

Meetings and Roberts Rules of Order:

Note: There are a number of versions of Robert's Rules of Order (RRoO).

- **General**

- RRoO are concerned with conducting business in deliberative assemblies.
 - Deliberative assemblies are groups that meet to conduct business and in doing so consider ideas and proposals that can advance the purpose of the group.
 - The overriding principle of RRoO is that individual and majority rights are always protected by the parliamentary procedures.
- Meetings are official gatherings of members to take care of business for a defined time period.
 - Socializing should occur before or after the meeting.
 - A meeting may be continued to be held at a later time.
 - Meeting will be such more effective if you've done everything to make them comfortable and effective meet the goals of the particular meeting.
 - Start meetings on time and do not let late comers to catch-up or derail the meeting progress.
 - Prior to the meeting have agenda printed and ready for distribution. If possible distribute the agenda in advance.
 - Seat those giving reports in the front of the room so the members will not have to wait for them to come forward to speak.
 - Insist that order be maintained and that the participation and contribution of the attendees is treated in a business like manner.
- Sessions are defined as a series of meetings to conduct a single order of business. i.e. a conference or convention that takes place over several days.
- Executive Sessions are any meeting or part of a meeting which is to be secret. Guests are not allowed at such meetings, for reasons of privacy, security & confidentiality.
- The membership at a meeting or session can't enact business that interferes with any other future meeting or session. They should also not postpone a motion past the time of the meeting or session as a way to prevent others from addressing the issue of the motion.
- Guests
 - Guests should be invited to participate at a specified time; either at the beginning or end of the meeting.
 - If their presence is not appropriate at any time they may simply be excused to leave the meeting so business may be conducted.
 - Any member may make a motion to go into closed session and for guests to be excused.
- Quorum
 - A quorum is the number of members that must be presented to legally transact business.
 - Detachment #885 has identified the following quorums:
 - Board of trustees – 50% plus one.
 - Members meetings – a minimum of 15 members.
 - The Detachments definition of a quorum may be changed as allowed in the Bylaws.
 - If a quorum is not present (as defined in the applicable bylaws), business cannot be conducted ... period.
 - This rule cannot be waived even by a majority vote of the members.
 - All actions taken by the members of the meeting in the absence of a quorum are INVALID.
 - Don't confuse a quorum with a majority.
 - If the fact that there is no quorum has been overlooked by the officers, any member may raise a point of order.
 - The only business that conducted is to adjourn, move to continue the meeting at another time, and to move to go to "recess".
 - If a recess is called officers or members could telephone other members to join in order to develop a quorum.

- **Calling the Meeting to Order**

- The Commandant should call the meeting to order by saying, "The meeting will come to order."

- The meeting is then defined within the MCL Ritual handbook.
 - Using of a gavel is optional; sometimes it is a bit too formal in a small group.
 - We have discussed getting a brass ships bell to use in the place of a gavel.
- **Adjourning**
 - At the completion of business or the allotted time the Commandant shall adjourn the meeting.
 - This is done as prescribed in the MCL Ritual handbook. The Commandant shall say, "There being no further business we will proceed to close."
 - After the appropriate responses by the Sgt-at-Arms, Chaplin and Senior Vice-Commandant, the Commandant shall declare, "This meeting is adjourned." Followed by a strike of the Gavel is used.
 - Any member can at anytime make a motion to adjourn the meeting, another may second it and a majority vote may carry the motion.
 - However, such a motion may not be made whose purpose is to delay the scheduled business of the meeting or force one faction's wishes upon all.
- **Attendees**
 - Dress appropriately
 - Stand or raise your hand to be recognized by the chairman.
 - When called upon, state your name.
 - Adopt a calm demeanor when addressing the membership. Passion is admirable, but remain calm and focus to convey your message effectively.
 - Make eye contact as you speak.
 - Don't become argumentative if confronted by a member who disagrees. This is a deliberative assembly.
- **Questions from the membership**
 - Research has shown that wherever people gather, for each person who states a question, 5 others wanted to ask but were afraid to.
- **Parliamentary Inquiries**
 - To make a parliamentary inquiry a member should rise or raise his hand and when recognized should state, "I raise a parliamentary inquiry" or "I have a question on the rules of this proceeding".
- **Officers**
 - Officers are elected by the membership to serve the organization.
 - They serve as role models for members and represent the best of the group has to offer.
 - Officers have the same rights as members to make motions, debate those motions, and vote.
 - The only exception is the chairman; who is required to be impartial, and therefore has restricted rights in the group.
 - Commandant (Meeting Chairman)
 - Sets the tone of the meeting.
 - It is important to distinguish firm, authoritative behavior from dictatorship. No one wants a tyrant for a chair.
 - Does not just preside over the group but understands that election to the office does not mean that the membership handed over exclusive control.
 - Leads by always using democratic principles in all areas of group business.
 - Is a guardian of the rights of the members protecting the membership from those who would disturb its democratic process in any way during the meeting.
 - Must make certain that members are not subjected to motions whose purpose is to delay business or force one faction's wishes upon all.
 - The Commandant may not make motions or engage in debate without stepping down and turning over the duties of running the meeting. He must not resume chairing the meeting until the motion has been disposed of by a vote or other action.
 - The Commandant can only vote if his vote breaks a tie vote, it would create a tie vote, or it is a ballot vote.
 - The Commandant must always step down from presiding over any motion in which he has a personal or financial interest.

