similar functions but often different rules. Example are “**recess**” and “**point of order**”.

Simply, **RECESS** is a **privileged motion** if an agenda item is being discussed as a main motion; but **RECESS** is an **incidental main motion** if in the meeting's dead space. They basically do the same thing.

Why focus on such trivia one might ask. Because in order to efficiently yet wisely get through an agenda, rules are needed and those rules can get intricate. Also, RONR uses these terms so it helps to understand them.

In most real life local government meetings these complexities usually don't arise. Yet when more information is needed to help with a debate, when unforeseen incidents occur, when disagreement become rather robust, then the rules are used to slow things down and to help move forward with efficiency and wisdom.

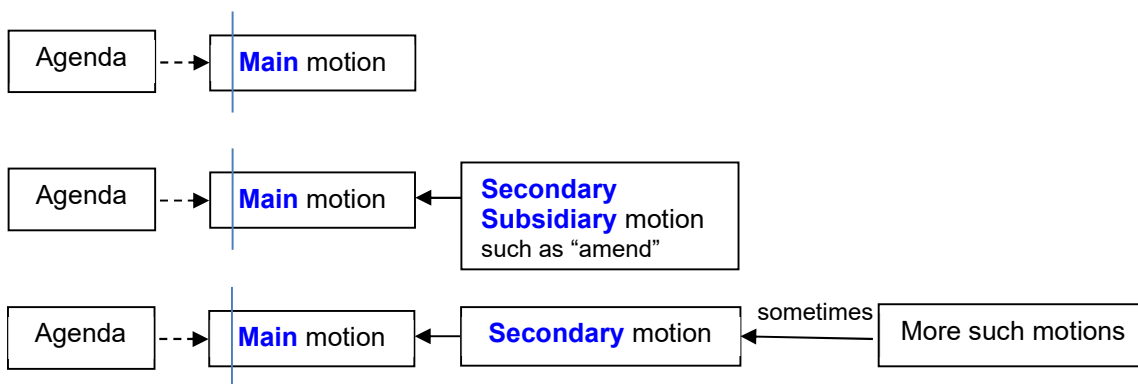
LOOKING AT THE MAIN MOTION FURTHER

There is a main motion, often related to an agenda item, and there are gaps in a meeting when there is no main motion for a short time, in essence, the meetings dead space. If there is a main motion then secondary motions can be made to modify or dispose of it, or they can affect the actual meeting itself.

As mentioned earlier, there are three secondary motion classes: subsidiary, privileged, and incidental.

Privileged motions affect the entire meeting rather than the main motion under discussion; one example is to "**recess**", another is "**question of privilege**". A question of privilege is for urgent issues that can affect everyone, such as when it is too cold, and so on. A question of privilege should not be confused with the term "privileged motion".

Subsidiary motions affect the main motion, they treat or dispose of it. One example is to "**amend**". Subsidiary motions can attach, or "**adhere**" to the main motion or other ones already in line.



Incidental motions are rather like privileged motions except they have different rules on how that interact with other motions. Examples are "**point of order**", "**suspend the rules**", "**request information**". Like privileged motions, they are dealt with when they arise.

Secondary privileged and secondary subsidiary motions have an order of **precedence** to control how they interact, and this is one reason why a secondary motion may or may not "**in order**". Secondary incidental motions have no such precedence but rather they each have special rules about when they can interact with the debate.

The agenda:

- Often generates each new motion
- Each "original main" motion is handled one at a time, debates may use secondary privileged, subsidiary or incidental motions while the original main motion is being worked
- Dead space exists between "original main" motion discussions or debates
- Dead space is where "incidental main" motions come alive for a short time, those incidental main motions consist of many of the secondary motions, they do similar things and the concept exists to enable more complex meetings to function given the complexities of Roberts Rules.
- Dead space can also have "**bring back**" motions such as "**take from the table**" something tabled earlier. In essence they are like main motions, and what they impact were, are, or will become main motions. It all fits together.

The “**floor**” means one of two things; a motion being worked on is “**on the floor**”, and a person recognized as a speaker “**has the floor**”. The “**table**” is where some active motions go so an urgent issue can be moved up.

The “**table**” is a temporary parking lot, and sometimes a place where motions can die. The table is a concept to let something be delayed a bit while other more urgent business is handled. The intent is to “**take from the table**” in the same meeting.

Actually, when it is taken up has special rules depending on where this meeting is and where the next session is. If the issue is not taken off the table, then it can die depending on a number of circumstances. For a local government meeting, it typically dies if not taken off the table either **during this or the next meeting** RONR § 17:8 because one meeting equals one session.

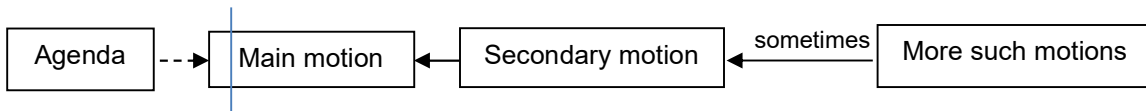
Robert’s Rules take a dim view of tabling something with the intent to let it die; one should use the correct term “To Postpone Indefinitely”, it sounds better than “kill”.

KEY GROUPS OF SECONDARY MOTIONS: PRIVILEGED, SUBSIDIARY, AND INCIDENTAL.

Main motions usually come from an agenda item and secondary motions can gang up on it. As mentioned earlier, the secondary motions consist of subsidiary, privileged, and incidental motions. Each motion has “**Standard Descriptive Characteristics**” (SDCs) which tell you how it interacts with other motions and things such as: is a second required, is it debatable, is it amendable, what sort of vote is needed, and so on.

Subsidiary motions usually affect the main motion by treating or disposing of it. The “**amend**” motion often treats the main motion. More later, but the “amend” motion actually has two concepts of precedence, so keep that in mind as it can be a bit of a bully.

Subsidiary and privileged motions have an order of precedence and that is because there can be several secondary motions stacked up on the main motion, so the precedence, also called “**rank**”, determines if the motions are “**in order**”.



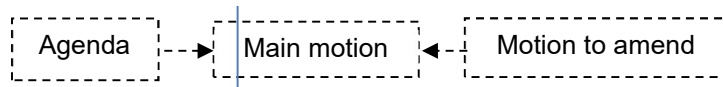
PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS: MAIN, AND SECONDARY MOTIONS.

Privileged motions usually affect the entire meeting, they also have an order of precedence, and they rank higher than the subsidiary motions. Privileged and subsidiary motions are ranked from 2 to 13 and are higher in precedence than the main motion whose precedence is 1. Privileged motions are acted on as they arise.

The “**amend**” motion is an odd one out, it has a precedence of 3, but is in order on some motions with a higher precedence. Each motion has **Standard Descriptive Characteristics** if you want to find out more; element 1 is its precedence, and element 6 says if the motion itself is amendable; these are discussed later.

Incidental motions are rather like privileged motions, however they do not have a numerical precedence. Instead, incidental motions have rules that govern how they interact, they are situational, and often focus on things happening around the main motion. Just like privileged motions, they are dealt with as they arise.

A common sequence of motions might be like below:



It is simple; however Roberts Rules manage to cram simple concepts into about 714 pages, so far; and “amend” has 38 pages all to itself! To be fair some special things can happen when the “amend” motion is made in that it can change its order of precedence when convenient, more on that later.

OTHER CLASSES EXIST: “BRING BACK” AND “INCIDENTAL MAIN MOTIONS”.

Actually, there are two kinds of main motions, one is an “**original main motion**” which often comes from the agenda, and the other is the “**incidental main motion**” that happens between agenda item debates, i.e. in a meeting’s dead space.

The incidental main motions mostly consist of some of the secondary privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions but with some changes.

For example, the motion to recess can happen while there is a main motion on the “**floor**”, and then it would be a privileged motion RONR §20:2

However, if there is no main motion on the “**floor**”, i.e. the meeting is between agenda items, and someone wants a coffee break then the privileged recess motion is morphed into an incidental main motion, and the coffee break happens RONR §20:3.

It seems complicated but it is to allow complex things to happen thus keeping “parliamentarians” both excited as well as employed.

There is another group of motions that “**bring back**” some prior business, and when used they often generate a new main motion. Needless to say one must consider Open Meetings Act requirements because of noticing requirements.

In the world of secondary motions, there are 5 privileged motions, 7 subsidiary motions and 11 incidental ones totaling 23. In typical Town Council and P&Z meetings, only 9 to 12 motions are used, sometimes a lot less.

There are 4 bring back motions, two are like main motions, one is an oddball, and the last is paired up with an unlikely partner.

Roberts Rules sections document subsidiary motions first, privileged next, and incidental motions after that. Secondary subsidiary motions work on the main motion that is why they discuss them first; privileged motions affect the entire meeting and that is why they are discussed second, and incidental ones can affect the main motion and the entire meeting somewhat like the privileged motions, so that is why they are discussed last.

This book prefers to look at privileged motions first as their precedence is higher than secondary motions which are then looked at next; with incidental motions last. It doesn’t matter which way you look at them, do what works best for you.

CONCEPT OF BEING IN ORDER

When a motion is made whose precedence is higher than the one it will impact, then the new motion is “in order”. For example, main motions have a precedence of 1, next is postpone indefinitely (the one that kills things) with a precedence of 2, next is the motion to amend which has a precedence of 3 however it has a special rule allowing it to mess with an earlier motion with a higher precedence. It thus has a precedence of 3 when it is in the line of motions, but it boosts its precedence when it wants to get on the line itself. It actually makes sense and is worth thinking about what it does and why.

Each motion has “**Specific Descriptive Characteristics**” or **SDCs** Each motion has 8 SDCs, for example if you try to “amend” something that is not amendable (SDC 6) then that is not in order. So, those SDCs are worth paying attention to. And it is the presiding officer (Mayor or Chair usually) who keeps track of that. If another member sees such a violation then they can make a “point of order”, as can Town staff. Specific Descriptive Characteristics are discussed in much more detail in a later section of this book.

RELATIONSHIPS OF MOTIONS

Standard Descriptive Characteristic #1 is the precedence which tells other motions whether they can get in line after it, except for amend which is a bit of a bully. Most parliamentarians give them the numbers 1 to 13; but Roberts likes to use many words saying what the motions yield to and what motions yield to it; job security for Roberts Rules employees. SDC #2 has additional notes on precedence.

STANDARD DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF MOTIONS, ALSO SHORTENED TO SDC

As mentioned above, SDC 1 and 2 control who can mess with a preceding motion. SDC 3 says whether the maker can interrupt things, the choices are yes, maybe, and no. Urgent issues can barge right in while a speaker who has the floor is speaking, others can jump after someone has been given the floor but has not spoken yet, and test rest cannot be made unless no one has the floor.

Specific Descriptive Characteristics are discussed in much more detail in a later section of this book.

AGENDA ITEMS THEMSELVES CAN BE OF DIFFERENT TYPES

Agenda items can be informational only, discussion with Q&A but no decisions, or debate with decisions. This is important for transparency, and important concerning the Open Meetings Act requirements. The Open Meetings Act has specific public “**noticing**” requirements, discussion and debate require specific public noticing; debates in public hearings such as granting a permit, have even more rigid noticing requirements.

Public input is **information** only, in other words if the public asks a question, then the members should not answer; similarly, members should not ask the speaker questions. To do so is more than public input and can be an Open Meetings Act issue. As always, consult the town attorney about these matters.

Discussion is a category whereby questions and answers are ok, but decisions must not be made. If decisions are made then that can be an Open Meetings Act issue. Discussions often happen in work sessions.

Debates can result in decisions, such as whether and how to approve a permit. The members may dialog with staff and the public; but when a motion is made and seconded, and stated by the presiding officer as a “**question**” then **debate is among the members only**. During debate, the members may need information so they can ask questions, however the public cannot interrupt during a debate.

SPECIAL ORDERS AND GENERAL ORDERS CAN EXIST IN AGENDAS

Special Orders §41:41 §41:53 and General Orders §41:41 §41:49 can exist in agendas; while the approved agenda is sacrosanct, sometimes things can interrupt it, namely general and special orders.

First, “special orders” and “general orders” relate to when an agenda item can turn up, and have nothing at all to do with “special rules of order” which relate to over-riding some of Roberts Rules.

When an item is postponed to another meeting, or to an “adjourned meeting” created by “**Fix the time to which to adjourn**” followed by the “postpone” to that date, then that agenda item becomes a “general order”. That means it normally cannot be considered **before** it pops up on schedule. And pop up on the schedule it must.

The general order can be just for that date, or it can be given a time as well. If it is given a time then it cannot be considered **before** that time. If another agenda item is being debated that day, then when the postponed item’s time is up, it has to wait for the active work to conclude.

However, if the postpone is made with the words to make it a **special order** and that is done with a **2/3 vote**, then it gets turbocharged. When the time arrives, even if something is already being worked, the special order interrupts what is going on. Of course once that happens, the members can move to delay it until the current work is finished.

If that same motion to postpone did not specify the postponed item was to be a “special order” then it is a “general order” and that motion needs only a simple majority; and at the date and time in question a general order does not interrupt any work in progress so it must wait for a meeting’s dead space.

An important rule in Robert’s Rules is that **no motions similar** to the postponed one can be made until the postponed item surfaces with a certain time frame RONR §17:9 36:2. That also applies to “**tabled**” items.

In all cases, a postpone to a future date triggers rules about whether an “adjourned meeting” needs to be set up by “**Fix the time to which to adjourn**” and that gets into rules involving sessions as mentioned elsewhere. Always **check the noticing requirements**, short postponements may have shorter noticing timelines compared to issues delayed longer, check the **Attorney Generals Open Meetings Guide**. General and special orders **may create** a future meeting’s agenda, but those **items must still be “noticed”**.

In many meetings with twelve or less members, sometimes the “Fix the time to which to adjourn” motions gets skipped, and instead the actual “postpone” motion has the information to create the “**adjourned meeting**” slot. That process may not be fully in line with Robert’s Rules, many small governmental meetings do just that, so how? It happens because it “always has”; and that makes it a custom.

SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER, CUSTOM RULES

Special rules of order are nothing to do with **special orders**. The former is an agenda issue, the latter are meeting process rules.

Roberts Rules allow **special rules of order** to override the standard Roberts Rules. They supersede Roberts Rules of Order **but not** bylaws, ordinances, or statutes §2:16. Roberts Rules say “special rules” should be adopted separately from by-laws RONR §2:17 2:20 by a resolution, but often they end up in the by-laws.

The reason special rules should not be in the by-laws is because by-laws are more permanent and cannot be suspended. Special rules of order are on a par with the assembly’s parliamentary authority, although they of course do modify it. Since Robert’s Rules are below by-laws in authority, so also should be special rules of order. Further, just as one can suspend Robert’s Rules for an agenda item, so also should the special rules of order.

Interesting observational note: Some Municipal Leagues include special rules of order in what would probably be called the by-laws given some of the items included therein; however, they actually title the chapter as “RULES OF PROCEDURE”. In such cases, the governmental assembly itself incorporates that as their by-laws because Articles I and II are clearly by-law material, and Article III clearly has special rules of order.

Roberts Rules also allow customs to override Roberts Rules. However, If a customary practice is in conflict with Roberts Rules or a Special Rule, and a Point of Order citing the conflict is raised, then **the custom falls to the ground**, and the provision in Roberts Rules must be complied with. If desired, the former customary practice can be added as a special rule of order. RONR §2:25

MORE ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS, AND A FEW RELEVANT MOTIONS

- Precedence of motions in more detail
- Concept of being in order in more detail
- Relationships of motions
- Standard Descriptive Characteristics
- Incidental main motions matching secondary motions
- What motions that an assembly uses that cannot be used in committees
- Another interesting term used ~ adhering
- Adjourn, Postpone, Recess, Fix the time to which to adjourn
- Majority
- Abstention
- How are rules other than the default Roberts rules created
- How NM organizations define majority: such as by members, or by votes cast
- Real world of majority: by members, or by votes cast: is that a real problem?
- Loss of control motions, and recovery methods
- Nominations for election to office (and how voted)
- Summing up points on losing control
- Consider these resources
- Putting it all together
- Some history for fun!
- Some final details to consider

The figure below shows “secondary” motions in their hierarchy and their precedence based on Standard Descriptive Characteristic #1. (SDC). Not all motions have a precedence, only the Privileged and the Subsidiary motions do..

Incidental motions have no precedence but do have rules about how they fit in and that is often based on SDC #2 or on RONR sections before or after the SDCs.

	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">13 Fix Time to adjourn to</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">12 Adjourn</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">11 Recess</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">10 Question of privilege</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">9 Orders of the day</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">8 Lay on Table</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">7 Previous question</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">6 Limit or Extend</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">5 Postpone to later</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">4 Commit or refer</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">3 Amend</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">2 Postpone indefinitely</td></tr> </table>	13 Fix Time to adjourn to	12 Adjourn	11 Recess	10 Question of privilege	9 Orders of the day	8 Lay on Table	7 Previous question	6 Limit or Extend	5 Postpone to later	4 Commit or refer	3 Amend	2 Postpone indefinitely	
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2 Postpone indefinitely														
<p>PRIVILEGED affects entire meeting</p>		<p>INCIDENTAL</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Requests/Inquiries</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Excused duty</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Nominations</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Voting</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Division: assembly</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Considin by para</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Division: question</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Object to consideration</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Suspend Rules</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Appeal</td></tr> <tr><td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Point of Order</td></tr> </table> <p>Have no precedence. Act like privileged motions</p>	Requests/Inquiries	Excused duty	Nominations	Voting	Division: assembly	Considin by para	Division: question	Object to consideration	Suspend Rules	Appeal	Point of Order	
Requests/Inquiries														
Excused duty														
Nominations														
Voting														
Division: assembly														
Considin by para														
Division: question														
Object to consideration														
Suspend Rules														
Appeal														
Point of Order														
<p>SUBSIDIARY affects main motion</p>														

PRECEDENCE OF MOTIONS IN MORE DETAIL

How is order kept when motions can be stacked next to each other?

