ROBERT’S RULES OF ORDER:
USING THIS POWER FOR GOOD
AND NOT FOR EVIL!
OBJECTIVES

• Learn where Robert’s Rules of Order came from and who “Robert” is
• Talk about why Robert is part of meetings for many groups and organizations
• Learn some of the most common parts of Robert’s Rules of Order
• Know enough to be dangerous
BEST MEETING EVER...

• Goes smoothly
• People take turns to talk
• Everyone has the opportunity to participate
• Climate of Healthy Dissent
• We talk about the most important stuff, and
• “We are making good progress – I felt that meeting went really well...”
ROBERT’S RULES: MAKING THE MOST OUT OF MEETINGS...

- Thomas Jefferson created the “Manual of Parliamentary Practice” in 1801
  - Adopted by the House and Senate
  - Founders wanted civil and courteous debate unlike the Parliament in London
  - Everyone has the chance to participate so consensus could be formed

- General Henry M. Robert published “Robert’s Rules of Order” in 1876
ALL PARTICIPANTS ARE CREATED EQUAL UNDER ROBERT’S RULES

- Parliamentary procedure offers democratic rule, flexibility, protection of rights, and a fair hearing for everyone
  - Is a set of rules for conduct at meetings
  - Allows everyone to be heard & make decisions
  - Enables you to expedite the flow of business and make decisions
MAIN MOTIONS

• Used to present new business
  – Amendments to bylaws
  – The starter motion
• Can’t be made when another motion is active
• Must be “seconded” before it can be discussed or voted on (Move unanimous consent)
  – “I move that the board authorize the Executive Director to pursue a new partnership with xyz org.”
  – “I second that” someone else says, or
  – “I move and ask for unanimous consent...”
“PERFECTING A MOTION” A.K.A. AMENDING A MOTION

- Motions are amended to change the wording to make it more acceptable before taking final action
- There are 3 ways to change the wording of a motion, to make it more acceptable before taking final action
  - To add words or phrases
  - To strike out words or phrases
  - To substitute by striking out & inserting; or substitute an entire motion or paragraph
AMENDING A MOTION

• Modifications can be made
  – Between the time a motion is made and before the Chair states the motion
  – After the Chair has stated the motion
  – Before the motion is voted upon
• Board then votes on only the amended portion
  – If that passes, then you return to the original motion AS AMENDED to vote on in its entirety
• If the amended portion fails, then the board returns to vote on the motion as it was originally worded
PRESENTING A MOTION IN 8 EASY STEPS

1. Raise your hand (or rise) and address the Chair
2. Receive recognition from the Chair
3. Make the motion (I move that/to...)
4. Requires a second
   - A motion must be seconded to bring it up for discussion. Seconding a motion does not mean you agree with it. The Chair must hear a second or the motion is lost.
5. Chair restates the motion
   – “It has been moved and seconded that...”

6. Discussion
   – Membership to be recognized by Chair
     • “Chair recognizes Mr. What’s His Name”
   – No member shall speak twice to a motion until all members who want to speak to the motion have been heard

7. Chair puts the motion to vote – “All in favor say Aye? All opposed say Nay”
   – Voice, raise hand, stand, ballot

8. Chair announces result of vote
MORE BASICS...

- President or Chair of a board cannot make motions – can “entertain a motion”
  - That means he or she wants someone else to make a motion
  - “So moved,” someone else might say
AND MORE BASICS

• All participants and their rights are equal
• A quorum must be present to do business – state law has a minimum – its in your bylaws
• The majority rules – what ever you say the majority is in your bylaws
• Silence signified consent
WHAT THE PRESIDING OFFICER/CHAIR/PRESIDENT DOES

- Be on time and start on time
- Be organized and prepared
- Take control of the floor
- Be impartial
- Be precise
- Be focused
EXPEDITING BUSINESS

- Use general consent

- Refer to a committee or entertain a motion to do so

- Assist in phrasing of a motion

- Restate the motion periodically

- Allow motions to be withdrawn

- Prevent bullying with parliamentary procedure
PRACTICE MAKING A MOTION

• Raise your hand, and the president may or may not call on you.
• When called on (stand up) and state the following “Mr./Madame President/Chair, I move to/that....”
• Then state what you want to happen. (or not to happen)
MORE MAKING A MOTION...

• State what you want to happen clearly and concisely (have a specific wording in mind first)
• After the motion, sit back down
  – If its longer than one sentence write it down
BUT WAIT, THERE’S MORE...

• Someone who “seconds” says that they feel the motion is of importance and worth discussion
  — If they don’t, the motion dies “for lack of a second”
• After motion and second, there is discussion/debate
  — Debate can be stopped by running out of people with opinions, putting a limit on debate, or by the President moving on because of repetitive debate
• Then its time to vote. President will restate the motion and will state how the votes will be cast.
  — Unless stated, majority is usually 50% + 1 of the active members present – simple majority
  — Your bylaws will tell you...
POINT OF ORDER

• Person 5: “Point of order. I think we should continue with the meeting because the agenda says we don’t have lunch until noon, which is 45 minutes away.”
FINAL POINTS

• Most organizations have little clue about how to use Robert’s Rules of Order
• In the hands of a good parliamentarian, Robert can be really helpful
• Remember: “Use this power for good and never for evil...”
QUESTIONS?
WHO’S HUNGRY? AN EXAMPLE

• You: “Ms/Mr. President I move that we get 100 burgers at The Powerhouse Restaurant.”
• Someone: “I second that”
  – If there isn’t a second, we don’t talk about it any more – no lunch
• President: “It’s been moved and seconded that we get 100 burgers from The Powerhouse. Is there any debate?”
DEBATE

• Members bring up Positive and Negative points, pertinent information on the motion.
• Points not directly dealing with the motion or amendment can not be brought up.
  — Monitoring that is the President’s job
• President also decides who gets to speak and in what order.
  — Can’t speak again until everyone has a chance
STILL HUNGRY...

• Person 1: “The Powerhouse is awesome, let’s do this.”
• Person 2: “Isn’t 100 burgers a little much for only 11 people?”
• Person 3: “Yes, but they are so good.”
• Person 4: “But they are not very healthy.”
• Person 5: “Mr. President, I move that we amend the original motion to say let’s get 100 Tofu Burgers from the Health Food Restaurant.”
AMENDMENT

• Only done when an original motion has been made, and you want to change it
• Same as a motion except you say “Mr./Ms. President I move to AMEND the motion to say.... (state what you want to happen)”
• The Amendment must relate to the original motion
  – This can be used to clarify a motion, make it more specific, change specifics, or add to or detract from a motion.
AMENDMENTS...

• Debate is allowed with respect to the amendment as if it were a new motion, then a vote is taken to add the amendment to the original motion.

• After that, a vote is taken on the acceptance of the now new motion that includes (or doesn’t include) the amendment.
HEALTHY DISSENT

• President: “An amendment to the main motion has been offered (Tofu, remember?). Is there discussion of the amendment?
  — “Hearing none and no second, the original motion stands.”
• President: “Is there any more debate?
• “Hearing none, all in favour of getting 100 burgers from The Powerhouse raise your hand. All those Opposed?”
• *votes tallied – drum roll please...*
• President: “By a vote of 12-1 we will be getting 100 burgers from the Powerhouse.”