



Ontario Horticultural Association

Guidelines for Meetings

A General Overview



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Introduction

What is Roberts Rules? Simply put, it is a guide to running meetings and conducting business at meetings. It is a simplified version of Parliamentary law and provides a standardized way for Societies/Clubs to conduct themselves.

The OHA uses the current version of Roberts Rules to conduct its business. This helps to establish standards and guidelines for dealing with various situations.

The adoption of Roberts Rules for your meetings is suggested; however, it can be tempered to keep meetings both fun and engaging. The point of this guide is not to hinder meetings. Some small boards may find it difficult to adhere to all principles. If, however, using "relaxed" rules leads to difficulties, then more formal procedures may be reintroduced to the meeting.

In this document the words "governing orders" refer to a Society's/Club's Constitution and/or By-Laws and/or Rules of Governance.

Voting (Motions)

Motion: Is a proposal that the Society/Club take an action or make a stand on an issue. Not everything requires a motion; it will depend on how your governing orders are written. Motions are generally used to make or effect changes in your Society/Club or to determine the voice your Society/Club will give to a community issue.

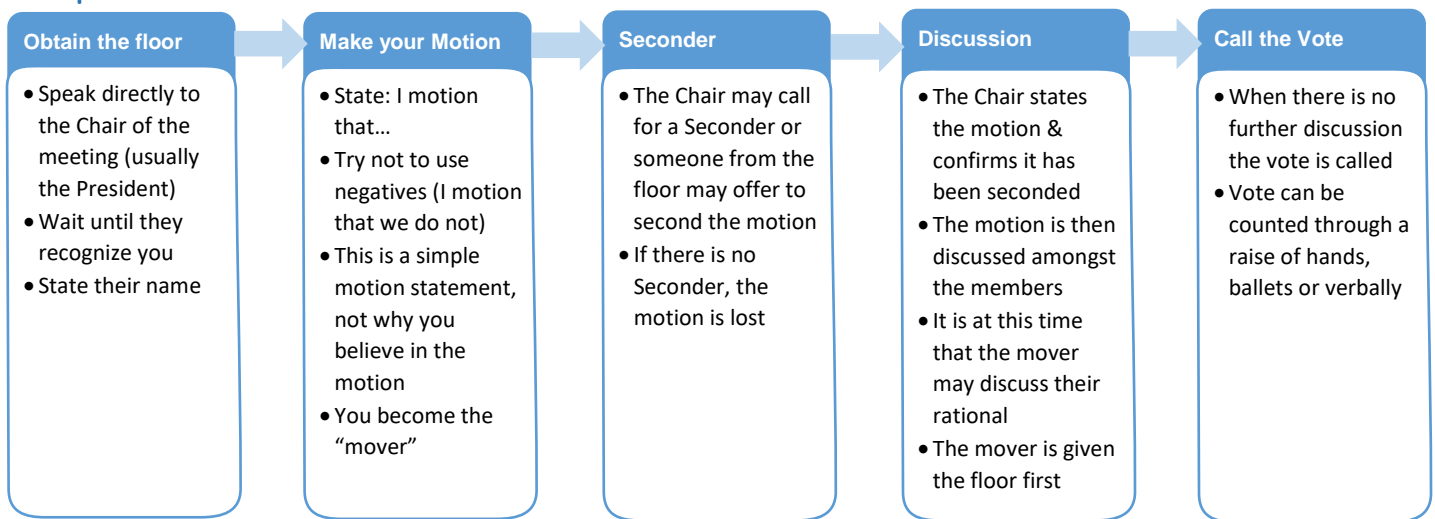
Examples:

- A motion is needed to accept the financial statements at your yearend meeting, these are official records being added to your books
- A motion is needed to raise your dues
- A motion may be needed if the Society/Club is asked to put their name or backing behind a community building or project
- A motion may not be needed to accept the agenda for every board meeting

Do You Have Enough People To Hold A Vote?

Quorum: This is the number of people that must be present for business to be conducted. Your governing orders usually identify what percentage of your membership or board must be present. As a general guideline 40% is acceptable. If you do not have a quorum present, then motions cannot be voted on and will have to be tabled until a quorum is present. You do not have to have a quorum to have a guest speaker, but you must have a quorum to vote on a motion. If no quorum is present a meeting may still continue and items of interest be discussed but no decisions made.

Simplified Motion Process:



Notes Regarding Discussion:

A lot of Societies/Clubs have the discussion before the motion is formally made. That is fine and often follows the flow of business and conversation.

Discussion should proceed in order of people identifying themselves. The person that moved the motion is usually the first to speak.

Moving The Question During Discussion:

During the discussion if a person says something to the effect of: "*move the previous question*", "*move the question*", "*call the question*", or simply "*I move we vote now*" they are essentially asking for the debate to end and the vote be called. This is acceptable and can be an effective way to stop a discussion from going round and round in circles, however, it must be recognized as a new motion and managed separate from the motion that was already being discussed.

For example: If you were discussing Motion 1 and during the discussion someone said to "move the question", the motion to move the question now becomes motion 1a. The Chair must call a seconder for 1a and ask if there is need to debate motion 1a. If there is a sign that the group is not on consensus for ending discussion, then a vote must be called on motion 1a (a vote to end discussion). If the vote is successful you can then call the vote for the original Motion 1. Sometimes the mere making of a motion to move the question is motivation enough for ending the discussion.

Care must be taken by the Chair to ensure that member's rights to debate a motion are not violated. Members may identify they wish to speak, by standing or raising their hand. It is suggested that the Chair should ensure that anyone who identified they wished to speak be heard before the "motion to move the question" is addressed.

Can A Motion Be Amended?

Yes as long as it pertains to the topic of the motion (For example, if a motion to increase dues is on the floor and an amendment is also added to cover expenses for travelling, the travelling expenses must be a separate motion).

The amendment must not convert the statement into a negative. For example: “*A motion to support the building of a greenhouse*” cannot be amended to: “*a motion to **not** support the building of a greenhouse*”.

Tips for Motions: Make a few motion slips to help record the mover and seconder as well as the motion. This can help the Secretary trying to take the minutes and the person making the motion to clarify their thought. See [Appendix B – Motion Slips](#) for a sample

Can The President (or Chair) Vote?

This does depend on what is written in your governing orders. Generally, the Chair does not vote on a motion unless there is a tie and then they may choose to vote.

Relaxed Option:

Often items will come up during general meeting discussion. For example: Should we look at having a booth at the Fall Fair? This may not require a formal motion. If the question is heard by all, if there is discussion amongst the board and all members have an opportunity to voice their opinion or ask questions and there is general consensus then a decision can be made without a formal motion. The Secretary must be sure to capture the decision and any key points from the discussion. It is recommended that if the subject of discussion involves the expenditure of funds, a motion is made in order to justify the expense at the time the books are reviewed.

Conducting A Vote

Ballot Voting:

This voting method is useful in situations where knowing how all members vote is not desirable and there is both time and space available to conduct a ballot vote. Ballot voting can be used for both motion and election votes. Two scrutineers will be needed to count the ballots of the vote and should be selected beforehand.

If the ballot vote decides a motion: the motion must be clearly stated by the Chair, and you are instructed to mark your ballot as Yes or No (For the motion or Against).

If the ballot vote decides an election: You should be instructed to write the name of the nominee of your choice on the ballot. It is never a Yes or No. The only way you can vote against a nominee is to vote for another person.

If voting on multiple positions, ballot voting should be cast in the order that the positions are listed in your governing orders

Ballots don't count if:

- They are unintelligible to ballot counters
- Two or more marked ballots are folded together
- It's cast for an ineligible candidate (example a member who is not in good standing)

Voice Voting:

While the word "voice" is referenced in this method, it does not have to be by a voice call. This method is often used in smaller assemblies or when ballot voting is not practical. It is more simply a yes or no vote.

The Chair will state "Those in favour" will (select the method):

- Raise a hand
- Rise and stand
- Answer aye or yes

A count of those with a raised hand or standing should be conducted.

The Chair will then state "Those not in favour" will (select the method):

- Raise a hand
- Rise and stand
- Answer aye or yes

A count of those with a raised hand or standing should be conducted.

It is not mandatory but the Chair may call for "Those abstaining" and also count.

The Chair must then announce the results of the vote. If the Chair is unsure of the results they may call the vote again to confirm until they are confident.

Your governing orders should outline if proxy votes are allowed and how they will be handled.

A quorum as identified by your governing orders must be present for any kind of vote to take place.

Running Meetings

Agendas

Agendas are useful tools for keeping a meeting organized, on topic and effective. The agenda should be created between the President and the Secretary. It needs to be provided to members with enough time for them to review it and prepare for discussion. The recommendation is a week before the meeting. This allows for any potential edits or recommendations to be updated and circulated. See [Appendix A – Sample Agenda](#) for a sample agenda.

