



# Robert's Rules of Order for the Town of Erie Planning Commission

Ben Hemphill, Chair

May 20, 2026



# Agenda

- **Current Rules of Procedure**
- **What are Robert's Rules of Order?**
- **Why use Robert's Rules or Order?**
- **Presiding Officer**
  - **Elections**
- **Basic Meeting Structure**
- **Definitions**
- **Motions**
  - **Order**
  - **Process**

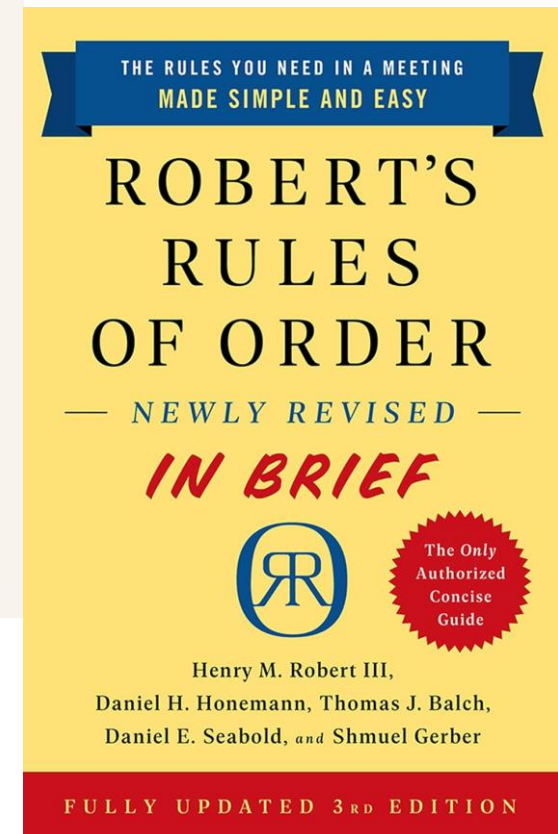
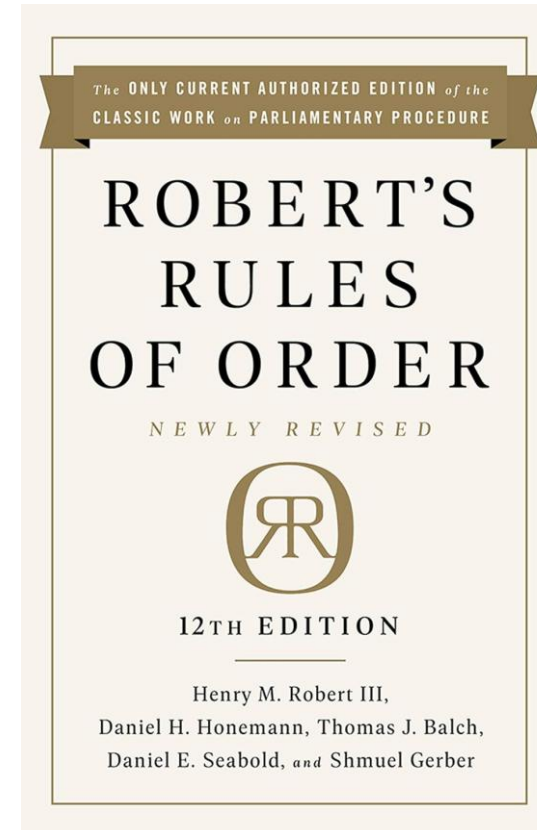


# Current Rules of Procedure

- Town of Erie Resolution No. 22-149
- See file 25-482 which is Sept. 3, 2025 Planning Commission meeting for a link
- <https://erie.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=14740536&GUID=84BAD7BE-8BDD-4129-9C21-DB00C5B67671>
- Covers officers, meeting times, agendas, procedures, and public comment
- Procedures discussing voting and motions
- Process generally follows Robert's Rules of Order

# What are Robert's Rules of Order?

- Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised 12<sup>th</sup> Edition (©2020) (816 pages)
- Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief (©2020) (224 pages)
- A guide for how to run meetings with attendance from small to large
- Planning Commission is a small group so there is more flexibility





# Why use Robert's Rules of Order?

- “A prime value of parliamentary procedure is that it provides processes through which an organization, large or small, can work out satisfactory solutions to the greatest number of questions in the least amount of time. It can do this whatever the detail or complexity that may be involved. It makes meetings go smoothly when everyone is in agreement, and allows the group to come to decisions fairly when issues are bitterly contested.”