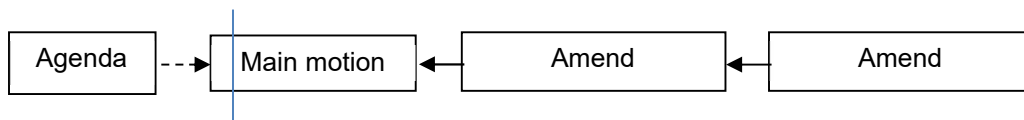
Each secondary privileged and subsidiary motion has a precedence, or rank, or level of priority. Roberts Rules do not give them a number but every parliamentarian does, and the number is based on each motion's Standard Descriptive Characteristic No. 1 (SDC) or on a chart towards the end of the Roberts Rules handbook, page t4 and t5, with the main motion on the bottom, and the privileged ones at the top with the subsidiary ones in the middle. Being Roberts Rules, instead of a simple precedence of 2 to 13, they make SDC No. 1 describe what the motion yields to and what motions yield to it. It is Roberts Rules so there is an anomaly in the case of the motion to "amend", it has a precedence of "3" which controls what it "yields to", but it has a precedence a bit higher than the precedence of the motion it is amending, in that when "amend" is made, it beats the motion it amends. "Amend" is a bit of a bully. RONR §12:7 1 B, and p t3-t5

When someone thinks that the main motion or other motion needs some work, an additional motion can be made and usually it is "in order", of course "amend" comes to mind as an example.

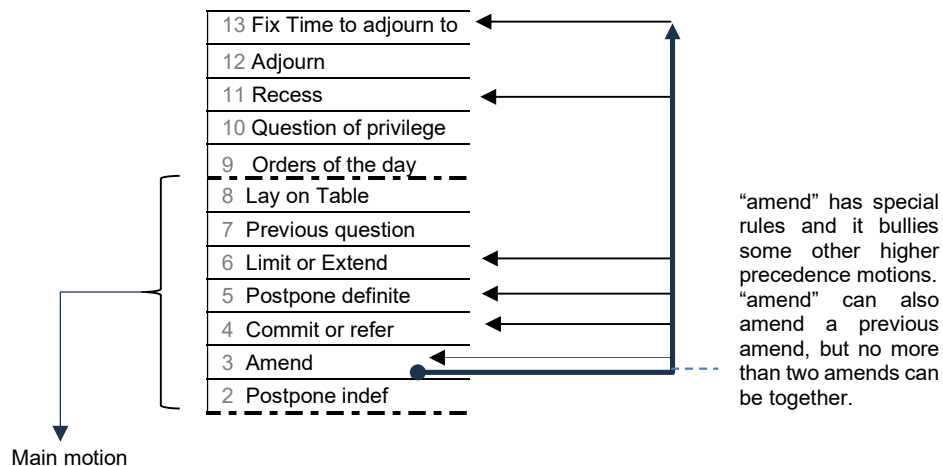
For example, someone thinks that the main motion could do with a change, then the "amend" motion is used.



And someone might like it but think it needs even more of a tweak, so the second amend adds to the first. However only two amends can be stacked together, a third is out of order. In fact, amend, while having a precedence of 3 when it comes to yielding, it takes precedence over amendable motions regardless of its precedence. RONR §12:7 1 B, and p t3-t5



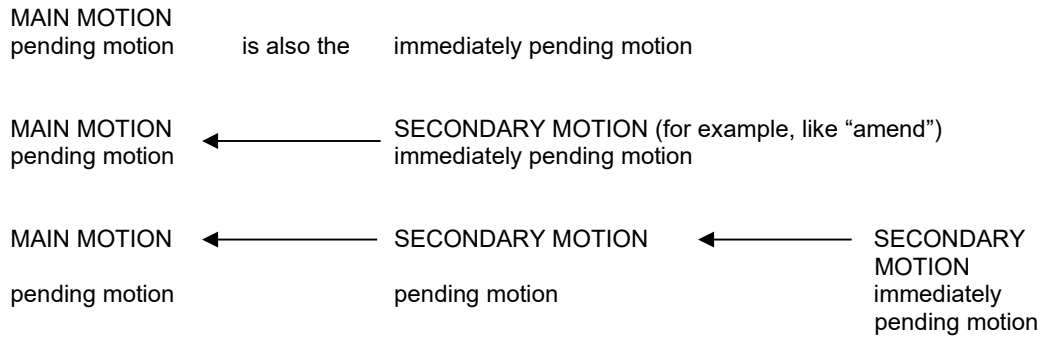
Being somewhat repetitive, amend has a precedence of 3 when it comes to yielding to other motions, but it has a precedence a bit above the precedence of the motion it is amending, in that way, when "amend" is raised, it beats the motion it amends.



A "motion" gets things going, and when someone makes a "second", it shows there is interest in that motion. When the presiding officer announces there is a motion and a second, then that collection becomes a "question". The word "question" is used a lot. Once a question exists, the motion no longer belongs to the maker but it then belongs to the assembly.

CONCEPT OF BEING IN ORDER IN MORE DETAIL

Two terms to remember are the “pending motion” and the most recent one at the end of the list is the “**immediately pending motion**”, and that is tackled first.



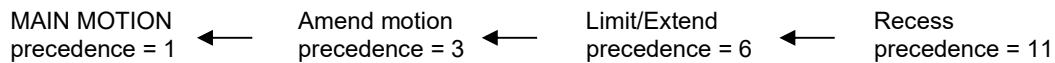
In the above pictorial, when the ““immediately pending motion” “amend” does its thing, it goes away since the one before it has then been amended. And then the remaining amend motion does its thing on the main motion which is now the “immediately pending motion”, and then that amend motion also vanishes.

Roberts does not let a third amend motion be added, it can become complicated with too many “amends”, like the proverbial Gordian Knot. Besides, the “amend” motion lives in a world of its own, and RONR dedicates 38 pages in its discussion. It has job security.

The rule is that motions normally are “not in order” if their precedence number is lower than the ““immediately pending motion”. However, the motion to “amend” is a special case; it is “3” when it comes to yielding but tops other “amendable motions”.

Amendable motions in general, are ones that can be amended and not all motions can be amended, see **Standard Descriptive Characteristic #6**, when it comes to being moved (RONR §12:7 1 B, and p t3-t5).

In the following sequence of one main and three additional motions, all is in order.



but if someone then moved to “Postpone to a certain time/date”...

Postpone precedence = 5

that would be **out of order** as its precedence is lower

however the bullying motion “amend” with a precedence of 3 would be **in order** since it changes its precedence when needed.

Privileged motions when made are handled as soon as possible, as are the incidental ones.

RONR Sections 4:17, 5:8-12, 6:6-7, 7:2 of the Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) discuss this at length; and for the amend motion, it is discussed in RONR §12:7 1 B, and p t3-t5.

When a member thinks that the Chair or presiding officer is not managing the rules, they can call the incidental motion “**point of order**” and the Chair or presiding officer than says “state your point”, and then issues a ruling. That ruling cannot be amended but it can be appealed. Points of order and its result should be documented in the minutes and they can set precedents for the future.

When a member thinks that the Chair or presiding officer is not following the agenda, they can use the privileged motion to call for “**the orders of the day**”.

RELATIONSHIPS OF MOTIONS

Secondary incidental motions do not have a precedence number, but each one does have rules on when it can apply to a motion on the floor and what it itself yields to. How does one know the rules regarding chains of motions? The answer is "Standard Descriptive Characteristics" (SDCs) and all motions have them, although Roberts Rules makes it hard to find some motion's SDCs. The first three usually determine when a motion is in order; however SDC (6) comes into play when an **amend** motion is made as not all motions are amendable.

In RONR table II p6 identified as incidental main, sometimes, or...
 in RONR in SDC (2) or SDC (1) for each specific motion, or
 " in other text for the motion after each motions SDCs, or
 " in other text for the motion before each motions SDCs, or
 In §10:5 of RONR (Main Motions), or sometimes in.....
 In classes of motions §6:9 (sub), §6:13 (priv), or §6:23 (inc).

STANDARD DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

1. Precedence re other motions a number between 2 and 13 but that is too simple so instead they use lots of words to show its precedence.
2. Situational applicability when a precedence number between 2 and 13 is not applicable or doesn't quite hit the spot, then there may be text describing when the motion can be added to the chain and when not.
3. Make if someone has the floor some motions are important enough that they may be allowed to be raised even if someone has the floor. Normally the person with the floor should not have started their speech, but in some urgent cases they can be interrupted while speaking.

No subsidiary motion can be made when another has the floor. All subsidiary motions need a second.
4. Second many motions need a person to second it, that way the presiding officer knows there is interest in allowing the motion onto the floor. For example the motion to amend needs a second. However a "point of order" does not.
5. Debatable some motions cannot be debated.

No privileged motion can be debated.
6. Amendable Some motions can be amended, some cannot. The idea is to ask yourself if it makes sense to amend something or not.
7. Majority or 2/3 vote As a rule a simple majority works for many things, but when member's rights are affected, then a two thirds majority is used. Sometimes in large groups some members may have left for some reason yet hoping to return; to avoid a temporary majority taking action, the super majority is required, hence the two thirds rule.
8. Reconsider Lastly, can the motion be later reconsidered or not.

The motion below shows a motion's attributes called the "Standard Descriptive Characteristics".

Standard Descriptive Characteristics (1) through (8)								
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
SECONDARY MOTIONS	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC	
PRIVILEGED	11 Recess	§20:2	n	y	n	y	majority	n

This document's author proposes two new SDCs:

SDC #9
SDC #10

secondary, incidental main, and bring back legislative, judicial, committee

What are the commonalities among the Standard Descriptive Characteristics? Notice the highlighted columns and see why they make sense.

Privileged Motions	Standard Descriptive Characteristics (1) through (8)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Fix Time to adjourn to	13	§22:3	NO	y	NO	y	majority	y
Adjourn	12	§21:2	NO	y	NO	NO	majority	NO
Recess	11	§20:2	NO	y	NO	y	majority	NO
Question of privilege	10	§19	y	NO	NO	NO	chair	NO
Orders of the day	9	§18	y	NO	NO	NO	§18:4 7	NO

Subsidiary Motions	Standard Descriptive Characteristics (1) through (8)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Lay on Table	8	§17:8	NO	y	NO	NO	majority	y
Previous question	7	§16:1	NO	y	NO	NO	2/3	y
Limit or Extend	6	§15:5	NO	y	NO	y	2/3	y
Postpone definite	5	§14:1	NO	y	y	y	majority	y
Commit or refer	4	§13:1	NO	y	y	y	majority	y
Amend	3	§12:7 1a	NO	y	y	?	majority	y
Postpone indef	2	§11	NO	y	y	NO	majority	y

Incidental Motions	Standard Descriptive Characteristics (1) through (8)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Excused duty		§32	y	?	y	y	majority	?
Requests/Inquiries		§33:3, 6	y	NO	NO	NO	Chair	NO
Nominations		§46	NO	NO	y	NO	majority	NO
Voting		§30.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Division: assembly		§29:1	y	NO	NO	NO	no vote	NO
Division: question		§27:1	NO	y	NO	y	majority	NO
Considn by para		§28:1	NO	y	NO	y	majority	NO
Object to considn		§26:1	?	NO	NO	NO	2/3	y
Suspend Rules		§25:4	NO	y	NO	NO	2/3	NO
Appeal		§24:1	y	y	y	NO	majority	y
Point of Order		§23:1	y	NO	NO	NO	Chair	NO

Bring Back Motions	Standard Descriptive Characteristics (1) through (8)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Take from table 17:8		§34:1, 3	NO	y	n	n	majority	n
Rescind/Amend		§35:1	NO	y	y	y	§35:2 (7)	y
Discharge		§36:1	NO	y	y	y	§35:2 (7)	y
Reconsider		§37:1	y	y	y	n	majority	n

INCIDENTAL MAIN MOTIONS MATCHING SECONDARY MOTIONS

When there is meeting dead space, such as between agenda items, and thus while waiting for a new “original main motion” from the agenda, there can still be some motions made.

One example would be the “bring back” motions, discussed elsewhere, they see if any earlier motions might need to be brought back.

Another example would be “incidental main motions”, discussed elsewhere, they are mostly process related, and they come from the “secondary motions”. Not all the secondary privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions can exist as “incidental main motions”. So how does that all work out?

Can SECONDARY Privileged Motions become Incidental Main motions:

YES Orders of the day 18:5
YES Question of Privilege 19:3
YES Recess 20:3,
YES Adjourn 21:2 last sentence,
YES Fix the Time to which to Adjourn. 22:4

Can SECONDARY Subsidiary Motions become Incidental Main motions:

YES Amend 12:7 1 b
YES Commit 13:6
YES Postpone definitely 14:3
YES Limit or Extend 15:4
NO Postpone Indefinitely 11:2 2
NO Previous Question needs a main motion
NO Lay on the table 17:3 2
NO Previous question not allowed in committees 16:4

Can SECONDARY Incidental Motions become Incidental Main motions:

YES Point of order 233:6 d
YES Appeal 24:3 2
YES Suspend the rules 25:2 1
YES Nominations Table II #57
YES Request information 33:2 1
YES Voting methods Table II #97
YES Excused from duty 32:2 1
NO Object to consideration 26:1 implies no
NO Consider by para seriatim 28:1 implies no
NO Division of question 27:1 implies no
NO Division of assembly 29:1 implies no

Figuring it out is not that simple, that would be too easy. Roberts Rules would like you to use Table II in RONR t-6 pages, but Table II is incomplete. They would like you to think that the standard descriptive characteristics (SDCs) would clear that up, some do and some don't. Then they would like you to think that the text just before or after those motion's SDCs might tell you, sometimes yes, sometimes no. Sometimes Sec. 6.9, 6.13, and 6.23 helps out when it describes privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions in the context of incidental main motions, but their list is not complete. Sometimes Sec. 10 of RONR helps out but don't rely on it.

WHAT MOTIONS THAT AN ASSEMBLY USES THAT CANNOT BE USED IN COMMITTEES

Earlier in the document, mention was made of committees as opposed to boards or commissions. For the most part, committees often use the same motions as do boards and commissions. Committees have less autonomy so motions may have some limitations when used in a committee. Specifically, some motions are not permitted in a committee:

See also: §15:1, 37:8 a), 37:8 b), 49:12, 50:23, 50:25, 50:26

Previous question §16:4 not allowed in committees
Limit or Extend §15:1 not allowed in committees

49:12 Boards **cannot empower** a subordinate group **unless the by-laws allow it**. But **any board can appoint committees to work under its supervision**.

50:23 All of the meetings of a special committee constitute one session

50:25 The motions to Rescind, or Amend Something Previously Adopted, and to Reconsider are modified as stated in §35:2(7) and §37:35.

50:26 A committee may not adopt its own rules except as authorized in the rules of the society or in instructions given to the committee by its parent assembly in a particular case.

ANOTHER INTERESTING TERM USED ~ ADHERING

An adhering motions is one that must be decided before the main question can be decided, RONR §10:35.

Roberts Rules use some 714 plus pages to get almost fully explained. So, there are times when duct tape is used to hold things together. For example say a main motion and its secondary motion chain is taking a lot of meeting time, or subject matter expertise is needed, then a motion may be made to postpone it, to lay it on the table, or commit (or refer) it to a committee. So what happens to the main motion and its chain of secondary motions? The term “**adhering**” is used to describe motions that stick together when shoved out of the way, and ones that do not adhere don’t go with the rest, §10:35

ADJOURN, POSTPONE, RECESS, FIX THE TIME TO WHICH TO ADJOURN

These motions **need an understanding of a meeting and a session**. A meeting is a session and a session is a meeting when the body has regular scheduled meeting dates such as a Town Council or a Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z). Otherwise a session can have many meetings such as in a State’s legislative session or in a convention. As an aside, committees have slightly different motion usage rules than a deliberative assembly such as the Town Council or P&Z.

RECESS RONR §20:1

Is for a short break only, not for something the next day. Coffee breaks stuff. **However**, NMSA 78, the NMAG, the LUZC, and even the P&Z by-laws use “recess” to sometimes mean adjourning to another day.

FIX TIME TO WHICH TO ADJOURN RONR §22

This does not say when the meeting will end, rather, this sets a time, date, and often a place for a future meeting called an “**adjourned meeting**”. And that future meeting will be an extension of the current session (even for P&Z and Town Councils). And then an agenda item can be postponed to that new spare meeting. And then everyone can get back to the current agenda, except for the one they shoved off of course.

NOTE: While “postpone” can be based until an event happens, §14:1 rather than a time, the motion “fix time to which to adjourn” has no such provision.

