

THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA  
COMMON INTEREST COMMUNITIES  
EDUCATION SERIES



**ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER**  
***BASICS FOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MEETINGS***

January 10, 2026

PRESENTED BY

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# Program Overview

- Meetings – The Law
- Purpose & Principles
- Order of Business
- Rules of Debate
- Types of Motions
- Common Misconceptions



# **MEETINGS – THE LAW**

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# Source of Authority

- Condominium Act - **§ 55.1-1949**
- Property Owners' Association Act –  
**§ 55.1-1816**
- Nonstock Corporation Act
- Governing Documents/Condominium Instruments
  - Articles of Incorporation
  - Bylaws



# Board Meetings - Defined

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The formal gathering of the board of directors where the business of the association is discussed or transacted.

# The General Rule

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All meetings of the Board  
and Committees shall be open  
to **all** members of record.

*Property Owners' Association Act, § 55.1-1816.A*

*Condominium Act, § 55.1-1949.B*



# Work Sessions

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The board of directors shall not use ***work sessions*** or other informal gatherings of the board of directors to circumvent open meeting requirements.

***Property Owners' Association Act, § 55.1-1816.A***

***Condominium Act, § 55.1-1949.B***

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# **ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER**

## **PURPOSE & PRINCIPALS**

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# **Robert's Rules**

*Parliamentary procedure  
governing conduct of  
meetings.*

- Created in 1876 by Major Henry Martyn Robert
- Adaptation of the rules and practices of the U.S. House of Representatives.
- To guide voluntary association governance.
- 12 editions – most recent effective September 1, 2020.



# Robert's Rules of Order

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- Motion made.
- Motion seconded.
- Chair restates motion.
- Members debate motion.
- Chair restates motion and takes a vote.
- Chair announces outcome of vote.



# Purpose

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- Ensure majority rule.
- Protect the rights of the minority and individual members.
- Provide order, fairness and decorum.
- Facilitate the transaction of business.
- Expedite meetings.



# Basic Principles

- All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations.
- Right to discuss each motion.
- One question considered at a time.
- Only one person may have the floor at a time.
- Members have a right to know the question under consideration and to have that question restated before a vote is taken.
- A majority decides a question **except** when the question impacts basic rights of members.



# Presiding Chair

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- Typically President
- Facilitates debate
- Maintains decorum
- Recognizes members to speak
- Ensure business adheres to rules
- Calls for votes
- Announces outcomes



# ORDER OF BUSINESS

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# Order of Business

**A. Call to Order**

**B. Determination of a Quorum**

**C. Adoption of Agenda**

**D. Reading & Approval of Meeting Minutes**

**E. Reports of Officers**

**F. Reports of Committees**

**G. Elections**

**H. Unfinished Business**

**I. New Business**

**J. Announcements**

**K. Adjournment**



# Agenda

- Set by President
  - In consultation with Management
  - In consultation with Board.
- Available for review by Owners when available to Board members.
  - *Unless* agenda item is exempt and to be considered in executive (closed) session.
- Open forum – ***Required.***



# Quorum

## *Board Meetings*

*Quorum must be present  
for the group to act*

- **Majority of Board** members must be present – in person or by permissible electronic or telephonic means.
- Typically established in the Bylaws



# Quorum

## *Membership Meetings*

### *Condominium Unit Owners Associations*

- Condominium Act - § 55.1-1952.A:
  - Specified in condominium instruments - Bylaws
  - ***If not specified in the condominium instruments –*** persons entitled to cast 33-1/3 percent of the votes.
  - Percentage may be larger but **not** less than 10 percent.



# Quorum

## ***Membership Meetings***

### ***Property Owners' Association Act***

- Does ***not*** address quorum

### ***Nonstock Corporation Act***

- Specified in Bylaws
- If Bylaws silent – 1/10 of votes entitled to be cast



# Lack of Quorum

***Review governing documents in preparation for the meeting!***

- Authority to continue meeting –
  - Recess
  - Adjourn to a fixed date and time
- Consider impact of not convening meeting.



# **RULES OF DEBATE**

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# Rules of Debate

- Motion maker has first right to debate.
- Discussion must be relevant to the motion.
- Must address issues, not personalities
  - no personal attacks or question of motives permitted.
- All remarks must be addressed to the Chair - cross debate not permitted.



# Rules of Debate

No members may speak -

- Until recognized by the chair.
- A second time until every member who wishes to speak has spoken.
- More than twice to each motion.
- More than ten minutes.



# Rules of Debate

- Not permissible to speak against one's own motion but one can vote against one's own motion.
- Members may not disrupt.
- Rules of debate can be changed by a two-thirds vote.



# Rules of Debate

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Debate is closed when:

- Discussion has ended; ***or***
- A two-thirds vote closes debate.



# Decision Making

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- Seek clarification – if needed.
- Obtain guidance.
- Full discussion – invite input from community (during Open Forum), Board Members, Management, Experts.
- Work to achieve consensus.
- Mindful of best interests of the Association
- Focus on Goals.



# Board Decisions

## *Methods of Voting*

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- **Voice Vote** - aye, nay, abstain.
- **Show of hands**
- **Roll call vote** - used to record how each member voted.
- **Secret Ballot** – Officer elections *only*.
- Any member may challenge the Chair's count.



# Association Decisions

## *Membership Voting*

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- In **Person**
- By **Proxy**
- **Absentee Ballot**
  - Electronic
  - Paper



# **TYPES OF MOTIONS**

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# Types of Motions

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- **Main Motion** - Introduces new item.
- **Motion to Amend** - Changes motion wording or affects how to handle a main motion (voted before main motion).
- **Privileged Motion** – Raises an urgent or essential matter unrelated to pending business.



# Types of Motions

- **Incidental Motion** – Raises questions about procedure of other motions.
- **Motion to Commit** - Refers motion to a committee to investigate, recommend or take action.
- **Motion to Table** - Kills a motion.
- **Motion to Postpone** - Delays a vote.



# Types of Motions

- **Motion to Withdraw** - Motion maker removes motion from consideration – requires unanimous consent.
- **Motion to Reconsider** - Reopens a motion for debate that has already been voted upon *in the same session* - motion must be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side.



# End of Meeting

- **Motion to Recess** – Short intermission in proceedings, allowing members to step away with the understanding that business will resume exactly where it left off.
- **Motion to Adjourn** – Closes meeting.
  - **Fixed Time to Adjourn** - Sets time and place for adjourned meeting before next regular meeting to continue business.



# COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

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# Common Misconceptions

1. **Roberts Rules are legally required.**

Only binding if governing documents require.

2. **Only the most recent version of Robert's Rules applies.**

Governing documents may specify the edition that must be used.



# Common Misconceptions

3. **Chair of the Meeting Cannot Vote.**

Unless documents provide otherwise, chair has the same voting rights as any other member.

4. **Robert's Rules take precedence over all other rules.**

In conflict, federal law, state law and governing documents supersede.



# DISCUSSION

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