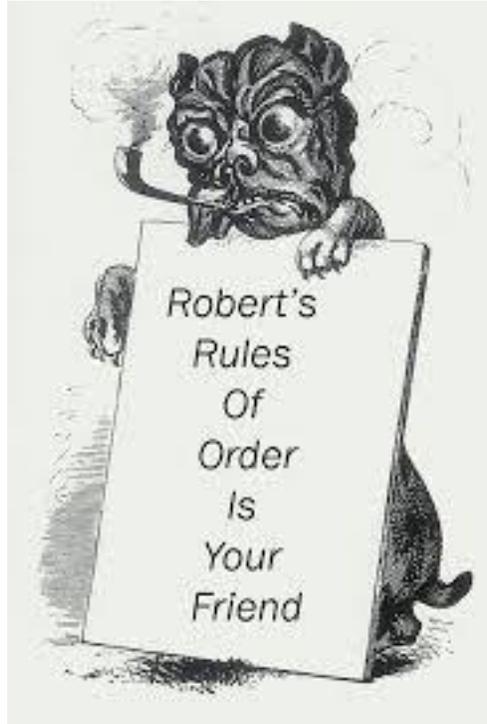


## Ash's Guide to Roberts Rules of Order (Parliamentary Procedure)

Presented for the 2014-2015 Board

RRoO is important for many reasons- It is a set of rules for conduct at meetings which allows everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion.



### How a Meeting Works

TJCSGA General Assemblies will have an Agenda, or more formally, Orders of the Day. This is a basic format of a generalized Agenda:

- Call to order.
- Roll call of members present.
- Reading of minutes of last meeting.
- Officer's reports.
- Committee reports.
- Special orders --- Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting.
- Unfinished business.
- New business.
- Announcements.
- Adjournment.

Meetings are called to order by the Chair, or Presiding Officer. In our case, the President. Sometimes we have pledge of allegiance and other assorted honorifics, but the next major piece of business is the Roll Call: The chair is passed to the secretary.

## **The Chair and the Floor**

The Chair is the presiding officer of the meeting, and it can be yielded to others. The Chair is in charge of keeping the Floor working. The floor is the platform from which delegates make motions and business is handled. Not to be mistaken, the floor does not mean the floor that delegates speak from, with the board on a stage, however it does have its roots there historically. People who are “In order” when making motions, have the floor, which means permission to speak, yielded from the chair. The Floor is NOT however, in ANY way weaker than the chair. The floor has the power, because the delegates have the power. The chair maintains the rules and governs the business.

The Chair yields to the Secretary, who will begin roll call. The Secretary will call names (Or it can be done as delegates approach but that gets messy and out of line quick) Delegates must have the floor to speak.

Secretary: *“University of awesome SGAitutde?”*

Delegate: *“Madame Secretary/Mr. Secretary”*

Secretary: *“Delegate is recognized”*

Delegate: *“Badass McCoy, University of Awesome, SGAititude, We have 30 Delegates and 4 Advisors”*

Secretary: *“Thank you”*

The information is then recorded. This part is really up to you. Maybe say information back if you wish? I have forms for delegates to fill out when they make motions etc., and this should help with minutes and keeping it in order.

When you are done, verify Quorum, 2/3 “Mr. President we have a quorum,” etc. and pass the chair back to president. You are probably thinking, “Wow it seems like I am in charge of the assembly when I have the chair.” Yup! That’s being the chair! After roll call, we must read and approve the orders of the day.

## **Read and Approve the Orders of the Day**

That’s me! President yields to the Parliamentarian. Delegates have the option to interrupt the reading with a motion to dispense the reading of the orders of the day and approve as written. If they do, cool, if not, it is read. Once read, a motion will be entertained to approve as READ, because now they have been read as well as written, therefore you say “read.” If amendments are needed they are made, and the orders of the day are passed, *as amended*. Once they are approved in whichever way they are, written, read, amended, the chair is passed back to the president. We proceed to reading and approval of the previous meetings minutes. The chair is passed to the secretary.

## **The Secretary**

The secretary begins reading the minutes, but can entertain the motion to dispense the reading of the minutes and approve as written. Delegates will then gain the floor correctly by being recognized:

Delegate: *“Madame Secretary/Mr. Secretary”*

Secretary: *Delegate is recognized*

Delegate: *“Name McNameyson, School of Rock, Rockin Campus, I move to dispense the reading of the previous meetings minutes and approve as written.”*

(If this happens it’s super easy!) Repeat procedure for a second, and take a vote:

*“The motion to dispense the reading of the previous meetings minutes and approve them as written has been correctly made and seconded,”* Pause here for any debate, interrupting motion, discussion, etc., *“If there is no discussion?”*

Pause *“All those in favor of dispensing of the reading of the previous meetings minutes and approving them as written say Ay?”*

*“All Opposed?”*

*“All Abstaining?”*

If passed, awesome, if failed, continue reading, if failed but reading is finished, then we have a major issue, and the President/Parliamentarian should have been paying attention. Yield floor to them if needed.

