

Roberts Rule of Order - Parliamentary Procedures 101

(February 14, 2022)

Why is it important to have Parliamentary Procedures at our School Board Meeting?

Ohio Law requires that all school board meetings be open to the public with notice; and that all meetings must be recorded in writing or on video/audio as a matter of public record. Minutes of the meeting must be taken with any corresponding action taken and passed. This is a matter of legal record that the meeting took place and Quorum was established. ORC 3314.15 governs the need for scheduled board meetings, with the first one being the organizational meeting where officers are elected by the board. Most boards will meet on scheduled dates, times, and locations; while offering workshop meetings at intervals between in case of important business matters.

Can we change the Agenda or Order of Business at our School board meeting?

Yes, you can change the Agenda and order of the business with a Motion to do so with a second, and a vote of the majority. The minutes must reflect the final outcome of that meeting per ORC 3313.26; and include the revised agenda and the business decisions made. The Board must approve the minutes of the last meeting(s), but can waive the reading of the minutes. The Treasurer is the customary keeper of the minutes of the meeting that must be made available to the public.

What is the Customary Order of Business for a Regular School Board Meeting?

Unlike many private or non-profit board meetings, the normal order of business on the agenda is a Role call of board members so that Quorum is established. Without a quorum that is set by board policy, no business or policy decisions can be made. After roll call, the Superintendent will present the agenda related to his/her business, along with the resolutions read for consideration of passage. Board members are the only ones who can affirm the motion read for ownership, and are called on first to comment after the motion is seconded by another board member. After sufficient discussion is made, the Chair will ask for board's decision of action. The motion can be withdrawn by nominating parties; tabled; amended; or passed. The Chair will confirm the vote passage or defeat after the Treasurer takes the roll call vote of each board member. The Treasurer will record the vote in the minutes and then move on to the next order of business. Superintendents submit resolutions for major contracts which include the hire/retire/ or fire of School employees; as well as policy changes for consideration.

The Treasurer will ask the board to pass various resolutions as well for the body to consider. These usually involve matters of financial reports, bills to be paid; vendor contracts, accepting funds; and passing the five year forecasts. Board members will be asked to accept or reject the Treasurer's report; and any other order of financial concern. Board chair will ask for motions to be made to accept; reject; amend; or table. The outcome is then recorded for the minutes.

Allowing for Public Comment at the Regular Board meeting.

School boards are NOT required by law to have part of the meeting reserved for public comment. However, for transparency and public support, good idea to allow for a structured voicing of visitor comments limited in time for each person; and limiting the time for open public comment. The comments can only come from those recognized by the Board Chair. Comments are directed to the Board Chair and never directed to any member of the Board or Administration. The Board Chair can call the visitors out of order and refuse to recognize them. The Treasurer, Superintendent, Board President, or two board members can call for a separate, noticed special meeting to open comments to all who participate.

Motions that open the main questions for debate and resolutions. How does a board member get their resolution published on the agenda for the next meeting?

The agenda is usually prepared by the Superintendent; Treasurer; and the Board President. Any other matters of consideration should be made in writing to the Board President for consideration with copies to Treasurer and Superintendent for inclusion on the agenda if in compliance with school board policy and budget. The member proposing the matter of business should have made it obvious to intent with language that corresponds with action requested. The language of "may and should" should be avoided and instead, the use of "shall" requires action as intended. This motion made and seconded is then owned by the group, with the Chair directing the support of or rejection of the said motion. A simple majority of the board is all that is needed to pass the motion, unless Board policy requires a larger majority of voting members.

Voting: Simple Majority of Consent or requiring Super Majority; two thirds vote or majority plus one.

In most orders of business, all that is needed is majority vote, or in cases of five board members present, three Board members would need to affirm and pass the motion. Absent board members cannot cast their votes for the affirmative or negative. A Board member can recuse themselves from the vote if it impacts them personally or financially. All board members must cast a vote on the motions or recuse themselves due to conflict of interest. A board can vote to table the motion; or remove it for consideration. Board policy decisions require three readings of the Board policy action; change; or deletion. First two meeting are read only, with the third voted on for adoptions.

A Main motion, or the original motion that was made can be amended to a “Primary Amendment” to the Main motion. This can only be performed if the Main motion is still pending, or it has not been voted on. The Primary Amendment is in order if the Chair recognizes the member and the amendment is in order and related to the main motion. This motion must be seconded by another member. The precedence to vote lays with the Primary Amendment, or postponed to a later date or to committee. The vote is then taken by the body to vote on the primary amendment and incorporated into the Main motion. While the Primary Amendment motion is still pending, a secondary motion can be made and seconded. Now the precedence goes to voting on the Secondary Amendment and supersedes both the primary and main motion. Picture a ladder where the first rung on the ladder is the main motion. The second rung is the primary motion, and the third rung while climbing the ladder is the secondary motion. A fourth motion or rung on the ladder could be made and seconded to postpone the voting to a certain time or meeting. Now we have to climb back down and vote in reverse order of the rungs in that order. Last motion made is the first one voted on.

Motions that cannot be debated and Undeatable motions.

Many times debate can be overwhelming and long. Making decisions outweighs the debate, so Parliamentary procedures allows for motions made. Best practices allows for the Presiding officer to ask another member to make these motions to avoid any perception of not being objective. The presiding officer in all cases is the tie breaker on voting.

1. Fixing the time to adjourn the meeting (Chair is asked to limit the time for debate)
2. Adjournment is nondebatable
3. Recess for a break
4. Raise a question of Privilege (Asks the Chair to bring urgency to the request)
5. Call for the orders for the day (Call for the Chair to follow the agenda and order of business)
6. Lay on the table to postpone a consideration (Tabling a motion that is not debatable or amendable) Must have a second.
7. Previous question (Asking the Chair to stop debate and vote on the preceding motion. Two-thirds vote is required to vote)
8. Limit debate (asking the Chair to put a time limit on the debate or have two for the motion and two against)

Motion to move to Executive Session.

This item should be place on the agenda with sufficient notice and allows for only those items permitted by law to be discussed in this session. Only board members and invited guests are allowed to be present to this part of the meeting; and is in secret. No voting can take place in an Executive Session. Written notes are discouraged and materials supplied for review should be collected at the end of this

meeting. A motion must be made by the presiding officer and seconded to enter into the Executive Session. A time stamp is recorded when the body enters into Executive session. Many boards will change venue or ask those not invited to leave, then come back with the session has concluded. Once finished, the call and motion to exit Executive session is made and seconded, then reverts back to the regular meeting. Voting on any motion made after this is acceptable for motions made outside of Executive Session.

Adjournment.

To end the order of business, adjournment motion is made and this is the end of the board's business. No discussion of any further board business conducted should be allowed. This is different from a call for an *Adjourned Meeting* where it is a continuation of a previous regular or special meeting. This constitutes one meeting even if separated by time, date, and location.