



# Handling Messy Meetings

**Groupthink** is a phenomenon that occurs when a group of individuals reaches a consensus without critical reasoning or evaluation of the consequences or alternatives. This desire creates a dynamic within a group whereby creativity and individuality tend to be stifled in order to avoid conflict.

Groupthink is not always problematic. In the best cases, it allows a group to make decisions, complete tasks, and finish projects quickly and efficiently. In the worst cases, it leads to poor decision-making and inefficient problem solving.

## How to Avoid Groupthink:

- Anticipate
- Size matters
- Speed kills
- Diversity

## Presiding Officer:

- Encourage debate
- Reframe disagreement as necessary
- Control decorum

## Control Decorum:

- Policy of no Insulting, demeaning, intimidating, or offensive communications
- Disorderly or boisterous conduct is not allowed (booing, whistling, stomping...)
- Signs, placards, banners, or other similar items shall not be permitted
- Avoid characterizing another member's motives and discussing personalities
- All remarks shall be addressed to the chair

## Keeping the Meeting on Track:

1. Always use a written agenda.
2. Use Robert's Rules of Order

## Typical Agenda:

Call to Order  
Pledge, Invocation  
Welcome, Protocol, Introductions  
Reading and Approval of Minutes  
Secretary Report (communications)  
Treasurer Report (financial report)  
Committee Reports  
Unfinished Business  
New Business  
Adjournment

## Best Advice

- ✓ Demand good minutes and good treasurer's reports
- ✓ Always utilize a calendar
- ✓ Educate new members, committee chairs, and board members
- ✓ Use club newsletter to keep members informed
- ✓ Be transparent, Be inclusive, Be enthused

# Robert's Rules of Order

All of parliamentary law rest on two basic principles:

- The right of the majority to rule
- The right of the minority to be heard

Important Concepts:

- Decorum is a sense of parliamentary courtesy
- Quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present for the transaction of business. Correctly defined as “more than half.” At a convention a quorum is a majority of registered delegates.
- “Unanimous Consent” is a procedure on deciding an action without a formal motion. When there is evidently no opposition, the chair can specify an action and state if there is no objection, the action will be considered adopted. Example: “Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes?” {pause} “Hearing none, the minutes are approved.” Appears in minutes: Minutes of previous meeting were approved. Note: if there is an objection, then a formal motion is required.
- Motions take a majority vote to be carried, unless it is changing something already adopted, then it requires 2/3 vote.

Steps of a Main Motion:

- Member obtains the floor
- The motion is made
- A second is made (if no second, motion dies and does not appear in minutes)
- The motion is stated by the chair. (very important)
- Debate.
- Call for the “Question” (ready to vote)
- Vote (both positive and negative vote must always be taken)
- Declare the results (verify the results if close)

Secondary Motions:

- ❖ Table – lay aside a motion until the assembly wants to resume its consideration
- ❖ Postpone – delays action on a motion until a later stated time
- ❖ Refer – send the motion to a committee
- ❖ Amend – change the wording of the main motion. An amendment must be germane (closely related) and seconded. Vote on amendment first then on the main motion.
- ❖ Point of Order – an assertion that a rule is being violated
- ❖ Division – a demand that the chair verify the vote
- ❖ Withdraw - allows the mover, who realizes it was an ill-advised motion, to remove the motion from the floor. The effect is the same as if it had never been made. It does not appear in the minutes.

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