RONR in Brief, Chapter 1 The “Why and Wherefore” of Meeting Rules



# Principles Underlying Parliamentary Law

- Balance the rights of persons within the assembly
- Rights of:
  - the majority
  - the minority
  - individuals
  - absentees
  - all of these together

“Ultimately, it is the majority taking part in the assembly who decide the general will, but only following upon the opportunity for a deliberative process of full and free discussion.”

RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.) Principles Underlying Parliamentary Law



# Presiding Officer

- The Planning Commission has a Chair and Vice Chair that are appointed to a one-year term.
  - Planning Commission will vote on these at our June 3, 2026 meeting
- If the Chair is not present, the Vice Chair takes the role of presiding over the meeting.
- If neither are present, then a presiding officer is selected for the meeting.
- Duties: Calling the meeting to order, announce business, recognize members, put the vote, enforce rules of order, expedite business compatible with the rights of the members, decide questions of order, parliamentary procedures, sign documents, and adjourn the meeting.

RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.) 47:7, 47:11



# Election Process

- Nominations from the chair or floor
- Ballot or Roll-Call Vote
  - Majority required
  - Voting repeated until a majority vote is obtained

RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.) 46



# Basic Meeting Structure per Robert's Rules

- Determination of quorum
- Standard order of Business
  - Minutes
  - Unfinished Business
  - New Business
  - Reports
- Planning Commission has Public Comment.
- Planning Commission adopts each agenda before the meeting.
- Planning Commission has reports at the end of the meeting.

RONR in Brief, Chapter 2

# Definitions

<b>Word/Phrase</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Appeal	Mechanism for members to dispute the chair's decision. RONR (12 <sup>th</sup> ed.) 24
Main Motion	Primary business before the assembly. RONR (12 <sup>th</sup> ed.) 6:1
Majority	>50% (e.g. with 6 votes, 4 is a majority, 3 is not). RONR (12 <sup>th</sup> ed.) 44:1
Previous Question	Close debate and call the vote
Privileged Motion	Not related to pending business which should be allowed to interrupt. RONR (12 <sup>th</sup> ed.) 6:11
Question	The formal statement of the motion and the actual item up for a vote.
Subsidiary Motion	Assist the assembly in treating or disposing of a main motion. RONR (12 <sup>th</sup> ed.) 6:3

RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.)

# Motions

Motion	Debate?	Amend?	Vote
Adjourn	No	No	Majority
Amend	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend Something Previously Adopted	Yes	Yes	(a) Maj. with notice; or (b) 2/3; or (c) maj. of entire membership
Appeal	Normally	No	Majority in negative required to reverse chair's decision
Debate, Close (Previous Question)	No	No	2/3
Debate, Limit or Extend Limits of	No	Yes	2/3
Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone	Yes	Yes	Majority
Previous Question	No	No	2/3
Recess	No	Yes	Majority
Reconsider	If motion to be reconsidered debatable	No	Majority
Rescind	Yes	Yes	(a) Maj. with notice; or (b) 2/3; or (c) maj. of entire membership
Suspend the Rules (rules of order)	No	No	2/3
Suspend the Rules (standing rules or convention standing rules)	No	No	Majority
Voting, motions relating to	No	Yes	Majority