POSTPONE TO A CERTAIN TIME RONR §9:7-9, §14 notwithstanding RONR 8:12

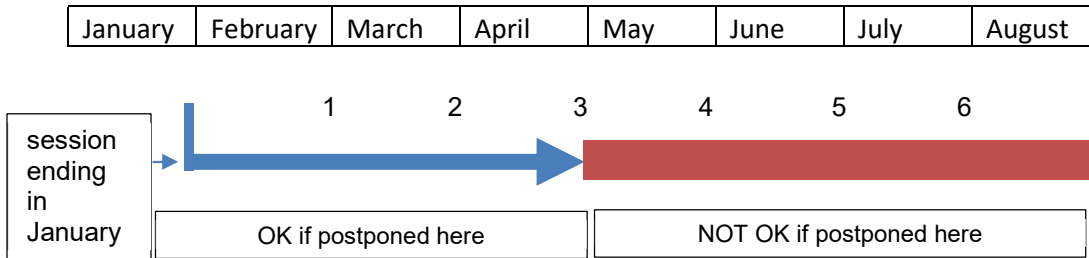
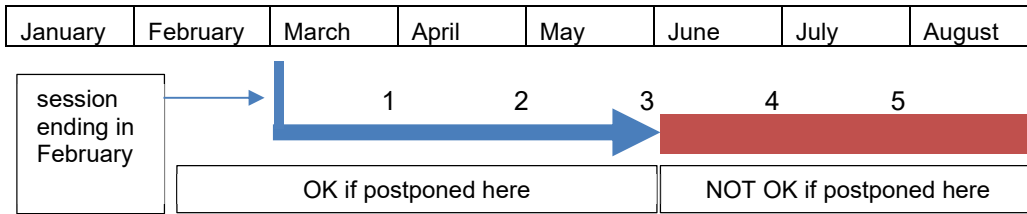
Also called POSTPONE DEFINITELY

to no later than this session	if	next session is more than a quarter away	§14:6
to this or the next session	if	next session not more than a quarter away	§14:6
to no more than one month	if	meetings are monthly	§14:20 a
week	or if	meetings are weekly	§14:20 a
to before next regular meeting	then	must create an “adjourned meeting”	§22:7 §14:7
	using	motion “Fix time to which to adjourn”	§14:20 f
	then	postpone the “question” to that meeting	
	where	there is now an adjourned meeting ready to go!	
	and	then continue with other business	
	and	no similar motions like the one postponed can be made	
	and	eventually adjourning	

Notwithstanding RONR §8:12 saying “as a general rule one session cannot bind a subsequent one”, **RONR 9:9 shows five ways** they can interact. Rules about **continuing a question from one session to the next** depend on whether *no more than a quarterly time interval (3 months)* intervenes between the two sessions.

“Important rules relating to the continuance of a question from one session to the next depend on whether no more than a quarterly time interval intervenes between the two sessions. In this book, it is understood that no more than a quarterly time interval intervenes between two sessions if the second session begins during or before the third calendar month after the calendar month in which the first session ends. For example, with reference to a session held in January, no more than a quarterly time interval has elapsed since the previous session if that session ended on or after October 1st of the preceding calendar year; and no more than a quarterly time interval will elapse before the next session if that session will begin on or before April 30th of the current year”. See next page...

Postponing an agenda item (the following **also applies** to the motion to **table**, see later):



Remember that for Town Councils and P&Z Commissions that have regular meetings and each such meeting is also one session. You can use “fix time to which to adjourn” to expand a session from just one day by adding another day a bit later.

Be warned that it is **improper** to postpone anything **BEYOND** the **NEXT session**—which could be an **attempt to prevent the NEXT session** from considering the postponed question. RONR §8:12

The above “postpone” discussion also applies to **Lay On The Table**, described later; §17:8 says the postponed agenda item stays on the table **for this session, or the next session** if it is within a quarter, **otherwise it dies**.

For **detailed rules** covering session to session communicating, please read **RONR 9:7-10** and **RONR 14:6-9** in the context of **RONR §8:12** which says “As a general rule, one session cannot place a question beyond the reach of a majority at a later session”, yet RONR §9:9 shows four or five easy ways to do just that!

NOTE: While “postpone” can be based on an event §14:1 rather than a time, the motion “fix time to which to adjourn” has no such provision.

ADJOURN RONR §22

Adjourn closes a meeting. If a motion **To Fix The Time To Which To Adjourn** RONR 22 has been made, then that creates an extension of the current session, and that time and usually place will create **an adjourned** meeting in the current session. For example, the Town Council and P&Z have regular meetings so each meeting is one session. When the current meeting finally Adjourns, nothing else is needed because the **Fix...** plus the **Postpone** motions have created a standalone meeting ready to go, but still in the same session. If no adjourned meeting was created, then Adjourn causes the meeting and thus, for the Town Council and P&Z as appropriate, the session to end.

Please read §21:2 for the **curious case** when ADJOURN is made when no agenda item is on the floor, because while you might expect ADJOURN to be an INCIDENTAL MAIN MOTION, it is usually not!

“The **adjourn motion is unique** in that, even if it is made while no question is pending, it is not debatable or amendable and it remains subject to all of the rules governing the privileged motion to Adjourn (except those that relate to making the motion while business is pending. Under those conditions, a motion to Adjourn is “**a privileged motion**” **even when no question is pending**”.

LOSS OF CONTROL MOTIONS, AND RECOVERY METHODS

Several motions cause the assembly to lose control, at least for a while, of an agenda item, i.e. a motion and its adhering motions.

Motions that lose control

- Commit Lay On The Table Postpone definitely

Motions that can recover the issue

- Discharge Take From The Table Reconsider postpone motion, or Suspend the rules

Commit or refer

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
4 Commit or refer	§13:1	n	y	y	y	majority	y

- 10:8 2 When using “commit” then the only adhering motions to go are “amend” motions
 13:2 A board can also send the question to itself, effectively making it a committee with differing Roberts Rules. In fact there are three options for an assembly referring an issue to itself, see 52:1-2 below
 13:6 Can be a subsidiary or an incidental main motion
 52:1-2 The committee of the whole, the quasi committee of the whole, and informal consideration

Discharge a committee

	RONR	INT	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
1 Discharge	§36:1	n	y	y	y	§35:2 (7)	y

- 36:1 **Discharge** can only be made when there is no main motion stated by the chair as it brings things back. That works because discharge is a bring back motion, not a secondary motion.
 36:2 While a motion is in a committee, the main body can’t consider similar motions
 36:10-11 If the committee was chartered by the subsidiary commit motion, then the issue comes back to the committing body. If it was chartered as a main motion however, the issues does not come back, and will die unless a motion is made to bring back that issue.

Lay On The Table

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
8 Lay on Table	§17:8	n	y	n	n	majority	y

- 10:8 2 When using “lay on the table”, it carries pending adhering motions
 17:3 2 Adhering motions go to the table with the main motion
 17:6 Take from the table is only in order if other business has been transacted since the lay on the table motion
 17:8 **Stays on the table for this session, or the next session if it is within a quarter. Else it dies.**
 17:9 While on the table, no similar new motions can be made
 17:14 It is not in order unless there is more business for this meeting

Take from table

	RONR	INT	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
1 Take from table 17:8	§34:1, 3	n	y	n	n	majority	n

- 34:1 **Take from the table** can only be made when there is no main motion stated by the chair
 34:2 2 Take from the table not in order after a lay on the table motions unless there has been further business transacted
 34:3 **Take from the table** can be made during the **same session it was laid on the table or the next session if within a quarter**
NOTE: Take from the table brings back a motion. Check to see if the Open Meetings Act is complied with.

Postpone to later

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
5 Postpone definite	§14:1	n	y	y	y	majority	y

10:8 2 When using “postpone to later, it carries pending adhering motions

- 14:1 **Postpone Definitely** or **postpone certain**. It can be predicated on an event not just a date/time. **NOTE:** While “postpone” can be based on an event §14:1 rather than a time, the motion “fix time to which to adjourn” has no such provision. So think about the session vs meeting concept.
- 14:3 Can be a subsidiary or an incidental main motion
- 14:4 7 Creates a general order by default, but can be made into a special order
- 14:5 Limits on postponement, several scenarios
- 14:6 **Can’t postpone** to a session **more than a quarter away**, **Can postpone** as far as next session **if within a quarter**
If regular meetings (weekly, monthly) then cannot postpone to more than one week or month respectively
- 14:7 If postponed to **before** the next regular meeting, then that new meeting is an **“adjourned meeting”** and the time and date **must** be set with **“Fix time to adjourn to”** (see 22:3), see also 14:20 f
- 14:12 Bylaws requiring a specific regular meeting, as in officer election, **cannot be postponed** in meetings before the named meeting, only in the named meeting itself
- 14:13 The motion cannot be **taken up** earlier than **the date and time to which it was postponed except** by reconsidering the original postpone motion, or by suspending the rules.
- 14:14 General vs special **orders of the day**
- 22:9 While RONR does not require noticing of an “adjourned meeting”, remember the **Open Meetings Act** has special rules for noticing when the postponement is no more than about 2 days

SUMMING UP POINTS ON LOSING CONTROL

- a very good way to lose control is not to know Roberts Rules of Order, nor the assembly’s bylaws.
- another way is when a member knows more than the presiding officer about Roberts Rules
- another good way to lose control is not to have bylaws at all. Remember that the NMML has model bylaws for both Governing Bodies as well as Planning and Zoning Commissions.
- If a body is inconsistent in applying decisions, that may be grounds for appeals of quasi-judicial decisions.

SOME HISTORY FOR FUN!

HISTORY	
One issue at a time	1581
Alternate opposing views	1592
Chair calls for negative vote	1604
Decorum, issues not personalities	1604
Debate on merits only	1610
Division of a question	1640
Jeffersons manual "Parliamentary Practice"	1801
Cushings manual	1845
Roberts Rules of Order	1875
(Sturgis) The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure	1950
Atwoods Rules For Meetings - used by IAFF	1956
Marthas Rules Of Order	1970
Customary rules in RONR 10th edition	2000
Electronic meetings guidance 11th edition	2011

VOTING – MAJORITY - ABSTENTIONS - OFFICE ELECTIONS

MAJORITY: based on **votes cast**, or based on **members present** if **bylaws specified it**

Roberts Rules default RONR §44:1 is that a majority is the number of AYES to the total votes cast where an abstention is not considered a vote. SDC #7 can require of 2/3 vote RONR 10:8. Roberts allows an assembly to choose and **articulate** an alternative definition of the standard majority RONR §44:10.

44:1 The word majority means “**more than half**”; and when the term majority vote is used without qualification, as in the case of the basic requirement, it means more than half **of the votes cast** by persons entitled to vote, excluding blanks or abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting.

4:35 The chair **does not call for abstentions in taking a vote**, since the number of members who respond to such a call is meaningless. **To “abstain” means not to vote at all.**

44:9 a Other voting requirements based on the number of members present, a majority of those present, two thirds of those present, etc, while possible, are generally **undesirable**. Since an abstention in such cases **has the same effect as a negative vote**, these bases **deny members the right to maintain a neutral position** by abstaining. For the same reason, members present who fail to vote through indifference rather than through deliberate neutrality may affect the result negatively. When such a vote is required, however, the chair must count those present immediately after the affirmative vote is taken, before any change can take place in attendance. **The negative vote is not taken**, as it is irrelevant in determining if the motion is adopted.

Historical note: In 1604 the English Parliament adopted the requirement to count both the ayes and the nos.

2:17 Special rules of order are usually adopted in the form of resolutions (§4:4–5, §10:13–23) and Roberts prefers that to be the mechanism rather than using by laws.

RONRIB Question 6: To **abstain** means to refrain from voting, and, as a consequence, there can be no such thing as an “abstention vote.” **In the usual situation**, where the rules require either a “**majority vote**” or a “two-thirds vote,” abstentions have absolutely no effect on the outcome of the vote since what is required is either a **majority or two thirds of the votes cast**.

ABSTENTION

Abstention is allowed under RONR, but remember **P&Z bylaws** only allow it in conflicts of interest. RONR 45:3 and P&Z by-law 3.2 A) Rules of Voting which derives from **NMML guidance**. The chair does not call for abstentions in taking a vote, since the number of members who respond to such a call is meaningless. **To “abstain” means not to vote at all** RONR §4:35. See also RONR 4:35 **and** RONR §44:9 a) under the MAJORITY heading. See §44:9 a) for a majority based on members present, when the NO vote is not taken.

HOW ARE RULES OTHER THAN THE DEFAULT ROBERTS RULES CREATED

Special rules of order are usually adopted in the form of resolutions (RONR §4:4–5, §10:13–23) and Roberts prefers that rather than using by laws RONR §2:17. A hierarchy to consider for ideas is the NM Constitution, NMSA 78, NMAG OMA (Open Meetings Act) guidance, Town ordinances, assembly by laws (if any), special rules of order, rules of custom, Roberts itself, then NMML. **If the RONR default §44:1, §44:3 is not being used §44:9 then** the assembly should **clearly state** (§44:10) what definition they shall use.

- P&Z by-laws use the NMML recommendation which prohibits abstentions except for conflicts of interest.
- NMML advice to governing bodies:
 - 52-Tips-for-Successful-Public-Service-PDF_202403181102191950.pdf para 21, no abstention
 - Rules-of-Procedure-for-Governing-Bodies-PDF_202403181100401985.pdf by law 3.2 A “ “
 - Code of Ordinances: most votes are based on the members present, **abstentions not addressed**.

HINT: NM constitution 2/3 3/4 or 3/5; NMSA 78 majority or 2/3; LUZC 6.2.8 B 3 majority or 2/3 vote of those present and not abstaining; By-laws 3.2 A majority (Commission); NMML majority or 2/3 for P&Z and for Council.

ALSO: The AIP Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (Sturgis), Sec. 5.12 et seq has excellent suggestions. A curious result can happen with “a majority vote of the quorum” Sec. 5.17 [e.g. if members=9, the quorum is 5 with 3 as the quorum majority. If yes=2 and no=1, others abstain, the majority suggests a win, but it is not a quorum majority, so it fails [eg NMSA 78 10-15-1 I (1)]

HOW NM ORGANIZATIONS DEFINE MAJORITY: BY MEMBERS, or BY VOTES CAST

CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO

Article V Sec. 16	by a majority vote of all members elected to the senate
Article IX Sec. 14 F	by a majority vote of the members in each house
Article XI Sec. 7 J	by a three-fifths' vote of the members elected to each house,
Article VIII Sec. 3	by a three-fourths majority vote of all the members elected to each house
Article IX Sec. 14 F	by a three-fourths' vote of the members elected to each house
Article XII Sec. 7 D	by a three-fourths' vote of the members elected to each house,
Article XIX Sec. 2	by a two-thirds vote of the members elected to each house
Article IV Sec. 23	by a two-thirds vote of each house
Article IV Sec. 17	by a vote of a majority of the members present
Article IV Sec. 22	by two-thirds of the members present and voting in each house by yea and nay vote

NM STATUTES DESCRIBING VOTING

Chapter 3 - Municipalities

Article 11 - Mayor-Council Municipality; Mayor

Section 3-11-3 - Mayor; presiding officer of governing body; limitation on vote.

The mayor of a municipality is the presiding officer of the governing body. In all municipalities the **mayor shall vote only when there is a tie vote.**

Article 19 - Planning and Platting

Section 3-19-11 - Legal status of master plan.

B. **by a two-thirds vote of all its members.**

D. by a two-thirds vote of all its members

Article 21 - Zoning Regulations

Section 3-21-6 - Zoning; mode of determining regulations, restrictions and boundaries of district; public hearing required; notice.

C. **by a majority vote of all the members** of the governing body of the municipality

by a **two-thirds vote of all the members** of the board of county commissioners.

Section 3-21-8 - Appeals to zoning authority; grounds; stay of proceedings.

C. by a **majority vote of all its members** may:

Section 3-21-14 - Adoption of county zoning ordinances.

C. by a majority **vote of all the members** of the board of county commissioners,

Chapter 10 - Public Officers and Employees

Article 15 - **Open Meetings**

Section 10-15-1 - Formation of public policy;

I. If any meeting is closed pursuant to the exclusions contained in Subsection H of this section:

(1) **by a majority vote of a quorum of the policymaking body;**

SILVER CITY TOWN CHARTER

Chapter 2 - ADMINISTRATION

ARTICLE V. - OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

Sec. 2-195. - Appointment; indefinite term.

The town manager shall be appointed by **majority vote of the town council** for an indefinite term.

SILVER CITY LUZC - Appendix C - LAND USE AND ZONING CODE OF 2010

ARTICLE II. – DEFINITIONS

2.2 – Definitions

Majority: simple. More than **50 percent of the voting members seated** for the vote.

Majority, super. More than **50 percent of the designated voting members of the decision-making body.** **(designated never defined)**

ARTICLE VI. - ADMINISTRATION

6.2.8 Citizen Participation.

B) 3) the **Planning and Zoning Commission** or **Town Council** may **require by 2/3 vote of those present and not abstaining**

6.3.2 Amendments to Official Zoning Maps or Text of this Land Use Code

C) **by a majority vote of all of the members of** the Town Council.

REAL WORLD OF MAJORITY: BY MEMBERS, or BY VOTES CAST: IS THIS REALLY A PROBLEM?

Is there actually an impact given the various definitions of majority when considering the basis of votes cast versus the members present? Yes.

- 44:1 The word majority means “**more than half**”; and when the term majority vote is used without qualification—as in the case of the basic requirement—it means more than half **of the votes cast** by persons entitled to vote, **excluding blanks or abstentions**, at a regular or properly called meeting.
- 4:35 The chair does not call for abstentions in taking a vote, since the number of members who respond to such a call is meaningless. To “**abstain**” means **not to vote at all**.
- 44:9 a Other voting requirements based on the number of members present, a majority of those present, two thirds of those present, etc, while possible, are generally **undesirable**. Since an abstention in such cases **has the same effect as a negative vote**, these bases **deny members the right to maintain a neutral position** by abstaining. For the same reason, members present who fail to vote through indifference rather than through deliberate neutrality may affect the result negatively. **The negative vote is not taken**, as it is irrelevant in determining if the motion is adopted.
- 2:17 **Special rules of order** are usually adopted **in the form of resolutions** (§4:4–5, §10:13–23) and Roberts prefers that to be the mechanism rather than using by laws.

Abstention is ok under RONR, but **NMML recommended bylaw 3.2 Rules of Voting A)** for both Governing Bodies and the Planning and Zoning Commission only allow abstentions in conflicts of interest. Refer to RONR §45:3 and P&Z by-law 3.2 Rules of Voting A) which derives from NMML guidance.

