

---

# Robert's Rules

Parliamentary Procedure For the  
Bloomington Commission on Sustainability



**01**

**What They Are**

Parliamentary Procedure  
& its purpose

**02**

**Application Options**

Comparing the formal and  
informal applications

**03**

**Essential Elements**

Highlighting the most frequently  
used components

**04**

**Exercises**

Real walkthroughs of real cases

**05**

**Recommendations**

Follow-up for reinforcement

# 01 – What are Robert’s Rules?

## A. Parliamentary Procedure:

“The generally accepted rules, precedents, and practices commonly employed in the governance of deliberative assemblies”  
(<https://www.britannica.com/topic/parliamentary-procedure>)

## B. Purpose:

“The object of Rules of Order is to assist an assembly to accomplish *in the best possible manner the work for which it was designed*” (Robert’s Rules Online - Preface <http://www.rulesonline.com/rro--03.htm>)

This is achieved through three fundamental Principles:

- 1) Keep business organized by taking things up one-at-a-time
- 2) Maintain a fair, courteous environment
- 3) Insure the minority is heard and majority rules

## C. Historical Fun Fact:

“Henry Martyn Robert (1837-1923) was an engineering officer in the [US] Army. Without warning he was asked to preside over a public meeting being held in a church in his community and realized that he did not know how. After the meeting, he vowed to learn something about parliamentary law...” (<https://robertsrules.com/our-history/>)

# 02 – How They Can Be Applied

## Formally:

- Members must request floor
- Members must address chair (not other members)
- Chair always facilitates who speaks, generally through
  - 2 rounds of comments where each member gets an opportunity to speak once in the first round, then once more in the second round
  - Additional comments are allowed when a member is invoked directly by another
- Motions are used to introduce all normal business or discussion, then deliberation follows (items are not discussed then made into a motion).
- Motions must be dealt with until they are resolved, either by reaching a decision or by using another motion to postpone or end the pending motion.

## 02 – How They Can Be Applied

### Informally:

- Permit 'obtaining the floor' without direct acknowledgment from the chair when there is no clear contest for the opportunity to speak
- Permit direct exchanges between members, rather than through the chair
- General adherence to allowing others to speak before speaking a second time
- Generally permit as many rounds of remarks as is needed to complete discussion
- Allow the chair to intervene when more order is required through facilitation for cases like
  - a) multiple competing speakers
  - b) speaker with disproportionate time or number of remarks
  - c) escalating or wandering progression of exchanges

# 02 – Application Comparison

## Formal

- Must Request floor
- Must address chair (not other members)
- Chair always facilitates through
  - 2 rounds of remarks
  - Invoked responses
- Motions to introduce all business
- Motions must be resolved before proceeding

## Informal

- Permit an open floor
- Permit direct member exchanges
- Chair only intervenes as needed, and members:
  - Allow as many rounds as needed
  - Allow others to speak before 2nd remarks
  - Allow others to speak when invoked
- Regular use of motions

# 03 – Essential Elements [1. Main Motion]

## Main Motions

### a) Phrasing the Motion:

“Make sure it contains all the pertinent information, including who, what, where, and when.

Word it in the positive, and not in the negative.” (Robert’s Rules Of Order Simplified & Applied)

Example: I move that we form a subcommittee to host a table at this year’s whatever fest on July 19, 20whateveryear

### b) Presenting the Motion:

Acquire the floor, and state the motion, see if there is a second:

- state “I move that ...” or “I move to...”
- wait for another member to second
- If there is a second, this motion becomes the “pending motion”

# 03 – Essential Elements [1. Main Motion]

## ... Main Motions Continued

### c) Discussion / Debate

If the motion is debatable:

- The member who made the motion has the right to speak first
- The rest of the discussion takes place with rounds and facilitation as described previously

### d) Voting

Votes can be taken by: roll-call, voice, show of hands, rising (standing), ballot, or by general/unanimous consent

- A roll-call vote is required for virtual meetings
- General/Unanimous consent is used for non-controversial items like approving minutes.

It is conducted by stating "is there any objection to..." then waiting for a response.

If a member objects, the vote must be conducted by one of the other formal voting methods.

### e) Statement of the conclusion ("Completing the action")

An officer announces the result of the vote and states what will take place as a result



# 03 – Essential Elements [2. Resolutions]

## Resolutions

These are simply a formal way of presenting a main motion, usually done because of length, complexity, or importance

- It can also include a preamble, which is the set of whereas-es used to give context to the motion, or give reasons as to why it should be adopted.

