



## Parliamentary Procedures for Texas REALTORS® Committee Staff Liaisons

The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to enable a governing board to efficiently make orderly decisions while ensuring that all the members of the board have an opportunity to express their opinions. Here are some basic parliamentary rules to help you navigate association committee meetings.

Texas REALTORS® follows Robert's Rules of Order for this purpose.

### Meetings

Every meeting needs:

- **Chair** (someone to preside over the meeting).  
Make sure you confirm that your committee Chair will be present at the meeting. If the committee Chair is unable to make the Vice Chair will need to run the meeting.
- **Secretary** (someone to record the meeting).  
Staff typically takes the minutes for meetings. If meeting virtually, please do not record the meeting. A record of the meeting should be made in the same way as for in-person meetings.
- **Agenda** (a list of items to be discussed).  
This should be reviewed with the committee Chair and sent out to the committee members ahead of the meeting.
- **Quorum** (number of members required to make a decision).  
Texas REALTORS® committees need 50% of a committee's membership present to establish a quorum. A committee cannot transact business without a quorum. Be sure to know the number of committee members needed for this purpose.

### Attendance (may also be called "roll call")

It can be beneficial for staff to silently note committee members who are present for the meeting. This removes the need for the Chair to call the name of each member to determine their presence or absence. Instead, the Chair can simply confirm with the staff liaison that roll has been taken and a quorum is present.

### Agenda

- Each meeting should follow an agenda (specified order of business).
- The agenda should be prepared in advance by the body's leadership.
- During the meeting, the agenda should be followed in order. Be sure to communicate if going out of order.
- Each agenda item needs to be addressed or voted on before moving on to the next items of business.

### Antitrust and Meeting Conduct Statements

Please include the antitrust and meeting conduct statements in your committee meetings, both as a slide for viewing and at the top of your agendas. Trade associations are made up of competitors that come together for meetings and other activities and therefore have to intentionally be mindful of actions that unreasonably restrict competition among competitors. Thus, there are topics that potentially may lead to illegal agreements

or may appear to do so. Staff liaisons should be prepared to ask their chair to stop discussions and to remind members to use their good judgment to avoid discussion that gives even the appearance of involving subjects that would violate antitrust laws.

## **Minutes**

Minutes are a record of what was done in the meeting.

Note: If the minutes were not provided to the members of the body ahead of the meeting, the minutes should be read aloud to the body prior to approval. If the minutes were provided prior to the meeting, they do not need to be read aloud. (So be sure to provide them ahead of the meeting!)

Minutes should contain:

- Type of meeting that occurred (regular or special).
- Name of the committee.
- Date, time, and place of the meeting.
- Presence or absence of the Chair, or who led the meeting in the Chair's absence; name of the person who recorded the minutes.
- A statement that the previous minutes were read & approved.
- Motions
  - The minutes do not need to include the name of the maker of the motion<sup>1</sup> or the person who seconded the motion. The minutes should not include details regarding discussion of the motion. Remember that minutes are a record of action taken at a meeting, not a record of what was said during discussion.
- Notices of motions for future meetings.
- Time of adjournment.

## **Motions**

A motion is a formal proposal put to a group for a decision by vote in a meeting. Official decisions are made using motions. The outcome of a motion gets recorded as an official decision in the meeting minutes.

The procedure for handling motions consists of these steps:

- A member of the body is granted the floor (recognized) by the Chair.
- The member makes a motion, "I move that...."
  - If staff needs to assist by providing the motion, state, "At this time it would be appropriate to entertain a motion to...." A member can then say, "So moved".
- The Chair can ask a member to write down the motion and provide it to the Chair.
- Another member seconds the motion, "I second" or "I support" is sufficient.
  - A second is only stating that the motion should be brought to a vote – it doesn't mean the seconder is in favor of a motion.
- The Chair restates the motion to ensure all members of the body understand the motion.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert's Rules of Order states the name of the maker of the motion should be included in the minutes. We have chosen to omit the name of the maker of the motion due to the competitive relationships of our members.

- Important that all members know exactly what they are voting on.
- The Chair opens the floor for debate (discussion).
  - Ensure all voices that want to speak are heard; but ok to draw debate to a close if nothing new being said.
- When the Chair feels debate has been exhausted, the Chair states, “Is there any further debate?” If no, the Chair re-states the motion and then takes the vote. “All in favor say ‘aye’. Pause. All those opposed, say ‘nay’”.
  - The Chair should note if any member “abstains” from voting.
  - A Chair should not vote on a motion unless it is required to break a tie.
- The Chair announces the result of the vote.
  - Adopting a motion *generally* needs 50% of members present voting in favor. There are some exceptions, depending on the Committee, and on the motion.

### **Amendments to motions**

If an amendment to a motion is offered, the amendment takes precedence over motion – the amendment must be adopted or defeated before the motion can be voted on. If the amendment is adopted, the main motion is then taken up, “as amended”. If the amendment is not adopted, the main motion is then taken up without the amendment.

### **The so-called “friendly amendment”**

There is no such thing as a friendly amendment to a motion. Even if the author of the main motion agrees with the amendment, the amendment must be debated and passed prior to it being made part of the main motion. The maker of the main motion cannot unilaterally accept it.

### **When a motion is not necessary**

A motion is not needed:

1. to approve a previous meeting’s minutes:
  - a. the chair says, "Are there any corrections to the minutes?"
    - i. Members may offer corrections, and when there are no further corrections forthcoming, the chair says, "If there are no further corrections to the minutes, they stand approved as corrected."
    - ii. If no corrections are offered, the chair states: "If there are no corrections to the minutes, they stand approved."
2. to adjourn the body:
  - a. when you reach the end of the agenda, the chair may just ask whether there's any more business; if none, the chair can declare the meeting adjourned.
  - b. when the hour adopted for adjournment has arrived, the chair announces the fact, and unless someone moves to set aside the orders of the day, the chair can declare the meeting adjourned.
  - c. when an emergency or immediate danger is present, the chair can declare the meeting adjourned to meet again at the call of the chair (example: fire has broken out in the building).

## Voting

**There are various ways to take votes at meetings. Votes are generally taken by voice vote (all in favor say “aye”, all opposed say “nay”).**

If a voice vote does not indicate a clear result, other types of voting may be necessary. These include:

- a rising vote,
- a counted rising vote,
- a roll call vote, or
- use of written or electronic ballots.
- Adopting a motion *generally* needs 50% of members present voting in favor.

## Action Items v. Informational Items

Some motions require action by the Executive Board while other motions will be presented as informational only.

- Some actions are specified in the Texas REALTORS® Bylaws as needing Executive Board or Board Directors approval. Other actions that affect association policy, products or services may also require Executive Board approval.
  - Example: the Strategic Planning Committee creates and approves a Strategic Plan which is then proposed as a recommendation to the Executive Board. Per the bylaws, the plan is not fully approved until the Board of Directors has approved it.
- Other actions are delegated to a committee and further action by the Executive Board or Board of Directors is not required. These would be reported by the committee as informational items.
  - Example: The Legal Review Committee may approve expenditures from the Legal Fund up to \$50,000 in any one case. A motion approved by the Legal Review Committee within those parameters is final, and does not need further approval.