After the motion has been made and the previous meetings minutes dealt with, pass the floor back to president.

### **Officer Reports:**

Advisor, advisor elect, etc. The floor is yielded to each officer, who in turn will make their report. After each report, yield floor to next officer. RRoO allows for the officer to pass the chair to the next officer on the agenda, or you can pass to the president, who will then make their way to the next officer. This step is formal, and not **actually** needed, unless you just want to.

### **Committee Reports**

Committee chairs will be yielded the floor, but of course will have to obtain it from the chair first. The committee will read the report, and if business needs to be voting on, a vote will be taken to accept it, discuss, vote, etc. These will be handled by the President, or the Chair. The Chair can be yielded if needed.

### **Special Orders**

Business is brought up according to the agenda, and handled, the president keeps the chair, and gives the floor to delegates who correctly obtain it. An example is a vote on to allow prayer or not before out meetings begin.

#### **Example:**

*“We will now open discussion on the business of allowing prayer during general assemblies, do we have a speech for?”* Or something along these lines. You would also want to establish working rules

for the debate, such as limiting speech times etc.

Unfinished business is brought up the same way: Pulled from the agenda, by the president, and handled by the delegates, with the chair moderating.

With these types of orders: They are brought up, and can be reported on, discussion opened, debate, or motions. The delegates decide. Let's say the issue is:

### **Unfinished Business: The Platform**

Clearly, this issue, if ever brought up, will be explosive, and a motion to open debate will be made. I always recommend a presiding officer, or the chair, set limits: Normally limiting speeches to say, five minutes, is good. I also believe in an "Affirmative/Negative" Block, as in, one for one against, for the debate.

This block of one speaker for, one speaker against, is what makes it organized debate. Of course, it isn't always so easy to have this if it's not actually debate. Issues such as a simple yes or no for prayer are easy to debate and regulate, in the case of discussion, which is what a platform debate would more closely resemble, limits are still wise: Five minutes Max. Sometimes, more so with assemblies of hundreds, three minutes is better, if delegates want more, they can easily make a motion to extend or limit terms of debate according to their needs.

The chair must make sure all delegates are following procedure, and with discussion, etiquette means that much more. Delegates should be polite, no mudslinging, no booing, no rudeness. Motions may be made during debate, and the chair should be very aware of motion classifications, what motions can be made during debate, etc. When debate ends, by motion, such as table or tapering out and then a motion to vote, the matter will be voted on, obviously.

Very rarely (and normally incorrectly) will issues that warrant discussion not be voted upon. It is my recommendation that when assemblies get a little hot and bothered, or if discussion has raged on for a bit, it's wise to encourage a motion to recess. Nothing long, 15 minutes. This buys time that normally everyone in the room needs. Business is handled, and you move on with the agenda. After Unfinished, obviously, is new business.

### **New Business**

Same procedure, only it's new.

Same rules apply. If you have another debating issue, and you didn't encourage that recess motion? Definitely do it if this one rages on too. The longer you are forced to sit without a break doing this stuff the tougher it gets, emotions run high, people get confused, it gets messy. Its okay to table and recess for 15. I wouldn't recommend more, unless it's a recess for information to be obtained or something. Really, it's a judgment call. Come back, and entertain the motion to bring it back, and continue. With any luck, discussions normally calm down, get concise, and votes happen pretty soon after. Once all the new business is handled we move on in the agenda.

## Announcements

This one, is pretty easy. The chair yields to delegates who correctly obtain the floor, and the delegate makes their announcement. If for some reason people start making wordy announcements, it's okay to limit them. Two minutes is very generous....an announcement shouldn't be that long, in its nature, it's meant to be to the point to convey information.

## Adjournment

Fun fact: If adjournment is already on the agenda, there is no need for the motion; however, it is normally done, anyways, for a myriad of reasons. The chair, same as anything else, handles the motion.

As long as you know this stuff and keep a motion chart on you, everything should be a breeze. Officers who need to know procedure more, President, VP, and Parliamentarian, should know all motions, precedence, etc., however, this information should get you generalized information for normal business in a meeting.

The assembly rules - they have the final say on everything!

