



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

## **Work Group Reviewing the Board of Selectmen Rules of Procedure**

July 31, 2023

5:00 PM

Main Meeting Room, Town Hall, 933 Hopmeadow Street

### **SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA**

Call to Order

- 1) Review and Discussion of Board of Selectmen Rules of Procedure
- 2) Next steps and next meeting date

Adjournment

### Board of Selectmen Rules of Procedure Template

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Town(s)</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Introduction & Purpose	Avon, Bloomfield, Cheshire, Mansfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specifies that these rules establish the rules and procedure for meetings</li> <li>Establishes that the Charter, the Code or any ordinance adopted by the Board shall govern and apply in the event there is a conflict with the rules</li> </ul>	<i>Details the purpose of the document, the intent of the Board when creating the document and establishes the legal authority of the document</i>
Parliamentary Authority		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States Robert's Rules as authority and how to suspend or amend these rules</li> </ul>	<i>Simsbury currently has the language</i>
Board Logistics, Composition, Responsibilities, Quorum, & Committees	Bloomfield, Cheshire, Farmington, Glastonbury, Mansfield, South Windsor, West Hartford, Windsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains information on Board logistics such as regular meeting location, time and schedule</li> <li>Contains information regarding Board membership, composition, term length, and resignation procedure</li> <li>Contains information on quorum requirements and committee assignments</li> <li>States how to address prolonged absence of a Board member</li> <li>Explains Chair order of succession</li> <li>Gives power to Board to establish special committees</li> </ul>	<i>Clear language on Board composition, responsibilities, standing committees, liaison committee appointments, special selectmen assignments, and proper resignation procedure is universal in ROP's</i>
First Selectmen (FS) Duties & Responsibilities	Avon, Bloomfield, Cheshire, Farmington, Mansfield, South Wind, West Hartford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains how the Chair will moderate meetings with impartiality</li> <li>Explains the powers and abilities of the Chair</li> <li>Includes the 'State of the Town' address</li> </ul>	<i>Language on Chair/Mayor/First Selectmen duties and responsibilities are universal in ROP's</i>
Recording of Votes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States how votes are to be conducted and tabulated</li> </ul>	<i>Common in ROP's</i>

Minutes	Bloomfield, Cheshire, Mansfield, South Windsor, Windsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designates the responsibility of keeping Board minutes to the Town Clerk</li> <li>• Establishes the rules on minutes records filing and approval</li> </ul>	<i>A clause regarding how minutes are collected is universal in ROP's</i>
Meeting Types	Avon, Bloomfield, Mansfield, South Windsor, West Hartford, Windsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes the different types of meeting the Board may have (regular, special, executive session)</li> <li>• Contains information on how and when the Board may convene into executive session</li> </ul>	<i>Language stating the various types of meeting the Board may have are universal in ROP's for the legislative body of a municipality</i>
Standards of Conduct	Avon, Farmington, Windsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'The foundation of municipal democracy rests on open, respectful and informed discussion and debate balanced with the necessary efficiency required to take action in the public interest'</li> </ul>	<i>The minimum standards of conduct for elected and appointed individuals are commonly found in ROP's</i>
Public Notice & Cancellations	Bloomfield, Mansfield, South Windsor, West Hart.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States that Board meetings are open to the public</li> <li>• States the procedure to cancel a scheduled meeting</li> <li>• States public notice process</li> </ul>	<i>This clause is universal in municipal legislative body's ROP</i>
Agenda	Avon, Bloomfield, Farmington, Mansfield, South Windsor, West Hart.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details the process on creating and approving the agenda, as well as, how to place matters on the agenda</li> <li>• Explains that the Town Manager shall make agenda with the FS</li> </ul>	<i>Grouping all agenda related information into one clause will make for a more organized ROP</i>
Order of Business	Bloomfield, Cheshire, Farmington, Mansfield, South Windsor, West Hart., Windsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Public Audience, Presentations, FS Report, TM Report, Selectmen Report, Selectmen Action, Appointments/Resignations, Review of Minutes, Communications, Adjourn</li> </ul>	<i>The structure of the agenda is explicitly stated in most ROP's</i>

Privilege of the Floor	Bloomfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that the Town Manager shall have speaking privileges for the purpose of providing information to the board concerning the business and affairs of the Town'</li> <li>Includes Town Attorney speaking privileges on the introduction or interpretation of any existing or proposed ordinance or resolution or any question of legal procedure'</li> </ul>	<p><i>The Town Manager (and Town Attorney) provide purely informative remarks during Board meetings. This clause provides justification and parameters on their speaking capacity</i></p>
Motions?	Avon, Bloomfield, Mansfield, South Windsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robert's Rules serves as the guide to all the Board's motions</li> <li>All official Board action is initiated by motion</li> <li>The 2 basic motions are action and procedural.</li> <li>Only one action motion may be on the floor at a time.</li> <li>A procedural motion may be proposed and acted upon when an action motion is on the floor, or at any time</li> </ul>	<p><i>Some towns include language on the motions made in local government. Since the Board uses Robert's Rules, and it contains the motions, the Board has discretion when including language on motions</i></p>
Public Comment & Audience	Bloomfield, Avon, Cheshire, Mansfield, South Windsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that statements by the public can be oral or written and shall start with speaker name and address</li> <li>Explains general procedures for public comment/audience</li> </ul>	<p><i>Speaker sign-up sheets and time restrictions are common in municipal legislative body's ROP's</i></p>
Public Hearing & Decorum	Avon, Cheshire, Mansfield, West Hartford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States that the First Selectman shall strive to maintain civility, decorum and order</li> <li>Establishes general procedure for public hearings</li> </ul>	<p><i>Parameters on presentations and decorum of the meeting are commonly found in municipal legislative body's ROP's</i></p>

Citizen Petition?	Bloomfield, Mansfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for any petition requesting Board action shall be in writing and state the citizen's name and address</li> <li>• 'If a super majority (2/3) of the Board shall so vote, such petition shall carry over to one of the Board's next succeeding meetings, to be placed on the agenda under Selectmen Action'</li> <li>• States that petition cannot be acted upon in the same meeting that it is brought up</li> </ul>	<i>In an effort to further increase transparency and resident engagement, if favorable to the Board, some towns have a resident petition portion in their ROP</i>
Telephonic & Electronic Action	Bloomfield, Mansfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes rules for absentee voting (if applicable)</li> <li>• 'All verbal communication by an absent Selectmen must be by telephonic communication in a manner that can be heard by everyone at the meeting'</li> <li>• States the status of virtual meetings</li> </ul>	<i>As more digital communication is being accepted in municipalities across the state, the Board may have an interest in creating a clause related to technology's place in Board meetings</i>

## GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS AND FORUMS<sup>1</sup>

These procedures are promulgated in accordance with the Bloomfield Town Council Rules of Procedure and shall be posted on the Town Clerk's bulletin board. The following represents the procedures for public hearings and public forums (including budget hearings), provided that the Mayor<sup>2</sup> may amend these procedures when conditions require or warrant:

- I. A sign-up sheet shall be provided at least fifteen minutes prior to the hearing.
- II. Speakers will be called in order from the sign-up sheet, provided that only those persons who have not yet addressed the Council on the issues subject to hearing shall be called.
- III. The Mayor may permit a presentation by the Administration prior to calling on members of the public.
- IV. Unless the Mayor permits, or the Council waives its rules by a two-thirds vote, only Bloomfield residents or taxpayers may address the Council.
- V. All speakers will begin by stating their full name and address.
- VI. After each person on the sign-up sheet has spoken, the Mayor may call on other persons who have not yet spoken who wish to address the Council.
- VII. All speakers shall be confined to three minutes each, except that persons providing the Council with a recognized group's duly authorized position on an issue may speak for up to five minutes.
- VIII. Speakers may not yield their allotted time to others in order for others to expand their three minutes.
- IX. If a hearing is continued to another date and time, the Council will continue the hearing by:
  - i. Providing an additional sign-up sheet fifteen minutes prior to the continued hearing;
  - ii. First calling speakers from the original sign-up sheet who have not yet spoken;
  - iii. After completing the original sign-up sheet, calling speakers from the new sign-up sheet in the order in which they have signed said sheet, provided that only those persons who have not yet addressed the Council on the issues subject to hearing shall be called;
  - iv. After each person on both sign-up sheets has been given an opportunity to speak, the Mayor shall call on other persons who have not yet spoken at the original or continued hearing who wish to address the Council.
- X. At the conclusion of the hearing or continued hearing, the Council may, by majority vote, permit speakers who have already addressed the Council at the original or continued hearing to address them again for an additional three minutes. The Mayor may set a total time limitation for receiving such additional comments and shall announce such limitation prior to the above-referenced vote by the Council.
- XI. If the number of speakers and the time obligations of the Council permit, the Mayor may announce, at the commencement of the hearing, that each speaker may have an additional specified time to address the Council.

<sup>1</sup>These procedures shall not apply to hearings or matters where procedures are subject to contrary state or federal law or regulation.

<sup>2</sup>Throughout this document, "Mayor" shall mean Mayor or, in the Mayor's absence, the presiding officer of the hearing or meeting.

## ROBERTS RULES CHEAT SHEET

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Adjourn	"I move that we adjourn"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Recess	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Complain about noise, room temp., etc.	"Point of privilege"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair Decides
Suspend further consideration of something	"I move that we table it"	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question"	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone consideration of something	"I move we postpone this matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move that this motion be amended by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce business (a primary motion)	"I move that..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

The above listed motions and points are listed in established order of precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that is listed below, but you may introduce another that is listed above it.

To:	You say:	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Needed
Object to procedure or personal affront	"Point of order"	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decides
Request information	"Point of information"	Yes	No	No	No	None
Ask for vote by actual count to verify voice vote	"I call for a division of the house"	Must be done before new motion	No	No	No	None unless someone objects
Object to considering some undiplomatic or improper matter	"I object to consideration of this question"	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up matter previously tabled	"I move we take from the table..."	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move we now (or later) reconsider our action relative to..."	Yes	Yes	Only if original motion was debatable	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move we suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Vote on a ruling by the Chair	"I appeal the Chair's decision"	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order of preference; any of them may be introduced at any time except when meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed from the first chart (Motion to Adjourn, Recess or Point of Privilege).

## PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING A MAIN MOTION

**NOTE:** Nothing goes to discussion without a motion being on the floor.

### Obtaining and assigning the floor

A member raises hand when no one else has the floor

- The chair recognizes the member by name

### How the Motion is Brought Before the Assembly

- The member makes the motion: *I move that (or "to") ...* and resumes his seat.
- Another member seconds the motion: *I second the motion* or *I second it* or *second*.
- The chair states the motion: *It is moved and seconded that ... Are you ready for the question?*

### Consideration of the Motion

1. Members can debate the motion.
2. Before speaking in debate, members obtain the floor.
3. The maker of the motion has first right to the floor if he claims it properly
4. Debate must be confined to the merits of the motion.
5. Debate can be closed only by order of the assembly (2/3 vote) or by the chair if no one seeks the floor for further debate.

### The chair puts the motion to a vote

1. The chair asks: *Are you ready for the question?* If no one rises to claim the floor, the chair proceeds to take the vote.
2. The chair says: *The question is on the adoption of the motion that ... As many as are in favor, say 'Aye'.* (Pause for response.) *Those opposed, say 'Nay'.* (Pause for response.) *Those abstained please say 'Aye'.*

### The chair announces the result of the vote.

1. *The ayes have it, the motion carries, and ...* (indicating the effect of the vote) or
2. *The nays have it and the motion fails*

### WHEN DEBATING YOUR MOTIONS

1. Listen to the other side
2. Focus on issues, not personalities
3. Avoid questioning motives
4. Be polite



# HOW TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT YOU WANT TO DO IN MEETINGS

## MAIN MOTION

You want to propose a new idea or action for the group.

- After recognition, make a main motion.
- Member: "Madame Chairman, I move that \_\_\_\_\_."

## AMENDING A MOTION

You want to change some of the wording that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by adding the following words \_\_\_\_\_."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words \_\_\_\_\_."
- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the motion be amended by striking out the following words, \_\_\_\_\_, and adding in their place the following words \_\_\_\_\_."

## REFER TO A COMMITTEE

You feel that an idea or proposal being discussed needs more study and investigation.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that the question be referred to a committee made up of members Smith, Jones and Brown."

## POSTPONE DEFINITELY

You want the membership to have more time to consider the question under discussion and you want to postpone it to a definite time or day, and have it come up for further consideration.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to postpone the question until \_\_\_\_\_."

## PREVIOUS QUESTION

You think discussion has gone on for too long and you want to stop discussion and vote.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move the previous question."

## LIMIT DEBATE

You think discussion is getting long, but you want to give a reasonable length of time for consideration of the question.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I move to limit discussion to two minutes per speaker."

## **POSTPONE INDEFINITELY**

You want to kill a motion that is being discussed.

- After recognition, "Madam Moderator, I move to postpone the question indefinitely."

## **POSTPONE INDEFINITELY**

You are against a motion just proposed and want to learn who is for and who is against the motion.

- After recognition, "Madame President, I move to postpone the motion indefinitely."

## **RECESS**

You want to take a break for a while.

- After recognition, "Madame Moderator, I move to recess for ten minutes."

## **ADJOURNMENT**

You want the meeting to end.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move to adjourn."

## **PERMISSION TO WITHDRAW A MOTION**

You have made a motion and after discussion, are sorry you made it.

- After recognition, "Madam President, I ask permission to withdraw my motion."

## **CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY**

At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda was adopted. The chairman is not following the order of the approved agenda.

- Without recognition, "Call for orders of the day."

## **SUSPENDING THE RULES**

The agenda has been approved and as the meeting progressed, it became obvious that an item you are interested in will not come up before adjournment.

- After recognition, "Madam Chairman, I move to suspend the rules and move item 5 to position 2."

## **POINT OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE**

The noise outside the meeting has become so great that you are having trouble hearing.

- Without recognition, "Point of personal privilege."
- Chairman: "State your point."
- Member: "There is too much noise, I can't hear."

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

You are going to propose a question that is likely to be controversial and you feel that some of the members will try to kill it by various maneuvers. Also you want to keep out visitors and the press.

- After recognition, "Madame Chairman, I move that we go into a committee of the whole."

## POINT OF ORDER

It is obvious that the meeting is not following proper rules.

- Without recognition, "I rise to a point of order," or "Point of order."

## POINT OF INFORMATION

You are wondering about some of the facts under discussion, such as the balance in the treasury when expenditures are being discussed.

- Without recognition, "Point of information."

## POINT OF PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

You are confused about some of the parliamentary rules.

- Without recognition, "Point of parliamentary inquiry."

## APPEAL FROM THE DECISION OF THE CHAIR

Without recognition, "I appeal from the decision of the chair."

### Rule Classification and Requirements

Class of Rule	Requirements to Adopt	Requirements to Suspend
Charter	Adopted by majority vote or as proved by law or governing authority	Cannot be suspended
Bylaws	Adopted by membership	Cannot be suspended
Special Rules of Order	Previous notice & 2/3 vote, or a majority of entire membership	2/3 Vote
Standing Rules	Majority vote	Can be suspended for session by majority vote during a meeting
Modified Roberts Rules of Order	Adopted in bylaws	2/3 vote

# ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER CHEAT SHEET

Robert's Rules of Order is a manual of parliamentary procedures that governs most organizations with boards of directors. Robert's Rules of Order are a provision of each of the SMPS chapter's bylaws normally stated as the following:

*"The rules contained in the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall provide the rules of procedure for the Chapter where they are not inconsistent with the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation or these bylaws."*

## TYPES OF MOTIONS

- **Main Motion:** Introduce a new item
- **Subsidiary Motion:** Change or affect how to handle a main motion (vote on this before main motion)
- **Privileged Motion:** Urgent or important matter unrelated to pending business
- **Incidental Motion:** Questions procedure of other motions (must consider before the other motion)
- **Motion to Table:** Kills a motion
- **Motion to Postpone:** Delays a vote (can reopen debate on the main motion)

## EVERY MOTION HAS 6 STEPS

1. **Motion:** A member rises or raises a hand to signal the chairperson.
2. **Second:** Another member seconds the motion.
3. **Restate motion:** The chairperson restates the motion.
4. **Debate:** The members debate the motion.
5. **Vote:** The chairperson restates the motion, and then first asks for affirmative votes, and then negative votes.
6. **Announce the vote:** The chairperson announces the result of the vote and any instructions.

TIP! If the board is in obvious agreement, the chairperson may save time by stating, "If there is no objection, we will adopt the motion to..." Then wait for any objections. Then say, "Hearing no objections, (state the motion) is adopted." And then state any instructions. If a member objects, first ask for debate, then vote and then announce the vote.

## REQUESTING POINTS OF SOMETHING

Certain situations need attention during the meeting, but they don't require a motion, second, debate or voting. It's permissible to state a point during a meeting where the chairperson needs to handle a situation right away. Board members can declare a Point of Order, Point of Information, Point of Inquiry, or Point of Personal Privilege.

- **Point of Order:** Draws attention to a breach of rules, improper procedure, breaching of established practices, etc.
- **Point of Information:** A member may need to bring up an additional point or additional information (in the form of a nondebatable statement) so that the other members can make fully informed votes.

- **Point of Inquiry:** A member may use point of inquiry to ask for clarification in a report to make better voting decisions.
- **Point of Personal Privilege:** A member may use point of personal privilege to address the physical comfort of the setting such as temperature or noise. Members may also use it to address the accuracy of published reports or the accuracy of a member's conduct.

## TIPS AND REMINDERS FOR CHAIRPERSONS

Robert's Rules of Order, which is also widely known as parliamentary procedure, was developed to ensure that meetings are fair, efficient, democratic and orderly. A skilled chairperson allows all members to voice their opinions in an orderly manner so that everyone in the meeting can hear and be heard. The following tips and reminders will help chairpersons to run a successful and productive meeting without being run over or running over others.

- Follow the agenda to keep the group moving toward its goals.
- Let the group do its own work; don't overcommand.
- Control the flow of the meeting by recognizing members who ask to speak.
- Let all members speak once before allowing anyone to speak a second time.
- When discussions get off-track, gently guide the group back to the agenda.
- Model courtesy and respect, and insist that others do the same.
- Help to develop the board's skills in parliamentary procedure by properly using motions and points of order.
- Give each speaker your undivided attention.
- Keep an emotional pulse on the discussions.
- Allow a consensus to have the final authority of the group.

Action	What to say	Can speaker be interrupted?	Need a second?	Can this be debated?	Can this be amended?	Votes needed
Introduce main motion	"I move to..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Move item to committee	"I move that we refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Postpone item	"I move to postpone the matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Object to procedure	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	Chair's decision
Recess the meeting	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adjourn the meeting	"I move to adjourn the meeting."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Request information	"Point of information."	No	Yes	No	No	No vote
Overrule the chair's ruling	"I move to overrule the chair's ruling."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Extend the allotted time	"I move to extend the time by _____ minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Enforce the rules or point out incorrect procedure	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Table a motion	"I move to table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Verify voice vote with count	"I call for a division."	No	No	No	No	No vote
Object to considering some undiplomatic matter	"I object to consideration of this matter..."	Yes	No	No	No	2/3
Take up a previously tabled item	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
* Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move to reconsider our action to..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider something out of it scheduled order	"I move to suspend the rules and consider..."	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Close the meeting for executive session	"I move to go into executive session."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority

\*A member may make a motion to reconsider something that was already disposed; however, the reconsidered motion may not be subsequently reconsidered. A motion to reconsider must be made during the same meeting and can extend to a meeting that lasts for more than one day.