Board Meeting Rules of Order & Best Practices

Board meetings are essential to your chapter's operations. They're where key decisions are made, progress is reviewed, and leadership comes together to keep the mission on track. But for new leaders, the structure of meetings—and the formal language sometimes used—can feel intimidating at first.

Impact100 recommends using a simplified version of standard parliamentary procedure, called Robert's Rules of Order, to help your board make decisions clearly, fairly, and efficiently. Below is a summary of key aspects of Robert's Rules of Order—along with best practices that help your meetings run smoothly and with purpose.

What Is a Motion?

- A motion is a formal proposal for your board to take a specific action
- Motions ensure that every board decision is clear, discussed, and properly recorded
- Examples: approving event plans, allocating funds, endorsing a policy

How to Put Forth a Motion

- A board member says: **"I move to…"**
- The President asks: **"Is there a second?"**
- Another board member says: **"I second the motion."**
- The President invites discussion
- After discussion, the President asks: **"Are there any opposing votes?"**
- The President announces the result and ensures it is recorded in the minutes

Other Common Motions

- **Amend a motion**: "I move to amend the motion by…"
- **Refer to committee**: "I move to refer this matter to [committee name]"
- **Postpone**: "I move to postpone this matter until…"
- **Point of order**: Used to flag a concern about process
- **Adjourn**: Ends the meeting formally

Typical Board Meeting Structure

- Call to Order
- Approve Minutes
- Committee Reports
- Unfinished Business
- New Business
- Adjourn
- Use a **consent agenda** to combine routine approvals into one motion
- Begin with a short **mission moment** to reconnect to purpose

President Responsibilities

- Keep the meeting fair, focused, and inclusive
- Ensure motions follow the correct order: motion → second → discussion → vote
- Manage time and keep the group on track

Preparation & Participation

- Send agenda and materials 5–7 days in advance
- Board members should review materials ahead of time
- Come prepared to ask questions, contribute, and vote

Clarity of Roles

- Committees do the prep; the board makes final decisions
- Officers and Presidents should understand their responsibilities
- Consider rotating minute-taking or logistics roles

Time Management

- Allocate time per agenda item
- Focus on strategy and decisions—not operational updates
- End meetings with clear action items: who, what, by when

Accurate Minutes Matter

- Record every motion, vote, and decision clearly
- Note any abstentions or disclosed conflicts of interest
- Minutes are your chapter's official legal record

Encouraging Engagement

- Invite input from all voices: "Any thoughts, Jamie?"
- Thank contributors and acknowledge follow-through
- Keep language simple so everyone feels comfortable participating