Time should be allowed after each vote to allow for motions, such as appeal, division, etc. The method used by members to express themselves is in the form of moving motions. A motion is a proposal that the entire membership take action or a stand on an issue. Below is help guide information that is more generalized for delegates and not for officers

There are four Basic Types of Motions:

- 1: **Main Motions:** The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the membership for their consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor, and yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.
- 2: **Subsidiary Motions:** Purpose is to change or affect how a main motion is handled, and is voted on before a main motion.
- 3: **Privileged Motions:** Purpose is to bring up items that are urgent about special or important matters unrelated to pending business.
- 4: **Incidental Motions:** Purpose is to provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other motion.

How are Motions Presented?

### Obtaining the floor

- Wait until the last speaker has finished.
- Rise and address the Chair by saying, "Mr. Chair or Mr. President." (Or Madam)
- Wait until the Chair recognizes you.
- State Name, School, (Region is optional) and then the motion (details below)
- Make sure you have filled out a motion form/ that information was recorded

### **Make Your Motion**

- Speak in a clear and concise manner.
- Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we ..." rather than, "I move that we do not ..."
- Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.

### **-Wait for Someone to Second Your Motion**

- Another member will second your motion or the Chairman will call for a second.
- If there is no second to your motion it is lost.

### **The Chairman States Your Motion**

- The Chairman will say, "It has been moved and seconded that we ..." Thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
- The membership then either debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
- Once your motion is presented to the membership by the chairman it becomes "assembly property", and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.

### **Expanding on Your Motion**

- The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it.
- The mover is always allowed to speak first.
- All comments and debate must be directed to the chairman.
- Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.
- The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished, unless called upon by the Chairman.

### **Putting the Question to the Membership**

- The Chairman asks, "Are you ready to vote on the question?"
- If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
- On a motion to move the previous question may be adapted.

### **Voting on a Motion:**

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation. There are five methods used to vote by most organizations, they are:

**By Voice** -- The Chairman asks those in favor to say, "aye", those opposed to say "no". Any member may move for an exact count.

**By Roll Call** -- Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person's vote is required.

**By General Consent** -- When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chairman says, "if there is no objection ..." The membership shows agreement by their silence, however if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.

**By Division** -- This is a slight verification of a voice vote. It does not require a count unless the chairman so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.

**By Ballot** -- Members write their vote on a slip of paper, this method is used when secrecy

is desired.

**In most cases, we will vote by voice. When division is called, we handle it via roll call vote, for fairness in votes.**

There are two other motions that are commonly used that relate to voting.

- 1 -Motion to Table -- This motion is often used (Incorrectly) in the attempt to "kill" a motion. The option is always present, however, to "take from the table", for reconsideration by the membership.
- 2 -Motion to Postpone Indefinitely -- This is often used as a means of parliamentary strategy and allows opponents of motion to test their strength without an actual vote being taken. Also, debate is once again open on the main motion.

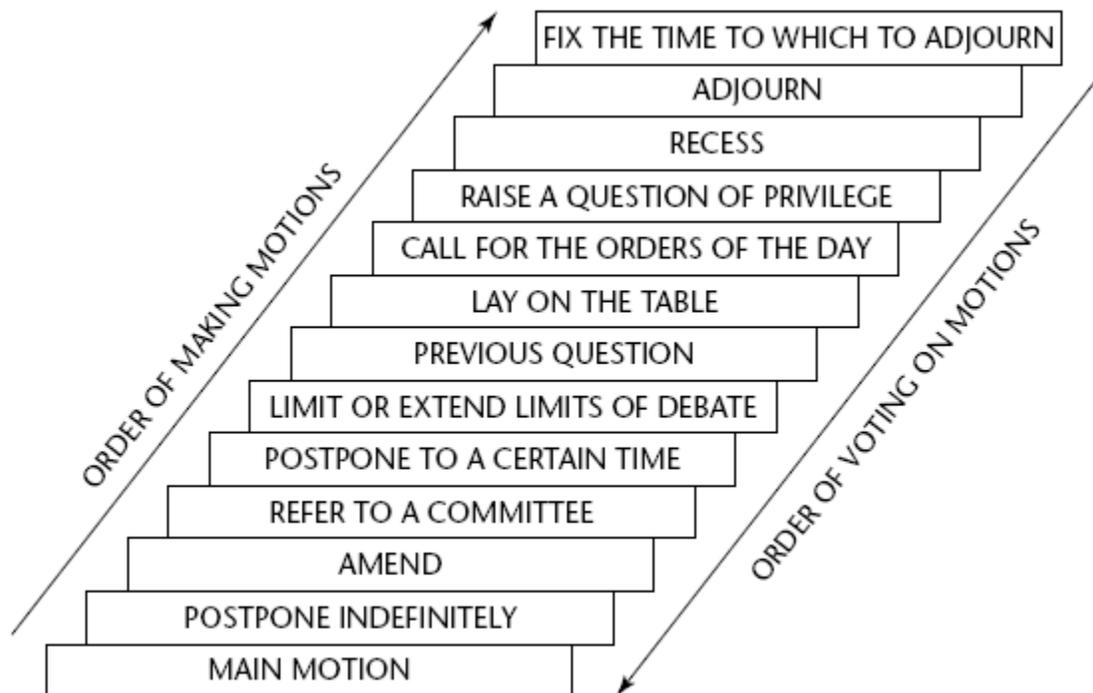
There are other versions of these motions, but they are fundamentally the same, however motion to table until XXX gives a deadline for the item at hand, etc.

