City of
Santa Rosa

Running a meeting using Rosenberg's Rules of Order

Presented by Ashle Crocker

Assistant City Attorney

Rosenberg's Rules

□ Procedures to guide the decision-making process for decision-making bodies. The Rules are guided by the following four principles:

- Rules should establish order
- Rules should be clear
- Rules should be user-friendly
- Rules should enforce the will of the majority while protecting the rights of the minority.

Quorum

❑ Default rule: more than half the body constitutes a quorum; a quorum required for the body to conduct business

❑ The body can lose a quorum during the meeting if a member departs or leaves the dais

❑ If there is no quorum or a quorum is lost, chair must adjourn the meeting or take short recess (e.g. 15 min) to allow time for members to join late

Basic Procedure for Meetings

Item Agendized. The item is placed on the agenda.

- A body's rules of procedure usually say how items get placed on the agenda;
- The Brown Act open meetings laws forbid off-agenda items from being discussed and acted upon.

1. **Item Called.** At the appropriate time on the agenda, the Chair announces the agenda item to take up the item for discussion
   - Chair asks for abstentions or recusals; for recusals, member must explain the conflict and leave chambers.
   - Chair asks for ex parte disclosures if applicable
2. **Report/Presentation.** An agency staff member presents an overview of the item, together with a recommendation to approve or deny the item;

Basic Procedure for Meetings (continued)

3. **Questions.** Chair invites members of the decision-making body to ask questions to the presenter; If applicable, Chair invites applicant to give its presentation and invites members to ask questions to applicant

4. **Public Comment.**

- Open public hearing
- Time limits for Speakers
- Close public hearing

5. **Motion.** Chair invites a member of the decision-making body to make a motion to approve, amend, or deny the item.

- Staff recommended motion
- Focus on the substance of the desired action

Basic Procedure for Meetings
(continued)

6. **Second.** Chair asks for another member of the decision-making body to "second" the motion;

7. **Understanding.** Chair ensures body understands the motion on the floor;

8. **Discussion.** Chair invites discussion of the motion;

9. **Vote.** The body votes; and

10. **Announcement.** The chairperson or secretary announces the result of the vote.

Motions

- **Basic Motion:** "I move we ....." (majority vote)

- **Motion to Amend:** "I move we amend the motion..." This takes the basic motion and amends it in some way (majority vote)

- **Motion to Substitute:** "I move a substitute motion..." This eliminates the basic motion and puts a new motion before the body. (majority vote)

- **Motion to Continue:** "I move we continue this item". This stops debate and sets a time for the body to hear the item at a later date or time. Can be to a date certain (no new notice) or not (new notice required). (majority vote)
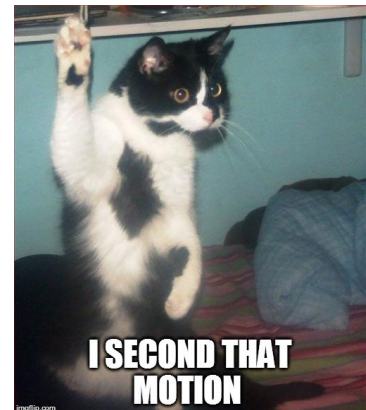
Friendly Amendment

❑ Alternative to motions to amend or substitute.

"I suggest a friendly amendment"

❑ If the maker of the original motion and the person that seconded the original motion agree, the new amended motion becomes the pending motion on the floor.

❑ If either the maker or the person who seconded rejects the friendly amendment, the original motion remains. The proposer can then formally move to amend.

Withdraw a Motion

❑ Maker of the motion may at any time interrupt a speaker and withdraw his/her motion.

❑ The motion is immediately deemed withdrawn, although the chair may ask the person who seconded the motion if they wish to make the motion and any other member may also make the motion. (no vote)

Multiple Motions
(up to 3 at one time)

❑ Vote should proceed first on the last motion that is made

❑ If the third or second motion passes, the remaining motions are moot

Voting

❑ City Council requires a majority of the entire body to pass a motion (4 votes)

❑ Most Boards and Commissions require a majority of the quorum for non-legislative actions (if 5 members are present, 3 votes are required to pass a motion). For legislative actions (e.g. general plan and zoning amendments) generally 4 affirmative votes are required to pass

❑ Voting options: yes, no, recuse, and abstain.

    ❑ Recuse vs Abstain

Table A: Recusal and Abstention Compared					
	Requirement	**Defined**	**Participate**	**Quorum**	**Exceptions**
Recusal	Mandatory	Readily identifiable, direct economic interest; must declare before an action item is discussed	May not discuss or vote upon at all	Not counted towards a quorum on that item	May make presentation
Abstention	Voluntary	Legitimate, non-financial interest, appearance of impropriety; must declare as soon as it becomes self-apparent	Depends when declared, but no participation after declared	Counts towards a quorum on that item	If direct economic conflict becomes apparent after start of action item, abstention is required

    ❑ If a member joins the meeting late, they cannot vote on the item they missed

Voting Continued

❏ If one member is absent, recuses or abstains, and the vote is tied 3-3, the motion fails. The effect is that no action is taken. This is not appealable to council but the item can come back to the body at later date.

❏ Simple majority vote (over 50% of quorum).

❏ Roll call vote.

❏ If a member misses a meeting and an item at that meeting is continued to a later date, the absent member can vote on the item at the later meeting date if they watch video of meeting

Questions?