The following can happen in real meetings with four members

c	c	Mayor	c	c
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Scenario 1:	RONR §44:1, result based on votes cast abstention is a non-vote	AYE 2 NO 1 ABS 1	Motion passes
Scenario 2	RONR §44:9, members who can vote but saying abstentions are a NO vote	AYE 2 NO 1 ABS 1	Motion fails
Scenario 2a	Presiding Officer breaks tie with a NO not needed, as the motion fails anyway	AYE 2 NO 2	Motion fails
Scenario 2b	Presiding Officer breaks tie with an AYE making AYE b3 3	AYE 2 NO 2	Motion passes

If an assembly has no bylaws, no special rules of order, but uses Roberts Rules then the assembly should use RONR §44:1 as the majority is based on votes cast excluding abstentions. It is a point of order if they do not.

If an assembly has no bylaws, but does have a special rule of order electing to use a majority based on members present (not votes cast), and uses Roberts Rules, the assembly does not use RONR 44:1 as it is over-ridden.

If an assembly has no bylaws or special rules of order and by ordinance bases a majority on members present, then **only the AYE are counted** and per RONR 44:9 a), the **NOs are not called for** nor abstentions.

If an assembly has standard NMML based bylaws (for Governing Bodies or P&Z commissions), and uses Roberts Rules, then the assembly bylaws match RONR §44:1 so the majority is based on votes cast excluding abstentions.

This is very important as if an assembly has no by-laws and no special rule of order to override RONR §44:1 then decisions can be arbitrary as one day they may define a majority based on votes case, and on another day a majority based on members present. That creates a potential inconsistency, and if that happens in a quasi-judicial hearing then there are grounds for appeal. For fun, consider the difference between members present, members present and voting, and elected members present; for a state assembly there may be a member who was appointed to fill a vacancy and thus not yet elected. That poses a legal question for an authorized attorney to answer. **Not defining what a majority is can be a mess.**

FYI: *The AIP* “Code of Parliamentary Procedure” (*Sturgis*) Sec. 5.20 and 5.23 match RONR §44:1
Demeter “Manual of Parliamentary Law and Procedure” p37(top) and p209 match RONR §44:1
Atwood [314] (4) matches RONR §44:1

VOTING BASED ON MEMBERS PRESENT ~ THE ABSURDITY OF ABSTENTIONS

RECONSIDERING:

37:10 By Whom and When a Motion to Reconsider Can Be Made. As briefly mentioned above (37:8), to provide both usefulness and protection against abuse, the motion to Reconsider has the following unique characteristics:

a)

Similarly, **if a motion was lost but the negative vote was not taken because it was intrinsically irrelevant (see 44:9(a))**, the members present at the time who did not vote in favor qualify to move to reconsider.

BASES FOR DETERMINING A VOTING RESULT

44:9 Regarding these bases for determining a voting result, the following points should be noted:

a) Voting requirements based on the number of members present—a majority of those present, two thirds of those present, etc.—while possible, are generally undesirable.

Since an abstention in such cases has the same effect as a negative vote, these bases deny members the right to maintain a neutral position by abstaining.

For the same reason, members present who fail to vote through indifference rather than through deliberate neutrality may affect the result negatively.

When such a vote is required, however, the chair must count those present immediately after the affirmative vote is taken, before any change can take place in attendance. **The negative vote is not taken, since it is intrinsically irrelevant to determining whether the motion is adopted. (See 4:35.)**

THE HANDLING OF A MOTION

4:35 The vote on a motion is normally taken by voice (or viva voce),¹⁰ unless, under certain conditions, it is taken by rising or —sometimes in committees, or in small boards, or other very small assemblies—by a show of hands. In putting the question by any of these methods, the chair calls first for the affirmative vote, and all who wish to vote in favor of the motion so indicate in the manner specified; then he calls for the negative vote.

The chair must always call for the negative vote, no matter how nearly unanimous the affirmative vote may appear, except that this rule is commonly relaxed in the case of noncontroversial motions of a complimentary or courtesy nature; but even in such a case, if any member objects, the chair must call for the negative vote.

A further exception arises when the negative vote is intrinsically irrelevant, as, for example, when “a vote of one fifth of the members present” is required (see 44:9(a)).

The chair does not call for abstentions in taking a vote, since the number of members who respond to such a call is meaningless. To “abstain” means not to vote at all, and a member who makes no response if “abstentions” are called for abstains just as much as one who responds to that effect.

The following can happen in real meetings with four members when their Ordinance defines the majority as “of a **majority** of the members of the <assembly>”. Assume 4 members and a presiding officer who can’t vote except to break a tie. Not defining abstentions and not following RONT 44:9 a, can be a mess.

Scenario 3 RONR §44:9, members who can vote AYE 1 NO 1 ABS 2 Motion **fails**

If the presiding officer believes this is a tie, and decides to vote NO, the Motion **fails** if the abstentions are assumed to be non votes. So the tie breaker is not relevant.

If the presiding officer believes this is a tie, and decides to vote YES, the Motion **fails** if the abstentions are assumed to be NO votes. So the tie breaker is not relevant.

If the presiding officer believes this is a tie, and decides to vote YES, the Motion **fails** if the abstentions are assumed to be non votes as there are only 2 AYEs, and 2 votes are not a **majority** of the members of the <assembly>. So the tie breaker is not relevant.

NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION TO OFFICE (AND HOW VOTED)

Philosophically, there is a balance between experience, fresh blood, and knowledge. Perhaps a recommendation for officers to relinquish their position when they believe others are qualified to replace them might be a good approach.

- 31 Motions relating to **nominations** in RONR Sec. 31 are minimal, see **RONR Sec. 46** which has its own nominating and own voting ideas.
- 46 Section on nominations has its own voting sections.
- 46:3 From the floor etc.
- 46:6 Call for more nominations, recognition not required, second not required
- 46:20 Motion to close the nominations after no more nominations come in
- 46:38 Then voting methods
- 47:4 The bylaws may contain a provision that “No person shall be eligible to serve consecutive terms in the same office.”
- 47.15 A presiding officer should make every effort to know more parliamentary procedure than other members.
- 56:31 Since a reasonable **rotation in office is desirable** in almost all organizations, a section of this article may well provide that “No person shall be eligible to serve... **consecutive terms** in the same office.”

Other Best Practices: Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure, formerly Sturgis, adopted by the AIP (American Institute of Parliamentarians)

27.57-62 (formerly Sturgis) cautions on limits and suggests thinking about the group as a whole.
28.15 Learning the basic rules of motions is a fundamental skill for a presiding officer, and proficiency in using these rules should be a priority.

46:6 **Nominations from the Floor.** Under the procedure of nominations from the floor, **the chair calls for nominations at the time established by rule or custom** of the organization or assembly—which may be while the election is pending or earlier. Unless the **bylaws or a special rule of order provides otherwise, the chair must call for further nominations at the session at which the election is held even if nominations were** called for at a previous session. A member **need not be recognized by the chair** to make a nomination unless he or she wishes to speak in debate on it at the same time (see 46:27–29), and **no second is required.**

46:38 **When there is more than one nominee for a given office** in a viva-voce election—or in an election by rising vote or by show of hands—the **candidates are voted on in the order in which they were nominated.** When the **nominations have ended, the chair repeats the nominations and continues, as soon as one of the nominees receives a majority vote, the chair declares him elected and no votes are taken on the remaining nominees for that office.** The other officers are elected in the same way.

NOTE: elections to office are covered in the NOMINATIONS section of RONR.

NOTE: you can vote for yourself §45.5

CONSIDER THESE RESOURCES FOR THE GOVERNING BODY

<https://nmml.org/DocumentCenter>

<https://nmml.org/189/Governing-Body>

- [Governing-Body-Code-of-Ethics-sample-PDF_202403181102030192.pdf](#)
- [Rules-of-Procedure-for-Governing-Bodies-PDF_202403181100401985.pdf](#)

CONSIDER THESE RESOURCES FOR THE PLANNING AND ZONING

- Commissioner's Manual
- <https://nmml.org/DocumentCenter/View/700/NMLZO-Land-Use-Officials-Handbook?bidId=>

OTHER RULE SYSTEMS, AND SOME INTERESTING MOTIONS

OTHER RULE SYSTEMS IN USE

- Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure Published in **1948**. It is the second most popular parliamentary authority after Robert's Rules of Order. Now lives on as the American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure
- Atwood: Rules for Meetings First published in **1956**. Used by the IAFF. Simplified procedures and language
- Martha's Rules of Order Originally created in the **1970s**. Facilitated consensus based methods
- Demeter's Manual of Parliamentary Law and Procedure First published in **1948**.
<https://archive.org/details/demetersmanualof00deme>
- Riddick's Rules of Procedure Floyd Riddick and Miriam Butcher. Hard to find book.
<https://archive.org/details/riddicksrulesofp00ridd/page/n5/mode/2up>

ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER AUTHORIZED BOOKS ARE:

- Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised in Brief 3rd edition RONRIB
- Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised 12th edition RONR

SOME QUESTIONS OR POSSIBLE INCONSISTENCIES

1. Rather than give a precedence number to each privileged and subsidiary motion, standard descriptive characteristic (SDC) #1 provides lists of what the motion yields to and what motions must yield to it. Most parliamentarians give a number starting at 1 for the main motion.
2. The SDCs usually relate to secondary motions, but some secondary motions are allowed to be incidental main motions as well. There is little consistency in how you determine whether a secondary motion can be an incidental main motion, and if so, what its SDCs would be.
 - **sometimes** in “classes of motions” §6:9 (subsidiary), §6:13 (privilege), or §6:23 (incidental),
 - **sometimes** TABLE II in the t-pages may suggest it,
 - **sometimes** SDC 2 might suggest it,
 - **sometimes** the additional text before or after the SDCs might suggest it,
 - **sometimes** §10:5 adds to the incidental main motions.

Yet these are unreliable, for example, RONR §6:13 omits the privileged motion “Orders of the Day” as being also an incidental main motion yet RONR §18:5 p1 says it is.

3. Table II in pages t6 et seq in RONR 12th edition is hit and miss on whether a motion can be an incidental main motion. Added to that, Table II in pages t6 et seq in RONR 12th edition does not contain all the motions in the book, for example, LIMIT OR EXTEND, which is §15 does not appear in table II, although the “EXTEND” part of it does **yet** lists it as an incidental motion, in fact **it is subsidiary**, while it refers to §18 which covers **privileged** motions.
4. RONR Sec.10:5 adds to the incidental main motions, for example **adopt, ratify, limit, recess**. *Adopt, ratify, and recess* are in Table II however *limit*, is not (see 4 above).
5. Consider RONR §22:11 saying “Fix The Time **TO** Which To Adjourn” is very different from “Fix The Time **AT** Which To Adjourn” which is a very true statement. Yet while it names Fix The Time **AT** Which To Adjourn”, nowhere in the book is it defined, luckily it is somewhat obvious.
6. Table II defines “suspend the rules” as an “I” or subsidiary incidental motion, but it has no separate entry for it being “M” or incidental main motion, yet §25:2 p1 clearly says it can be.
7. Frequently, paragraphs have run on sentences that should be a new subsection or new line, eg §8:8 (a), (b), and (c), and §14:6 etc. This reduces clarity in a book that has many ambiguities in it such as SDCs for incidental main motions, or whether a motion can even be an incidental main one. This book uses pictorials to improve the readability of several confusing issues.
8. Fix the time to which to adjourn §22:2 appears to disagree with §22:4. Badly worded and §22:4 probably should be before §22:2, but it is in fact **not inconsistent**. A new proposed Standard Descriptive Characteristic SDC #9 could clearly show the motion as secondary, incidental main, or bring back, it would help.

SOME RONR MOTIONS OR TERMS HAVE SIMILAR WORDS BUT DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS

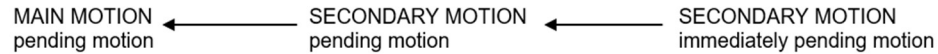
- Fix The Time **TO** Which **TO** Adjourn is very different from Fix The Time **AT** Which To Adjourn, see RONR §22:11
- **Recess** and **Adjourn** are often confused with each other. (NMSA78 10-5, NMAG, NMML, P&Z bylaws, LUZC)
- **Special Rules of Order** (which modify RONR) are not the same as **Special Orders** (an agenda issue)
- Please be consistent with **AYE** and **NO** when voting rather than YES, AYE, NAY, etc, it helps the minutes keeper.
- The word “**order**” appears in special rules of order, orders of the day, point of order, as well as being the result of some motions such as postpone and limit or extend, and in that context, the order is the hangover of the motion’s impact and influence; those orders also get “exhausted”.

Below by RONR reference are highlights to review, they are in the order they appear in the book. And after that is a similar listing but in alphabetical order.

SOME MORE INTERESTING MOTIONS AND MOTION ANOMALIES

Be aware that some motions may seem inconsistent with other principles of Roberts Rules but they are ok.

AMEND: The secondary AMEND motion has a precedence of 3. That is used by other motions who want to interact with it. However, AMEND is a bit of a bully. Even though its precedence is 3, it can be made when another motion is there with a higher precedence. The current motion is called the immediately pending motion. RONR §12



The secondary AMEND motion adheres to preceding motions And you can even AMEND the first AMEND But they don't allow three AMEND motions in a row.

RECONSIDER: The bring back RECONSIDER motion is a USA motion only, and Roberts says don't use it if you can use other motions to achieve the same goal. The reconsider motion **can be made** even **during** a debate on another motion. and it can be seconded there as well! Reconsider must be **"moved" on the same day** (or next day if in a multi-meeting session) that the original vote was made. The presiding officer will make a note of it, and the ongoing debate will continue as if never interrupted. Later, sometimes much later, that reconsider motion can be **"called up"**, with no second if one was made during that interruption. Sec. 37:8, 37:10 b, are consistent even though they appear to disagree with §37:15 In other words, "reconsider" has two timelines associated with it. Of course, beware of the Open Meetings Act noticing requirements if called up on a different day.

POSTPONE: Notwithstanding RONR §8:12 saying "as a general rule one session cannot bind a subsequent one", RONR §9:9 **shows five ways** they can interact. Rules about **continuing a question from one session to the next** depend on whether *no more than a quarterly time interval* intervenes between the two sessions. RONR §14

to no later than this session	if next session is more than a quarter away	§14:6
to this or the next session	if next session not more than a quarter away	§14:6
to no more than one month week	if meetings are monthly, or if meetings are weekly, etc	§14:20 a 14:20 a
to before next regular meeting	then must create an "adjourned meeting" using motion "Fix time to which to adjourn"	§22:7 §14:7 §14:20 f

ADJOURN: Please read RONR §21:3 for the **curious case** of ADJOURN with no agenda item on the floor as you might expect it to be an INCIDENTAL MAIN MOTION, but it varies see table below. Normally, RONR makes adjourn privileged by default. The rules are summarized below:

If there is **no mention of meeting again during this meeting**, then ADJOURN is a **privileged** motion **regardless of whether business is pending**. It closes the meeting immediately and any pending business stops and becomes unfinished business. In other words, the **ADJOURN at the end of a normal meeting** with all business complete is not, as you might expect, an incidental main motion, but **is a privileged motion**. When the motion to ADJOURN is **qualified in any way**, as in the case of a motion to adjourn to a future time, then the motion is not privileged, usually **it is an incidental main** motion; for clarification please refer to RONR §21:1 and §21:2, and also §6:13 footnote 5. Is this a real problem? Not really because in the real world, adjourn is adjourn is adjourn.

The adjourn motion when...	no future meeting planned	a future meeting planned	
DEBATING A MOTION	privileged	out of order	active debate
BETWEEN MOTIONS	privileged	incidental main	dead space

FYI: <https://robertsrules.forumflash.com/topic/13508-privileged-motions-treated-as-main-motions-why/>

AMEND SOMETHING PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED and RESCIND are bring back motions classes together. Amend changes pieces, rescind deletes the entire activity RONR §35. A good example of using "amend something previously adopted" would be amending bylaws, or similar documents.

RONR SECTIONS IN BOOK SEQUENCE ~ MOTIONS AND PROCEDURES

NOTE: This section covers the common issues with a motion, procedure, or concept. For more motion details, please refer to the “DETAILED MOTION COMMENTS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER” for extra insights.

DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLY

- 1:9 **Deliberative assemblies** exist in many forms.
(1) the mass meeting; (2) the assembly of an organized society; (3) the convention; (4) **the legislative body**; and (5) **the board**.
- 1:21 The **Legislative Body** is a **constitutionally established public lawmaking body** of representatives chosen by the **electorate** for a fixed term of office. *Hence*, a Town Council is a legislative body
- 1:22 The **Board** is an administrative or **quasi-judicial** body of elected or **appointed** persons that while it may or may not function autonomously, its operation is determined by responsibilities and powers delegated to it or conferred on it by authority outside itself. *Hence*, a P&Z is board, and an assembly
1:24
- 2:17 Special rules of order are usually adopted in the form of resolutions (§4:4–5, §10:13–23) and Roberts prefers that to be the mechanism rather than using by laws.
- 9:1 **Regularly prescribed meetings** are a feature of boards 9:1
- No regular meetings** are common with committees.
- 49:21 Small boards have more flexible rules of order

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

- 3:30 a member “obtains the floor”
3:31 a member “yields the floor”

HANDLING OF A MOTION

- 4:2-3 After a “motion” and a “second”, the chair then states “the question” which is then “on the floor”
4:7 No debate before motion, brief consultation allowed (see small groups for exceptions)
4:25 After debate, the chair “puts” the “question” and for the result see §4:43
4:35 The chair does not call for abstentions in taking a vote, since the number of members who respond to such a call is meaningless. **To “abstain” means not to vote at all.**
4:43 Report the vote, then announce if lost or won, then state the effect of the vote
- 8:15 Bringing up failed issues in the same session is out of order
- 10:26 Main Motions That Are Not in Order: one example is **if substantially the same** as an earlier disposed of motion in same session

CLASSIFICATION ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

- 5:2 Motions are classified as main (original and incidental), secondary (privileged, subsidiary, and incidental) and bring back motions
5:8 Yielding and precedence difference
5:12 Incidental motions (secondary as well as main) have no rank among themselves

CLASSES AND MOTIONS

- 6:7 AMEND modifies its rank so it takes precedence over the motion it is being applied to
6:18 Each incidental motion has its own rules based on the situation, hence no precedence

STANDARD DESCRIPTIVE CHARACTERISTICS

- 7 Standard descriptive characteristics, all 8 elements

MEETINGS AND SESSIONS

- 8:4 for boards with published regular meetings, each meeting is a session
- 8:4 what is an **adjourned meeting** (also see §9:17): an adjourned meeting is not a meeting that has been adjourned, rather it is a meeting created by the previous meetings motion to adjourn (after a prior motion to Fix the Time To Which To Adjourn).
- 8:6 recess vs adjournment differences
- 8:8-9 using the “fix the time to which to adjourn”
- 8:12 freedom of each new session, but see §9:9 for five ways of one session affecting another.
- 8:15 bringing up failed issues in the same session is out of order

- 9:9 Five methods allow **session to session** transfers if sessions are not more than a quarter apart:
1: postpone, 2: laid on the table, 3: unfinished business, 4: committee, 5: reconsider,
- 9:10 If sessions are more than a quarter apart, only a committee can transfer issues session to session
- 9:10 Using “commit” to have session to session communication
- 9:13 Special meetings
- 9:17 Adjourned meetings
- 9:32 Need for rules for electronic meetings

THE MAIN MOTION

- 10:1 Original and Incidental main motions
- 10:6 Objection to consideration only allowed as secondary motion to a main motion, never as a main motion
- 10:7 Incidental main motions come from many of the secondary privileged, subsidiary and incidental motions
- 10:8 2 When using **COMMIT**, the only **adhering** motions to go are **AMEND** motions
- 10:8 2 **LAY ON THE TABLE** or **POSTPONE TO LATER** carry pending adhering motions
- 10:16 Resolution preambles are optional
- 10:26 Main motions are **out of order if substantially the same** as an earlier disposed of motion
- 10:30 1 **FRIENDLY AMENDMENTS**, see also §4:20 and §12:91
- 10:45 **PREVIOUS NOTICE** requirements, and impact on voting
- 10:48 Previous notice can be made in a preceding meeting

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS – 7 motions

- 11:1 **Postpone Indefinitely** means kill the motion
- 11:5 Postpone indefinitely is sometimes used by strategists to test their strength on a motion they oppose.

- 12:7 1 b **Amend** takes precedence over the motion it will amend. Amend occupies 38 pages in RONR!!
- 12:91 Friendly amendments, see also §4:20 and §10:30 (1)

- 13:2 **Commit** can be used to keep the “question” in the originating group thus use committee rules. A board can send the question to itself, effectively making it a committee with differing Roberts rules. There are three such options which is in essence suspending the rules. Also see §52:1-2 Sending a question to itself: **Committee of the whole, Quasi committee of the whole, Consider informally**

- 14:1 **Postpone Definitely** or **postpone certain**, and it can be predicated on an event also
- 14:4 7 Creates a general order by default, but can be a special order
- 14:5 Limits on postponement, several scenarios
- 14:6 **Can’t postpone** to a session **more than a quarter away**,
Can postpone as far as next session **if within a quarter**
- 14:7 Uses the **FIX THE TIME TO WHICH TO ADJOURN** motion
- 14:12 Bylaws requiring a specific regular meeting, as in officer election, **cannot be postponed** in meetings before the named meeting, only in the named meeting itself
- 14:14 General vs special **orders of the day**

- 15:1 **Limit or extend limits of debate**
- 15:3 Exhausted motions
- 15:4 Limit or extend can be subsidiary or it can be main incidental
- 15:18 Exhausted motions

- 16:1 **Previous question** if voted on, then brings one or more motions to an immediate vote
- 16:2 Previous question stops additional subsidiary motions but not privileged or incidental
- 16:11 Exhaustion of previous question meaning

- 17:6 Take from the table is only in order if other business has been transacted after the lay on the table motion
- 17:8 **Lay on table** holds the issue until this or the next session if within a quarter
- 17:9 The assembly can't debate similar motions to motions laid on the table
- 17:13 **Misuses** of the "lay on the table" and solutions
- 17:14 **Lay on the table** can't be used unless there is business needing to be discussed on another topic

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS – 5 motions

- 18 - 22 Orders of the day, Question of Privilege, Recess, Adjourn, Fix time to which to adjourn
- 19:7 Types of privileged motions. Most common use is something affecting the assembly.
- 21:10 Things that can be done after the adjourn motion but before the meeting is adjourned
- 21:12 Pause after the vote to adjourn in case there are residual issues to tidy up
- 21:15 If at the end of a completed agenda, motion to adjourn is not required, but most groups do.

Please read §21:2 for the **curious case** when ADJOURN is made when no agenda item is on the floor, because while you might expect ADJOURN to be an INCIDENTAL MAIN MOTION, it is usually not!

The **adjourn motion has the unique characteristic** that, even if it is made while no question is pending, it is not debatable or amendable and it remains subject to all of the rules governing the privileged motion to Adjourn (except those that relate to making the motion while business is pending; see Standard Descriptive Characteristics). Under the conditions just described, a motion to Adjourn is therefore said to be "privileged" or to be "**a privileged motion even when no question is pending**."

- 22:1 **Fix the time TO which to adjourn** creates a future adjourned meeting time
NOTE: While "postpone" can be based on an event §14:1 rather than a time, the motion "fix time to which to adjourn" has no such provision.
- 22:9 **Adjourned meetings** do not need a **notice** to members. But see **NMAG OMA** Guidance
- 22:9 Creates a new meeting in the current session even if each meeting is normally one session

INCIDENTAL MOTIONS – 11 motions

- 23:4 A member unsure if a point of order is needed can do a parliamentary inquire instead
- 23:10 A **point of order** goes into the minutes as precedence, and can be used later as persuasive

- 24:1 An **appeal** causes a point of order to be discussed by the assembly
- 24:6 Parliamentary inquiries are opinions and not rulings, so can't be appealed

- 25:2 1 **Suspend the rules** can be a secondary incidental motion or an incidental main motion
- 25:7 Cannot suspend some rules with the motion to suspend, examples. EG by-laws, ordinances, statutes.

- 26:2 3 **Objection to consideration of a question** must be made when question is called up but before debate
- 26:3 The chair can raise an **objection to consider**
- 26:7 When an **objection to consideration is put to a vote** in its correct form, members are asked to vote for or against consideration of the question objected to, not for or against sustaining the objection

- 27:1 **Division of a question** used to break out parts of a question when a motion is for one subject but the parts can be separated on their own, this motion separates each part and each part then has its own vote

- 28:3 **Consider by paragraph** continues to the end before any final vote, like a TAU (temporarily agreed upon)
- 28:8 Consider by paragraph continues to the end **even when** motion to postpone indefinitely

- 29:1 **Division of the assembly** - when a member doubts the result of a vote, this motion causes the Chair to require the vote to be re-taken by rising. Alternatives to the motion for a division thus causing rising are also presented.

- 30 Motions relating to **voting – minimal, see Sec. 45 and 44 instead**
- 31 Motions relating to **nominations – minimal, see Sec. 46 instead**
- 46 Larger section on nominations ~ this section has its own voting rules
- 46:3 From the floor etc
- 46:6 Call for more nominations, recognition not required, second not required
- 46:20 Motion to **close the nominations after no more** nominations come in
- 46:38 Voting methods

- 32:1 The proper method to **excuse a member from a required meeting** is for the assembly to vote
- 32:5 Any member knowing they cannot honor duties should resign

- 33:1 **Requests and inquiries** five general questions
- 33:3 Chair answers parliamentary enquiries. Need not answer hypotheticals.
- 33:5 Chair answer on parliamentary enquiry is not subject to appeal, it is an opinion and not a ruling
- 33:6 information requests to staff or another member go through the chair

MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY

- 34:1 **Take from the table** can only be made when there is no main motion stated by the chair
- 34:2 2 Take from the table not in order after a lay on the table motions unless there has been further business transacted since the motion to lay on the table
- 34:3 Take from the table can be made during the **same session** it was laid on the table **or the next session if** within a quarter. See also §17:8

- 35:1 **Rescind** also **amend something previously adopted** can only be made when no main motion has been stated by the chair. **Bylaw amendments** use amend something previously adopted
- 35:3 No time limits unlike reconsider
- 35:8 Majority if previous notice, otherwise 2/3 vote
- 35:13 **Rescind and expunge** from the minutes shows disapproval, special processing rules

- 36:1 **Discharge** can only be made when there is no main motion stated by the chair as it brings things back.
- 36:2 While a motion is in a committee, the main body can't consider similar motions
- 36:10-11 If the committee was chartered by the subsidiary committee, then the issue comes back to the committing body. If it was chartered as a main motion however, the issue does not come back, and will die unless a motion is made to bring back that issue.

- 37:1 **Reconsider** is a USA only motion, it is neither a secondary nor a main motion. It is a bring back motion.
- 37:8 b Reconsider must be **moved** on the same day (or next day if in a multi-meeting session) that the original vote was made, also §37:10 b
- 37:8 c Reconsider can be made when out of order, is kept pending until "called up" when it would be in order
- 37:9 3 When later **called up**, no second is needed, also §37:15
- 37:46 **Reconsider and enter in the minutes** is like reconsider but not for the same day, for a later day and designed to prevent a temporary majority benefitting from an unrepresentative attendance
NOTE: §37:8, §37:10b refer to "**making**" the reconsider motion, §37:15 refers to "**calling up**" the motion and not to making it. They appear inconsistent, but in fact they talk of two different things.

RENEWAL OF MOTIONS, DILATORY AND IMPROPER MOTIONS

- 38:1 An assembly cannot be asked to decide the same or substantially the same question twice during one session, also see §39:6 (of course exceptions exist such as reconsider)
- 38:4 Similar motion to earlier failed one can't be renewed in this session
- 39:1 Dilatory if purpose is to thwart the will of the assembly
- 39:3 Frivolous or absurd motions or that contain no rational reasons are dilatory and cannot be introduced.
- 39:5 If the motion is contrary to a higher authority

QUORUM

- 40:7 If no quorum, what can and cannot be done
- 40:8 Any motion aimed at getting a quorum is allowed
- 40:11 Chair to determine quorum before starting the meeting, see also §41:31
- 40:12 What if a quorum is lost during a meeting

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 41:10 Motion to approve minutes is not required
- 41:18 Special orders and how processed
- 41:22 **Definition** of a general order
- 41:31 Customary to do a roll call, see also §40:11
- 41:41 **Definition** of a special order
- 41:49 Rules for general orders
- 41:53 Rules for special orders, do interrupt business, see also §14:47 and §14:20 d

ASSIGNMENT OF THE FLOOR

- 42:2 The Chair must recognize any member seeking the floor while entitled to it
- 42:3 Use "For what purpose does the member rise" when the floor is limited for some reason
- 42:9 The member who makes a motion is normally entitled to be the first speaker
- 42:18 **Interrupt** a member who has the floor **and is speaking**, 8 reasons:
1: Orders of the Day, 2: Question of privilege, 3: Point of Order, 4: Separate vote on independent resolutions on different subjects, 5: Request or inquiry, 6: Appeal, 7: Objection to Consideration, 8: Division of the Assembly
- 42:19 **Interrupt** if speaker has not started to speak, 2 reasons: announce future motion, and **reconsider**

- 43:4 No debate before there is a motion (see **small groups for exceptions**)
- 43:5 During debate secondary motions can be processed (privileged, subsidiary, or incidental)
- 43:8 **Non legislative body** speeches are limited to **10 minutes**
- 43:12 No more than **2 speeches per day** on the same question (see **small groups for exceptions**)
- 43:15 The 2 speeches of 10 minutes each maximums can be changed by a special rule, or see 43:17
- 43:17 **Limit or extend debate** can be moved while a motion is being debated
- 43:20 Speeches are to be germane to the question
- 43:21 Speakers cannot attack a member's motives
- 43:22 Speakers must address remarks through the chair
- 43:25 Cannot speak against one's own motion (his can be a problem in quasi judicial hearings)
- 43:28 People must refrain from disturbing the assembly
- 43:29 If the chair wishes to speak on the issue, then vacate the chair (see **small groups for exceptions**)
- 43:21 A few words of explanation when making a motion are allowed

- 44 **VOTING**: basis for determining a voting result
- 44:1 Majority is **more than half of the votes cast excluding abstentions**
- 44:3 When a 2/3 vote is needed, see also pages RONR t48-t49 for a full list
- 44:9 a) Voting requirements **based on the number of members present is generally undesirable**.
When based on members present, "When such a vote is required, however, the chair must count those present immediately after the affirmative vote is taken, before any change can take place in attendance. The negative vote is not taken, since it is intrinsically irrelevant to determining whether the motion is adopted.
- 44:11 Plurality definition

- 45:3 **ABSTENTION** is allowed under RONR. **NMM/bylaws** only allow that for conflicts of interest.
- 4:35 The chair does not call for abstentions in taking a vote, since the number of members who respond to such a call is meaningless. To "abstain" **means not to vote at all**.

RONRIB Question 6: To abstain means to refrain from voting, and, as a consequence, there can be no such thing as an "abstention vote." **In the usual situation**, where the rules require either a "**majority vote**" or a "two-thirds vote," abstentions have absolutely no effect on the outcome of the vote since what is required is either a **majority or two thirds of the votes cast**.

Read the definition of a majority, for example is it based on the number of votes cast, the number of votes cast excluding abstentions, the number of members total, the number of members present, and so on.

- 45:5 Voting on questions affecting oneself is generally ok
- 45:11 Methods of voting
- 45:45 Roll call votes or yeas and nays as it is called, unlike other RONR **preferred** guidance of using **ayes** and **nos**.
- 45:48 The roll is called in alphabetical order, the presiding officer's name is called last. Each member responds in the affirmative or negative. If he does not wish to vote, he answers **present** or **abstain** (**by-laws may** prohibit abstain except for conflicts of interest). If a member is not ready to vote, but wishes to be called on again after the roll has been completely called, they answer "**pass**"
- 45:72 Straw polls are out of order as they neither affirm nor deny a question.

- 46 **NOMINATIONS:** Larger section than earlier Sec. 31 and this section has its own voting rules.
46:3 From the floor etc
46:6 Call for more nominations, **recognition is** not required, and a **second** is not required
46:20 Motion to close the nominations after no more nominations come in
46:38 Voting methods
- 47 **OFFICERS**
47:5 Chair vs presiding officer
47:9 Presiding officer stands when calling the meeting to order (see **small groups for exceptions**)
47:11 Temporary occupants of the chair
47:15 **A good presiding officer** should know RONR better than other members, and **know subsidiary and privileged** motions and their precedence by heart
47:19 Good judgment is essential; the assembly may be of such a nature, through its unfamiliarity with parliamentary usage and its peaceable disposition, that **strict enforcement of the rules, instead of assisting**, could greatly **hinder** business.
47:21 President-elect method of filling offices, not applicable in **P&Z** as bylaws would need to authorize it
- 48:2 In an ordinary society, the **minutes** should contain mainly a record of **what was done** at the meeting, not what was said by the members. NOTE: quasi-judicial hearings have their own reporting requirements.
48:9 Approval of the minutes

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

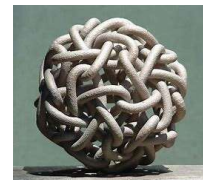
- 49.2 How a **board** is constituted, states **frequency of regular meetings** and procedure for special meetings. P&Z is a board see RONR §1:22
49:12 Boards **cannot empower a subordinate group** unless the by-laws allow it. **But any board can** appoint committees to work **under its supervision**.
49:21 Simpler procedures in **Small Boards of not more than about 12** members present:
Motions need not be seconded.
The 2 speech limit vanishes for debatable questions
Limited Informal discussion of a subject is permitted **while no motion is pending** RONR §4:3
When a proposal is perfectly clear to all present, a vote can be taken without a motion having been introduced.
The Chair may, without leaving the chair, speak in informal discussions and in debate, and vote on all questions.
- 50:1 **Committees** are not a form of assembly, unlike a board (P&Z) and council (legislative body) which are.
50:3 Standing RONR 50:8 and special committees RONR §50:10
50:4 Committees normally don't act independently and **don't have regular meeting times**
51:1 Reports from boards and committees.
51:4-7 Format of the report
- 52:4 **Committee of the whole** – is **a real committee**, when “in committee of the whole,” even though the entire body of members in attendance at the assembly’s meeting, it is still technically not “the assembly.”
52:5 A chair is appointed
52:9 Committee of the whole motions are limited to:
adopt (within the committee, for inclusion in its report), **amend**, and to “**rise**” or “**rise and report**”, and the incidental motions, a **point of order**, an appeal, a **division of the assembly**, and applicable **requests and inquiries**.
52:10 Consequences of 52:9 – **roll call** vote not allowed, must **rise** as adjourn and recess not allowed.
52:19 **Quasi committee of the whole** - is **not a real committee**, but is “the assembly acting as if in committee of the whole.”
52:21 The presiding officer of the assembly does not appoint a chairman of the quasi committee, but remains in the chair himself throughout its proceedings.
52:22 All motions are allowed, but any motion made that isn't in order in a real committee of the whole will trigger an end to proceedings in the quasi committee.
52:24 **Informal consideration** – **only suspends** the number of times a member may speak on the main question

- 53 Mass meetings - to take appropriate action on a problem stated by the meeting's sponsors, and is open to everyone interested in the stated problem
- 54 Organization of a Permanent Society
- 55 Merger, Consolidation, and Dissolution of Societies
- 56 **BYLAWS**
- 56:31 Since a **reasonable rotation in office** is desirable in most organizations, a section of this article may well provide that "No person shall be eligible to serve..... consecutive terms in the same office."
- 56:49 Naming the Parliamentary Authority, also special rules of order can amend it.
- 56:58 **Principles of Interpretation (like principles of statutory construction)**
- 1) Each society decides for itself the meaning of its bylaws.
 - 2) When a provision of the bylaws is susceptible to two meanings, one of which conflicts with or renders absurd another bylaw provision, and the other meaning does not, the latter must be taken as the true meaning.
 - 3) A general statement or rule is always of less authority than a specific statement or rule and yields to it.
 - 4) If the bylaws authorize certain things specifically, other things of the same class are prohibited.
 - 5) A provision granting certain privileges carries with it a right to a part of the privileges, but prohibits a greater privilege.
 - 6) A prohibition or limitation prohibits everything greater than what is prohibited, or that goes beyond the limitation; but it permits what is less than the limitation, and also permits things of the same class that are not mentioned in the prohibition or limitation and that are not evidently improper.
 - 7) The imposition of a definite penalty for a particular action prohibits the increase or diminution of the penalty.
 - 8) In cases where the bylaws use a general term and also two or more specific terms that are wholly included under the general one, a rule in which only the general term is used applies to all the specific terms.
- 57:1 **Amendment of by-laws:** A particular case of **Amend Something Previously Adopted**
- 57:1 4 The rule that, when a main motion is adopted, no other conflicting main motion is thereafter in order is not applicable to the motion to amend the bylaws...
- 57:3 Isolated changes
- 57:14 **Any member may give notice of a by-law amendment**
- 61:10 Minor points of order handled in a low level hint
- 61:11 Repeated points of order may need a member to be "called to order:
- 61:19 Annoyance by non members, RONR allows them to be removed, since P&Z is a governmental body, there are issues with freedom of speech.

