

# Robert's Rules of Order

Online  
training  
session,  
August 2017



**Akin Unver** ✓

@AkinUnver

Follow

Interesting, since I \*finally\* finished @zeynep's book yesterday. Opens up several avenues of research into why %1 works when it works.

Collective action has always required a balance between empowering the individual voice and expressing the will of the group. Digital technology can often amplify this tension. Sometimes, great unity and collective identity can emerge as people coalesce around hashtags that sing the song of the excluded and the marginalized. But networked movements have few means of dealing with the inevitable internal conflicts of politics, as well as the natural jockeying for status and attention. Who speaks for the movement as a whole when members can speak through their individual social media accounts, but there is no mechanism for closure or decision making?

5:24 PM - 30 Aug 2017

2 Retweets 5 Likes



# Fundamentals

1. One member of the group is the chair for the meeting and applies the rules. Other members must be clearly recognized by the chair before speaking to the group. Ultimately, the group as a whole is in charge and may tell the chair what to do.
2. The group discusses one topic at a time. The group makes a decision about that topic before going to the next topic.
3. A member of the group may propose changing the details of how to handle a topic or what the decision on that topic should be. The chair keeps this under control.
4. Every member of the meeting has the right to speak once on a proposal (if they wish) before anyone may speak a second time.
5. Every member of the meeting has the right to know what is going on at all times.
6. Only urgent matters may interrupt someone who is speaking or break into a queue.
7. Any deviation from the rules is an extraordinary decision, made by the whole group.

# Push and Pop

how RRO is like a conversation

- We should get a drink — what do you think?
- If we get a drink, where? On a terrace?
- If we sit on a terrace, are we going to get wet? Yes.
- If we get a drink, where? In a pub.
- We should get a drink, in a pub, where it will be dry.
- Should we see a movie afterwards?

# Clarity and Procedure

how RRO is not like a conversation

Free-for-All / Corporate Shareholders Meeting

We want to be democratic AND effective.

Rules don't change according to subject matter.

Nobody owns a proposal or an idea.

One person facilitates by making the tough decisions.

We vote on everything.

# Fundamentals

1. One member of the group is the chair for the meeting and applies the rules. Other members must be clearly recognized by the chair before speaking to the group. Ultimately, the group as a whole is in charge and may tell the chair what to do.
2. The group discusses **one topic at a time**. The group **makes a decision** about that topic before going to the next topic.
3. A member of the group may propose changing the details of how to handle a topic or what the decision on that topic should be. The chair keeps this under control.
4. Every member of the meeting has **the right to speak once** on a proposal (if they wish) before anyone may speak a second time.
5. Every member of the meeting has **the right to know what is going on** at all times.
6. Only urgent matters may interrupt someone who is speaking or break into a queue.
7. Any deviation from the rules is an extraordinary decision, made by the whole group.

# The MOTION

A motion is a proposal. Once it is under consideration, the group must decide whether to do it or not.

Main motion = proposal covering a whole topic

Formal discussion of a motion comes in two types:

1. Give information or reasoning to decide how to vote
2. Refine or change the proposal under consideration

Informal discussion is not part of the formal procedure.

[The one sentence guide to good participation according to RRO](#)

**Wait your turn  
and then  
ask for help.**

# The DECISION

Every motion requires some kind of vote to make the decision

Simplest vote = no objection (unanimous)

Easiest vote = voice vote

Surest vote = roll call (or ballot)



