

# Using Robert's Rules of Order to run your meeting

Role of meeting chair (in our case, the Chief Officer)

1. **Calling the meeting to order on time**
2. **Announcing the business before the group in the order noted on the agenda**
3. **Determining the presence of a quorum (minimum of 7 members to vote on an item)**
4. **Recognizing members who want to speak (they must raise hand)**
5. **Processing all motions**
6. **Expediting business (getting things done at the meeting)**
7. **Ruling on points of order**
8. **Conducting the meeting in a fair and equitable manner**

## Notes:

- The goal of following Robert's Rules is to protect the rights of the minority, ensure legality and expedite business.
- The Chief Officer should remain as neutral as possible, not making motions and not debating. If chair actively participates in the debate, he or she should relinquish the leading the discussion until after the vote. Have your other chief officer chair that part of the meeting.
- When the meeting strays from the business item being addressed, the chair needs to bring the focus back to the specific motion, even if it means interrupting a speaker.

## Calling for a vote on an item requires **Making a Motion**

The six-step process:

1. Member makes a motion. (ex. I make a motion to approve the company salaries)
2. Another member needs to second the motion. (ex. I second the motion to approve the company salaries)
3. The chair (Chief Officer) states the motion, formally putting it before the group.  
(ex. A motion has been made to approve the company salaries and will open the floor to discussion)
4. The members (raise hands) and can openly discuss the motion. (when all discussion is exhausted)
5. The chair (Chief Officer) puts the question to a vote.  
(ex. If there is no further discussion, we will vote on the motion of approving company salaries)
6. The chair announces the results of the vote.

## **Discussion, Debates and Decorum (discussion behavior)**

- After a motion is made, the floor is open for debate and discussion
- The person making the motion has the right to speak first.
- Each speaker needs to raise their hand and be recognized by the meeting chair. (do not speak unless called upon)
- Ideally, speakers should alternate between those in favor of a motion and those opposed.
- Each speaker is given a specific time limit to present his or her argument, usually 2-3 minutes.
- A longer time can be given, if approved by a two-thirds vote.
- A person who hasn't spoken out yet gets precedence over people who have already spoken to the motion.
- No speaker can speak more than two times.
- Maker of the motion (or the chair) calls for closure of the debate after everyone who wishes to speak has been heard. If someone calls the question before that, the group must vote on whether to end debate (no discussion). A two-thirds vote is required to end a debate.
- To keep the discussion focused on the motion, avoid discussing personalities of the people involved, questioning the motives of other members, making derogatory remarks, including name calling.