



**Basic Rules of Order
for
Efficient Meetings & Good Records
—Motions—**

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U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250- 9410
Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
Email: program_intake@usda.gov

**NIFA/USDA
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Statement
(English)**

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correo postal:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
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1400 Independence Avenue,
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NIFA/USDA Nondiscrimination Statement (Spanish)

Green Poster [AD-475-A](#) – May 2022 version



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***The slides that follow are designed to serve as an individual or group tutorial in the basic use of motions under the Rules of Order.**

There are no illustrations, no photos. Moreover, there are far more words per slide than any artful PowerPoint should have.

Think of this, therefore, as a helpful .pdf cut up on digital flashcards!


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Why follow Rules of Order? The key word is *Order*

- ❖ encourages efficient use of time
- ❖ helps keep the agenda on track
- ❖ helps keep discussions on focus
- ❖ allows all voices to be heard but no voice to dominate
- ❖ encourages differing opinions to be discussed professionally or in a business-like manner
- ❖ compels clearly articulated decisions

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Key Sources for this Review

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 12th ed., 2020

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised in Brief, 3rd ed., 2020

Robert's Rules of Order, Official Website, Frequently Asked Questions
<https://robertsrules.com/frequently-asked-questions/>

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A Foreword: Agendas


A brief word about agendas: *have one and share it!*

Presidents should provide an opportunity for the membership to add topics prior to the meeting.

Include reports from AMGA
Advisory Council Representatives
and Extension Coordinating Agent

*A basic agenda, or order of business, is provided at the end of these slides.


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Types of Motions

Main motions place a proposal for deliberation and decision before the association. Until a main motion is dealt with, or disposed of, no other business can be conducted. In other words, only one main motion or proposal—or issue—can be before the association at one time.

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Subsidiary motions provide the means for dealing with motions regarding debate, postponing action, or voting.

For example, there could be a motion

- ❖ to limit debate or to extend time for debate,
- ❖ to table the motion or to return it to committee, or
- ❖ to postpone action either to a stated time or indefinitely.

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Many types of subsidiary motions are not needed in typical local association meetings, such as a motion to limit the time for discussion.

** See “Customary Methods of Disposing of a Motion” below for information on motions of these types.*

One form of subsidiary motion, however, is used with regularity—motions to amend.

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❖ **motions to amend provide a means to modify a main motion so that it can be dealt with confidently by the association.**

They might propose details or wording for clarity so that the main motion is more explicit.

They might nuance wording to make the motion more acceptable to everyone.


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Because motions to amend, if carried, modify the main motion, *they must be voted on before a vote can be taken on the main motion.*

Amendments may also be amended by a subsequent subsidiary motion—which must be voted on before the first amending motion.


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Motions used more frequently in larger legislative or business bodies:


Privileged motions are far less common than subsidiary motions. They pertain to issues of immediate or overriding concern and may interrupt discussion on main motions or other business before the association.

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Incidental motions pertain to procedural issues in the matter under consideration, such as raising a point of order or a parliamentary question. Incidental motions require no second and may not be amended. They must be decided by the presiding officer, who may ask for advice from an experienced person or from the association members in attendance.

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Putting a Motion in Motion

Essentially, a motion is a proposal that a member wants to place before the group for discussion and approval.

The Path of a Motion

- ❖ Recognized by the President, a member says, “I move that. . .”
- ❖ In support, another member “seconds” the motion.


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- ❖ The President says, “It has been moved and seconded that [the *precise* motion is repeated.]”*
- ❖ Discussion on the motion follows.
 - ❖ Only discussion related to the question should take place.
 - ❖ The motion can be amended with a subsidiary motion.

* the President may say “It has been moved by (name) and seconded by (name) that. . .”


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- ❖ **The President says, “If there is no further discussion, the motion is [the motion is repeated]. All those in favor of . . . say ‘aye.’ Those opposed say ‘no.’”***
- ❖ **Most motions require a simple majority to pass; however, motions to end, limit, or extend debate require two-thirds.**


*** Even if it is obvious that the motion carries, the President should ask for “no” votes so that all voices have the opportunity to be heard.**

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- ❖ **The vote is reported as, “The motion is carried (passes)” or “the motion is lost (fails).”**
- ❖ **If there were no second, the motion is “lost” for lack of a second.**
- ❖ **The Secretary records the precise wording of the motion, the names of the members moving and seconding the motion, and the outcome of the vote.**

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An Amended Motion Example

President calls on **X**

X: I move that we donate to the County’s free seeds for produce fund.

P: Is there a second?


Y: I second the motion.

P: *It has been moved and seconded that we donate to the County’s free seeds for produce fund. Is the any discussion?*

Z: I move that we amend the motion to stipulate that we donate \$50.

Y: I second the motion.

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P: *It has been moved and seconded that we amend the original motion to specify that we donate \$50 to the County’s free seeds for produce fund. Any discussion?*


Hearing none (or after discussion), *those in favor of the amendment that specifies a donation of \$50 to the County’s free seeds for produce fund, say yes....those opposed say no.*

P: (after the count) *The amendment passes. Is there further discussion on the amended motion now before us that we donate \$50 to the County’s free seeds for produce fund.*

Hearing none, *those in favor of the amended motion say yes....those opposed say no.*

P: (after the count) *The motion is carried.*

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Motions from Committees

Motions, recommendations, or proposals that come before the association in a committee report require no second—if the committee contains at least two people.

