



Roberts and Rosenberg's Rules of Order

This document supports the use of Roberts Rules of Order and Rosenberg's Rules of Order (collectively RRO) by the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) of East Bay Community Energy (EBCE). It is not meant to be a complete rendition of all the rules in either Roberts or Rosenberg's Rules of Order but is a curated summary of important items so the CAC members can easily understand and apply the basic procedures (i.e., motions, discussions, and voting). These procedural rules are an effective tool to ensure efficient meetings. The process:

- facilitates group decisions,
- allows for democratic speech and action,
- enforces the will of the majority while protecting the rights of the minority, and
- preserves order.

As a nine-person committee, following the formal parliamentary procedures of RRO does not make sense for the CAC as we tend to run our meetings less formally. A few key differences between small board procedures and the processes noted in Roberts Rules are that for small boards such as the CAC:

1. A motion does not need to be pending to discuss a subject informally.
2. Members may speak any number of times on a question, and motions to close or limit debate are generally not permitted.
3. The chair can participate in debate just as any other member.
4. Votes can be taken by a show of hands.
5. Committee members need not stand up to be recognized to speak or make motions.

Motions

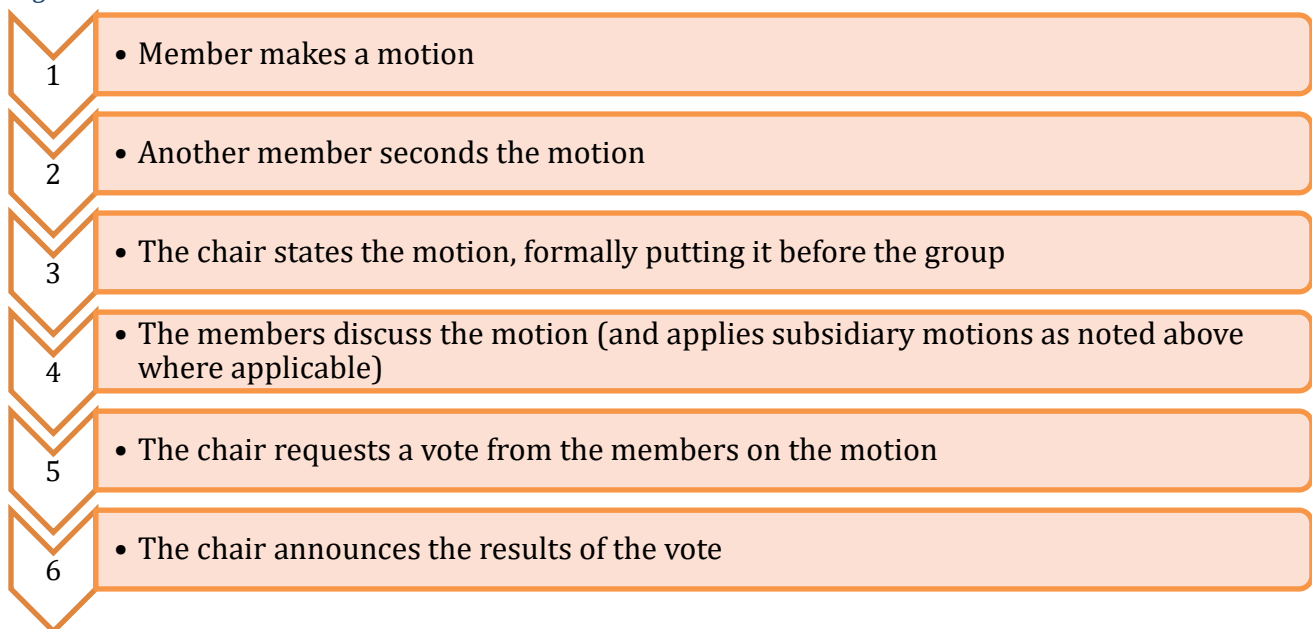
Motions are made by CAC members. They are a formal proposal by a member that the group take a certain action or position. The CAC typically uses two motions (basic and amend), but others are noted below. There can be up to three motions on the floor at one time (i.e., a basic motion and up to two subsidiary motions). When there are multiple motions, they are voted on in reverse order (i.e., motion #3 is voted on first, followed by motion #2, and finally the basic motion, which is always the first motion).

