

Robert's Rules Are Your New Best Friend

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Association of Washington Cities

By videoconference
Saturday, December 9, 2023

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Why are we here?

To offer four guidelines that will make you
an effective participant in your meetings
from the get-go

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I. Robert's Rules of Order

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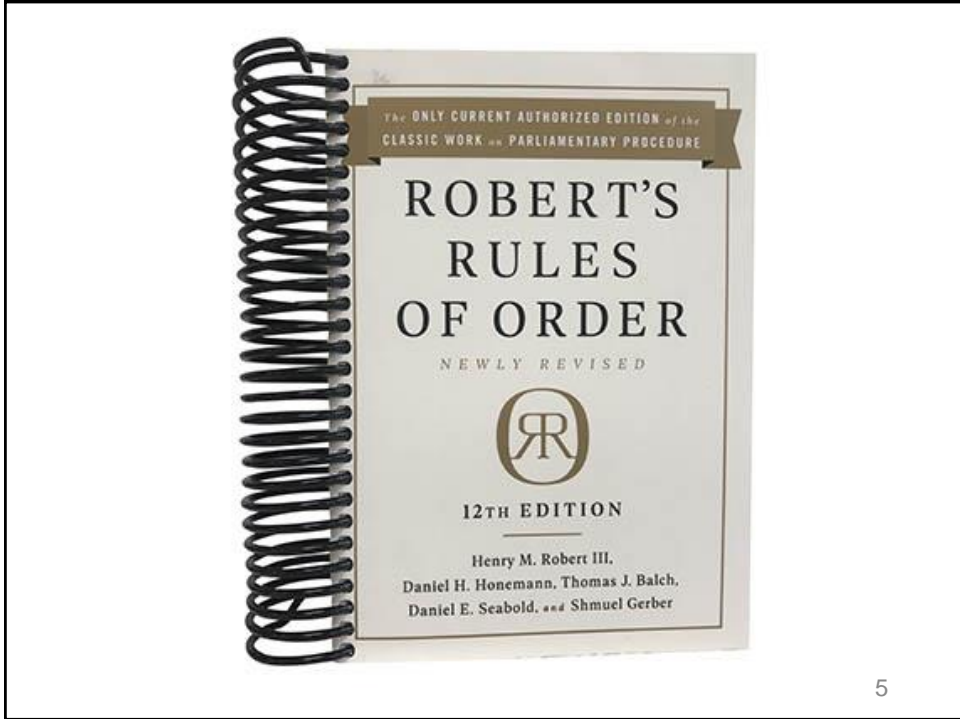
*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised,
12th edition*

Abbreviated RONR
“Rules of Order Newly Revised”

We recommend spiral-bound edition,
available only from the
National Association of Parliamentarians
www.parliamentarians.org

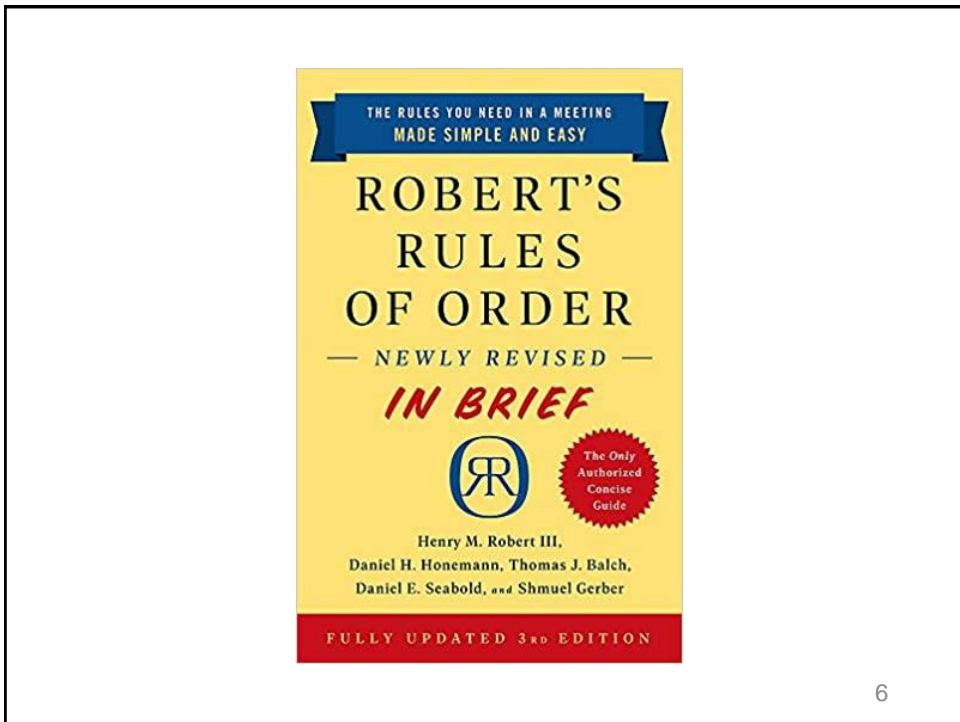
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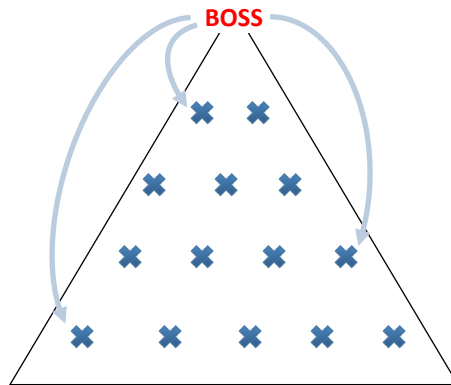
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II. Who's in charge?