Tip: A consent agenda is a good way to save time at meetings if you have a lot of committee reports. The consent agenda allows the committee to submit their reports in advanced of the meetings. The reports are attached to the agenda when it is circulated to the members. There is a standing agenda item to adopt the reports. This allows the agenda to focus on issues or questions instead of reviewing a standing report. If there are questions, they can be designated to new business or the one committee report can be removed from the consent section and stand as a separate discussion.

Meeting Rules & Guidelines:

While Roberts Rules does cover meeting rules and guidelines, below are some suggestions on making things run smoothly.

Have rules and guidelines. State what the Chair's responsibility is and outline what the participant's responsibilities are.

Examples:

Chairperson will:	Board members will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• adhere to the agenda and keep an orderly meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• read the agenda and committee reports prior to the meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• give equal rights to all board persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• speak one at a time
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure that the will of the majority is carried out	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• stay on topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure key decisions are voted on	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• respect the majority vote

General Conduct At Meetings:

Some Societies/Clubs have adopted a Code of Conduct or Guidelines for Conduct During Meetings. Here are some general principles for how membership should conduct themselves at meetings:

1. One person will speak at a time
2. Wait to be acknowledge by the Chair before speaking
3. Be polite
4. Discussion is healthy but all members must be respectful
5. Stay on topic with the issue being discussed
6. Be clear and specific when making a point about a topic

Installations Of The Board & AGMs

Board installations and AGMs are not one and the same, it just so happens that the installations of the board for Societies/Clubs coincides with a year end, when AGMs are held. It is important to review the governing orders as they often outline any specifics for how board selections or AGMs are to be conducted.

Tip: Some governing orders outline that members will fill their posts for more than one year. If that is the case, they do not have to be re-installed each year but an AGM must still be conducted.

Nominations:

Nominations are the process of getting members to join the board (the list of people to be installed). Your governing orders may have procedures outlined for how you are to conduct your nominations. Below are some common methods that are traditionally used.

Nominating Committee:

An interim committee can be formed with the express intention of soliciting members to fill the positions of the board. The committee would be responsible for reaching out to membership (either through phone, email or direct conversation) to engage membership in standing for the available board positions. The committee would then report back to the board prior to elections to advise on the candidates standing for nominations.

Idea: Try having the committee with a mix of board and general members. For example the Past President and 2 general members. This allows for the sharing of viewpoints, ideas and concepts. It can also give people who are considering volunteering for the board a small taste of what the work will be like.

CONSIDERATIONS	
Positive	Negative
The committee is at arm's length from the board and provides for a transparent process (provided the committee is not just existing board members)	It can be difficult to fill committee positions
It engages all membership and provides opportunity for those that might be more shy to be identified	If roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined it can create confusion
This is a short term committee and might be useful in engaging newer members to meet more people and have a taste of working with the board	
It allows the full membership a voice instead of the board of directors only	

Tip: Having job descriptions for the different board positions will help people to understand the roles and responsibilities of the positions and take away some of the unknown. This also helps in identifying skills and qualities required for the roles which can aid in identifying future possible candidates and assist with succession planning. Sample job descriptions can be found in [Appendix C- Sample Job Descriptions](#)

Nominations By The Board

Some Societies/Clubs rely on the board to determine the nominations for the coming elections. The board may discuss nominations internally, solicit members directly and/or call for general nominations from the membership. The board then puts forward the names for nominations.

CONSIDERATIONS	
Positive	Negative
Can be useful if there are not a lot of members to draw from to form a committee	If the board is small there could be objectivity issues in determining if a candidate is appropriate
	The selection process may not be transparent to all members
	More reserved or shy candidates might be overlooked

Nominations From The Floor

This is an open call for suggestions to be put forward. At the meeting (or as outlined by your governing orders) a call will be put forth for nominations from the floor.

- Nominations don't have to be seconded
- A person can nominate themselves
- Nominees do not have to leave the room if a vote is to be taken
- After each nomination the President/Chair should repeat the name and nominated position
- Nominations should be taken for positions in the order that the positions are listed in the Governing orders
- A member can decline the nomination

Points To Consider For Nominations

Some Societies/Clubs use a hybrid of the various nomination types. Be aware that if Nominations from the floor is offered at the AGM and there is more than one person standing for the position then there will need to be an election/vote. The board must be ready to conduct a vote (see [Conducting a Vote](#) or as per your governing orders indicate).

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Again, your Societies/Clubs' governing orders should be consulted for any particulars as to how notifications for the AGM and/or any specific requirements for the AGM be conducted.