The reasoning is that as part of a committee report, more than one person has already endorsed the proposal.

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Customary Methods of Disposing of a Motion

***Disposing* of a motion means bringing closure to that question or item of business before moving on to the next.**

- ❖ **vote on the motion**
- ❖ **or deal with it by a subsidiary motion**


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Ways of disposing of a motion by subsidiary motion:

- ❖ **table the motion, which sets it aside for later consideration. A subsequent subsidiary motion can remove it from the table.**
- ❖ **return it to or refer it to committee, which delays action until additional investigation, study, or consideration is given to the motion.**


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- ❖ **postpone action to a stated time.**
- ❖ **postpone indefinitely, which essentially “kills” the motion without taking a vote on it.**

Before moving on to another item of business, any motion currently before the assembly must be disposed of in one of these ways.

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Two Ways to Close a Meeting

- ❖ After completion of all business and following announcements, the President may call for any further business. If there is none, the President may declare the meeting adjourned.
- ❖ A motion may be made to adjourn; this requires a second and a majority vote in favor.

A meeting closes when the President declares it adjourned.

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The benefit in following Rules of Order in meetings is not in *“doing it right.”*

The benefit is in conducting business efficiently and clearly so that everyone’s voice is heard and an accurate record of what transpires is kept.

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Agendas

ORDER OF BUSINESS The basic outline of the business proceedings.

1. Call to order.
2. Reading and approval of the minutes.
3. Reports of officers, boards and standing committees.
4. Reports of special committees (committees appointed to exist until they have completed a specified task or been discharged).
5. Special orders (matters which demand special priority).
6. Unfinished business (never referred to as "old" business), which deals with matters previously introduced but not completed.
7. New business (to bring a new matter before the organization for discussion).
8. Public comment (for public [assemblies] to hear anything not on the agenda but under the authority of the [association]).

https://www.montana.edu/extension/pubs-linked-in-store/5363_4-H_Parliamentary_Procedure_Guide.pdf

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AMGA Local Association Sample Agenda

AGENDA

(Date, time and location)


- **Call meeting to order**
- **Reading of the Minutes** - Ask for approval of the minutes as read/emailed/posted in newsletter, or as corrected, if there are changes. Many LMGAs email the minutes prior to the meeting for review by members, which saves time. A simple vote is taken for approval of minutes.
- **Treasurer's Report** - It is important that a financial report be given at each board and general membership meeting to keep the membership informed. In addition, some LMGAs prepare a yearly budget. A monthly budget report keeps check of the prepared budget for the year
- **Report from local MG Extension Agent**
- **Committee Reports** - List each of your committees including committee chair name and contact information in case members have questions. If the committee chairperson does not have a report that month, give them an opportunity to be recognized especially in larger LMGAs.
- **Project Reports** - List each project including project leader's name and contact information in case members have questions. Even if the project leader does not have a report that month, give them an opportunity to be recognized especially in larger LMGAs.
- **State Advisory Council Representative Report** - AC meets on a quarterly basis so reports should be offered following each AC meeting and comments/questions solicited for next AC meeting. The report could be included in LMGAs newsletter to save time.
- **Old Business** - Any outstanding action items from previous meetings
- **New Business** - Members may have some suggestions, ideas for new projects, and/or announcements that could be brought to the membership's attention. Discussion could ensue, assigned to appropriate committee, or delayed to the next meeting.
- **Adjournment**

[If the meeting includes a Program with a Speaker, this could come at the beginning of the meeting or you could plan a short break between the meeting and the Program/Speaker. For courtesy, a time frame should be set. Emailed agendas, AC reports in newsletter can save on the length of meetings when a Program/Speaker awaits.]

<https://alabamamga.org/amga-local-association-handbook-2/>

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Customary Privileged and Subsidiary Motions



	In order when another has the floor	Requires a second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote required
PRIVILEGED MOTIONS					
To fix the time to which to adjourn	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
To adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
To recess	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
To rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	Chair rules
To call for the order of the day	Yes	No	No	No	None
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS					
To lay on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
To call for the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
To limit or extend limit of debate	No	Yes	No	Yes	Two-thirds
To postpone to a definite time	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
To refer to a committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
To amend	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
To postpone indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

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Additional Resources



Guide for Simplified Parliamentary Procedure.
Montana State University Extension
https://www.montana.edu/extension/pubs-linked-in-store/5363_4-H_Parliamentary_Procedure_Guide.pdf

Robert’s Rules of Order Cheat Sheet. *Purdue University Extension*
https://extension.purdue.edu/county/sullivan/_docs/roberts-cheat-sheet.pdf

The Basics of Parliamentary Procedure.
University of Alabama.
<https://bpb-us-e2.wpmucdn.com/sites.ua.edu/dist/0/126/files/2025/01/basics-of-parliamentary-procedures.pdf>

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