Parliamentary Procedure is the best way to get things done at your meetings. But, it will only work if you use it properly. These rules will make it run even better if all members and officers follow them.

- Allow motions that are in order.
- Have members obtain the floor properly.
- Speak clearly and concisely.
- Obey the rules of debate.
- Most importantly, *BE COURTEOUS*.

### **Order of Precedence with Motions:**

Go up the ladder, then climb down. This will be a lifesaver when multiple motions are on floor.



## Guidelines

- Obtain the floor (the right to speak) by being the first to stand when the person speaking has finished; state Mr./Madam Chairman. Must be recognized by the Chair before speaking!
  - Before the motion is stated by the Chair (the question) members may suggest modification of the motion; the mover can modify as he pleases, or even withdraw the motion without consent of the seconder; if mover modifies, the seconder can withdraw the second.
  - The "immediately pending question" is the last question stated by the Chair!  
Motion/Resolution - Amendment - Motion to Postpone
  - No member can speak twice to the same issue until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken to it once!
  - All remarks must be directed to the Chair. Remarks must be courteous in language and deportment - avoid all personalities, never allude to others by name or to motives!
- The agenda and all committee reports are merely recommendations! When presented to the assembly and the question is stated, debate begins and changes occur!

## Some Motions

- **Point of Privilege:** Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc. - may interrupt only if necessary!
- **Parliamentary Inquiry:** Inquire as to the correct motion - to accomplish a desired result, or raise a point of order
- **Point of Information:** Generally applies to information desired from the speaker: "I should like to ask the (speaker) a question."
- **Orders of the Day (Agenda):** A call to adhere to the agenda (a deviation from the agenda requires Suspending the Rules)
- **Point of Order:** Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised immediately after the error is made
- **Main Motion:** Brings new business (the next item on the agenda) before the assembly
- **Divide the Question:** Divides a motion into two or more separate motions (must be able to stand on their own)
- **Consider by Paragraph:** Adoption of paper is held until all paragraphs are debated and amended and entire paper is satisfactory; after all paragraphs are considered, the entire paper is then open to amendment, and paragraphs may be further amended. Any Preamble cannot be considered until debate on the body of the paper has ceased.
- **Amend:** Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or resolutions
- **Withdraw/Modify Motion:** Applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor
- **Commit /Refer/Recommit to Committee:** State the committee to receive the question or resolution; if no committee exists include size of committee desired and method of selecting the members (election or appointment).
- **Extend Debate:** Applies only to the immediately pending question; extends until a certain

time or for a certain period of time

- **Limit Debate:** Closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time
- **Postpone to a Certain Time:** State the time the motion or agenda item will be resumed
- **Object to Consideration:** Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated
- **Lay on the Table:** Temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending
- **Take from the Table:** Resumes consideration of item previously "laid on the table" - state the motion to take from the table
- **Reconsider:** Can be made only by one on the prevailing side who has changed position or view
- **Postpone Indefinitely:** Kills the question/resolution for this session - exception: the motion to reconsider can be made this session
- **Previous Question:** Closes debate if successful - may be moved to "**Close Debate**" if preferred
- **Informal Consideration:** Move that the assembly go into "**Committee of the Whole**" - informal debate as if in committee; this committee may limit number or length of speeches or close debate by other means by a 2/3 vote. All votes, however, are formal.
- **Appeal Decision of the Chair:** Appeal for the assembly to decide - must be made before other business is resumed; NOT debatable if relates to decorum, violation of rules or order of business
- **Suspend the Rules:** Allows a violation of the assembly's own rules (except Constitution); the object of the suspension must be specified

**Remember-** A motion to dispense the reading of the minutes and approve as written- is a motion that would be entertained by the secretary- so when making motion, the language would be Madame or Mr. Secretary, not president. They do have the chair, but for clarity, they should not be called chair, but by their office.

If you do not know what to do? There is a motion for that! A point of information, a Parliamentary Inquiry, and point of clarification can all allow you to ask a question, even during pending business, and is never out of order

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