

## Robert's Rules Procedures with Modified Consensus

Unify Sedona (rev. 2018-08-19, lq)

Perhaps the best known process for running official organization meetings, especially for corporations, is using Robert's Rules to one degree or another. Robert's Rules lay out an American style of parliamentary procedure. Some people fear Robert's Rules as being too formal, bureaucratic, and restrictive, often for its own sake, prone to time-wasting, power plays, and drama. But the Rules do not cause those things; people do.

At the outset, everyone should be aware that Article XIV of our By Laws specifically requires the use of Robert's Rules for running our official meetings. But... Our approach to Board meeting procedures is intended to follow a lightweight use of Robert's Rules. With the new Executive Board in place, we wanted to share the procedures and guidelines intended to provide structure for our meetings. These have been published online to [unifysedona.org](http://unifysedona.org), where they will be revised as necessary:

1. The Directors are nominated to serve on the Board, their membership discussed & voted on by other sitting Directors.
2. The President has the responsibility to develop a meeting agenda with input from the Board well ahead of time.
3. The Secretary will format and post the agenda online with email notification  $\geq 24$  hours ahead of published meeting start time.
4. The President will call the meeting to order no later than 5 minutes after its published start time.
5. The President serves as meeting leader and facilitator, focused on leading discussions and balancing speaking and listening.
6. The Vice-President serves as parliamentarian, who will strive to keep us on topic and on time, assuring all items are addressed.
7. WE agree to follow the posted meeting agenda, with minor sequence adjustments per the President.
8. WE agree to honor, within the constraints of human limitation, everyone's time and everyone's turn to speak and be heard.
9. WE agree to address just 1 item of business at a time per the agenda, remaining focused until action is called for on the item.
10. WE agree to note or record secondary discussion topics in a "parking lot" for future consideration.
11. WHO CAN SPEAK, WHEN?
  - a. The President has the floor unless: a) someone else has been asked to speak, b) a presenter has the floor for an item of business, or c) the President has invited someone else to speak or to begin open discussion on a topic.
  - b. Non Directors (members of the public) may not speak except: a) during a call to the public, or b) a specific call to open public discussion. This helps keep the meeting running on time.
  - c. Social interactions are welcome before the meeting has been called to order and after it has been adjourned.
12. Meeting Agendas contain a list of items of business. A task list for the Directors to work through.
  - a) Typical time allotment per business item is ~5 minutes, which may be extended upon verbal request to the President, with positive consensus of the Board members present allowing time extension.
  - b) If any item of business takes more than 5 minutes in a meeting, it may be a sign that further attention to the topic may be required in a work session or subcommittee, and the current item may need to be tabled for review another time. This helps keep the meeting running on time.
13. The President will introduce the agendaized Item and open discussion by the Board.
14. Motions: The purpose of holding discussion on a business item is to communicate and refine it, seek input on it from the board, and unless it is a Report to the Board requiring no action, it is to determine whether further actions are warranted on the item.
  - a. A request for action on an item of business is stated as a motion, requires support of just one Director, is then opened for discussion, and ultimately voted upon, yea or nay.
  - b. Note that, through a motion, an item may also be tabled for future discussion, or may even be removed from consideration.
15. Once a motion is "on the floor", it requires just one Director to indicate support for discussion.
16. Once on the floor with support, the President calls for discussion by the Board, and may opt for other input as well, seeking to get as much input on topic as possible, in hopes of making the best decision. Still, one person speaks at a time to be heard.
17. Once discussion has *waned*, the President or another Board member will "call the question" asking to vote on the motion.
18. The motion is then voted on by the Board of Directors. While our By Laws require a simple majority to determine the outcome of a motion (via count of yeas and nays), the President will typically seek "modified consensus" indicating a positive showing or lack of support for the motion as stated.
19. The vote on any motion whose outcome is not visibly clear to all attendees through verbal voting, will require either a show of hands for YAY and a show of hands for NAY, or possibly even a rollcall vote, tallying the YEAs and NAYs.
20. The Secretary will record all proceedings including motions, supports, major discussion elements, votes, and results.

**Thank you for your support in contributing to smooth running meetings that honor everyone's input and everyone's time.**