# RRO in Country Committees and Chapters

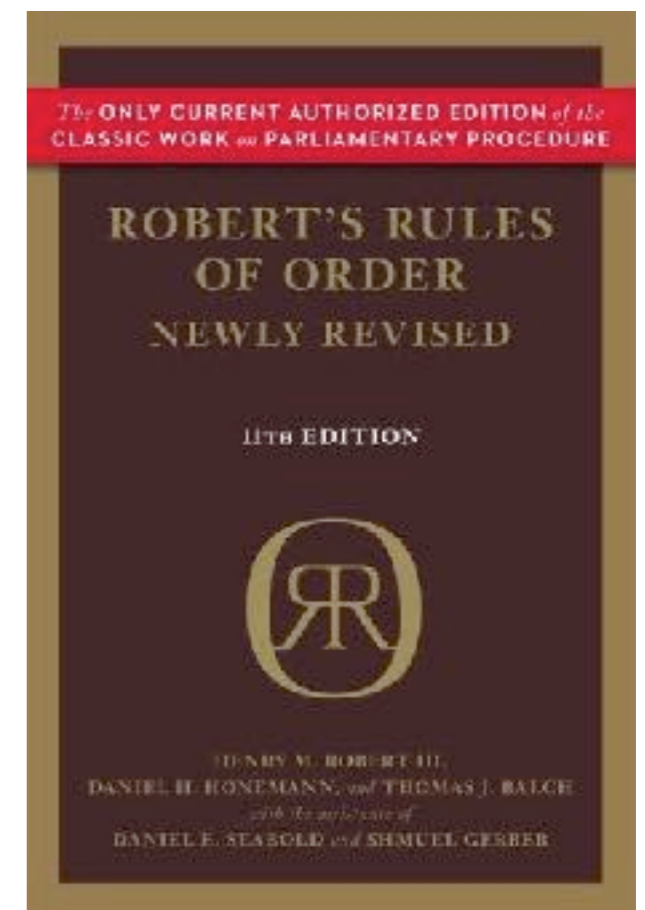
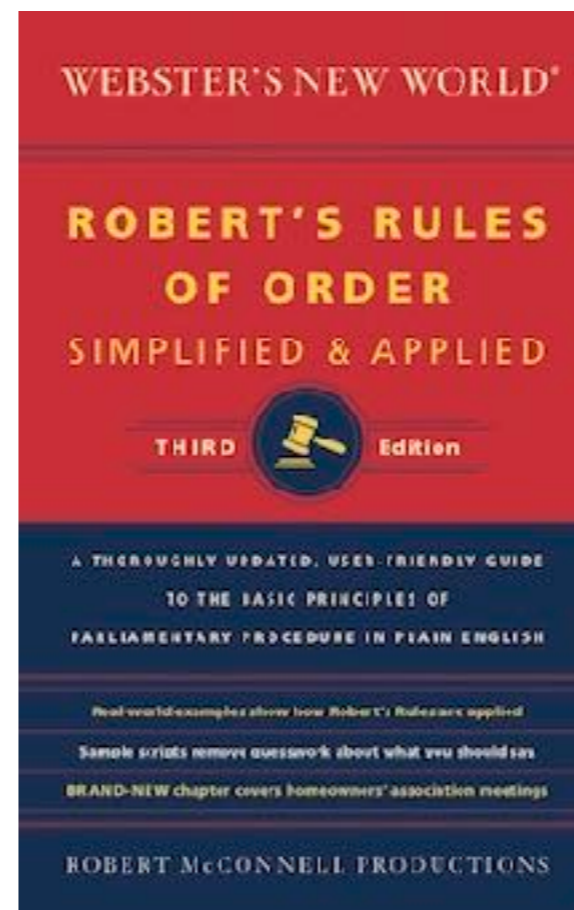
Annual General Meeting (possibly required by bylaws)

Executive Committee / Council

DPCA ExCom

DPCA Bylaws Committee

...and when frustration outweighs the benefits



# Rough RRO

keeping order and getting things done

- Start with the fundamentals.
- Keep track of exact wording of all proposals. Don't allow half-baked ideas; allow improvements instead.
- Vote on any change to the wording of the proposal.
- Push and pop topics; never move on before making a decision.
- Special motions: refer to committee & postpone until next meeting
- Optional but recommended:  
No dialogues and no ownership! Everyone speaks once before anyone speaks twice.

# Questions?

Precedence: e.g. *refer to committee* takes precedence over *amend* but then the motion to refer can be amended itself 🖱 WTF bamboozles

Obscure incantations in DPCA meetings:

- Divide the question / Division of the assembly
- Point of order / Point of information
- Table the motion / Lay on the table
- Refer to committee / Commit / Committee of the whole
- Postpone indefinitely / Reconsider
- Previous question & Call the question

# What's wrong with calling the question?

- It is never permitted to yell out “Call the Question” without waiting your turn in the queue.
- “I call the question.” = I don't think the people who are waiting to speak have anything useful to say or to add and I want to take away their right to speak.
- It requires 2/3 affirmative vote, which usually takes longer than just listening to those in queue.

PICT. BY ANDREWS McWHEEL GANDICATION

I CALL IT,  
CLOSING  
ARGUMENTS



EARLY EDITION OF  
ROBERT'S RULES  
of ORDER

GOCOMICS.COM / NONSEQUITUR

I CALL IT,  
calling the  
question

EARLY EDITION OF  
ROBERT'S RULES  
of ORDER

PICT. BY ANDREWS McWHEEL CANDIDATION



© 2017 WILEY INK, LTD. 5-23

GOCOMICS.COM / NONSEQUITUR

WILEYINK@EARTHLINK.NET