

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

A guide for effectively and efficiently conducting a County Deer Advisory Council meeting

County Deer Advisory Councils are unique—no other state in the country has a system exactly like them. The Councils provide an additional opportunity for stakeholders and the general public to get involved in Wisconsin's renowned deer management program. However, deer management is a complex process, and not all stakeholders may agree on how to best manage the deer herd. Accomplishing the Councils' responsibilities starts with a well-run meeting, in which all Council members have an opportunity to speak and questions and concerns are kept on topic. Robert's Rules of Order set the standard for keeping meetings productive so that the public voice is heard when preparing for deer season.

The Chair



- ☞ Refuse to entertain motions that are obviously frivolous.
- ☞ Limit the number of speakers, the amount of time, and can move the previous question to end debate.
- ☞ Restrict the debate to the merits of the pending question.
- ☞ Recognize who may have the floor and require them to identify themselves.
- ☞ Entertain items in a different order than listed on the agenda if there are no objections.
- ☞ Voting privileges: the chair can vote if his vote will make a tie (the motion dies), or if the vote is a tie, the chair may vote and carry the motion.

The Quorum



- ☞ A quorum is the number of people needed to conduct business.
- ☞ A majority of the members of the group.
- ☞ In addition to a quorum of members, the chair and secretary must be present for an assembly to conduct business (the officers are counted toward the quorum).
- ☞ Business conducted without a quorum is **null**.
- ☞ If a quorum is lost, no further business can be conducted.

A **walking quorum** is a series of meetings, telephone conferences, or some other means of communication such that groups of less than a quorum are effectively meeting and can arrive at a consensus or understanding regarding Council business that, collectively, would constitute a quorum.

Motions

A **motion** is the procedure of getting a matter before a group. Before the group can consider any proposal for action, it must be presented to the assembly in the form of a motion.

Main Motion

- ☞ A proposal that certain action be taken or an opinion be expressed by the group
- ☞ Used to introduce a new item of business
- ☞ Only one main motion can be considered at a time
- ☞ A main motion cannot be made when another motion is being considered
- ☞ Cannot be applied to any other type of motion, but other motions can be applied to it
- ☞ Requires a second, unless the motion is from a committee
- ☞ Can be amended
- ☞ Can be debated
- ☞ Requires a majority vote

Subsidiary Motions

- ☞ Applied to a main motion to aid in its disposition—can never stand alone
- ☞ Changes the status of the motion to which it is applied by modifying it in some way
- ☞ Subsidiary motion must be decided before the assembly can act on the main motion (examples include lay on the table, previous question, postpone to a specific time, refer to a committee, or amend)

Incidental Motion

- ☞ A motion that comes up incidentally when another motion is being considered
- ☞ These motions are procedural and deal with correcting errors, verifying votes, etc.
- ☞ Must be considered and disposed of before the principle motion or subsidiary motion can be acted upon (examples include withdraw, request type of vote)

Privileged Motion

- ☞ A motion relating to the well-being of the group or its members
- ☞ Because of its importance, it takes precedence over all other motions
- ☞ Examples include: take a recess, adjourn, or adjourn at a specified time

Getting In Touch with your Motions

How to Make a Motion

First, obtain the floor. The motion may not be presented until the chairman has recognized the speaker. State the motion carefully, and be specific. The motion must then be seconded—it cannot be discussed until it receives a second. If no second is received, the motion dies. After the motion is seconded, the chairman must repeat it in full: “The motion has been made and seconded that...is there any discussion?”

Discussion and Debate

Once a motion is open for discussion, members wishing to participate in the discussion must first be recognized by the chair. During discussion, the facts and merits of the question are brought out. Thorough discussion also allows members to vote more intelligently. After discussion, the vote is taken.

Voting

Members can vote through a voice vote, a show of hands, or a roll call vote. With a voice vote (usually structured as “All those in favor please say AYE. All those opposed say NO.”), the chair makes the decision by what she hears. A show of hands can be used if there is a doubt about the voice vote, and is taken for all motions requiring a 2/3 majority. A roll call vote clearly shows how each member voted on a specific issue, and is especially useful when it is important that the votes are precisely recorded.



Motions

What to do with a motion

Amending a Motion

An amendment allows members to narrow, clarify, or tailor the main motion to their specific purpose if a main motion is unclear or too broad. A motion to amend does not allow members to significantly alter the main moments; changes must relate specifically to the main motion. An amendment requires a majority vote to pass and can be debated (separate from the main motion vote). Amending a motion is done before the motion is voted on. Motions can be amended by:

- ☞ adding specific words at the end of the motion;
- ☞ inserting words in the body of the motion;
- ☞ deleting words in the motion;
- ☞ deleting and inserting words in the motion; or
- ☞ replacing a pending motion in its entirety with another motion relating to the same subject.

Motion to Postpone

The motion to postpone an item allows the assembly to set aside the main motion until a later date. It can only be used on a main motion, and a time should be specified when the matter will be taken up again. Items cannot be postponed beyond the next meeting or the motion dies.

- ☞ This should not be confused with the *motion to postpone indefinitely*, which removes the item from consideration

Lay on the Table

Laying a motion on the table can only be used to deal with another urgent matter. Tabling an item does not establish a time for the debate to resume—the debate can be resumed at any time during the meeting. Resuming consideration of the item requires that a motion be made to “...take the question of [...] off the table.”

Previous Question

Move the Previous Question closes the discussion and forces an immediate vote. It is a motion that requires a second and a 2/3 majority vote to pass.



Hierarchy of Amendments

Friendly amendments offer only slight changes and do not substantially change the motion. If members agree, friendly amendments are in order at any time during the process of making the main motion

Friendly amendment

Primary amendments must be relevant to the motion to which it is applied

Primary amendment

A secondary amendment can be made to a primary amendment, however a secondary amendment cannot be amended

Secondary amendment