Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised)

The MCL recognizes at all three levels (National, state and detachment levels) the use of Robert's Rules of Order in which to ensure the orderly conduct of business important to the MCL. The following is offered as guidelines to conducting business during detachment meetings. This document does not cover the entirety of Robert's rules, but focuses on those rules that the detachment most often relies on. The original Robert’s Rules of Order is posted at the end of this article for additional information.

**Basics:**

-During detachment meetings there is only one speaker at a time

-The commandant acts as Chairperson of the detachment meeting. When the commandant is elected he/she is awarded the rights and authority to run the detachment meetings.

-Any speaker must be recognized by the commandant before speaking, with the exception of making a “point of order” (i.e. pointing out someone is not following the proper rules). A point of order is non debatable and is ruled on immediately by the commandant, who may ask the Judge Advocate for an opinion on the point of order prior to ruling.

-Members who wish to speak must raise their hands in order to let the commandant know they wish to be recognized and may not speak until recognized.

-The commandant recognizes speakers on a “first come, first served basis”

-A speaker may not be interrupted unless by a point of order,and traditionally the speaker concludes his/her comments with the phrase “Thank you Commandant”. This lets the commandant know the speaker is finished and the next speaker can be recognized

-All comments from a recognized speaker are only addressed to the Commandant, ***not*** to any other members or committees.

-Language in both form and function must be courteous and respectful.

**Motions:**

-Motions are the way the detachment deliberate and vote on actions the detachment is to take

-Any recognized speaker can make a motion. Simply state “I make a motion that…..”and describe the action you are asking the detachment to take.

-The motion must be seconded to move on. The person who seconds a motion need not be recognized by the commandant but can simply state out loud “I second the motion”. If there is no second, the motion “dies” (i.e. is no longer considered) without further debate or action.

-Once the motion is seconded, the commandant must clearly state the motion (or question) to be voted on, and ask for debate. All debate must be specific to the motion the commandant has articulated. If there is no debate needed or offered, the commandant can proceed to the vote.

-Members may make ***subsidiary motions*** to the main motion. These would include “moving” to refer the motion to a committee, postponing the deliberation until the next meeting, call to vote immediately and/or to amend an original motion. Subsidiary motions follow the same procedure as main motions, an exception being a call to vote which would suspend debate and force the members to vote on the main motion immediately

-One of the most important goals is that the voting member feels he/she has enough information to make a qualified judgment. It is ok to ask for more time to consider or for additional information prior to a vote. The Judge advocate can help in the phrasing of this type of request into a subsidiary motion.

-Subsidiary motions must be dealt with before the main motion is dealt with.

-Once debate has ended, the commandant calls for a vote. First for all those in favor, then all those opposed. Only members who are present at the meeting may vote (no proxy votes) and only one vote per member.

-Simple majority of members who are present will carry the vote.

-The outcome of votes on motions are recorded by the adjutant, the actual number of “yes” and “no” votes are not required, only that the motion passed or failed.

-Only one main motion at a time may be considered. Once the previous motion has been resolved, then the next motion may be introduced.

-The commandant has the responsibility to run the meeting smoothly and to that effect has the power to suspend a speaker if their remarks are not germain to the main motion or any subsidiary motions before the detachment. Comments by recognized speakers must be in regards to only the question/motion before the detachment at that time.

-The commandant also has the authority to deny a motion by ruling it out of order. This decision is not debatable. Also, ⅔’s of present members can vote to deny a motion.

-It is highly suggested that if a member has a motion that requires long explanation or deals with complex issues, that the motion be written (this is called a *resolution*), and prior to the meeting be submitted to the commandant so that he/she may distribute the resolution to the members, normally via email. The resolution should state the issue, and what the suggested action be along with any other pertinent data the general member would need to be educated on the matter. At the next detachment meeting, the commandant will bring up the resolution as a specific question and ask for a second. Once a second has occurred, the procedure then follows the motion sequence.

**Other detachment issues:**

**-**The commandant may ask various committee chairs and others to report on aspects of their responsibilities (i.e. the commandant may ask for a report from the paymaster as to the current disposition of detachment funds or that minutes of the past meeting be approved.)

-These reports are not debatable except in the accuracy of the report.

-Once the report is given, the commandant will ask that the report be accepted and entered into the minutes of the meeting. Now is the time to address any concerns a member may have with the report.

-Concerns are handled like motions (i.e. speakers must be recognized, address comments to the commandant, etc), but concerns cannot be debated.

-The commandant is the sole arbitrator of concerns and will make rulings/recommendations as he/she sees fit to do so. This can include postponing a vote on acceptance until changes are made to the report or additional information is obtained.

-Once all concerns are addressed, the commandant will ask for the report, minutes, etc to be accepted and a majority vote will decide.

Further information regarding Robert’s rules of order:

Here is a printable “cheat sheet” detailing the various rules:

[https://www.boardeffect.com/wp-content/uploads/2023](https://www.boardeffect.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/BoardEffect-Roberts-Rules-of-Order-Cheat-Sheet.pdf)

Here is a more in depth explanation of Motions:

[Motion (parliamentary procedure) -https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motion_(parliamentary_procedure)#Privileged_motion)

Here is the complete set of Robert’s Rules in its entirety:

<https://robertsrules.org/robertsrules.pdf>

Additional questions can be addressed to the current detachment Judge Advocate:

John Malstrom jmalstromsales@gmail.com