

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The "order of business" is the established sequence in which business is taken up during a meeting. It is a blueprint for meetings and provides a systematic plan for the orderly conduct of business.

I. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Following any corrections or additions, the minutes should be approved. Approval is usually handled by unanimous consent.

II. REPORTS OF OFFICERS, BOARDS, AND STANDING COMMITTEES – The chair usually calls on only those members who have reports.

III. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES – Special committees do not have continual existence, but exist solely for the purposes of a specific project.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Unfinished business (sometimes incorrectly referred to as "old business") refers to questions that have carried over from the previous meeting as a result of that meeting having adjourned without completing its order of business.

V. NEW BUSINESS – Following any unfinished business, the chair asks, "Is there is any new business?" Members can introduce new items of business.

Optional headings may include **OPENING CEREMONIES**, **ROLL CALL** of members, **CONSENT CALENDAR** for disposing of routine business by unanimous consent, **ANNOUNCEMENTS**, or **PROGRAM**. Any item of business can be taken out of its proper order by adopting a motion to suspend the rules with a two-thirds vote, although this is usually arranged by unanimous consent.

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PHRASES FOR THE PRESIDING OFFICER

Listed below are phrases for the presiding officer as found in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*. Slight variations of the given language may work just as well.

- **OPENING THE MEETING** (after quorum is present)
"The meeting will come to order."
- **RECOGNIZING MEMBERS**
"The chair recognizes"
- **STATING THE QUESTION** (following motion and second)
"It is moved and seconded that [or "to"] . . ."
- **WHEN DEBATE APPEARS TO HAVE ENDED** (if no objection, chair can proceed to vote)
"Are you ready for the question?"
- **TAKING A VOTE** (once debate appears to have ended or vote has been ordered)
 - Voice Vote
"The question is on the adoption of the motion to _____. Those in favor of the motion, say aye. [Pause] Those opposed, say no."
 - Rising Vote
"Those in favor of the motion to _____ will rise [or, "stand"]." [Pause] "Be seated. Those opposed will rise." [Pause] "Be seated."
 - Counted Rising Vote
"The question is on the adoption of the motion to _____. Those in favor of the motion to _____ will rise and remain standing until counted." [Count vote.] "Be seated. Those opposed will rise and remain standing until counted." [Count vote.] "Be seated."

Vote by Show of Hands

"The question is on the adoption of the motion to _____. All those in favor of the motion will raise the right hand." [Count hands.] "Lower hands. Those opposed will raise the right hand." [Count hands.] "Lower hands."

- **ANNOUNCING VOTE** (immediately following vote)

Voice Vote

"The ayes have it and the motion is adopted [or "carried"]."
Or, "The noes have it and the motion is lost."

Uncounted Rising or Show of Hands Vote

"The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted."
Or, "The negative has it and the motion is lost."

Counted Rising Vote or Show of Hands Vote

"There are 32 in the affirmative and 30 in the negative. The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted."
Or, "There are 29 in the affirmative and 33 in the negative. The negative has it and the motion is lost."

- **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

"Are there any corrections to the minutes? If there are no corrections [or "no further corrections"], the minutes stand [or "are"] approved [or "approved as read," or "approved as corrected"]."

- **PROCEEDING THROUGH BUSINESS**

"The next item of business is"
(Do **NOT** say "The next order of business.")

- **DISCIPLINE**

Motion Out of Order or Motion Not in Order

"The chair rules that the motion is out of order [or "not in order"] because . . ."

Member Out of Order (serious offense while speaking)

"The member is out of order and will be seated."