Roberts Rules of order does not have a specific section dedicated to AGMs. AGMs are just another meeting with some specific business that is usually addressed.

[Appendix D – AGM Elements](#) outlines items that should be included in an AGM. [Appendix E – Sample AGM Agenda](#) is a sample of a simplified AGM Agenda.

Resources:

There are lots of different resources that are available on the internet.

Go to the OMAFRA website ([OMAFRA.gov.on.ca](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca)) then select ***Effective Organizations***

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/nfporgs/factshts.htm>



AGENDA (Sample)

Date:

Attendees: *list*

Regrets: *list*

Reading list: *Attach necessary items*

1. **Call to Order** - *Chairperson, (time)*
2. **Welcome and introductions** - *Chairperson*
3. **Approval of and additions to meeting agenda** - *Chairperson*
4. **Possible amendments and approval of previous meeting minutes** - *Secretary and Chairperson*
5. **Executive and Committee Reports** - *see below*
 - *Secretary or any correspondence*
 - *Treasurer or financials*
 - *Committee Report*
6. **Unfinished Business** - *Previously discussed proposal/info or follow up*
7. **New Business** - *New business*
8. **Next meeting date** - *Chairperson*
9. **Adjourn** - *closing time*

Motion Slip

Date: _____

Motion # _____

Moved by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Motion: _____

Result:

Motion Slip

Date: _____

Motion # _____

Moved by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Motion: _____

Result:

Motion Slip

Date: _____

Motion # _____

Moved by: _____

Seconded by: _____

Motion: _____

Result:

President

The President is a key figure within the Society. The President provides leadership by coordinating and delegating tasks and seeing that these tasks are completed.

1. Chairs general and board meetings of the Society.
2. Prepares an agenda in consultation with the Secretary.
3. Is conversant with the Society's Constitution/By-Laws, and the structure of the OHA.
4. Is an ex-officio member of committees.
5. Prepares for succession planning by involving members in various duties.
6. Ensures that everyone who has a role at meetings is aware of their duties.
7. Ensures that all relevant correspondence is shared with the membership.
8. Ensures that required forms and reports are completed and submitted before the deadline.
9. Presents a review of the year's work at the Society's annual meeting.
10. Attends and encourages others to attend OHA District Meetings and Provincial Conventions.
11. Secures an OHA password for access to OHA administrator pages.
12. Ensures that all Society info on the OHA website is current and complete.
13. Ensures volunteer hours of all members are recorded as the year progresses.

Vice-President(s)

The Vice-President's position is a training period for the position of President.

1. In the absence of the President performs his/her duties.
2. Assists in other duties as requested by the President i.e. chairing committees.

Treasurer or Secretary-Treasurer

May be elected by the membership or appointed by the board according to the Society's Constitution and/or By-Laws and/or Rules of Governance. They are bonded through OHA insurance for \$10,000. Further indemnification should be stipulated in your Constitution and/or By-Laws and/or Rules of Governance.

1. Maintains accurate financial records.
2. Ensures the distribution of all funds as per Society Constitution and/or By-Laws and/or Rules of Governance.
3. Deposits all monies received in the Society bank account. This account should have two or three designated signing Officers, with two signatures necessary to sign a cheque, one of which should be the Treasurer, with either the President or the Secretary.
4. Submits an up-to-date financial statement at any meeting. With a copy for the Secretary's records.
5. At the end of the fiscal year prepares books of account for auditing or review.
6. Presents an audited or reviewed, financial statement for the previous fiscal year at the Annual Meeting.
7. Submits the financial statement to OMAFRA by the required date, to maintain status as a society incorporated by the Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations Act, and to qualify for the legislative grant administered by OMAFRA.
8. Retains financial records for at least 7 years, or as required by Law or accounting practices.
9. Prepares a yearly budget for Society approval, estimating receipts and expenses.

Secretary

The duties of the Secretary may be divided between two people: a Recording Secretary and a Corresponding Secretary. The duties of the Secretary may be combined with the duties of the Treasurer in the position of Secretary-Treasurer as per the Society Constitution/By-Laws. The Secretary or Secretary-Treasurer may be elected by the membership or appointed by the board according to the Society's Constitution/By-Laws.

