

Special Rules for Small Boards

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 11th Edition

“In a board meeting where there are not more than about a dozen members present, some of the formality that is necessary in a large assembly would hinder business. The rules governing such meetings are different from the rules that hold in other assemblies, in the following respects:

- Members may raise a hand rather than standing when seeking to obtain the floor, and may remain seated while making motions or speaking.
- Motions need not be seconded.
- There is no limit to the number of times a member can speak to a debatable question. *Appeals, however, are debatable under the regular rules – that is, each member, (except the chair), can speak only once on debate on them, while the chair may speak twice.
- Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.
- When a proposal is perfectly clear to all present, a vote can be taken without a motion's having been introduced. Unless agreed to by unanimous consent, however, all proposed actions must be approved by a vote under the same rules used in larger meetings, except that a vote can be taken initially by a show of hands, which is often a better method in small meetings.
- The chairman need not rise while putting questions to a vote.
- If the chairman is a member, he may, without leaving the chair, speak in informal discussions and in debate, and vote on all questions. **

* However, motions to close or limit debate, including motions to limit the number of times a member can speak to a question, are in order even in meetings of a small board, although occasions where they are necessary or appropriate may be rarer than in larger assemblies.

** Informal discussion may be initiated by the chair himself, which in effect, enables the chairman to submit his own proposals without formally making a motion as described on pages 33-35 [§4 of Robert's Rules] (although he has the right to make a motion if he so chooses.)