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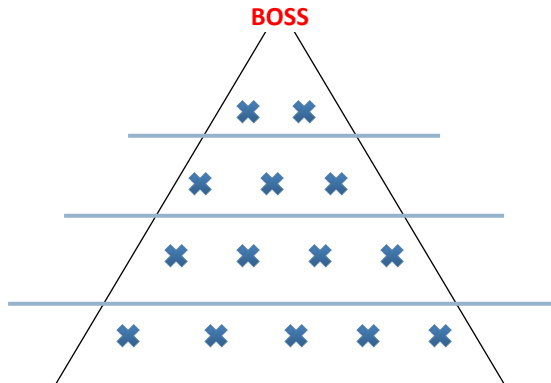
Accountability Hierarchy



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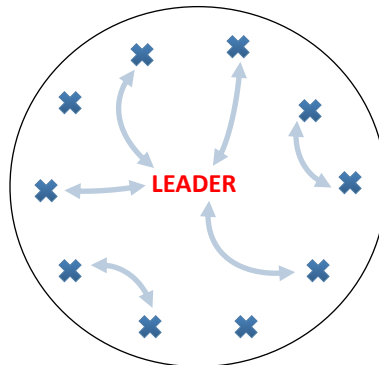
Accountability Hierarchy



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Voluntary Association



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Fundamental guideline

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

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Fundamental guideline

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

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You have both types of structure

- The council forms a voluntary association.
- The strong mayor or city manager and staff form an accountability hierarchy.

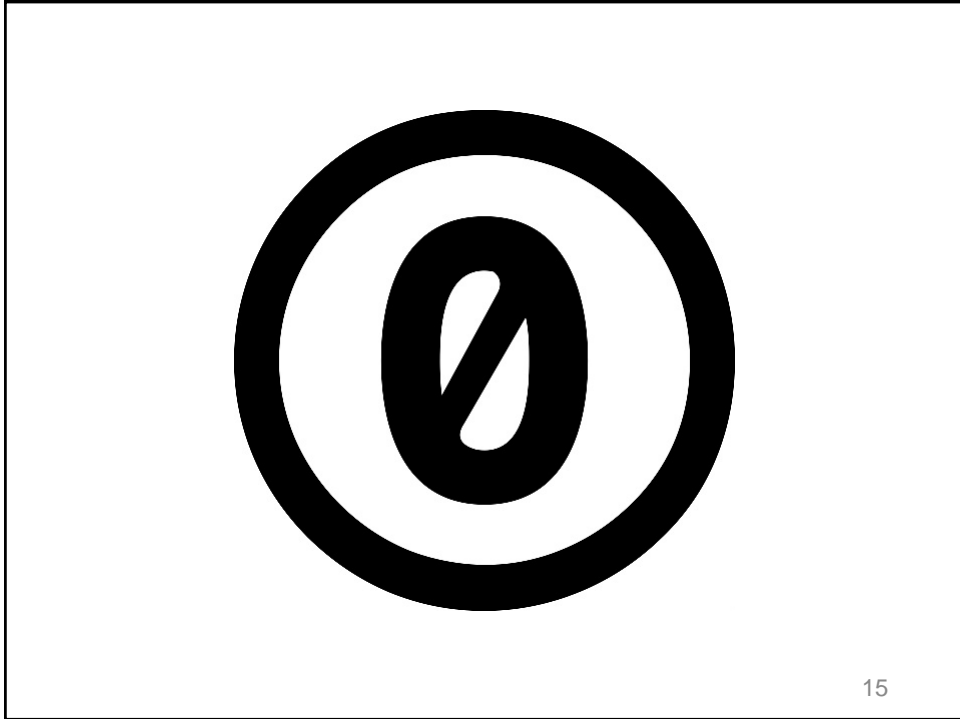
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What is each person's individual authority?


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Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

ZERO
Nothing
Nada
Zip
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*All members of a governing board share
in a joint and collective authority which
exists and can be exercised only
when the group is in session.*

The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure

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

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

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

Winston Churchill

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III. Effective discussion

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Principle of Equality

All members have equal rights,
privileges and obligations.