One class on RONR suggested that if a non member is within public speaking time limits, is at the podium, and the manner while offensive is not disruptive, then it may be best to not take action.

HOW TO SOLVE THE GORDIAN KNOT PROBLEM

The Gordian knot is a mythical knot that could not be undone. What if you have a main motion and a string of amendments and it is getting just too complicated so no one is following what is going on? It would be nice to cancel all those amendments and the main motion, and then remake the main motion but make it better. But the rules do not allow a new motion to be made that is similar to one voted down in the same session. (RONR 8:15 and 10:26). Here is one way to solve that problem:



- step 1 explain how the mess is complicating everything
- step 2 move the previous question on all the pending motions, have the previous question sustained
- step 3 do the vote on the entire string of motions, and have them voted down
- step 4 move to suspend the rules prohibiting new motions similar to failed ones
- step 5 make the new but improved motion which is similar to the failed one

SPECIAL VS GENERAL ORDERS

Special and general orders have the effect of bringing postponed issues to the meeting. A question to ask yourself is this “have those predictable pop up agenda items been publicly noticed?”. Just because Robert’s Rules may not require public noticing, that does not mean that Open Meetings Act can be bypassed. The Open Meetings Act should always be considered when planning the meeting, as well as during the meeting if such pop up issues arise.

- 14:4 7 What do special and general orders mean? During a meeting, the members may want to postpone some agenda items. The “postpone to a certain time” allows the group to specify when, and if desired, at what time a postponed item will be picked up in a later meeting. That would be a general order. **If the motion to postpone** says it is to be a “**special order**” with a date and time **using a 2/3 vote**; then at the time and date in question the chair **must** address that item, and **it will interrupt any work in progress**. If that same motion to postpone did not specify the postponed item to be a “special order” then it is a “general order” and that motion needs only a simple majority; however at the date and time in question a general order does not interrupt any work in progress so it must wait.
- 14:6-7 In all cases, a postpone to a future date triggers rules about whether an “adjourned meeting” needs to be set up and that gets into rules involving sessions. Also §14:20 f)
- 41:49 General orders and when they can and can’t be taken up, and they don’t interrupt other business

SPEECH LIMITATIONS

- 43:8 Non legislative body speeches are limited to 10 minutes
43:12 No more than 2 speeches per day on the same question

SOME COMMON MOTIONS REQUIRING A TWO-THIRDS VOTE ~ please check the RONR section for details

RONR Sec. 44:3 and RONR pages t48-49
Adopt parliamentary authority if the bylaws don’t name one RONR [2:14–22](#); [10](#)
Adopt special rules of order, previous notice also being required RONR [2:14–22](#); [10](#)
Amend or Rescind adopted special rules of order RONR [2:22](#); [35](#) , previous notice also being required
Amend or Rescind Something Previously Adopted RONR [35](#)
Close nominations RONR [31](#)
Discharge a Committee RONR [36](#)
Limit or Extend Limits of Debate RONR [15](#)
Make a special order RONR [14](#), [41](#)
Objection to the Consideration of a Question RONR [26](#)
Previous Question RONR [16](#)
Refuse to proceed to the orders of the day RONR [18](#)
Suspend the Rules RONR [25](#)
Take up a question out of its proper order RONR [14:11](#); [25](#); [41](#)

SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER (not related to special orders)

Special rules of order are **process rules** and not to be confused with special orders which are **agenda issues**.

- 2:17 Special rules of order are **adopted separately from by-laws** in the form of a resolution, however the original P&Z **by-laws were based on NMML Chapter V** which had simply merged the Special Rules into the by-laws. RONR 2:20 goes on to say the **by-laws should be printed in the same book** as the Special Rules albeit under a heading separate from the by-laws.

DETAILED MOTION COMMENTS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

NOTE: These notes cover motions in **alphabetical order** which while duplicating some content in the previous section, one should **always check** “RONR SECTIONS IN BOOK SEQUENCE ~ MOTIONS AND PROCEDURES” **which covers procedures and concepts** which this section does not address.

HANDLING OF A MOTION

8:15 Bringing up failed issues in the same session is normally out of order.

10:26 A main motion is **out of order if it is substantially the same** as an earlier disposed of motion.

MEETINGS AND SESSIONS

8:4 For boards with published regular meetings, **each meeting is a session.**

THE MAIN MOTION

5:2 Original main motions (as from an agenda) and incidental main motions (clones of some secondary motions)

8:15 Bringing up failed issues in the same session is out of order

10:26 A main motion is **out of order if it is substantially the same** as an earlier disposed of motion

SECONDARY MOTIONS

Privileged

13 Fix Time to adjourn to
12 Adjourn
11 Recess
10 Question of privilege
9 Orders of the day
8 Lay on Table
7 Previous question
6 Limit or Extend
5 Postpone to later
4 Commit or refer
3 Amend
2 Postpone indefinitely

Incidental

Requests/Inquiries
Excused duty
Nominations
Voting
Division: assembly
Considn by para
Division: question
Object to consideration
Suspend Rules
Appeal
Point of Order

Subsidiary

INCIDENTAL MAIN MOTIONS

Many of the secondary privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions have counterparts that can be made when no main motion is pending. It is hard to find out which ones!

- Check RONR table II p6 identified as incidental main, sometimes.
- Check if in RONR in SDC (2) or SDC (1), or
- Check if in classes of motions §6:9 (sub), § 6:13 (priv), or §6:23 (inc), or
- Check if in other text for the motion, or
- Check if in RONR §10

ADJOURN

SECONDARY		Pr	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
PRIVILEGED	Adjourn	12	§21:2	NO	y	NO	NO	majority	NO

The SDC for the privileged Adjourn motion is in Table II #3 page t6

INCIDENTAL MAIN	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Adjourn	§21:3	N	y	y	y	majority	N

The SDC for the incidental main Adjourn motion is in Table II #3 page t6

Adjourn closes the meeting, and adjourn sine die closes a session RONR 21:8.

- 8:4 What is an **adjourned meeting** (also see §9:17)
- 21:15 When all agenda items have been completed, no motion to adjourn is required, can be unanimous consent (which means no objections, not everyone agreeing)
- 21:7 Items under discussion when the adjourn motion is made become unfinished business
- 22:9 **Adjourned meetings** do not need a **notice** to members per RONR, **but see NMAG OMA** Guidance
- 21:10 Things that can be done after the adjourn motion but before the meeting is adjourned.

After making the privileged motion to adjourn but before actual adjournment, several activities can still be conducted: §21:10 §21:12

- to tell the assembly of business requiring attention • to make important announcements;
- to **make** (but **not take up**) a motion to reconsider a previous vote (see reconsider rules)
- to give prior notice of a motion to be made at the next meeting
- to move to set a time for an adjourned meeting (9, 22) if there is no meeting scheduled for later within the same session.

21:12 Pause after the vote to adjourn in case there are residual issues to tidy up

21:15 If at the end of a completed agenda, motion to adjourn is not required. Most groups do move to adjourn.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF ADJOURN ~ PRIVILEGED OR MAIN

Please read §21:2 for the **curious case** when ADJOURN is made when no agenda item is on the floor, i.e. meeting dead space, because while you might expect ADJOURN to be an INCIDENTAL MAIN MOTION, it is usually not. *"The **adjourn motion has the unique characteristic** that, even if it is made while no question is pending, per the Standard Descriptive Characteristics, under the conditions just described, a motion to Adjourn is therefore said to be "privileged" or to be "a **privileged motion**" even when no question is pending".*

If adjourn is made with **no reference to meeting again**, nor to adjourn this meeting at a specific time, then it is a **privileged** motion, **even if there is no current agenda item being worked**; and it closes the meeting immediately. §21:2

Adjourn is not privileged (it is an **incidental main** §21:3) under three conditions, one being if the motion specifies adjourning AT a specific time, or adjourning TO a specific time. Another is if a time for adjourning has already been made or is required by by-laws etc. §21:3. The third case is if the adjourn motion would dissolve the assembly. In other words if the adjourn motion is qualified. Consequently, a motion to adjourn at or **to a future time is always out of order while business is pending** in any assembly; and any motion to adjourn at all is out of order while business is pending under either of conditions (2) or (3)

So, you might expect the adjourn motion made during meeting dead space to automatically be an incidental main motion; the result depends on whether the motions is qualified or not.

The adjourn motion when...	no future meeting planned	a future meeting planned	
DEBATING A MOTION	privileged	out of order	active debate
BETWEEN MOTIONS	privileged	incidental main	dead space

AMEND

see RONR p:t6 etc	RONR	INT	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
1 Amend	§12:7 1b	n	y	y	?	majority	y

Amend is a subsidiary motion with a precedence of 3, and can modify a preceding motion in the chain of adhering motions. Amend **can be used to modify** a preceding amend, but **a third amend in a row is not allowed**. The amend motion can only amend something whose SDC #6 allows an amendment. Amendments must be germane. Amend takes up 38 pages in RONR mostly with how to delete, replace, or insert a word, sentence, or paragraph; something everyone does every day if they use a word processor.

- 12:7 1 b **Amend** takes precedence over the motion it will amend. Amend occupies 38 pages in RONR
- 12:7 2 Amend can amend a preceding amend motion, but not a third time, see also §12:11
- 12:16 Amendments must be germane
- 12:33 It can be difficult to remember where the motions stand after amendments
- 12:37 After approving an amendment the chair should state the now-current question, see 12:33
- 12:91 **Friendly amendments**, see also §4:20 and §10:30 (1)

APPEAL

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Appeal	§24.1	y	y	§24.3 (5)	n	majority	y

Appeal exists to appeal a ruling of the chair coming from a “point of Order”. The appeal must be seconded, and the purpose is to allow the group to decide a point of order if they do not like the Chair’s ruling. While a point of order can trigger an appeal, a parliamentary inquiry does not because it is an opinion of the Chair and not a ruling. Appeal, while incidental and thus has no precedence, takes precedence over any question. However, it yields to privileged motions and to incidental ones arising from itself.

SDC #2 gets somewhat technical about its debatable status, as does SDC #5, see §24:3

- If it is debatable (see its SDC #5) it yields to all subsidiary motions except postpone indefinitely and amend.
- If it is undebatable and it adheres to pending questions, then it only yields to Lay on The Table.
- If it is undebatable and it does not adhere to pending questions, then it yields to no subsidiary motions.

A **majority or a tie** vote **sustains the decision** of the chair on the principle that the **chair’s decision stands until reversed** by a majority.

- 24:1 An **appeal** causes a point of order to be discussed by the assembly
- 24:3 7 A majority or a tie sustains the chair’s ruling
- 24:6 Parliamentary inquiries are opinions and not rulings, so can’t be appealed
- 24:10 “shall the decision of the chair stand”
- 24:12 The affirmative will be in favor of sustaining the chair’s decision

COMMIT OR REFER

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
4 Commit or refer	§13:1	n	y	y	y	majority	y

Can be a **subsidiary**, an **incidental main**, or an **original main** motion. Commit allows an assembly to send an issue to a committee. It can also send an issues to itself and it does that in three ways: to the **committee of the whole**, the **quasi committee of the whole**, and **informal consideration**. §52:1-2

- 10:8 2 When using “commit”, the only adhering motions to go are “amend” motions
- 13:2 A board can send the question to itself, effectively making it a committee with differing Roberts rules which suspending a few rules
- 13:6 Can be a subsidiary or an incidental main motion
- 13:6 It is an **incidental main** motion if the assignment is a subject the assembly has **already taken some action**; but it is an **original main motion** if the matter to be assigned relates to a new subject.
- 13:6 When a motion assigns a task to a committee **when no question is pending**, such a motion is not the **subsidiary** motion to Commit, but **is a main motion**.
- 13:7 2 Committing a main motion which has a pending reconsider motion has the effect of dropping the reconsider. Additionally there are interactions with other motions to review.
- 13:19 If a motion to Postpone Indefinitely is pending when the main motion is referred to a committee, the motion for indefinite postponement is dropped.
- 51:4 When a committee completes its work, it sends a report back to the originating assembly.
- 52:1-2 The **committee of the whole**, the **quasi committee of the whole**, and **informal consideration**.

CONSIDERATION BY PARAGRAPH, SERIATIM

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Considn by para	§28:1	n	y	n	y	majority	n

Can be applied to main motions and amendments. No subsidiary motion can be applied to it alone except Amend and the Previous Question; but while it is pending the main question can be committed, postponed, or laid on the table

- 28:3 **Consider by paragraph** continues to the end before any final vote, like a TAU (temporarily agreed upon)
- 28:4 Chair can initiate if for long documents such as by-laws and ordinances.
- 28:5 The motion to Consider as a Whole can be made to stop going by paragraph.
- 28:8 Consider by paragraph **continues** to the end **even after postpone indefinitely**.
- 28:8 Consider by paragraph continues to the end **even when** motioned to **postpone indefinitely**.
So, if members are tired, do an ADJOURN to make what is left become unfinished business, don't use postpone indefinitely.
Motions to COMMIT, POSTPONE (definitely), or LAY ON THE TABLE, are taken up as they arise; and, if adopted, they affect the entire main question immediately.
- 28:8 Once consider by paragraph has been made, division of the question is out of order.

DISCHARGE A COMMITTEE

	RONR	INT	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
1 Discharge	§36:1	n	y	y	y	§35:2 (7)	?

- 36:1 **Discharge** can only be made when there is no main motion stated by the chair.
- 36:2 While a motion is in a committee, the main body can't consider similar motions.
- 36:5 Discharge should be used only if the committee has not met reasonable timelines
- 36:9 A special committee ceases to exist either upon reporting out, or by a discharge motion.
- 36:9 A standing committee continues to exist after a discharge motion.
- 36:10 When a committee is discharged from further consideration of a question which was pending at the time of its referral and which was referred by means of the **subsidiary** motion to Commit, the question comes before the assembly automatically at that time.
- 36:11 A motion to discharge a committee from further work on a subject **referred** to the committee with a **main motion** is a particular case of the motion to Rescind or to Amend Something Previously Adopted. In that case, **another main motion** is needed to bring before the assembly the matter that was referred; otherwise it dies.

DIVISION OF ASSEMBLY

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Division: assembly	§29:1	y	n	n	n	no vote	n

- 29:1 **Division of the assembly** - when a member doubts the result of a vote, this motion causes the Chair to require the vote to be re-taken by rising. Alternatives to the motion for a division thus causing rising are also presented.

DIVISION OF QUESTION

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Division: question	§27:1	n	y	n	y	majority	n

- 27:1 **Division of a question** used to break out parts of a question when a motion is for one subject but the parts can be separated on their own, this motion separates each part and each part then has its own vote
- 27:5 A motion cannot be divided unless each part presents a proper question for the assembly to act upon if none of the other parts is adopted

EXCUSED FROM DUTY

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Excused duty	§32	y	?	y	y	majority	?

- 32:1 The proper method to **excuse a member from a required meeting** is for the assembly to vote
- 32:5 Any member knowing they cannot honor duties should resign

**FIX TIME TO
ADJOURN TO**

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
13 Fix Time to adjourn to	§22:3	n	y	n	y	majority	y

NOTE: While “postpone” can be based on an event §14:1 rather than a time, the motion “fix time to which to adjourn” has no such provision.

- 22:1 **Fix the time TO which to adjourn** creates a future adjourned meeting time, also known as “fix the time for an adjourned meeting, used if the adjourned agenda item is **not postponed to a regular meeting**.
 - 22:2 A motion to Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn is in order only if at the time it is offered there is no meeting scheduled for later within the same session. Roberts prefers the Fix Time To Which To Adjourn to be made between agenda items as a main motion, it begrudgingly accepts that it can be used as a privileged motion during a main motion’s debate.
 - 22:7 The date and time must be set for a time before that of the next regular meeting.
 - 22:9 An “adjourned meeting” does not need a notice to members, but see **NMAG OMA** Guidance because in many cases the public needs noticing.
Unlike a special meeting, an adjourned meeting does not require notice per RONR §22:9, however in the local **government setting**, the **Open Meetings Act must be complied** with. NMSA 78 10-15-1 etc allows a simple notification if the adjourned meeting is within about two days, otherwise the regular notification is required.
 - 22:9 The “adjourned meeting” will be a continuation of the session even for bodies with regular meetings where each meeting is one session. Important because the “session” has significant meaning
 - 22:10 The privileged motion of Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn is often followed by the immediate introduction of a motion to Postpone, or of the privileged motion to Adjourn.
 - 22:11 Has no effect on when this meeting will adjourn
- NOTE:** While “postpone” can be based on an event §14:1 rather than a time, the motion “fix time to which to adjourn” has no such provision.

