

Excerpts from Robert's Rules of Order, Revised (12th edition), relating to meetings where there are not more than about a dozen members present.

- 1) Motions need not be seconded.
- 2) There is no limit to the number of times a member can speak to a debatable motion. However, each member (except the chair) can speak only once in debate on Appeals, while the chair may speak twice.
- 3) Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.
- 4) In both small and large meetings the chair can "assume" a motion, rather than waiting or calling for a routine motion to be made. This is appropriate as a means of saving time when it is obvious that the motion is necessary or appropriate, and not controversial.
- 5) To obtain unanimous consent the chair states that "If there is no objection..., we:
 - adopt the minutes as presented (or as corrected);
 - pass the motion to...;
 - adopt the report;
 - Receive the item for information;
 - etc.by common consent". The chair then pauses, and if no member objects, the chair announces that, "Since there is no objection..., the item is decided upon".

If any member objects, the chair must ask for a motion and, after discussion, call for the vote as per the standard rules of order. (The objection can be to the motion itself, or to the manner in which it is decided without a formal discussion.)

- 6) When a proposal or agenda item is perfectly clear to all present, a vote can be taken without a motion having been introduced.
- 7) If the chair is a member of the body, they may, without leaving the chair, speak in informal discussions and in debates, and vote on all questions. (However, to maintain the confidence of the members the chair is advised to do so in a measured and non-partisan way.)
- 8) If the president and vice-president do not object, the assembly, by majority vote, can adopt a motion to appoint an alternate chairperson, or guest facilitator for all or part of a session. Alternatively, the rules of order may be suspended by a 2/3 vote to authorize this type of temporary appointment, even over the objection of the president or a vice-president.
- 9) Whenever a motion is made that refers only to the chair in a capacity not shared in common with other members, or that commends or censures them with others, they should turn the chair over to an appropriate temporary chairperson, not so encumbered, during the consideration of that motion.