

ROBERT'S RULES REFERENCE GUIDE - SUMMARY OF MOTIONS - BRATTLEBORO RTM

1. Privileged Motions

Having to do with the meeting and the agenda. These motions take precedence.

What do you want to do?	What do you say?	Notes
End the meeting	"I move to adjourn "	You will need a 'second'; A majority vote is needed to adjourn.
Take a break	"I move to recess "	You will need a 'second'; The specifics can be amended; A majority vote is needed to recess the meeting; If there is no motion pending, the request for a recess can be debated.
Register a complaint when the main motion is <i>in</i> order	"Question of privilege "	You will need a 'second'; The specifics can be debated and amended; A majority vote is needed to resolve the specific complaint.
Register a complaint when the main motion is <i>out</i> of order	"Question of privilege "	You may interrupt to raise this question; The moderator will rule on the issue; the moderator's decision can be questioned (see Incidental Motions). No second, no debate, no amendments.
Make sure agenda is being followed	" orders of the day "	You may interrupt to make sure the agenda is 'in order'; The moderator will rule on the issue; Moderator can offer amendment.

2. Incidental Motions

Having to do with specific requests, appeals and inquiries; relating to pending business

What do you want to do?	What do you say?	Notes
Appeal a decision of the moderator	"I appeal the decision of the moderator"	You may interrupt to appeal the moderator's decision; You will need a 'second'; The specifics can be debated; A majority vote is needed to resolve the specific complaint; A tie sustains the decision.
Request a standing/ rising vote (this is customary at RTM)	"I call for a division "	You may interrupt to request a 'division'; The moderator decides on the request. Brattleboro Charter allows a voting member to request a roll call vote; this requires six, or more, members in support.
Divide a motion into separate parts	"I move to divide the question "	You may interrupt to request a motion be divided into parts; You will need a 'second'; It can be amended; Majority vote.
Ask a question about parliamentary rules	" Parliamentary inquiry "	You may interrupt to ask a parliamentary question relating to rules and process; The moderator decides, and the moderator's decision can be questioned (see Incidental Motions).
Request information	"Request for information / Point of information"	You may interrupt to request information; The Moderator directs to request to a knowledgeable source; No 'second' or voting required.
Make sure rules are being followed	" Point of order "	You may interrupt to confirm that rules are being followed; The Moderator responds and decides; No 'second' required; The moderator's decision can be questioned (see Incidental Motions).
Reconsider motion (refer to VT law)	"I move to reconsider the vote"	Vermont Law prohibits reconsidering a decided motion once a new motion has been introduced; A 'second' is required to reconsider, debate is allowed, but no amendments; Majority vote decides.
Suspend rules (depart from usual and ordinary rules of meeting)	"I move to suspend the rules in order to..." <i>(the member must specify what they are proposing)</i>	You can move to depart from the ordinary rules and employ a change of the rules. (Examples: changing speaker time limits, allowing an all-group discussion with no motions on the floor, debating two alternative motions at the same time - or any other departure from regular order); A 'second' is required; No debate or amendments; A 2/3 majority is needed to suspend rules.

3. Subsidiary Motions

These motions assist in putting forth, debating, amending and disposing of main motions

What do you want to do?	What do you say?	Notes
Set aside the question <i>temporarily</i>	"I move to lay the question on the table "	You can ask that a motion be set aside; You will need a 'second'; No debate or amendments; Majority vote decides. Brattleboro Town Charter requires that all <i>warned</i> articles/motions be decided.
Close debate	"I move the previous question " or... "I call the question "	A member can request that debate cease. A 'second' is required; Robert's Rules suggests this when the discussion has become repetitive and circular. No debate or amendments; Because this limits the opportunity to debate it requires a 2/3 majority to succeed.
Limit or extend debate	"I move that the debate be..." (<i>be specific about what you are asking</i>)	You can move that the agreed upon rules for debate be changed to allow more time or less time for members to speak - or for the total time set aside for the motion; No debate - but the specifics are amendable. Limiting/extending debate requires a 2/3 majority vote.
Postpone the question to a definite time	"I move to postpone the motion to..."	You can propose that the decision on a motion be postponed until a specific time later in the meeting; Debatable and amendable; Majority vote decides. Brattleboro Town Charter requires that all warned articles/motions be decided.
Modify the wording of an amendment	"I move to amend the amendment by..."	You can make an amendment of amendment; A 'second' is required; A motion to amend an amendment is debatable; An amendment to an amendment, however, is NOT amendable; A majority vote is required for passage.
Modify the wording of a motion	"I move to amend the motion by..."	You can make an amendment to a main motion; A 'second' is required; a motion to amend is both debatable and amendable; A majority vote is required for passage.
Introduce a motion	"I move that..." or "I move to..."	If no motion is before the meeting a member can introduce a motion; Motions require a 'second'; Motions are debatable and amendable. A majority vote is required for passage.
Take a matter from the table that was previously set aside	"I move to take from the table "	If no motion is before the meeting a member can move to take a prior motion that was 'tabled' and reintroduce it as a main motion for consideration. This motion needs to be 'seconded'; It is debatable, amendable and requires a majority vote to be passed.

This document is a summary of Robert's Rules as modified by Vermont State Law and Brattleboro Town Charter. For complete treatment of any question - refer to Robert's Rules, Vermont State Law and Brattleboro Town Charter.

The purpose of Robert's Rules is to assist in fair deliberation and decision-making in a civil manner. This framework insures that all voices will be heard. Opportunities exist to debate, to ask questions and to offer amendments. In the end, the will of the majority is followed.

When these Rules are used to purposely impede or suspend the work of the group - they are being misapplied.

The term 'motion' is a general term referring to any proposed action for the group to consider. 'Main motion' is used like 'Article'. Warned articles are motions that have been placed before the meeting for consideration and action.

Brattleboro's Town Charter requires all warned articles to be acted upon and cannot be set aside to another meeting.

Under Vermont State Law, unwarned articles and motions that are presented for action under Other Business are not binding and are advisory only. Amendments cannot have the effect of introducing unwarned business for action.

Amendments, requests and objections must be *germane*. The Moderator can rule an amendment, request or objection to be *not germane*. Members of the meeting can object to a Moderator's decision and appeal to the body to decide the issue (see Incidental Motions, above).

Electronic meetings follow the basic principle of deliberative bodies in that the discussion, debate and voting take place in a single shared forum.

**Prepared, March 2022, by Andy Davis for use by Brattleboro Representative Town Meeting members
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