LAY ON TABLE

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
8 Lay on Table	§17:8	n	y	n	n	majority	y

- 10:8 2 When using “lay on the table”, it carries pending adhering motions
- 17:1 Enables laying the pending question aside temporarily when something of immediate urgency has arisen or when something needs to be addressed before consideration of the pending question is resumed
- 17:3 2 Adhering motions go to the table with the main motion
- 17:6 Take from the table is only in order if other business has been transacted after the lay on the table motion
- 17:8 Stays on the table **for this session, or the next session if** it is within a quarter, see also §34:3
- 17:9 While on the table, no similar new motions can be made
- 17:14 It is not in order unless there is more business for this meeting, and it not in order in a special meeting if the issue being laid on the table is the reason for a special meeting

LIMIT OR EXTEND

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
6 Limit or Extend	§15:5	n	y	n	y	2/3	y

- 15:3 When it has served its purpose, the motion is said to be exhausted
- 15:4 The motion can confine the motion to a specific issue or set of issues §15:5 2 (SDC #2).
- 15:4 Limit or extend can subsidiary or it can be main incidental motion.
- 15: 18 When an assembly moves to Limit or Extend Limits of Debate, it is adopting an “**order**” taking such action, which means there will be a time when the order will be “exhausted”

NOMINATIONS

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Nominations	§31	n	n	y	n	majority	n

- 31 Motions relating to **nominations, a very small article.**
- 46 Larger section on nominations ~ this section has its own voting rules. Has its own voting rules. There are many ways of getting nominations and the assembly can choose whatever method they desire.
- 46:3 From the floor etc
- 46:6 By-laws should specify the methods to be used §46:30 for example.
- 46:6-8 Methods of nominating such as from the floor etc §46:3. Nominations are collected before any voting takes place. Call for more nominations, **recognition** not required, **second** not required.
- 46:19-21 Nomination process before election is covered well.
- 46:20 Motion to close the nominations after no more nominations come in.
- 46:38 Voting methods

OBJECT TO CONSIDERATION

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Object to considn	§26:1	y	n	n	n	2/3	y

- 26:2 3 **Objection to consideration of a question** must be made when question is called up but before debate §26:3 The chair can object to consideration
- 26:3 The chair can raise an **objection to consider**
- 26:5 If the objection is sustained, then the main question is dismissed without a further vote
- 26:7 When an **objection to consideration is put to a vote** in its correct form, members are asked to vote for or against consideration of the question objected to, not for or against sustaining the objection

ORDERS OF THE DAY

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
9 Orders of the day	§18	y	n	n	n	§18:4 7	n

Members must be able to know the approximate times at which subjects will come up, hence the motion. It is in order if no pending motion; or when there is §18:5 p1, §18:7

18:1 Used to require the assembly to follow its agenda

POINT OF ORDER

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Point of Order	§23:1	y	n	n	n	Chair	n

- 23:2 3 Can interrupt even while speaker is speaking
- 23:2 4 No second required
- 23:4 A member unsure if a point of order is needed can do a parliamentary inquire instead
- 23:10 The point and the ruling go into the minutes and as persuasive as a precedent
- 23:18 When in doubt about a ruling the chair can pass it to the members

POSTPONE INDEF

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
2 Postpone indef	§11	n	y	y	n	majority	n

- 11:1 **Postpone Indefinitely** means kill the motion
- 11:2 2 Can only be applied to a main motion so it can be made only while a main question is **immediately pending**. (SDC #2).
- 11:3 The effect of postponing a question indefinitely is to suppress it throughout the current session.
- 11:5 Postpone indefinitely is sometimes used by strategists to test their strength on a motion they oppose.
- 28:8 Consider by paragraph continues to the end **even when** motioned to **postpone indefinitely**.

POSTPONE TO LATER

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
5 Postpone definite	§14:1	n	y	y	y	majority	y

- 14:1 **Postpone Definitely** or **postpone certain**, and it can be predicated on an event also
- 10:8 2 When using “postpone to later, it carries pending adhering motions
- 14:3 Can be a subsidiary or an incidental main motion
- 14:4 7 Creates a general order by default, but can be a special order
- 14:5 Limits on postponement, several scenarios
- 14:6 **Can’t postpone** to a session **more than a quarter away**, **Can postpone** as far as next session **if within a quarter**
If **regular meetings** (weekly, monthly) then cannot postpone to more than one week or month respectively
- 14:7 If postponed to before the next regular meeting, then that new meeting is an “adjourned meeting” and the time and date **must** be set with **“Fix time to adjourn to”** (see 22:3), see also 14:20 f
- 14:12 Bylaws requiring a specific regular meeting, as in officer election, **cannot be postponed** in meetings before the named meeting, they can only be postponed in the named meeting itself
- 14:13 The motion **cannot be taken up earlier than the date and time to which it was postponed except by reconsidering the original postpone motion, or by suspending the rules.**
- 14:14 General vs special **orders of the day**
- 14:19 This rationale is worth studying: eEffect on Subsequent Debate and Methods of Voting
- 22:9 While RONR does not require noticing of an “adjourned meeting”, **remember the Open Meetings Act** has special rules for noticing, and also if the postponement is no more than about 2 days
- NOTE:** While “postpone” can be based on an event §14:1 rather than a time, the motion “fix time to which to adjourn” has no such provision.
- NOTE:** Always consider the Open Meetings Act noticing requirements for the adjourned meeting.

PREVIOUS QUESTION

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
7 Previous question	§16:1	n	y	n	n	3-Feb	y

The Previous Question vote only to sees if ending debate itself is desired. After that, each motion or set of motions, depending on what “previous question” specified, must be voted on.

- 16:1 **Previous question** brings one or more motions to an immediate vote
- 16:2 Previous question stops additional subsidiary motions but not privileged or incidental ones.
- 16:11 Exhaustion of previous question meaning

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
10 Question of privilege	§19	y	n	n	n	chair	n

- 19:7 Types of privileged motions. Most common use is something affecting the assembly, eg temperature, noise, and the like.

RECESS

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
11 Recess	§20:2	n	y	n	y	majority	n

- 20:1 A recess is a short break in proceedings, typically only a few minutes, which does not close the meeting and after which business will be resumed at exactly the point where it was interrupted.
- 20:2-3 Recess can be a secondary privileged motion, or it can be an incidental main motion.

RECONSIDER

	RONR	INT	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
1 Reconsider	§37:1	y	y	y	n	majority	n

This motion has two timelines, one for “**making**” the motion §37:8, §37:10b which is very short; and the other for “**calling up**” the motion later §37:15 such as in this session, or **in the next session if it is within a quarter**. This may appear inconsistent, but making and calling up are two different things...

Reconsider must be moved on the **same, or next day in the session**, that the original vote was made, also §37:10 b. It can be made when out of order, and is kept pending until “called up” when it would be in order §37:8 c, and when later “**called up**”, no second is needed, §37:9 3 and §37:15

- 37:1 **Reconsider** is a made in USA motion, it can be a secondary or a main motion.
- 37:8 b Reconsider must be moved on the same, or next day in the session, that the original vote was made, also §37:10 b
- 37:8 c Reconsider can be made when out of order, is kept pending until “called up” when it would be in order
- 37:9 3 When later “called up”, no second is needed, also §37:15
- 37:15 Calling Up the Motion to Reconsider at a Later Time. If a motion to Reconsider that involves a main motion cannot be taken up when it is made, it can be called up and acted on whenever no question is pending and no other member has the floor, within the various limits. Please check 37:15 itself.
- 37:25 Reconsideration moved while the main question is pending, such as with a subsidiary, privileged, or incidental motion, is acceptable, however depending on precedence, it can become complicated.
- 37:35 Reconsideration in Standing and Special Committees has more flexible timelines
- 37:46 **Reconsider and enter in the minutes** is like reconsider but **not for the same day**, for a later day and designed to prevent a temporary majority benefitting from an unrepresentative attendance
- NOTE: §37:8, §37:10b refer to **making** the reconsider motion, §37:15 refers to **calling up** the motion and not to making it. They appear inconsistent, but in fact they talk of two different things.

REQUESTS and INQUIRIES

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Requests/Inquiries	§33:3, 6	y	n	n	n	Chair	n

- 33:1 **Requests and inquiries** five general questions
- 33:3 Chair answers parliamentary enquiries. Need not answer hypotheticals.
- 33:5 Chair answer on parliamentary enquiry is not subject to appeal, it is an opinion and not a ruling
- 33:6 Information requests to staff or another member go through the chair

RESCIND / AMEND PRE-ADOPTED

	RONR	INT	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
1 Rescind/Amend	§35:1	n	y	y	y	§35:2 (7)	y

- 35:1 **Rescind** also **amend something previously adopted** can only be made when no main motion has been stated by the chair
- 35:3 Amend something previously adopted has no time limits unlike “reconsider”.
- 35:4 Amend something previously adopted cannot amend beyond the scope of the previous notice.
- 35:8 Majority if previous notice, otherwise 2/3 vote
- 35:13 **Rescind and expunge** from the minutes shows disapproval, special processing rules

SUSPEND RULES

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Suspend Rules	§25:4	n	y	n	n	2/3	n

- 25:2 1 **Suspend the rules** can be a secondary incidental motion or an incidental main motion
- 25:3 Moving to “take up a question out of its proper order” is an example of the motion to Suspend the Rules
- 25:4 The motion doesn’t name the rules to suspend, but rather the specific purpose of the suspension
- 25:7-13 Can only suspend the parliamentary rules, not by-laws, ordinances, or statutes.
- 25:14 A 2/3 vote for parliamentary rules
- 25:15 A majority vote is for standing rules

TAKE FROM TABLE

	RONR	INT	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
1 Take from table 17:8	§34:1, 3	n	y	n	n	majority	n

Take from the table brings work back, so consider the Open Meetings Act before proceeding since in the enthusiasm surrounding taking back the items, they may not have been publicly noticed.

- 34:1 **Take from the table** can only be made when there is no main motion stated by the chair
- 34:2 2 Take from the table not in order after a lay on the table motion unless there has been further business transacted
- 34:3 Take from the table can be made during the **same session** it was laid on the table **or the next session if** within a quarter. See also §17:8

VOTING

If main motion pending	RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Voting	§30:3	-	-	-	-	-	-

- 30 Motions relating to **voting – minimal, see Sec. 45 (Nominations) and 44** instead.
- 30:1 Different from normal voice votes, are several options
- 44:1 The requirement for approval of an action except where a rule provides otherwise, is a majority vote which means “more than half” of the votes cast excluding blanks or abstentions.
- 44:9 a Voting requirements based on the number of members present etc, is generally undesirable
- 44:10 Alternative methods should be in Special Rules of Order, or in the by-laws.

SECONDARY MOTIONS – PRIVILEGED, SUBSIDIARY, INCIDENTAL

Roberts Rules of Order newly revised (RONR) 12th ed		Standard Descriptive Characteristics (1) through (8)							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
SECONDARY MOTIONS	main motion pending		RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
PRIVILEGED §6:11 §5.3	Fix Time to adjourn to	13	§22:3	NO	y	NO	y	majority	y
There are 5 motions. Affects entire meeting Must decide asap: §6:11	Adjourn	12	§21:2	NO	y	NO	NO	majority	NO
	Recess	11	§20:2	NO	y	NO	y	majority	NO
	Question of privilege	10	§19	y	NO	NO	NO	chair	NO
	Orders of the day	9	§18	y	NO	NO	NO	§18:4 7	NO
SUBSIDIARY §6:6 §5.3	Lay on Table	8	§17:8	NO	y	NO	NO	majority	y
There are 7 motions. Treat or dispose of the MAIN MOTION	Previous question	7	§16:1	NO	y	NO	NO	2/3	y
	Limit or Extend	6	§15:5	NO	y	NO	y	2/3	y
	Postpone definite	5	§14:1	NO	y	y	y	majority	y
	Commit or refer	4	§13:1	NO	y	y	y	majority	y
	Amend	3	§12:7 1a	NO	y	y	?	majority	y
	Postpone indef	2	§11	NO	y	y	NO	majority	y
INCIDENTAL §6:15-17 §5.3	Excused duty		§32	y	?	y	y	majority	?
There are 11 motions. Procedural, related to pending business. Must decide asap: §6:15 Precedence is complex, see §6:15-19 notes and §5:8-12 notes and each motion's Standard Descriptive Characteristics	Requests/Inquiries		§33:3, 6	y	NO	NO	NO	Chair	NO
	Nominations		§46	NO	NO	y	NO	majority	NO
	Voting		§30:3	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Division: assembly		§29:1	y	NO	NO	NO	no vote	NO
	Division: question		§27:1	NO	y	NO	y	majority	NO
	Considn by para		§28:1	NO	y	NO	y	majority	NO
	Object to considn		§26:1	?	NO	NO	NO	2/3	y
	Suspend Rules		§25:4	NO	y	NO	NO	2/3	NO
	Appeal		§24:1	y	y	y	NO	majority	y
	Point of Order		§23:1	y	NO	NO	NO	Chair	NO
MAIN MOTIONS §6.1 §5.3			RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
ORIGINAL MAIN §10.3 §5.3	Agenda items	1	§10	NO	y	y	y	majority	y
INCIDENTAL MAIN §10.4 §5.3	see RONR p:t6 etc		RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
There are more motions. Made if no main original motion is in discussion	Postpone to later		§14:3	NO	y	y	y	majority	y
	Recess		§20:3	NO	y	y	y	majority	NO
	Adjourn		§21:3	NO	y	y	y	majority	NO
	Suspend Rules		§25:2(1)	NO	y	NO	NO	2/3	NO
* Standard Descriptive Characteristics may differ between secondary and incidental.main versions of motions.									
BRING BACK §6.25			RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
There are 4 motions. Except for reconsider, these are only in order when no other question is pending.	Take from table 17:8		§34:1, 3	NO	y	n	n	majority	n
	Rescind/Amend		§35:1	NO	y	y	y	§35:2 (7)	y
	Discharge		§36:1	NO	y	y	y	§35:2 (7)	y
	Reconsider		§37:1	y	y	y	n	majority	n
Reconsider, §37:9 1 a), can be made when another question is pending.									

The motion's precedence is item 1 of Standard Descriptive Characteristics

Many Standard Descriptive Characteristics have complex answers. Shown here are the most common values.

"?" means complex rules exist depending on context

Caution: Incidental main motion Standard Descriptive Characteristics are for the most part much less well defined in RONR

INCIDENTAL MAIN MOTIONS

There are incidental main motions that are taken from selected “secondary” motions and then they can be moved in between agenda items.

NOTE: RONR SDCs (Standard Descriptive Characteristics) are usually for secondary motions. RONR is somewhat vague about SDCs for incidental main motions unless they are in Table II in the t-pages, so it is possible some SDCs below may be inaccurate. See the notes below for places to try and find if a secondary motion can have a similar one as a main incidental motion. Even then, you may not always find the SDCs.

INCIDENTAL MAIN MOTIONS	Standard Descriptive Characteristics SDC (1) through (8)							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
		RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Fix Time to adjourn to	M	§22:4	n	y	y	y	majority	y
Adjourn	M	§21:3	n	y	y	y	majority	n
Recess	M	§20:3	n	y	y	y	majority	n
Question of privilege	M	§19	y	y	y	y	chair	y
Orders of the day	A	§18:5 p1	?	?	?	?	§18:4 7	?
Limit or Extend	M	§15:4	n	y	y	y	2/3	y
Postpone to later	B	§14:3	n	y	y	y	majority	y
Commit or refer	M	§13:6	n	y	y	y	majority	y
Amend	->	§35:1	is part of rescind bring back motion:					
Excused from duty	S	§32:2 p1	y	?	y	y	majority	y
Requests/Inquiries	S	§33:2 1	y	n	n	n	Chair	n
Nominations	M	§46	n	n	y	n	majority	n
Voting	B	§30:3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Suspend Rules	S	§25:2(1)	n	y	?	?	2/3	?
Appeal	M	§24.3 2 p0	y	y	§24.3 (5)	n	majority	y
Point of Order	S	§23:6 d	y	n	n	n	Chair	n
Adopt	M	§10	n	y	y	y	majority	y
Ratify	M	§10	n	y	y	y	majority	y

CAUTION: Incidental main motion SDCs are for the most part less well defined in RONR

- M** In RONR table II p6 identified as incidental main, sometimes.
 - m** Not clearly identified as incidental main in RONR table II p6. But may be located in one of several places. RONR didn't keep like things together.
 - S** in RONR in SDC (2) or SDC (1) for each specific motion, or
 - A** in other text for the motion after each motions SDCs, or
 - B** in other text for the motion before each motions SDCs, or
 - 10** in §10:5 of RONR (Main Motions), or sometimes in
 - X** in classes of motions §6:9 (sub), §6:13 (priv), or §6:23 (inc), or
- SDCs are usually for secondary motions, not incidental main motions
Some secondary motions are not also incidental main motions, eg Object to Consider

MAIN MOTIONS		RONR	INT	SECOND	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
Agenda items	1	§10	NO	y	y	y	majority	y

1 main motions have a precedence of 1

02/26/25

For the most part, committees use the same motions as do boards and commissions. Committees have less autonomy so each motion may have some limitations when used in a committee.

