



Robert's Rules of Order

Robert's Rules...

- ...provide guidelines for **orderly** debate, deliberation, and action.
- ...allow a coalition of individuals to **act as one** through the will of a deliberate majority.
- ...allow a strong minority to press for a **thorough debate**.
- ...place the full membership on equal footing by creating a **common language** for debate and action.
- ...are not meant to hinder a group from conducting business in **good faith**.

Rules for Overall Governance of the Body

Quorum – According to the NYC CCoC bylaws, 51% or more of voting members must be present in order to conduct business.

Majority – According to the NYC CCoC bylaws, a 60% majority is required to pass all motions.

Membership – The NYC CCoC bylaws identify membership as open to “all persons interested in the purposes of the NYC CCoC.” Any member present at NYC CCoC Steering Committee meetings may make and second motions, and participate in debate.

Voting members are elected to represent stakeholders from the general body annually through an established election process. Only voting members are permitted to vote.

Rules for Taking Action as a Body

Motions – Motions should be concise, and should not contain reasoning or argument in the language of the motion. Before debate on a motion can begin, the motion must be seconded, and the exact wording of the motion must be restated to the group by the Steering Committee co-chairs.

Debate – Debate will be moderated by the co-chairs. Each member will be allowed to speak twice in debate on a motion. Statements in debate must be germane (relevant) to the motion at hand. The co-chairs are empowered to enforce germaneness in debate.

Concluding Debate – If debate has naturally come to a close, co-chairs can ask the group if there is any more debate. If no one voices an objection, the co-chairs can initiate a vote without a member calling the question. At any point in debate any *voting* member may call the question by saying “I move the previous question,” or “I call the question,” or “I move we vote now.” This motion must be seconded by another voting member, and must be approved by a 60% majority in order for debate to end.



Postponing or Tabling Motions – Robert’s Rules differentiates between the words “Postpone” and “Table.” A motion to postpone is used to suspend debate on a motion until an appointed time, which must be included in the motion to postpone. The motion to postpone requires a second, can be debated, and can be amended. It must be approved by a 60% majority in order to be approved.

A motion to “lay on the table” is used in order to suspend debate on a motion without appointing a time when debate on a motion will resume. This motion is made with the understanding that debate on the motion will continue as soon as it is convenient to do so. It is generally regarded as inappropriate to use a motion to “lay on the table” to stop debate on a motion, without the intention of bringing the motion back for a vote at a later meeting.

Voting – A motion must be seconded, and must be approved by 60% of voting members present. When debate is concluded the co-chairs must repeat the exact wording of the motion. The co-chairs then ask those in favor to say “aye,” those opposed to say “no,” and then ask if there are any abstentions. The co-chairs judge whether more people called out “aye” or “no” and announce the result of the vote.

In situations where the co-chairs reasonably believe that there will be no objection, when a motion is put forward, the co-chairs can ask the body, “is there any objection to ____” and if no objection is voiced, the motion can be considered adopted by **unanimous consent**.

If the result of the voice vote is ambiguous, any member may make a motion to conduct a vote by roll call or by secret ballot. The same rules for voice voting apply to secret balloting.

Amendments – Proposed amendments must be presented as separate motions, and must clearly state how the wording of the original motion will be changed. Most amendments will be adopted using the procedure for unanimous consent outlined above.

- If no member objects to the adoption of the amendment, the amendment will be considered adopted. The co-chairs will restate the motion as amended, and debate on the amended motion will continue.
- If an objection is voiced regarding the amendment, the amendment must then be seconded, debated, and approved by 60% of voting members present in order to be adopted into the original motion