### RESOLUTION 2022 – 01

WHEREAS, Bloomington Municipal Code Section 2.12.100(8)(F) permits the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability to adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of its business; and

WHEREAS, ...

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commission on Sustainability hereby resolves...

# 03 - Essential Elements [3. Secondary Motions]

## Secondary Motions

### Purpose:

“Help the assembly decide what to do with the main motion or how to get things done in the meeting”.

A secondary motion is considered “immediately pending” while its main motion is just ‘pending’, and these are taken up in the order in which they are received.

### Classes:

- 1) Subsidiary [disposal] Motions
- 2) Privileged [meeting] Motions (not related to the main motion)
- 3) Incidental [procedural] Motions

### Characteristics\*:

Each motion has its own set of attributes that determine if [it] [is]:

- a) 1 - Debatable
- b) 2 - Debate Confined to Pending Questions
- c) 3 - Can be Amended
- d) 4 - Subsidiary Motions can be Applied
- e) 5 - Can be Reconsidered
- f) 6 - Requires only a Majority Vote
- g) 7 - Must be Seconded
- h) 8 - Out of Order when Another has Floor

[\*Table]

# 03 - Essential Elements [3. Secondary Motions]

## Subsidiary [disposal] Motions

- a) LAY ON THE TABLE (set aside temporarily)
- b) PREVIOUS QUESTION (stop debate)
- c) LIMIT OR EXTEND LIMITS OF DEBATE
- d) POSTPONE TO A CERTAIN TIME
- e) REFER TO A COMMITTEE
- f) AMEND
- g) POSTPONE INDEFINITELY (kill the motion)

# 03 - Essential Elements [3. Secondary Motions]

## Privileged [meeting] Motions

- a) FIX THE TIME TO WHICH TO ADJOURN
- b) ADJOURN
- c) RECESS (take a break)
- d) RAISE A QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE (on the welfare of an individual or the body)
- e) CALL FOR THE ORDERS OF THE DAY (stick to the agenda)

# 03 - Essential Elements [3. Secondary Motions]

## Incidental [procedural] Motions

- a) POINT OF ORDER (point out something against the rules)
- b) APPEAL (disagree with the chair's ruling)
- c) DIVISION OF THE ASSEMBLY (doubt the results of the vote)
- d) REQUESTS AND INQUIRIES (raise a question)
  - Point of Information
  - Parliamentary Inquiry
- e) SUSPEND THE RULES
- f) DIVISION OF THE QUESTION (divide a motion in to two or more questions)
- g) OBJECT TO CONSIDERATION OF A QUESTION (prevent consideration of a motion)

# 04 - Exercises

## Example 1: A Main Motion start to finish, with formal application

### The setup:

The meeting has been called to order, we are already into new business and have completed discussion of all of the existing items on the agenda. A member would like to do something, but there are mixed opinions about this thing among other members, so a discussion ensues. Two rounds of remarks take place before members are ready to vote. In the first round, Main Motion maker opens by defending the motion. Opposition 1 invokes the main motion maker by targeting a point in the opening remarks; MMm wishes to respond.

### The players:

- Main Motion maker
- Supporter
- Opposition 1
- Opposition 2
- Abstainer

# 04 - Exercises

## Example 1.b: A Main Motion start to finish, with *informal* application

### The setup:

The meeting has been called to order, we are already into new business and have completed discussion of all of the existing items on the agenda. A member would like to do something, but there are mixed opinions about this thing among other members, so a discussion ensues. Two rounds of remarks take place before members are ready to vote. In the first round, Main Motion maker opens by defending the motion. Opposition 1 invokes the main motion maker by targeting a point in the opening remarks; MMm wishes to respond.

### The players:

- Main Motion maker
- Supporter
- Opposition 1
- Opposition 2
- Abstainer

# 04 - Exercises

## Example 2: A Main Motion with a subsidiary, privileged, and incidental motion

### The setup:

It is nearing the end of the meeting there is a pending main motion on the floor to do something but this thing cannot be done so it must be amended [AMEND - subsidiary]. During the amendment, the need to extend the meeting arises [FIX TIME... - privileged] , but while discussion of the timing is taking place, a member realizes that there is another meeting that will conflict with the proposed end time [POINT OF INFORMATION - incidental]

### The players:

- Main Motion maker
- Amender
- Timekeeper
- Watchdog



# 05 - Recommendations

## Books

Robert's Rules of Order Simplified & Applied  
*Robert, Henry M.* ([Borrow at MCPL](#))

Robert's Rules of Order: Newly Revised  
*Robert, Henry M.* ([Borrow at MCPL](#))

