

Questions and Answers about Robert's Rules of Order

By Associated Property Management

Robert's Rules of Order is an accepted manual to running a successful Board or Members meeting. The parliamentary procedures outlined provide a guide for Motions, Rules and Procedures. Robert's Rules of Order also provides suggestions on director duties, voting, and the structure and running of committees. Since parliamentary procedures is a complex and lengthy subject, there are misconceptions and misinformation on what is acceptable or not. Here are 6 questions and answers about Robert's Rules of Order that will surprise you:

1. Q. Is it true that the president can vote only to break a tie?

A. *No, it is not true that the president can vote only to break a tie. If the president is a member of the assembly, he or she has exactly the same rights and privileges as all other members have, including the right to make motions, speak in debate, and to vote on all questions.*

2. Q. Once a quorum has been established, does the quorum continue to exist no matter how many members leave during the course of the meeting?

A. *No. Once a quorum at a meeting has been established, the continued presence of a quorum is presumed to exist only until the chair or any other member notices that a quorum is no longer present. Any board member noticing the apparent absence of a quorum can and should make a Point of Order to that effect whenever another person is not speaking. It can be considered improper to allow the transaction of substantive business to continue in the absence of a quorum.*

3. Q. In determining the result of a vote, what constitutes a majority?

A. *The word "majority" in this context means, simply, more than half. The use of any other definition, such as 50 percent plus one, is apt to cause problems. If there is a motion and 7 votes are cast, 4 in favor and 3 opposed; Fifty percent of the votes cast is 3-1/2, so that 50 percent plus one would be 4- 1/2. Under this circumstance, the motion was not adopted because it did not receive fifty percent plus one of the votes cast, even though it passed by a majority vote.*

4. Q. Does an abstention vote count?

A. The phrase “abstention vote” is an oxymoron. An abstention is a refusal to vote. To abstain means to refrain from voting. Therefore, there can be no such thing as an “abstention vote.” In Condominiums, an abstention by a director will not be counted for or against. In an HOA, an abstention counts as a vote against the motion.

5. Q. Can Proxy Votes be Used at a Board of Directors Meeting?

A. A “proxy” is a means by which a member who expects to be absent from a meeting authorizes someone else to act in his or her place at the meeting. Proxy voting is not permitted in board of directors meetings.

6. Q. Isn't it necessary to summarize matters discussed at a meeting in the minutes of that meeting in order for the minutes to be complete?

A. It is not necessary to summarize matters discussed at a meeting in the minutes of that meeting and it is considered improper to do so. Minutes are a record of what was accomplished at a meeting, not a record of what was said.

A great site where there is an open forum of questions and answers on Robert's Rules of Order is <http://tinyurl.com/yh35wv3>.

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