

March 9, 2021

MEMO TO: GREAT-6(1) File

F R O M: Michael J. Molina, Chair *Michael J. Molina*
Government Relations, Ethics, and Transparency Committee

SUBJECT: **TRANSMITTAL OF INFORMATIONAL DOCUMENT RELATING TO
AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES OF THE COUNCIL** (GREAT-6)

The attached informational document relates to Item 6 on the Committee's agenda.

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Attachment

RECEIVED AT GREAT MEETING ON 3/9/2021

Robert Has Special Rules for Small Boards

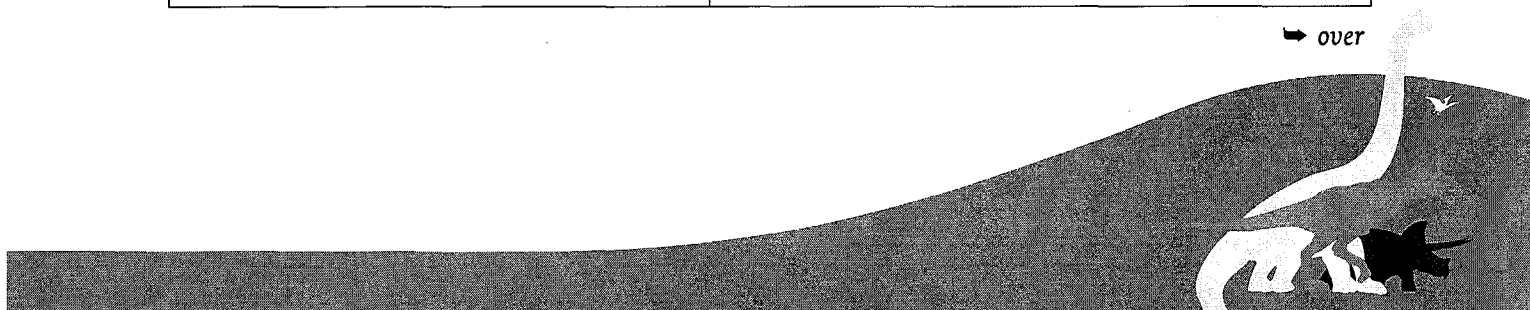
There are many reasons why Robert's Rules of Order have such a bad reputation, but one of the most regrettable is the fact that few people know about the special rules for small boards. Robert comes right out and says that in a small board, "some of the formality that is necessary in a large assembly would hinder business." The book goes on to list seven significant bullet points about the way the rules in small boards are different.

We in Jurassic Parliament like some of these special rules, but not all of them. We thought it might be useful to list each of these rules and give our comments. If your bylaws say that "meetings shall be run according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, latest edition," and your board has twelve or fewer members, you are fully entitled to use Robert's special rules for small boards. You're also entitled to adopt your own special rules of order if you find rules that would suit your organization better.

Robert defines a small board as up to about twelve people, but we have found that small board rules may be useful for slightly larger boards too, up to about twenty people. All that is necessary is for the board to adopt the rules it finds useful.

ROBERT'S RULES FOR SMALL BOARDS <i>Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised</i> , 11th edition, pp. 487-488.	JURASSIC PARLIAMENT COMMENTS <i>"Yes" means we like the rule.</i> <i>"No" means we disagree with Robert.</i>
Members are required to obtain the floor before making motions or speaking, which they can do while seated.	Yes. It is always useful to require members to obtain the floor before making motions or speaking. This allows the chair to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak once before anyone speaks a second time. Yes to remaining seated, of course.
Motions need not be seconded.	No. We prefer that a second be required for any motion. Before a proposal takes up the group's time, there should be at least two people who want to talk about it.

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There is no limit to the number of times a member can speak to a question, and motions to close or limit debate generally should not be entertained.	Yes, provided that the rule that everyone has a chance to speak once before anyone may speak twice is strictly enforced.
Informal discussion of a subject is permitted while no motion is pending.	Yes, though it's useful to ask for a motion just as soon as the chair senses that the group is ready to formulate one.
Sometimes, 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 of a board must be approved by vote under the same rules as in other assemblies, except that a vote can be taken initially by a show of hands, which is often a better method in such meetings.	Yes, provided that someone, eventually, states in clear terms what is about to be voted on. What is "perfectly clear" to some members may be rather murky to others. This also relieves the secretary from having to guess just what the motion was when composing the minutes.
The chairman need not rise while putting questions to the vote.	Yes.
The chairman can speak in discussion without rising or leaving the chair; and, subject to rule or custom within the particular board (which should be uniformly followed regardless of how many members are present), he usually can make motions and usually votes on all questions.	<p>Yes as far as discussion goes. We believe that in most small boards, members want to hear what the chair thinks, and the chair should participate in debate.</p> <p>We suggest that boards adopt a rule that the chair debates and votes last, after others have spoken. This allows her to summarize discussion and to remain more impartial. Her voice and vote are heard, but are not given too much weight.</p> <p>No for making motions. We believe it is always better for the chair not to propose motions, because of the human tendency to show undue deference to the leader of a group. Motions should come from the members.</p> <p>As for voting, we leave it to the rule and custom of the particular board. In many small boards it makes sense for the chair to vote.</p>

Article: Robert Has Special Rules for Small Boards
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