COMMITTEE USAGE	Standard Descriptive Characteristics SDC (1) through (8)							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
		RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC
all motions allowed except...								
Previous question	X	§16:4						
Limit or Extend	X	§15:1						

See also: 15:1, 37:8 a), 37:8 b), 49:12, 50:23, 50:25, 50:26

15:1 **The subsidiary motion to Limit or Extend** Limits of Debate is one of the two motions by means of which an assembly can exercise special control over debate on a pending question or on a series of pending questions. (The other motion serving such a purpose is the **Previous Question**, 16. **Neither of these motions is allowed in committees;**

37:8 a) Except in committees, it can be made only by a member who voted on the prevailing side.

37:8 b) Except in committees, it must be moved either on the same day the original vote was taken or on the next succeeding day within the same session on which a business meeting is held

49:12 Boards cannot empower a subordinate group unless the by-laws allow it. **But any board can** appoint committees to work under its supervision.

50:23 All of the meetings of a special committee constitute one session

50:25 the rules governing the motions to Rescind, to Amend Something Previously Adopted, and to Reconsider are modified as stated in 35:2(7) and 37:35.

50:25 motions to close or limit debate (15, 16) are not allowed in committees.

50:26 A committee may not adopt its own rules except as authorized in the rules of the society or in instructions given to the committee by its parent assembly in a particular case.

02/20/25

MOTIONS THAT CAN BE IN MULTIPLE CLASSES Privileged (P) or Incidental main (i.m)

		RONR	INT	SEC	DEBATE	AMEND	VOTE	REC		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
13 Fix Time to adjourn to	13	§22:3	NO	y	NO	y	majority	y	Priv	
Fix Time to adjourn to		§22:4	NO	y	y	y	majority	y	Inc.m	
12 Adjourn	12	§21:2	NO	y	NO	NO	majority	NO	Priv	
Adjourn		§21:3	NO	y	y	y	majority	NO	Inc.m	
11 Recess	11	§20:2	NO	y	NO	y	majority	NO	Priv	
Recess		§20:3	NO	y	y	y	majority	NO	Inc.m	
10 Question of privilege	10	§19	y	NO	NO	NO	chair	NO	Priv	
Question of privilege		§19	y	y	y	y	chair	y	Inc.m	
9 Orders of the day	9	§18	y	NO	NO	NO	§18:4 7	NO	Priv	
Orders of the day		§18:5 p1	?	?	?	?	§18:4 7	?	Inc.m	
6 Limit or Extend	6	§15:5	NO	y	NO	y	2/3	y	Priv	
Limit or Extend		§15:4	NO	y	y	y	2/3	y	Inc.m	
5 Postpone definite	5	§14:1	NO	y	y	y	majority	y	Priv	
Postpone to later		§14:3	NO	y	y	y	majority	y	Inc.m	
4 Commit or refer	4	§13:1	NO	y	y	y	majority	y	Priv	
Commit or refer		§13:6	NO	y	y	y	majority	y	im m	
3 Amend	3	§12:7 1a	NO	y	y	?	majority	y	Priv	
Amend	->	§35:1	is part of rescind bring back motion:							Inc.m

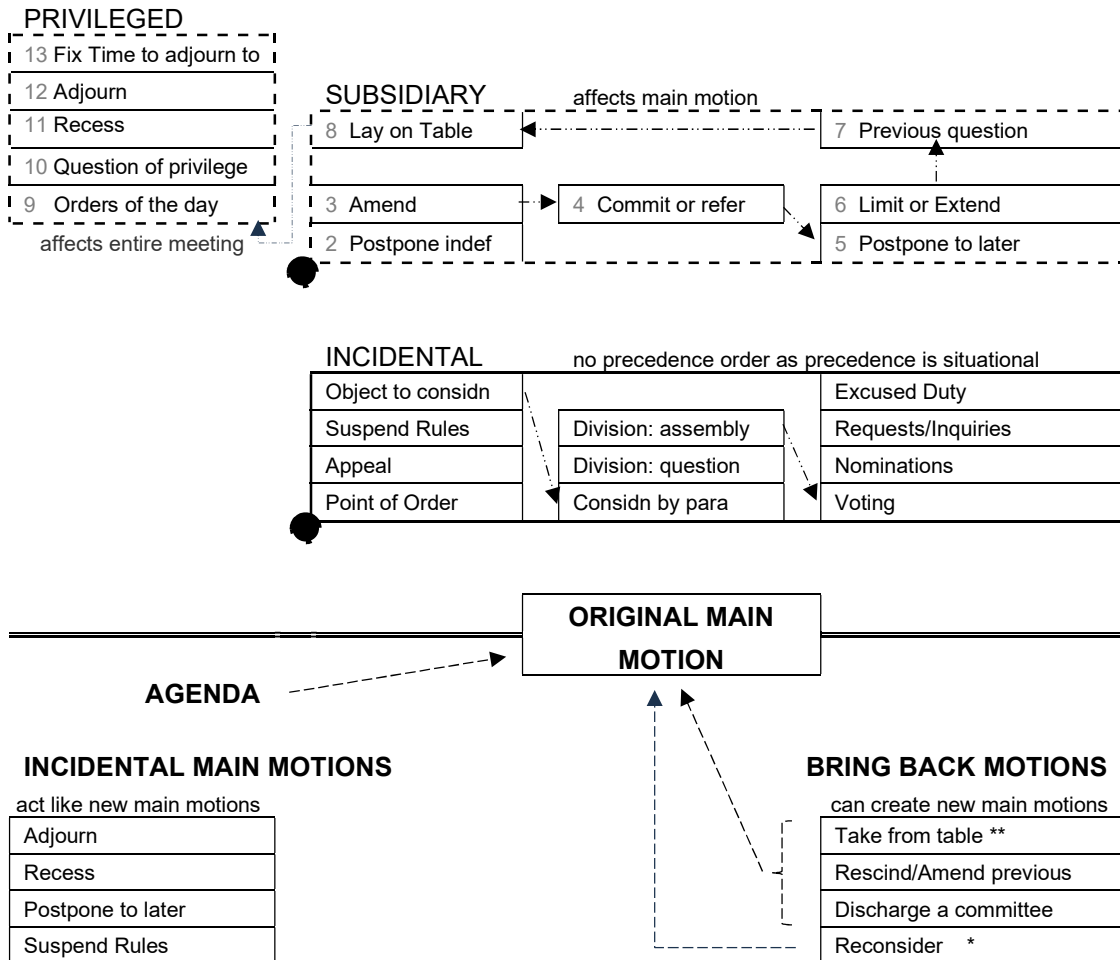
A VISUAL MEMORY AID

Privileged and Subsidiary motions are shown in precedence order. Incidental motions are not shown in the order used in RONR because they have no precedence. Having no order of precedence, their order is thus equally valid; on the image below, they are shown in a manner that facilitates memorization.

The relationships between the various motions are depicted.

SECONDARY MOTIONS

visual memory aid



* Amend and reconsider have special precedence rules, and both can have complex rules on how they act.
 ** Take from the table has some interesting rules

NEW MEXICO INFORMATION

NEW MEXICO MUNICIPAL LEAGUE GUIDANCE

The New Mexico Municipal League has similar counter parts in other states. They advocate for legislative priorities, and provide advice to local governments. In particular, some provide training for Town Councils and Planning and Zoning Commissions, and they provide model codes of conduct, model bylaws, and other documents to help local governmental bodies perform their duties. Municipal League guidance is just that, guidance, it has no authority, however its guidance provides tremendous benefits to local governments. If a Council or a Commission do not adopt Municipal Guidance or some other equivalent, they do so at their peril.

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR GOVERNING-BODIES

3.2 Rules of Voting

A. **Each councilor** in attendance **must vote for or against all measures before the Governing Body, unless there is a conflict of interest, for which abstention is recognized.** Such conflict of interest disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes.

source: Rules-of-Procedure-for-Governing-Bodies-PDF_202403181100401985.pdf
at: <https://nmml.org/189/Governing-Body>

LAND USE OFFICIALS HANDBOOK

3.2 Rules of Voting

A. **Each Commissioner** in attendance **must vote for or against all measures before the Commission, unless there is a conflict of interest, for which abstention is recognized.**

source: 19 NMLZO LUO Handbook.pdf
at: <https://nmml.org/DocumentCenter/View/700/NMLZO-Land-Use-Officials-Handbook?bidId=>

CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO

by a **majority** vote of all **members elected** to the senate
by a **majority** vote of the **members in** each house
by a **three-fifths**' vote of the members elected to each house,
by a **three-fourths** majority vote **of all the members elected** to each house
by a **three-fourths**' vote of the **members elected** to each house
by a three-fourths' vote of the members elected to each house,
by a **two-thirds vote of the members elected** to each house
by a **vote of a majority of the members present**
by registered voters **not less in number than thirty-three and one-third percent** of those who voted for
the office
by **two-thirds of the members present and voting** in each house by yea and nay vote

Sec. 17. [Passage of bills.]

No bill shall be passed except by a **vote of a majority of the members present** in each house, nor unless on its final passage a vote be taken by **yeas and nays**, and entered on the journal.

NM STATUTES RELATING TO VOTING

NEW MEXICO STATUTES ~ NMSA 78 ~ NEW MEXICO STATUTES ANNOTATED, CODIFIED IN 1978

Chapter 3 – Municipalities

Article 11 - Mayor-Council Municipality; Mayor

Section 3-11-3 - Mayor; presiding officer of governing body; limitation on vote.

The mayor of a municipality is the presiding officer of the governing body. In all municipalities the **mayor shall vote only when there is a tie vote.**

NOTE: The NM constitution is silent on a mayor voting, NMSA is the first place to mention it.

Article 19 - Planning and Platting

Section 3-19-11 - Legal status of master plan.

B. **by a two-thirds vote of all its members.**

D. by a two-thirds vote of all its members

Article 21 - Zoning Regulations

Section 3-21-2 - Jurisdiction of a county or municipal zoning authority.

D. **to not less than twenty-five percent of the votes cast** for the office of governor at the last preceding general election,

Article 21 - Zoning Regulations

Section 3-21-6 - Zoning; mode of determining regulations, restrictions and boundaries of district; **public hearing required; notice.**

C. **by a majority vote of all the members** of the governing body of the municipality
by a two-thirds vote of all the members of the board of county commissioners.

Article 21 - Zoning Regulations

Section 3-21-8 - Appeals to zoning authority; grounds; stay of proceedings.

C. by a majority vote of all its members may:

Article 21 - Zoning Regulations

Section 3-21-14 - Adoption of county zoning ordinances.

C. by a majority vote of all the members of the board of county commissioners,

Chapter 10 - Public Officers and Employees

Article 15 - Open Meetings

Section 10-15-1 - Formation of public policy;

I. If any meeting is closed pursuant to the exclusions contained in Subsection H of this section:

(1) **by a majority vote of a quorum of the policymaking body;**

NOTE: The AIP Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (Sturgis), Sec. 5.12 et seq has excellent suggestions. It also gives the example of a curious result that can happen with “a majority vote of the quorum” Sec. 5.17. And, the New Mexico Open Meetings Act NMSA 78 10-15-1 I (1) has a just such quorum majority requirement when going into an executive session.

If for example there are 9 members (as in the Santa Fe Planning and Platting Commission) then the quorum is 5, thus the majority of the quorum is 3. If two members vote aye, and one votes no, and the rest abstain, then the majority vote with abstentions excluded is the ayes win, it was 2 to 1. But because the vote needs is a majority of the quorum, then the 2 aye votes are not enough since 3 votes are needed.

This shows why defining what the majority means is essential. One must consider the **ratio** (majority, 2/3, 3/5 4/5), the **status of abstentions**, and finally whether the **stated majority is of** the votes cast, or of the members present, and so on.

SILVER CITY TOWN CHARTER

ARTICLE I. - TOWN COUNCIL

Section 2[5]. The mayor and councilmen shall constitute a town council of which the mayor shall be ex officio president, but **he shall not vote except in case of a tie.**

NOTE: this matches NMSA 78 3-11-3

ARTICLE II. – MAYOR

No reference to the Mayor voting

SILVER CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES

Chapter 1 - GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 1-2. - Definitions and rules of construction.

No definition of majority nor vote

Chapter 2 – ADMINISTRATION

ARTICLE V. - OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

DIVISION 1. – GENERALLY

Sec. 2-148. - Mayor pro tempore.

All the duties and powers imposed and granted upon and to the mayor shall, in case of his absence or inability to act, devolve upon the president pro tempore of the council.

DIVISION 3. - MANAGER

Sec. 2-195. - Appointment; indefinite term.

The town manager shall be appointed by **majority vote of the town council** for an indefinite term.

SILVER CITY APPENDIX C OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES Appendix C - LAND USE AND ZONING CODE OF 2010

ARTICLE II. – DEFINITIONS

2.2 - Definitions

Majority, simple. More than 50 percent of the **voting members seated** for the vote.

Majority, super. More than 50 percent of the **designated voting members** of the decision-making body.

NOTE: designated voting member(s) is not defined in the LUZC

ARTICLE VI. - ADMINISTRATION

6.2.8 Citizen Participation.

.....

B) Applicability.

3) **In instances where the citizen participation report has been waived by the Community Development Director or designee, the Planning and Zoning Commission or Town Council may require by 2/3 vote of those present and not abstaining that a citizen participation report be submitted.**

6.3.2 Amendments to Official Zoning Maps or Text of this Land Use Code

.....

C) Protests. If the owners of 20 percent or more of the area of the lots and of land included in the area proposed to be changed by a zoning regulation or the owners of 20 percent or more of the area of the lots and of land within 100 feet, excluding the public right-of-way, of the area proposed to be changed by a zoning regulation, protest in writing the proposed change, then it shall not become effective unless the change is approved **by a majority vote of all of the members of** the Town Council.

INTERNET RESOURCES

All links on this page are free resources

PZ meeting
January 7, 2025

OMA resolution, officer elections and so on
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dD0GuGdOwRs>



PZ meeting
October 1, 2024

This has the consultants housing plan ideas
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jv4eCAIONmM&t=169s>



PZ meeting
June 4, 2024

This has a hearing
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehA0TY9Ribw>



PZ meetings
October 26, 2023 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRcYo3plmBY>

This has a missing Chair



PZ PowerPoint course (ensure your phone has the free PowerPoint reader)
Municipal League PowerPoint P&Z course
<https://www.nmml.org/DocumentCenter/View/734/LAND-USE-OFFICALS-TRAINING>



MORE HELPFUL RESOURCES

<https://robertsrules.forumflash.com/>
<https://robertsrules.forumflash.com/topic/44201-legislative-body-or-small-board/>
https://assembly.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/roberts_rules_simplified.pdf
<https://robertsrules.com/frequently-asked-questions/>
https://www.parli.com/index.php?mod_name=little-ben/make-a-motion-in-the-positive-not-the-negative

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBaifHMo5a8>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7j_Wa5HM1Gs
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=shared&v=PCmED6vzDi0>

Port of Olympia training
Bothell Council training
City of Selah Starts at 4M 38s

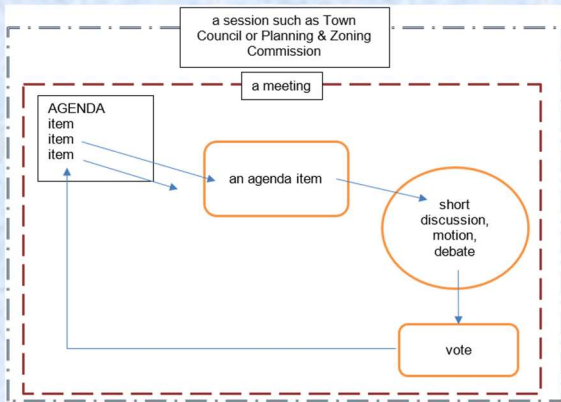
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NOTES

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WHAT IS IN THIS BOOK

AN OVERVIEW

ROBERTS RULES IN THREE PAGES

KEY CONCEPTS

MOTIONS IN CONTEXT WITH USEFUL DETAIL

THE MICROSCOPIC VIEW OF THE RONR 12th Edition

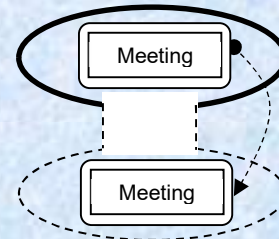
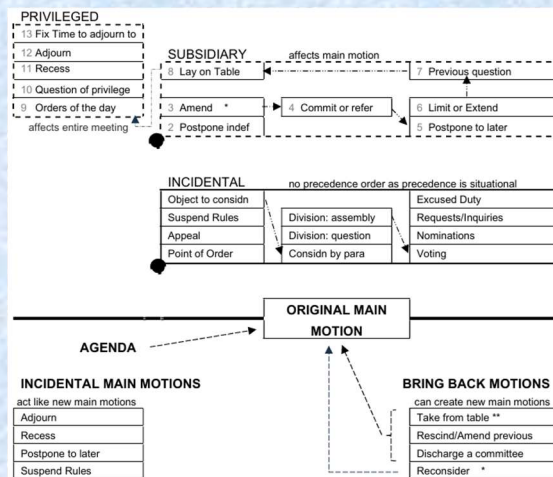
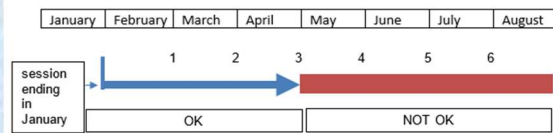
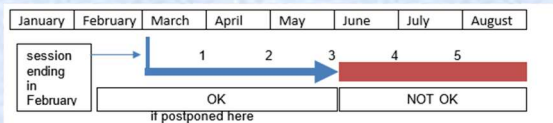
IN BOOK ORDER

IN ALFABETICAL ORDER

NEW MEXICO RELEVANT INFORMATION

INTERNET LINKS AND TRAINING RESOURCES

BUSINESS MEETING MODELS



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First edition, revised