

# Robert's Rules for HOA and Condo Boards

## Motions, Quorum, and Order of Business

By Kevin B. Leigh · SoShiny

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**Not legal advice.** This is a plain-English summary for volunteer boards. Your **bylaws** and **state statute** win. In Florida, that often means Chapter 718 (condos) or Chapter 720 (HOAs) for notice, elections, and records. Robert's Rules does not override those. If your governing documents name a different parliamentary authority, follow that. When a dispute gets personal, call a licensed attorney.

### 1. Why boards use Robert's Rules

You volunteered for a board seat. You did not volunteer for a three-hour argument with no vote at the end.

Robert's Rules is a shared playbook. One speaker. One motion. A clear yes or no. Owners can follow what happened. The next board can read the minutes and know what you decided.

Boards that skip process spend the next meeting re-litigating the last one. Fair and short beats loud and endless.

### 2. Quorum

**Quorum** is the minimum number of board members who must be present to do official business. Your **bylaws** set the number. Sometimes statute weighs in. Do not invent a number in the parking lot.

**Without quorum:** you can talk and take notes. You cannot pass motions that bind the association. Call the meeting to order, note no quorum, adjourn, and reset. "Voting anyway" creates a mess you will clean up later — sometimes in court, often at the next owner meeting.

Have the secretary announce quorum out loud after roll call. Put it in the minutes.

### 3. Order of business

A standard spine keeps the agenda honest:

- Call to order
- Roll call / quorum check
- Approve prior minutes
- Officer, manager, and committee reports
- Unfinished (old) business
- New business
- Owner comments (if your rules allow a slot)
- Adjourn

Match the posted agenda. Owners trust a meeting that does what the notice said it would do. Florida boards: check your chapter for notice rules before you lean on Robert's alone.

### 4. Motions — the basic loop

This is the engine of the meeting:

- A member makes a **main motion**: "I move that we..."
- Another member **seconds** (at least two people want it heard).
- The chair **states** the motion.
- The board **debates** — stay on this motion.
- The chair **puts the question**.
- The board **votes**.

- The chair **announces** the result.

No second when one is required → the motion dies. Do not run three topics at once. If the discussion drifts, the chair pulls it back: “We are on the motion to hire ACME Roofing. Is there further debate on that motion?”

## 5. Amendments

**Friendly change:** the mover accepts a small fix. If no one objects, update the motion. Still write down the exact text you vote on.

**Formal amendment:** “I move to amend by adding / striking / striking and inserting...” Needs a second. Debatable. Vote the **amendment first**. Then vote the main motion as amended (or as original if the amendment fails).

Word amendments tight. Vague amendments burn the clock and confuse the minutes.

## 6. Common motions boards actually use

You will live on a short list:

- **Postpone** to a time certain or the next meeting — clean way to wait for a bid or a report.
- **Refer** to a committee or the manager — say what you want back and by when.
- **Call the question** (end debate) — usually needs a higher vote; confirm in your authority.
- **Lay on the table** — set aside temporarily; easy to abuse; prefer postpone when you can.
- **Point of order** — process broke; chair rules.
- **Adjourn** — end the meeting.

See the cheat sheet on the last page.

## 7. Debate rules

One speaker at a time. Address the chair, not the person across the table. Stay on the pending motion. No personal attacks.

Your board may set time limits (for example, two minutes per speaker). If you use them, say so at the start of debate so nobody feels ambushed.

The chair's job is traffic control, not winning the argument.

## 8. Voting

**Methods:** voice vote, show of hands, or roll call when you need each name on the record.

**Majority:** more than half of the votes cast — confirm how your bylaws treat abstentions. Do not guess.

**Two-thirds:** often required to cut off debate or undo something already decided. Check the motion and your documents before you claim a two-thirds rule.

Chair announces clearly: “The motion carries” or “The motion fails.” That sentence belongs in the minutes.

Again: statute and bylaws beat a habit. Florida notice and voting rules live in Chapters 718 and 720 where they apply. This guide does not replace them.

## 9. Minutes

**Record:** date and time, who attended, whether quorum was met, the exact motion text, who moved (and who seconded if you track it), and the result of the vote.

**Skip:** play-by-play debate, insults, and every side comment. Minutes are a decision log, not a novel.

Draft within a week. Approve at the next meeting. Next year's secretary will thank you.

## Chair's pocket lines

- “Is there a second?”
- “It is moved and seconded that... Is there debate?”
- “Are you ready for the question?”
- “All in favor... opposed... The motion carries / fails.”
- “Point of order noted. The chair rules...”

## Motion cheat sheet

| Motion                         | Second ? | Debatable? | Usual vote           | Board note                            |
|--------------------------------|----------|------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Main motion                    | Yes      | Yes        | Majority             | “I move that...” One topic.           |
| Amend                          | Yes      | Yes        | Majority             | Vote amendment, then main motion.     |
| Postpone to a certain time     | Yes      | Yes        | Majority             | Prefer over “table” for next meeting. |
| Refer to committee / manager   | Yes      | Yes        | Majority             | Say deliverable and deadline.         |
| Call the question (end debate) | Yes      | No         | Two-thirds (typical) | Confirm in your authority / bylaws.   |
| Lay on the table               | Yes      | No         | Majority             | Easy to abuse; prefer postpone.       |
| Point of order                 | No       | No         | Chair rules          | Fixes process breaks.                 |
| Appeal chair's ruling          | Yes      | Limited    | Majority             | Rare; keep it civil.                  |
| Recess                         | Yes      | Often no   | Majority             | Short break.                          |
| Adjourn                        | Yes      | No         | Majority             | Ends the meeting.                     |

*Details vary by edition of Robert's Rules and by the authority your documents adopt. When unsure, follow bylaws and counsel.*

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