1. In conjunction with the President prepares an agenda before each meeting.
2. Records the minutes of all annual, general, and board meetings and keeps these as permanent, complete records of the Society.
3. Provides minutes of prior meetings as required.
4. Keeps the board informed of all correspondence, notifies the President, Committee Chairmen or other appropriate individuals of relevant correspondence without delay, and acts upon these as directed.
5. Keeps a list of current Officers, Board Members, and Committees in the Society.
6. Keeps and up to date list of members (if this duty is not assigned to another Board Member).
7. Notifies Directors and Officers of board meetings.
8. Keeps official correspondence and records for 7 Years.
9. Maintains and passes on to the next Secretary all Society files including copies of:
 - The Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations Act,
 - Society, District and OHA Constitution and By-Laws,
 - OHA Awards Booklet,
 - Certificate of Insurance,
10. Receives and compiles committee reports for presentation at the Annual Society and District Meetings.

Directors

Have various responsibilities and aid in fulfilling the needs of the Society. Directors can have specific functions which they perform throughout the year or ad-hoc duties. Directors must foster cooperation throughout the board and aim to fulfill their duties to the best of their abilities. Directors may have to provide a yearend report on their duties depending on what their role is. Some examples of directors:

- Membership Coordinator (signs up new members and maintains contact information for members)
- Greeter (greet members at meetings and provides any key information people need to know)
- Social Director (helps coordinate volunteers for snacks, tea/coffee and sets it up)
- Flower Show Convenor (coordinates the volunteers and the flower shows for the Society/Club)

Elements of a Society Annual General Meeting

Agenda (Underlined (and bolded) elements are required)

1. Call to Order
2. Welcome and Introductions
3. **Minutes of the previous AGM**
 - As distributed or as read
 - Secretary asks if there are any errors or omissions and motions for acceptance
 - Minutes may be emailed to members and/or posted at the meeting. It is suggested that a society maintains a booklet housing the AGM agenda, minutes and other pertinent information that members can review at the AGM
4. **Treasurer's Report**
 - A summary of incomes and expenses as distributed or read
 - Note: If your Society uses an Auditor, the Society is still obligated to have two Financial Reviewers (using signed form) to review the books
 - A Financial Reviewer must not be a member of the Board or a relative of a Board Member
 - A note: Reviewers may not be current Board or Executive members, nor have been members in the period under review, nor related to each other or the Treasurer
5. **Auditor's Report – Financial Reviewers' Report**
 - Indicates approval of the above Treasurers Report
 - Treasurer moves acceptance of the audited Report and the Auditors' or Reviewers Report
6. Annual Reports of Committees (if any)
 - These are received as read or distributed
 - Secretary moves acceptance of all after the last report
7. **President's Report**
 - Summarizes the past year's highlights
 - Important – the President must read this report at the AGM
8. **Approvals**
 - Motion to approve the actions and decisions of the Executive in the past year
 - Motion to approve the actions and decisions of the Board of Directors

9. **Elections of Officers and Directors (As per your Constitution and/or By-Laws and/or Rules of Governance)**

- As per your governing orders or see the section on [nominations](#).

10. Installation of Officers and Directors

- Usually by the District Director or Designate
- Contact your District Director and invite that individual to the AGM
- Provide the names of all the members standing for Officer and their respective roles in advanced of the AGM
- Have a copy ready for their arrival

11. New President's Remarks

12. Other Business, Awards, Presentations, Entertainment or Speakers

13. Adjournment

Sample AGM Agenda

Agenda (Underlined (and bolded) elements are required)

1. Call to Order
2. Welcome and Introductions
3. **Minutes of the previous AGM**
 - As distributed or as read
 - Move and seconded as accepted
4. **Treasurer's Report – Audited Financial Statement**
 - Read Auditor's cover letter
 - Can be provided for members to review
 - Moved and seconded as accepted
5. **Auditor's Report – Financial Reviewers' Report**
 - Indicating approval of the above Treasurers Report
 - Treasurer moves acceptance of the Audited Report and the Auditors' or Reviewers Report
6. Nominations
 - Name nominations received
 - Option: Ask if there are any further nominations from the floor
 - If none presented then nominations received stand
 - District Director or Designate installs the board
 - All positions are installed even if they are returning members
7. **President's Report**
 - Must be read in full
 - Moved and seconded as accepted
 - A copy of this may be attached to the Annual Information Report (See Presidents Quick Start)
 - Important – the President must read this report at the AGM
8. **Approvals**
 - Motion to approve the actions and decisions of the Executive in the past year
 - Motion to approve the actions and decisions of the Board of Directors

Note: Send reports to your members a month in advance, or have them read at the AGM. Have a copy available for attendees to read. It is suggested that each Society create a binder just for the information gathered at the AGM.