

# **I HATE ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER**

Roberts Rules is an essential tool for any nonprofit organization. It doesn't matter if you "make a motion" in our Assemblies or in your committee meetings. About 80% of all volunteer association's Bylaws state that they will use Roberts Rules to run their meetings.

Roberts rules can seem too formal and stuffy for some people. But the rules can be adjusted to the needs and "personality" of your organization. The important thing is to have a process by which you run meetings and accomplish the work that is before you. The more you repeat this process, the more efficient your meetings will become and the more effective you will be at accomplishing your mission. Just remember, you don't need to be an expert, you just need some ground rules.

## **Roberts Rules Are A Road Map**

Roberts Rules will help give our meetings structure by giving us a proven process to follow during our meetings. There are procedures within Roberts Rules that will help us run meetings in an efficient and professional manner. Meeting Minutes Made Easy

It can be difficult to track what is being said at a meeting when the conversation strays from the topic. By using motions, in accordance with Roberts Rules, the tracking of meetings becomes easier to document. And straying off topic, a common problem for many boards, becomes easier to recognize and correct.

## **Everyone Has A Voice**

The process of Roberts Rules ensures that everyone has an opportunity to speak on a topic. A good meeting facilitator will use Roberts Rules to check in with every person at the table and give them the chance to speak.

It can also limit the number of opportunities someone can speak on a topic. The idea of limiting the number of times members can speak on a topic has advantages:

- Members will learn to be more on point and thorough when it is their turn to speak.
- It can quicken the decision-making process without sacrificing the opportunity to share information.
- It can help prevent members who are determined to have the last word from repeating the same points over and over.

## **Roberts Rules Means Freedom**

I know it sounds funny to think that a more formal process will result in more freedom, but it is true. Anyone who has run a meeting, at some point, has found themselves more caught up in the "running the meeting" than actually paying attention to what is being discussed. But with a

firm grasp of Roberts Rules, the meeting facilitator can relax and let Robert Rules run the meeting for them. This will allow them to play a more active role in the meeting itself.

## **Keep it Simple**

It doesn't have to be hard. Here are 5 simple steps to making a motion.

The steps in presenting a motion:

1. A member obtains the floor and makes a motion. If you have a specific format for a motion, it will be useful. Region 5 provides formats for you. See Packet A Pages 104 – 111 for the different motion types. The format is generally the same whether it is a Bylaws, Policy, or Standing Rules motion. Most motions made stay within the Committee and are not motions for the Assembly.
2. Another member seconds the motion.
3. The chair states the motion. It is important to restate the exact wording of the motion to keep everyone clear on what is being discussed. It also helps to keep things on track and specific to the motion at hand. Other ideas most likely will warrant a separate motion and can be put off while discussion the current motion continues for continuity.
4. Members debate the motion. Keep in mind **debate does not necessarily mean adversarial**. There are times when a motion is just too broad or too specific and needs to be word smithed to address ambiguities. For example, if a motion says "no tape recorders" can be used during a meeting, it may be better to say "no recording devices" can be used during a meeting.
5. Before voting, make it clear if it is a simple majority, some number or percentage of votes, or unanimous. This will eliminate hard feelings later. The chair puts the motion to a vote.