

# Member Resources

## Robert's Rules of Order Cheat Sheet

The Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (CMWIB) and its committees utilize *Robert's Rules of Order* as a guide to the orderly transaction of business in meetings. Most of us have probably heard of *Robert's Rules of Order* or been to meetings full of motions, seconds, and calls to order; but it's not often that we explore why. To help keep our members informed, we have put together this *Robert's Rules Cheat Sheet* to give you an overview of our meeting structure.

To start, let's explore the definitions to some of the key terms:

**Meeting** – An event to transact CMWIB business. This includes all Board and Committee meetings.

**Member** – A person having the right to full participation during the meeting proceedings (the right to make, debate, and vote on motions). This also pertains to any official proxy.

**Proxy** - All members may appoint a proxy to attend a meeting in their absence. Appointment can come in the form of an email or a letter and gives the proxy right to full participation during the meeting (the right to make, debate, and vote on motions).

**Quorum of Members** – The minimum number of members who must be present at the meeting to be legally transacted. The requirement of a quorum is a protection against totally unrepresentative action in the name of the CMWIB by an unduly small number of persons. The quorum for the CMWIB is a third of the members then in office. *Example: for a committee with twelve members, four or more members would equal a quorum.*

**Minutes** - A written record of what business was conducted during the meeting.

Now that we understand the terms, we can look at how the CMWIB meetings are conducted:

**Calling a Meeting to Order** - The presiding officer (Chair) will determine that a quorum is present and open the meeting by stating in a clear voice, "Seeing that a quorum of members is present the meeting will come to order."

**Order of Business** – an established order that specifies the sequence in which general types of business are to be brought up or permitted to be introduced. The following has come to be regarded as usual or standard:

- 1) Reading and Approval of Minutes
- 2) Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees
- 3) Reports of Special (Select or Ad Hoc) Committees
- 4) Special Orders (matters which have previously been assigned a type of special priority)
- 5) Unfinished Business and General Orders (matters previously introduced which have come over from the preceding meeting)
- 6) New Business (matters initiated in the present meeting)

**Majority Vote** – Any item requiring a vote must be adopted by a majority vote registered by more than half of the members present (quorum must be established) and voting on the particular matter. In the event of a tie vote, the motion is defeated.

**Motions** – A formal proposal by a member that the assembly take certain action.

**Handling of a Motion** – There are six essential steps to the handling of a motion—three by which a motion is *brought before the assembly*, and three in the *consideration* of the motion.

How a Motion is brought before the assembly:

1. A member makes a motion
2. Another member seconds the motion (if no member seconds the motion, the Chair must be sure that all have heard it before proceeding to other business)
3. The Chair states the question on the motion – meaning the Chair states the exact motion and indicates it is open for debate (the motion is debatable only after the Chair states the question).

Consideration of the Motion

1. Members debate the motion
2. The Chair puts the question to a vote
3. The Chair announces the result of the vote

**Debate** – The Chair may limit time for debate and the ability for each member to speak twice on a matter before others have an opportunity to speak.

**Motion to Adjourn** – a motion to close the meeting immediately. This motion needs a second, is not debatable, and not amendable.



In addition to following Robert's Rules of Order, the CMWIB meetings also allow for the distribution of information:

***Distribution of Material at CMWIB Meetings***

An area will be available at each meeting for members and guests to distribute information to the members present at the meeting. The handout or material should clearly identify the individual and/or organization distributing the information.

For more information on Robert's Rules of Order, please visit <http://www.robertsrules.com/>.