- Of course the Senior Vice-Commandant takes over for the Commandant if the Commandant steps down or leaves the meeting early for any reason.
 - Adjutant (Secretary)
 - Prepares & distributes agendas
 - Keeps accurate meeting minutes.
 - Signing documents as required by Bylaws.
 - Paymaster (Treasurer)
 - Reports the following figures:
 - The balance on hand at the beginning of the month
 - Total receipts (Income)
 - Total disbursements (payments)
 - The balance on hand at the end of the month
 - Other reports
 - Reports are only as good as the care given them. Mistakes, even simple spelling errors, reflect badly on the professionalism of the officer or committee.
- **Minutes**
 - What is included in the minutes? Everything that happened but not in minute detail.
 - The hour the meeting was called to order.
 - Motions that were made, what actions were take and by who.
 - Programs presented.
 - Announcements made.
 - The hour of adjournment.
 - The meeting may be recorded via analog tape, video or digital audio recording so the secretary or others may refer to them for the sake of accuracy.
 - Approval of previous meeting's minutes.
 - Copies of previous meetings minutes should be available for review by the members and the officers prior to the start of the meeting.
 - First priority after the meeting is called to order.
 - Requires a motion and a second to be approved.
 - Once approved if a mistake is noticed, a member must pose a motion to amend something previously adopted.
 - Corrections are noted in the margins of the previous minutes.
 - Along with the date and the Adjutant's initials.
 - There is no statute of limitations for correction of minutes. They may even be corrected years later; as long as there is a 2/3rd majority vote with previous notice, a majority vote of the membership or unanimous consent.
- **Motions**
 - General:
 - More than one motion can be considered at one time.
 - The main motion and another motion to amend it.
 - Only the motions that further the main motion can be considered.
 - A secondary motion might be one to reword the main motion, to refer it to a committee for study, to place a time constrain on the debate, etc.
 - If there is no second or if the motion is defeated it may not be brought up as a motion (even a restated one) in that meeting. It can be brought up again in another meeting.
 - It is suggested however that you have thought about you motion and gained support from other members before doing so.
 - SIMPLEST & TYPICAL SCENARIO:
 - A main motion is made
 - A second is made to the motion
 - The motion may be debated
 - Upon conclusion of the debate the main motion may be voted upon
 - Classifications of Motions:

- Main motion
 - Holds the most importance and everything should be done with the idea of serving the main motion.
 - Is the only motion that introduced new business to the meeting.
 - All other motions classified beneath the main motion should support its goal; i.e.:
 - Original motion is a motion is made to consider a fund-raising opportunity
 - Another motion is made to the original motion maker do some additional research and get back to the group.
- Secondary motions
 - Subsidiary motions
 - Privileged motions
 - Incidental motions
- Motions to bring the original motion back to the forefront after debate.
- The Order of Making a Motion:
 - First a member makes the main motion.
 - That main motion may be postponed indefinitely, amended or referred to a committee.
 - There could be a motion to limit or extend limits of debate.
 - Members could move on the previous (original) motion for a vote.
 - There could be a motion to lay the original motion on the table.
 - Someone could call for the orders of the day if they have been scheduled at this time.
 - A question of privilege could be raised.
 - There could be a call for recess.
 - There could be a motion to adjourn.
 - Someone could want to fix the time to adjourn (so the meeting does not run over).
- The order of voting on motions:
 - Fix the time to adjourn.
 - Adjourn
 - Recess
 - Question of privilege
 - Call for the orders of the day
 - Lay on the table (motion to “Kill” [*table*] the motion)
 - Limit or extend limits of debate
 - Postpone to a certain time
 - Refer to a committee
 - Postpone indefinitely
 - Original motion
- How to make a motion:
 - Main motion
 - If possible the member should have already discussed the motion with other members to ensure there will be support, as a minimum for a second.
 - A member should stand or raise their hand to request the floor.
 - The chair acknowledges the member – Usually by name.
 - The member should say, “I move that”
 - At anytime the member may withdraw the motion unless there is objection by the membership.
 - Then a **second** member must second the motion (as described above).
 - If there is no second the Commandant should say, “As there is no second, the motion is not before this meeting.”
 - The Commandant should restate the motion before the matter is debated.
 - The motion is debated and the debate is ended when a member makes a motion to “move to the question (original motion). To stop the debate there must be 2/3rd majority vote (by a show of hands).
 - After the debate is completed the Commandant should again restate the motion and a vote is taken.
 - Voting can be written, verbal (aye or nay) or by a show of hands.

- Objections:
 - To make a motion to object to the consideration of a motion, a member should say, “I object to the consideration of the question (original motion).” This objection cannot be debated, amended or have any subsidiary motion attached to it.
 - This would be the action a member would take if a confidential matter is being discussed and the member believes it should not be discussed in the current venue (i.e. in front of guests, etc.).
 - Additionally, this is a way to stop the debate of a motion. If the objection is made a vote must be taken on the objection. If a 2/3rd majority agrees with the objection, then the debate is stopped.
- General Consent
 - General consent may be used to save time for routine business actions such as reports, etc.
 - The commandant could state:
 - “If there are no objections, the action is adopted.” Or
 - “If there are no objections, we will.” Or
 - Hearing no objection, we will ...”
 - If there is an objection to general consent then the action must be made into the form of a motion, a second, put to debate and then voted upon.
- New Business
 - Whether new business has been put on the agenda, the Commandant shall ask the membership if there is any new business.
 - Members have the right to present their ideas about what the group should do, at the time that new business is discussed.
 - Grievances should not be aired during general meetings. The League and Detachment have clearly defined guidelines for addressing grievances in a clear and unbiased environment that will not disrupt the normal pace of business.