## Web

Robert's Rules of Order Simplified & Applied:  
[http://www.cnpoa.com/PDF/Roberts\\_Rules\\_of\\_Order.pdf](http://www.cnpoa.com/PDF/Roberts_Rules_of_Order.pdf)

Robert's Rules Online:  
<http://www.rulesonline.com>

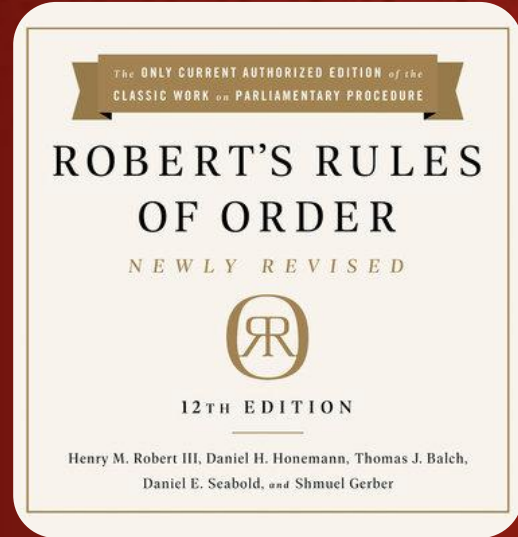
## Municipal Meetings

Bloomington City Council: <https://catstv.net/government.php?issearch=govt&meeterid=117>

Monroe County Council: <https://catstv.net/government.php?issearch=banner&webquery>

# Questions?

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by Slidesgo, including icons by Flaticon, and infographics & images by Freepik.





Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission  
Resolution 22-01 - Condemning Antisemitism and Anti-Jewish Violence

Summary: In response to past and recent acts of antisemitism and anti-Jewish violence in our community, this Resolution condemns antisemitism and acts of anti-Jewish bigotry as morally reprehensible in themselves as well as serious threats to public safety, and it denounces the antisemitic sentiments that give rise to such acts as false, hateful and antithetical to core American values.

WHEREAS, the CAPS Commission is deeply disturbed that several acts of antisemitism, anti-Jewish violence and hate crimes have occurred in our community, including:

- an arson attack by a white supremacist group against the synagogue of Congregation Beth Shalom in 1982 [1],
- antisemitic hate literature that was publicly distributed in 1998 by a white nationalist who later killed two people and wounded nine in a shooting spree that targeted Jews, Blacks and Asians [2],
- three acts of vandalism against Hebrew books and Jewish community institutions Hillel and Chabad in 2010 [3],
- the theft of dozens of Jewish sacred religious objects from Indiana University students' doors in several dormitories in 2021 [4],
- verbal harassment of a Jewish Indiana University student in 2021 [5], and
- defacement by swastika of several pieces of property near campus and downtown Bloomington in 2021 and 2022 [5].

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY ON PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSION THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. Celebrates Bloomington's Jewish population as an indelible, rich and valuable part of our community; and
2. Affirms the rights of Jews, people from Israel, and people of Jewish heritage to reside in our community as safely and securely as everyone else; and
3. Condemns all acts of violence, bigotry, hate speech and intimidation targeted at members of our community who are perceived to be Jewish as serious threats to public safety; and
4. Declares that antisemitic speech is:
  - a. is objectively false,
  - b. violates core American values such as liberty, equality and freedom, and
  - c. threatens the most basic civil liberties of all Americans; and
5. Calls upon Mayor John Hamilton, the Office of the Mayor, all Common Councilmembers and the Board of Public Safety to:
  - a. actively condemn antisemitic speech and anti-Jewish violence when they occur as both morally reprehensible and serious threats to public safety;
  - b. reinforce that antisemitism is altogether corrosive of American values, and as such, is to be unambiguously denounced and rejected [6];

- c. endeavor to share factually true portrayals of Judaism and Jews as a valuable part of American society and of our local community.

PASSED by the Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, Chair  
Community Advisory on Public Safety Commission

Citations:

1. The arson attack on Congregation Beth Shalom in 1982 was described by Rabbi Brian Besser in a phone conversation with CAPS Commissioner Nejla Routsong on January 26, 2022.  
<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/IncidentSummary.aspx?gtdid=198308150012>
2. The public distribution of antisemitic hate literature, as well as several other local acts of antisemitism included in this Resolution, was described by Rabbi Sue Silberberg, Executive Director of the Helene G. Simon Hillel Center at Indiana University, in a phone conversation with CAPS Commissioner Nejla Routsong on January 21, 2022.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/1999/07/06/us/midwest-gunman-had-engaged-in-racist-acts-at-2-universities.html>
3. <https://www.hillel.org/about/news-views/news-views---blog/news-and-views/2010/12/02/indiana-hillel-responds-to-anti-jewish-incidents>
4. <https://www.wthr.com/article/news/local/indiana-university-iu-task-force-antisemitic-actions-college-campus/531-e86839b8-72d0-4b38-9d49-e946edeeb8d6>
5. <https://www.wrtv.com/news/local-news/monroe-county/bloomington/iu-bloomington-community-react-to-antisemitism-incidents>
6. This phrasing was suggested by Professor Alvin Rosenfeld, the Irving M. Glazer Chair in Jewish Studies and Director of the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism at Indiana University in an email conversation with CAPS Commissioner Nejla Routsong on February 22, 2022.

Submitted by:

Nejla Routsong  
Kamala Brown-Sparks

Endorsed by:

Sponsored by:

**2022-01**

To Establish Rules and Procedures for the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability

Whereas, Bloomington Municipal Code Section 2.12.100(8)(F) permits the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability to adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of its business; and

Whereas, the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability has created a set of Bylaws, which are attached to this Resolution as Exhibit 1, for the conduct of its business; and

Whereas, the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability finds the following Bylaws to be appropriate and necessary.

Section 1. The attached Bylaws noted in Exhibit 1 are adopted and shall now govern the operating procedures for the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability.

Section 2. The Bylaws may be amended with the approval of a new resolution passed by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability.

Passed and Adopted by the Bloomington Commission on Sustainability of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County, Indiana, upon this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.

Signature of Chair of Bloomington Commission on Sustainability

Witness

## **Exhibit 1**

### **City of Bloomington, Indiana Bloomington Commission on Sustainability Bylaws**

#### **Article I. Members**

**Appointment and Residency.** BMC § 2.12.100(3) The commission shall consist of fourteen (14) members. Six (6) of the members shall be appointed by the mayor and six (6) shall be appointed by the common council. No more than two of the mayor's appointments and no more than two of the common council appointments may be citizens who live outside the corporate city limits of Bloomington and within Monroe County. One of the six common council appointments shall be a member of the common council. One of the members shall be appointed by the Monroe County Commissioners from Monroe County government. The Director of the Indiana University Office of Sustainability or his/her designee shall serve as the ex-officio member from Indiana University. All members shall have a vote and shall serve without compensation.

#### **Article II. Officers**

**II.1 Election.** BMC § 2.12.100(5) Officers shall be elected by vote of the commission members annually at the Annual Meeting by a majority of the current membership of the Commission. It shall be the right of the Commission to decide annually on the Structure of the Executive Office/s. The Commission will decide by vote at each annual election whether to elect officers as Co-Chair or Chair and Vice Chair.

**II.2 Eligibility.** All officers shall be members of the Commission and no member shall hold more than one office at a time.

**II.3. Term.** Officers shall be elected to serve until the next Annual Meeting. Their terms of office shall begin at the close of the meeting at which they are elected. Officers may serve more than one term. Officers shall deliver to their successors all accounts, papers, records, and other Commission property within two weeks of their expired term.

**III.4. Removal.** An Officer of the Commission may be removed from office for cause. Cause shall include, but not be limited to, misuse of office, improper representation of the commission, failure to carry out minimum duties of office, failure to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings in any twelve month period or four regularly scheduled meetings in any twelve month period without just cause as determined by the Commission; provided, that any member may submit in writing to members of the commission any extenuating circumstances. Such written submission shall be made within five business days before the formal decision to remove is reached. A member or members of the commission shall submit a signed statement outlining the charges to



the Commission and, following the proper procedure, cause is established. Proper procedure includes distribution of the statement to all Commission members. Decision as to removal will be made by majority vote at the next scheduled meeting. Removal from office is not a vote for dismissal from the Commission.

**II.5. Types of Officers and Duties.** BMC § 2.08.020(9) The commission shall elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, treasurer and such other officers as may be necessary.