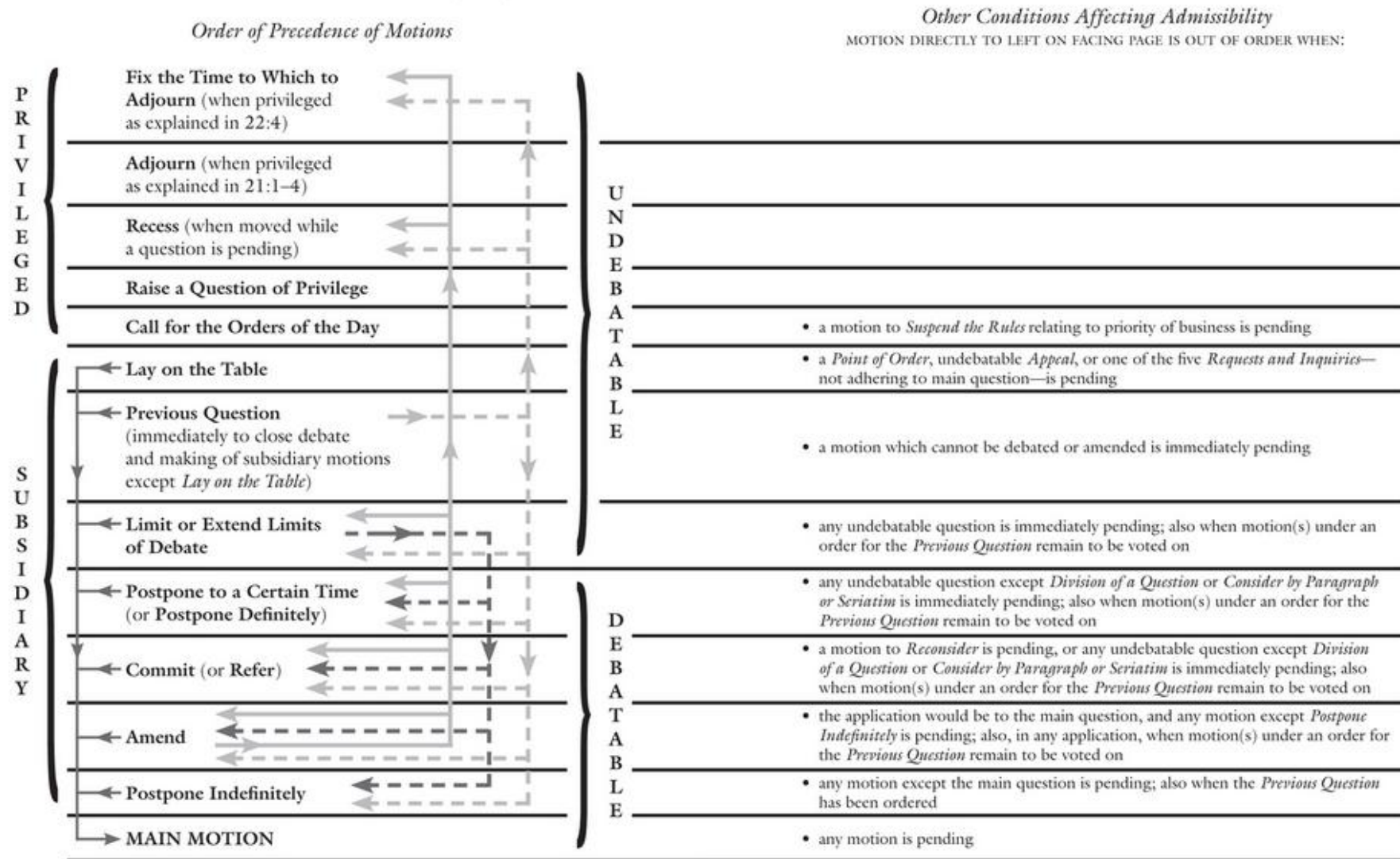
RONR in Brief, Table D.



# Motion Order

## RONR (12<sup>th</sup> ed.) Chart I

### I. CHART FOR DETERMINING WHEN EACH SUBSIDIARY OR PRIVILEGED MOTION IS IN ORDER (cont.)





# Motion Process

- A member requests to make a motion
- The chair recognizes the member
- The recognized member makes the Motion
- Another member Seconds the motion
- The Chair States the Question\*
- Debate †
- The Chair Puts the Question
- Announce result

\* The Chair restates the motion per RONR in order for the motion to be clear to all who vote on it. Since the Planning Commission typically has well defined motions from the member, the chair does not typically repeat the motion.

† Planning Commission typically debates before the motion in order to capture any amendments before the motion. This works because of the well-defined nature of our agenda items.

RONR in Brief, Chapter 3



# Motion Process Example

Member A	I would like to make a motion
Chair	Member A
Member A	I move to approve [full language of resolution]
Member B	Second
Chair	There is a motion from Member A and a second from Member B for the [resolution].
Chair	[call the vote based on motion]*

\* Voice vote or roll call vote are typical depending on motion or the request from any member

RONR in Brief, Tables. Modified



# Questions & Discussion