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Key Point

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

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Fundamental guideline

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

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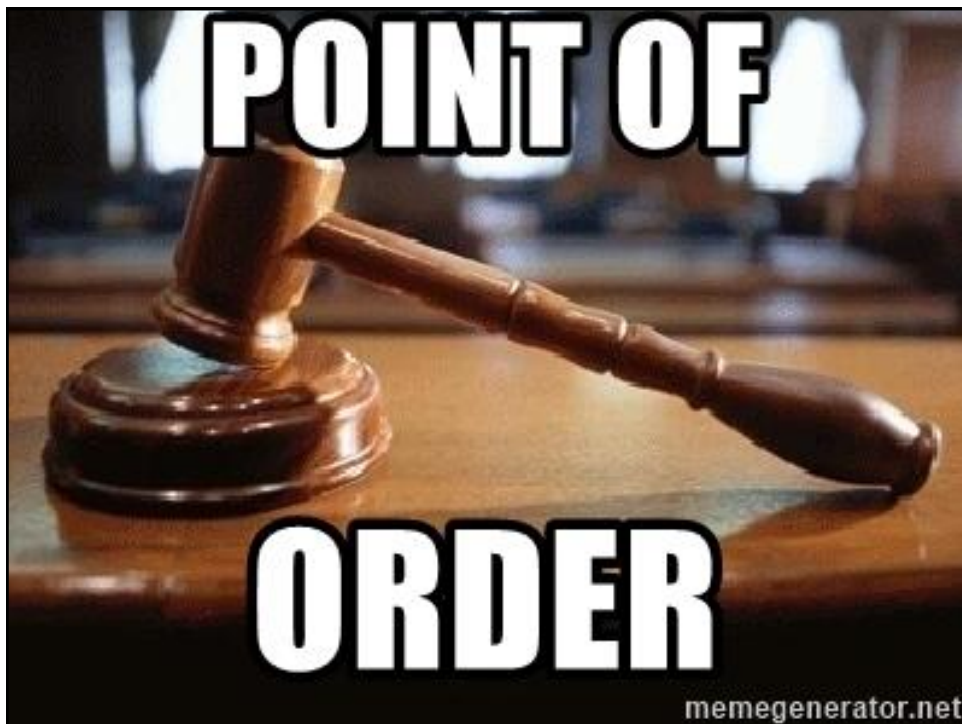
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Fundamental guideline

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

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Point of Order
flying dinosaur

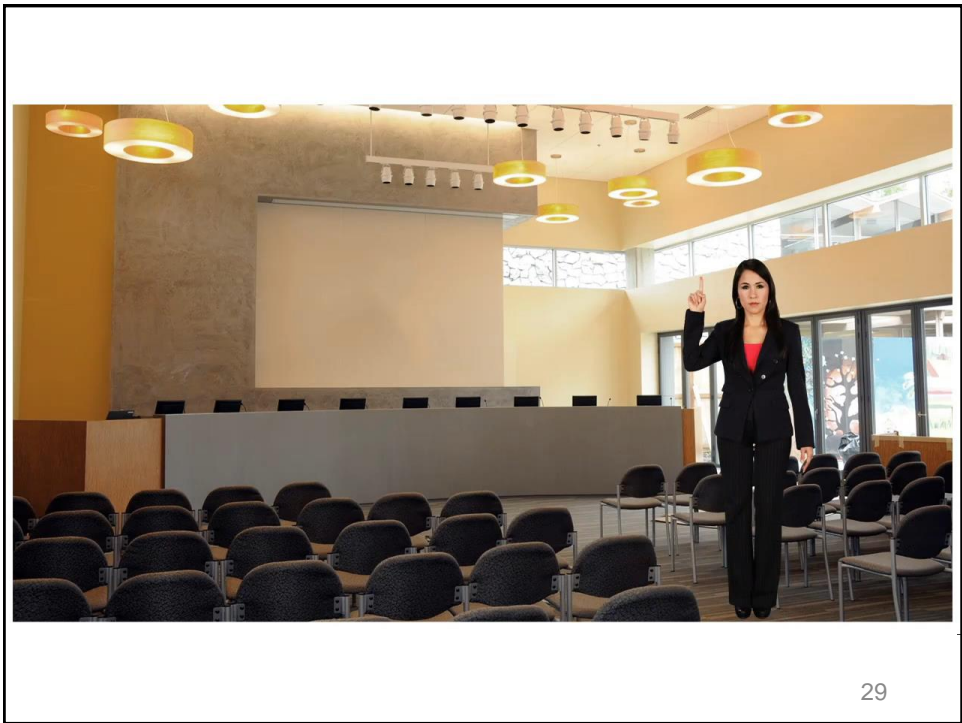
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Point of Order
flying dinosaur

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

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 **Jurassic Parliament** Mastering meetings using Robert's Rules

IV. Courtesy and respect

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Fundamental guideline

Courtesy and respect towards everyone are required.

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These remarks are inappropriate

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

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Inappropriate Remarks on Local Government Councils



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

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

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Personal remarks

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

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

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Important note

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

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Fundamental guideline

One thing at a time!

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V. Conclusion

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Four fundamental guidelines

1. The chair is the servant of the group, and the group is the final authority.
2. All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations. To ensure this, no one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to do so has spoken once.
3. Courtesy and respect are essential at all times.
4. One thing at a time.

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Follow four fundamental guidelines for successful meetings



Gig Harbor, Washington City Council. ©Jurassic Parliament 2018.

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

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

Samuel Johnson, British author

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

Tami Tanoue, Colorado Intergovernmental
Risk Sharing Agency

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