- 1) **Duties of the Chairperson.** The Chairperson shall prepare the agenda for all meetings, and preside over all meetings (except when she/he designates the Vice-Chairperson). The Chairperson shall distribute the agenda (see Sample Agenda) and related documents no less than 48 hours prior to a scheduled meeting. The Chairperson, in coordination with other members of the Executive Committee, shall be responsible organizing and submitting the Commission's Annual Report, as required by BMC § 2.12.100(8)(D).
- 2) **Duties of Co-Chairs.** In the event that the Commission elects two Co-Chairs, instead of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, then the following shall apply. The newly elected Co-Chairs shall decide how to divide the responsibilities enumerated for the Chair and Vice Chair and shall ensure that all of these responsibilities are explicitly assigned to an individual. This list of responsibilities shall be presented in written format to the Commission by the next regular meeting.
- 3) **Duties of the Vice-Chairperson.** The Vice-Chairperson shall serve as the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson; shall perform all duties that may be delegated by the Chairperson; shall aid the Chairperson on request; shall post notice of vacancies of the Commission's Advisory Committee positions and the requirements thereof; and shall perform such other duties applicable to the office as prescribed by the parliamentary authority adopted by the Commission. In the absence of the Secretary, the Vice-Chairperson shall serve as or appoint a Member to serve as Secretary.
- 4) **Duties of the Secretary.** BMC § 2.08.020(10) The secretary shall keep, for every meeting, written minutes in which the results of any vote are recorded and, when appropriate, specific findings of facts and conclusions are set forth.
- 5) **Duties of the Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall facilitate the preparation of the annual budget as required by BMC § 2.08.020(13). Additionally, the treasurer shall facilitate the efforts of commission members to identify funding sources in order to execute the strategic goals of the commission as authorized by BMC § 2.12.100(8)(A).

**II.6. Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, the Secretary, and the Treasurer.

- 1) The executive committee shall be responsible for organizing the creation of the Commission's annual report, as required by BMC §2.12.100 (8) (D).

### **Article III. Meetings**

**III.1 Meetings.** BMC § 2.12.100(6) The Commission shall meet one time each month, every month of the year, unless it decides to cancel the meeting.

**III.2 Annual Meeting.** At the Commission's monthly meeting in **March** of each year, the following activities shall occur:

- 1) Annual selection of officers
- 2) Annual review of bylaws
- 3) To provide, in cooperation with other city boards and commissions, an annual "sustainability assessment" based on said indicators. The assessment shall be included in an annual report and provided to the common council, mayor and the public.

**III.3 Majority Vote.** BMC § 2.08.020(6) A "majority vote" means a majority of the Commission who are present and voting.

**III.4 Quorum.** A majority of the currently filled seats on the commission constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting the official business of the commission.

**III.5 Parliamentary Procedure.** BMC § 2.08.020(8) Meetings shall be conducted according to procedures set forth in Roberts Rules of Order. All members of the commission are to be provided with a set of rules that will be used during the monthly meetings.

**III.6 Conduct of Meetings.** The order of business of all meetings shall be as follows:

- 1) Call to Order;
- 2) Roll Call;
- 3) Approval of Agenda;
- 4) Approval of Minutes;
- 5) Reports from the Public;
- 6) Reports from Commissioners;
- 7) Discussions of Topics Not the Subject of Resolutions;
- 8) Resolutions for Second Reading and Discussion;
- 9) Resolutions for First Reading and Discussion;
- 10) Report from Staff Liaison;
- 11) Member Announcements;
- 12) New Business;
- 13) Adjournment.

Members of the public will be allowed to speak only once within a maximum

time frame of 5 minutes

**III.7. Votes.** Each voting Member shall be entitled to one vote. Routine business may be conducted by voice vote. The outcome of a vote shall be determined by the majority of the serving Members present and eligible to vote and voting. A member who wishes not to vote may remain silent during a voice vote or roll call vote, or may submit a blank ballot during a ballot vote. No member may be forced to vote.

**III.8. Special Meetings.** BMC § 2.08.020(11) A special meeting of the commission may be called by the chairperson, the mayor, or by a majority of the members then serving on the commission requesting such meeting in writing. Upon receiving such request, the chairperson shall thereafter call a special meeting to be held within twenty days.

#### **Article IV. RESOLUTIONS**

**IV.1. Resolutions.** The Commission shall have the authority to adopt resolutions. Resolutions shall be given two readings before a vote may be taken on its passage and no resolution shall be adopted on the same day or at the same meeting as it is introduced except by unanimous consent of the Members present, **at least two-thirds of members from currently filled seats** being present and voting. Resolutions will be designated by year and by order of introduction in that year (e.g., Resolution 2017-01).

**IV.2. Recommendations.** Published recommendations of the Commission and the Annual Report shall be adopted and approved by Resolution.

**IV.3. Recorded Votes.** For Resolutions considered by Commission, the Secretary shall record the total votes, the results which shall be published in the minutes of the Commission's meeting.

#### **V. Amendment of Bylaws**

**V.1. Amendment.** A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Commission may vote to amend these by-laws only after discussing proposed amendments during at least two regularly scheduled Commission meetings that have been called with the notice required by Indiana's Open Door Law (Indiana Code 5-1.5) then in effect.