1. **Basic Motion:** Introduce a new item
2. **Subsidiary Motion:** Change or affect how to handle a main motion
 - a. **Amend** = a way to clarify or modify wording
 - i. Amendments should say exactly where in the basic motion the change is to be made, and precisely what words to use.
 - ii. Amendments must be germane (i.e., relevant to the subject under consideration).

- iii. After an amendment is made, the body follows the same procedure to discuss and vote on the newly revised main motion.
- iv. There can be a “friendly amendment” where no vote is required. However, the person who introduced the basic motion and the person who seconded it must agree to the friendly amendment. If they do not, then the friendly amendment goes to a vote.
- v. There can also be a “substitute amendment” where the member wants to completely do away with the basic motion and put a new motion before the body. The chair decides on whether the amendment is “friendly” or “substitute”.
- b. **Postpone Indefinitely** = a way to essentially drop a motion before it can be brought to vote
- c. **Postpone to a Certain Time** = to move to a later time on the agenda or to the next meeting with the time specified as to when motion will be addressed
- d. **Lay on the Table** = lay motion aside temporarily without setting a time for its consideration. The motion can be taken up again, via motion process, when the majority decides.
- e. **Motion to Adjourn** = adjourn the meeting. This can also be a “motion to fix the time to adjourn” where the motion is specific to the time when the meeting will adjourn.
- 3. **Motion to Reconsider** = a motion to again take up an already voted on motion. This must be made at the meeting where the item was first voted on (unless the body votes to suspend the rules and by a 2/3 majority, allow the motion to reconsider be made at a different time). The motion can only be made by a member who voted in the majority of the first vote.

The basic motion process has six steps as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Basic Motion Process



Discussions

- After a motion is made, the floor is open for discussion. (Discussions can occur without a motion as is the case for many of the CAC information items. However, these discussions follow the same procedures as bulleted below.)
- The public speaks before CAC members.
 - Each public member must fill out a speaker slip and be recognized by the chair.

- They are given a specific time limit to present his or her viewpoint (generally 2 to 3 minutes).
- After public comment, the person making the motion has the right to speak first.
- Each member needs to be recognized by the chair prior to talking.
- Each member is given a specific time limit to present his or her viewpoint (*the CAC has not typically followed this item in the past, but the chair reserves the right to implement as needed*).
- A person who hasn't spoken out yet gets precedence over people who have already spoken to the motion.
- No speaker can speak more than two times (*the CAC has not typically followed this item in the past and it is typically not used for small committees, but the chair reserves the right to implement as needed*).
- The chair calls for closure of the debate after everyone who wishes to speak has been heard. If someone calls the question (i.e., calls for closure) before that, the group must vote on whether to end discussion.
- When discussing motions, keep the discussion focused on the motion, not on other less germane areas.

A member can interrupt the speaker only under certain circumstances. These are when a member wants to:

- Request information (Point of Information)
- Complain about noise, room temperature, etc. (Point of Privilege)
- Object to a procedure (Point of Order)
- Object to considering some improper matter (Object to Consideration of the Motion)
- Take up matter previously tabled
- Vote on a chair ruling

Voting

If the committee is in obvious agreement during the discussion period, the chair may save time by stating, "If there is no objection, we will adopt the motion to..." Then wait for any objections and say, "Hearing no objections, (state the motion) is adopted." If a member objects, then the committee votes.

Votes can be counted by a voice vote or show of hands.

The CAC can pass motions only when a quorum is met (i.e., 5 CAC members). Motions pass by either a majority (more than half the votes of those members who are present, excluding abstentions) or two-thirds (2/3 votes of those members who are present, excluding abstentions).

Summary

Action	What to Say	Can interrupt speaker?	Need a second?	Can be debated?	Can be amended?	Votes needed
Introduce a basic motion	"I move to ..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..." (add or strike words or both)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

Postpone item	"I move to postpone the matter until..." or "I move to postpone the matter indefinitely"	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Table a motion	"I move to table"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Motion to adjourn	"I move to adjourn the meeting" or "I move to adjourn the meeting at ___"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Motion to reconsider	"I move to reconsider the already pass motion"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3 vote
Extend the allotted speaker time	"I move to extend the time by ___ minutes"	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3 vote
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3 vote
Object to procedure	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decision
Complain about noise, etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decision
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Take up previously tabled item	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority