



# The Efficient Meeting Rules of Order

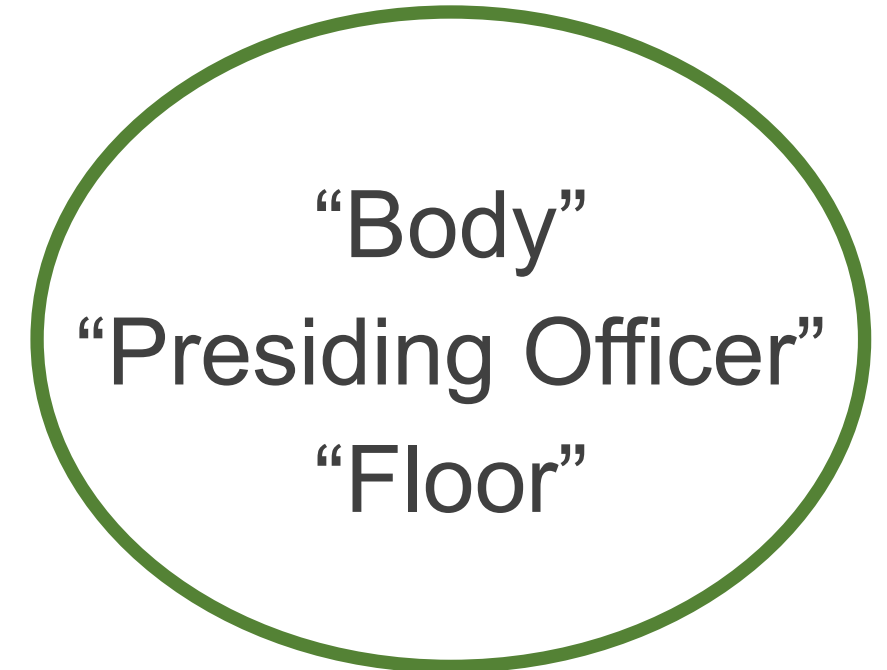
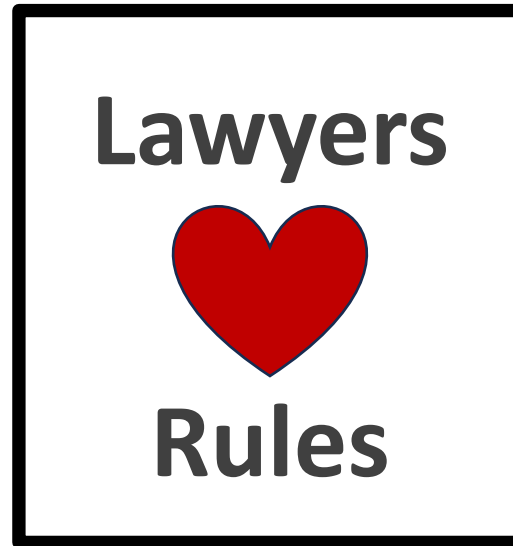
Robert (Bob) Widner

Widner Juran LLP

City Attorney - City of Centennial

CML Immediate Past President

# Some Introductory Stuff

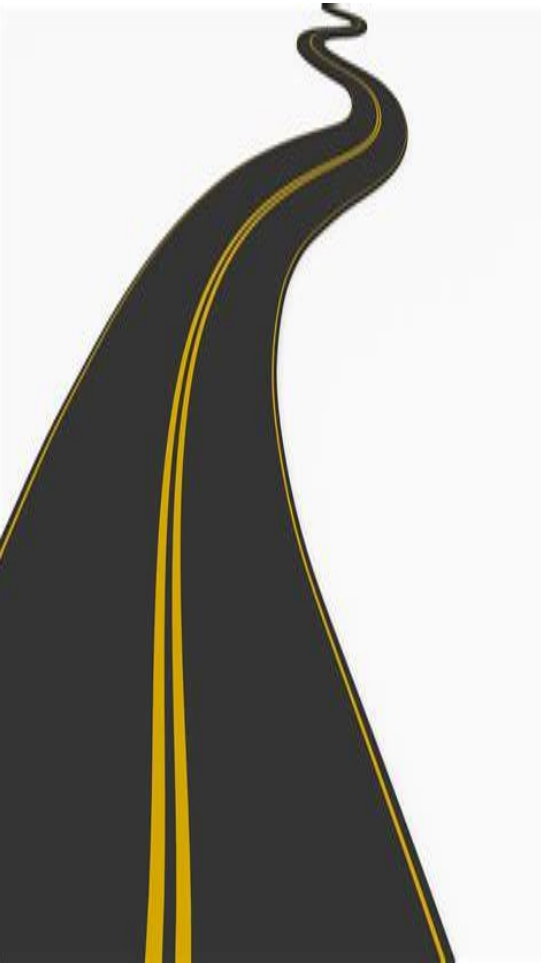


# Endgame

- A. “Rules of Order are Necessary.”
- B. “We Have Good Rules.”  
or
- C. “We Could Improve Our Rules.”  
or
- D. “We Should Get Some Rules.”



# Road Map



- Rules of Order & Bylaws
- Benefit of Rules of Order
- “Best” Rules of Order?
- *Robert’s Rules of Order* (1876)
- *Bob’s Rules of Order*
- Questions

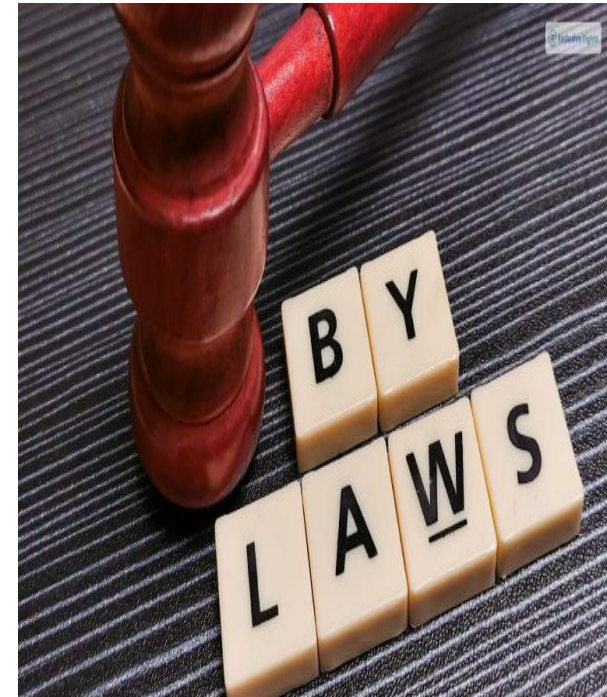
# Rules of Order

- Process & Procedures for Making a Decision
- General Scope of Rules
  - General Meeting Procedures
  - Determining Quorum, Gaining the Floor
  - Presiding Officer's Role
  - Available Motions, Second, Debate & Vote
  - Suspending & Deviating from the Rules
- Uniform for Similar Bodies



# Bylaws

- Organization & Management of the Body
- Scope of Bylaws (just some...)
  - Body's Purpose & Powers
  - Membership, Officers, Removal
  - Type of Meetings (including Remote Meetings)
  - Quorum Requirements for a Meeting
  - Conflicts, Appearance of Impropriety
  - Decorum Requirements
  - and More....
- Specialized for the Body





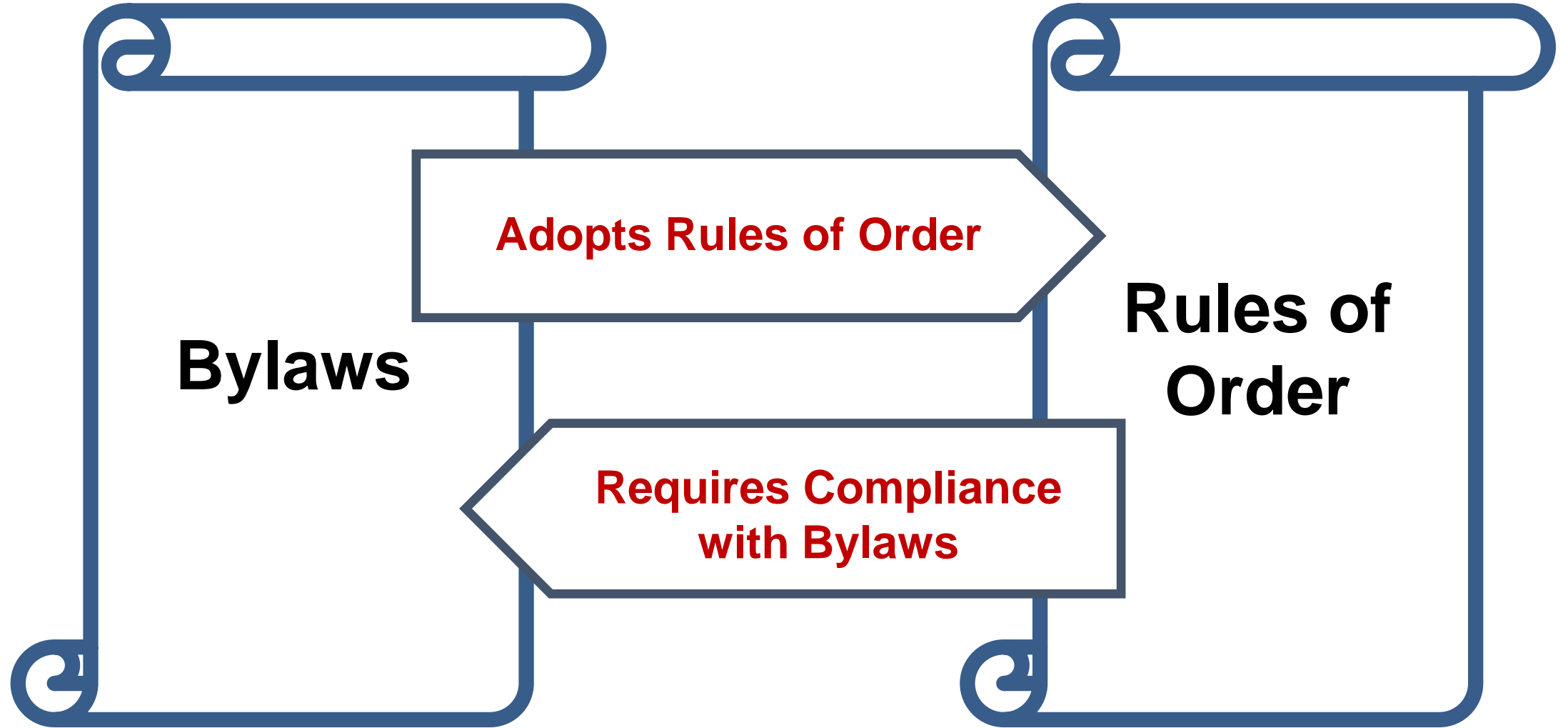
## Bylaws

*Not Easy to  
Change  
“Hardwired”*



## Rules of Order

*Easy to  
Change,  
Deviate,  
Suspend*





# Benefit of Rules of Order



**FAIRNESS**



**DEFENDING  
DECISIONS**

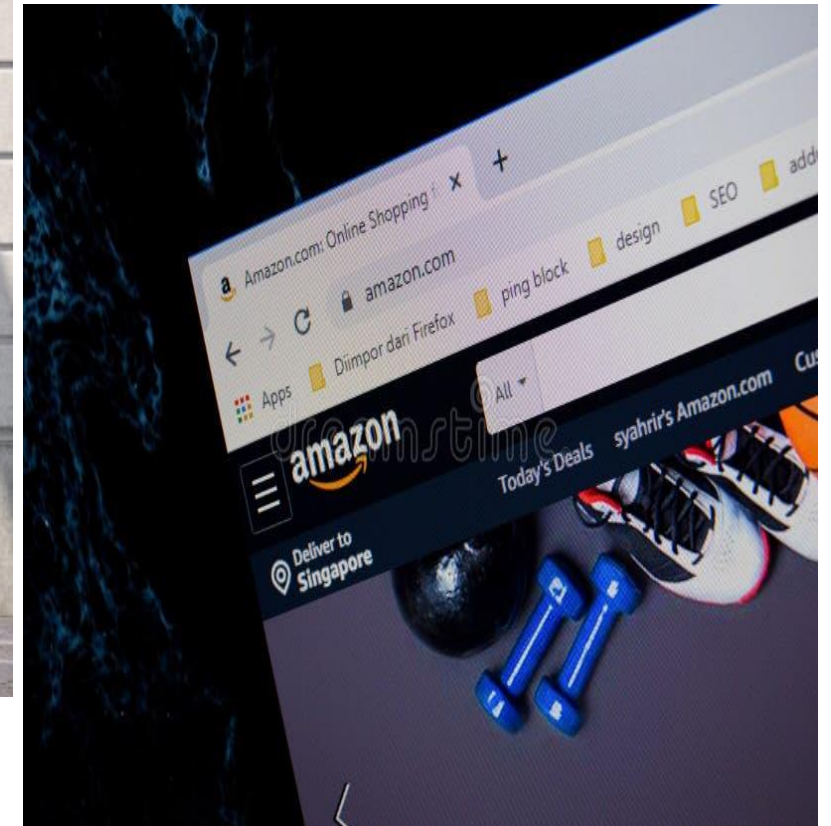


**EFFICIENCY**

# “Best” Rules of Order?

- Reasonably Simple & Understandable
- Tailored to Purpose and Authority
- Reasonably Comprehensive
- “Fit” with Historic/Cultural Practices
- Used Consistently





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The ONLY CURRENT AUTHORIZED EDITION of the  
CLASSIC WORK on PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

# ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

NEWLY REVISED



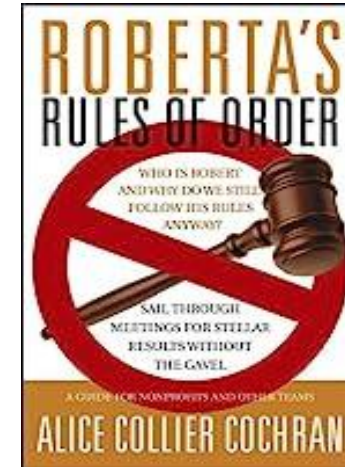
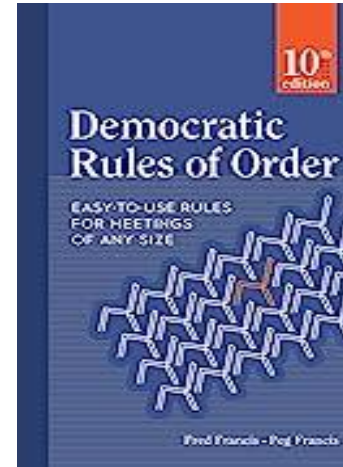
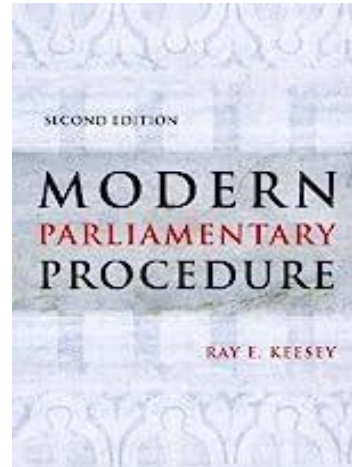
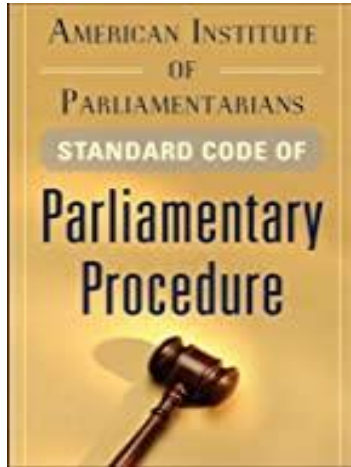
12TH EDITION

Henry M. Robert III,  
Daniel H. Honemann, Thomas J. Balch,  
Daniel E. Seabold, and Shmuel Gerber



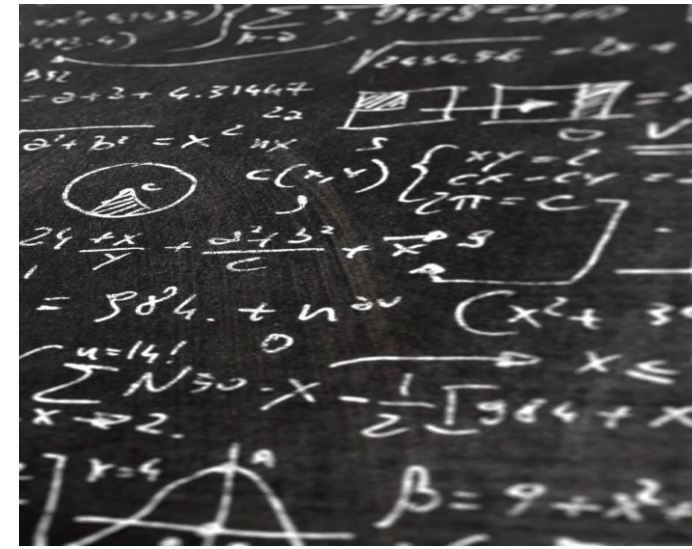







- Not Laid Out as Rules – More Discussion of Practices
- Some More Complex than Needed
- Some Too Simplistic
- None address Quasi-Judicial Meeting Process
- None Recognize Local Government Meeting Obligations

# Options?

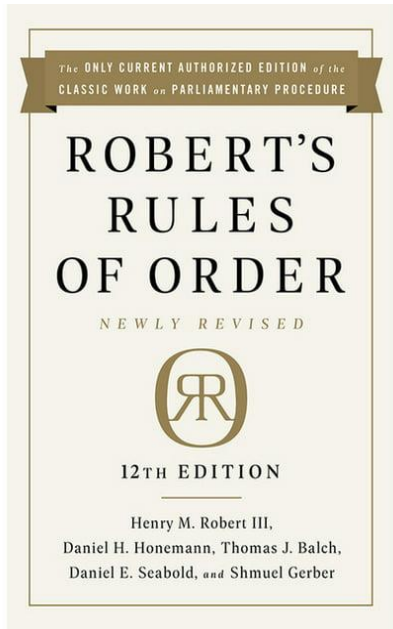


- Operate Without Rules (Some do) 
- Revise, Cut & Paste from Published Sources\*
- Custom-Tailored Rules (Many Have)
- Another Government's Rules (Many Have)
- *Robert's Rules of Order* (Many Adopted)
- *Bob's Rules of Order for Colorado Local Governments*

# Disclaimer

*“I do not hate Robert’s Rules of Order. In fact, I believe that Robert’s Rules is a sound choice for a large legislative body that must manage a large number of members. But the most effective means of using Robert’s Rules is to use a trained and certified parliamentarian to assist the Body in conforming to Robert’s Rules.”*





- 803 Pages
- 96 Motions
- Good for Colorado Local Governments?
  - Too Complex and “Too Much”
  - Difficult to Understand or Quickly Reference
  - Some Provisions Conflict with Colorado Law
  - Unacceptable Procedures for Local Government
  - No Recognition of Quasi-judicial Procedures
  - Simply Not Used or Usable – “As It Is”



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# Bob's Rules of Order for Colorado Local Governments

SIMPLIFIED PARLIAMENTARY  
RULES FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS

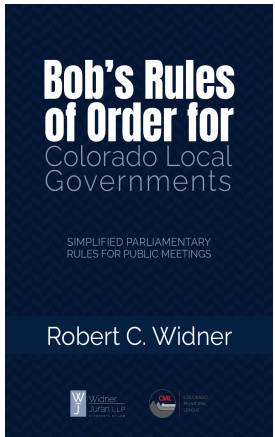
Robert C. Widner



- Product of +30 years of:
  - Meeting Frustrations & Problems
  - Successful Meeting Practices
  - Listserv Issues & Questions
  - Actual Use & Improvements
- Not a “Shameless Plug”

# Giving Credit

- Many Governments, Officials & Staff
- Colorado Municipal League
- Widner Juran LLP
- City of Centennial

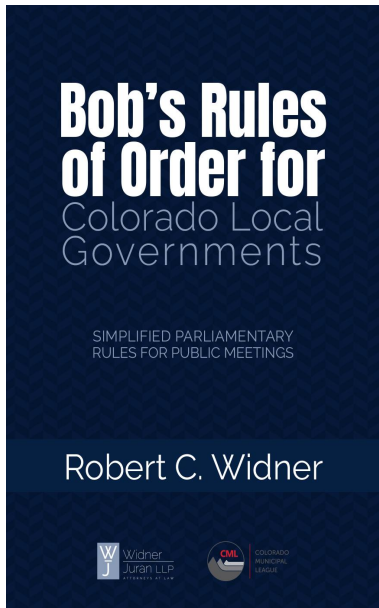




## *Expert Advisors*

David Broadwell  
Gerald (Jerry) Dahl  
Sam Light  
Wynetta Massey  
Robert Sheesley

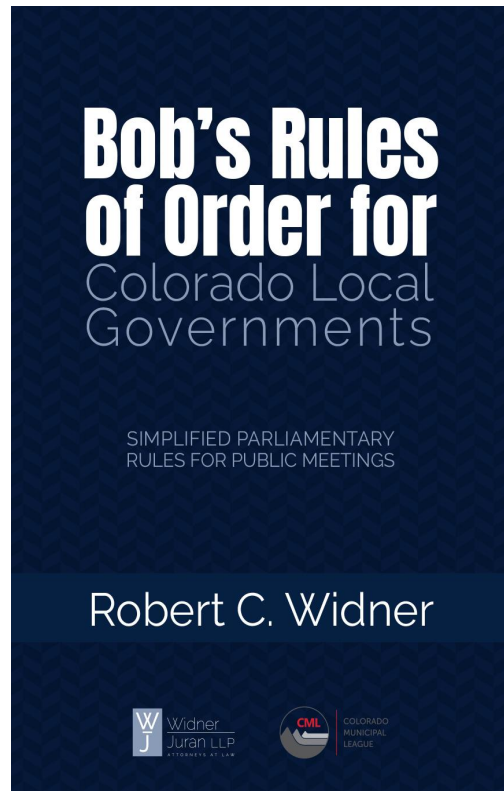




- Just the Basics Needed
- Simplistic Enough to Understand
- Integrates Successful Local Practices
- Provides Flexibility – Suspend & Deviate
- “Amendable”
- Conforms to Colorado Law
- Recognizes Quasi-Judicial Obligations

# Bob's Rules of Order

Look inside



## Rules

## Points & Motions

# The Rules

## CHAPTER 3 THE RULES

*Bob's Rules of Order* establishes rules governing the various aspects of a public meeting. The rules are set forth in the following order:

- 1.0 The Meeting Generally
- 2.0 The Quorum
- 3.0 The Presiding Officer
- 4.0 The Floor
- 5.0 The Motion
- 6.0 The Friendly Requests
- 7.0 The Vote
- 8.0 Rule Suspension and Rule Deviation



# The Rules

Rule

Commentary

Special Note

The Rule in Practice

## Rule 1.2

**The meeting agenda will be followed unless properly amended or modified.**

### Commentary

An efficient meeting is, in part, the result of organization. Organization is best achieved by following a meeting agenda. To

### Special Note: Discussion of Quasi-Judicial Matters

Members sitting as judges for a quasi-judicial matter must remain fair, impartial, and unbiased and judge the matter

### The Rule in Practice

The following dialogue provides an example of Rule 6.1 in practice:

Background: The Town Manager presents Ordinance 19 to the Town Board. Ordinance 19 will amend the

# APPENDIX B

## ***Bob's Rules of Order***

### **List of Rules for Reference**

#### **1.0 The Meeting Generally**

- Rule 1.1 Any state or local law that concerns the conduct of a meeting is a part of the *Rules of Order* to the extent the law is applicable to the Body.
- Rule 1.2 The meeting agenda will be followed unless properly amended or modified.
- Rule 1.3 The Body may presume that any legally required public notice for the meeting and for each agenda item was properly completed.
- Rule 1.4 A Member shall disclose a conflict of interest and recuse themselves from both participation and voting when required by applicable state or local law.

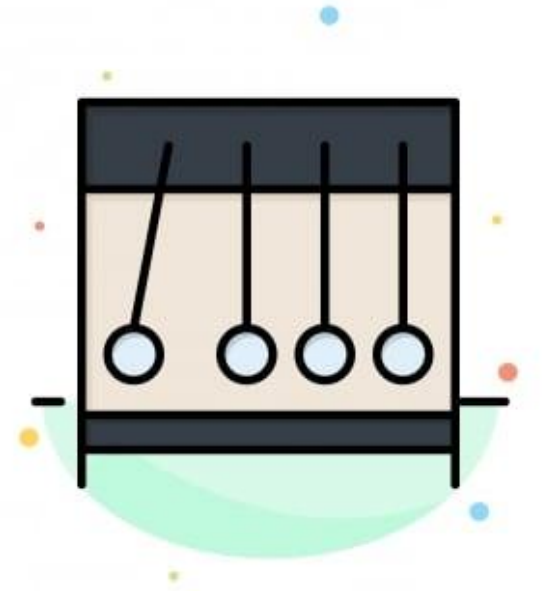
# Points (3)



- Point of **Order**  
(Bring the Body into Compliance with the Rules)
- Point of **Information**  
(Obtain Urgently Needed Information)
- Point of **Appeal**  
(Appeal Presiding Officer's Decision)

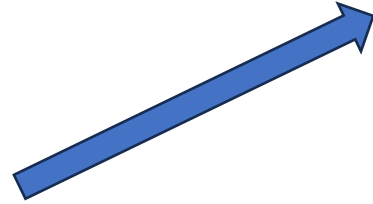
# Motions (8)

- **Principal** Motion
- Motion to **Continue or Postpone**
- Motion to **Amend**
- Motion to **Close Debate**
- Motion to **Reconsider**
- Motion to **Recess**
- Motion to **Adjourn**
- Motion for **Executive Session**

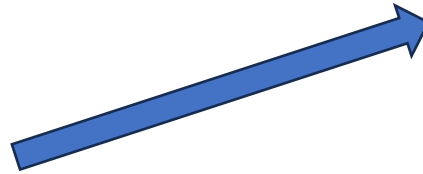


# Points & Motions

Point or Motion



Purpose



Requirements and  
Limitations

Commentary



Motion/Point in  
Practice



## 17.0 Motion to Amend

### Purpose

The purpose of a Motion to Amend is to modify a *debatable* motion on the Floor.

### Requirements and Limitations

Type of Action	Subordinate motion (to a debatable motion)
When in Order?	When a <i>debatable</i> motion is on the Floor
Floor Required?	Yes
Second Required?	Yes
Debatable?	Yes
Subject to Motion to Amend?	No
Friendly Amendment Possible?	No
Vote Required?	Majority of quorum
Subject to Motion to Reconsider?	No

### Commentary

A Motion to Amend is available and applicable only to a debatable motion on the Floor. The motion must provide specificity as to the

### The Motion in Practice

The following dialogue highlights the offer of a Motion to Amend a debatable motion.

Background:      The Body is considering Ordinance No. 6, which would create a new municipal offense for an unlicensed animal. The Ordinance provides for a

# APPENDIX C

## Bob's Rules of Order

### Summary Table of Points and Motions

TYPE	MOTION	FLOOR?	WHEN IN ORDER?	SECOND?	DEBAT-ABLE?	VOTE?
POINT	<b>Order</b>	No	Any time	No	No	No
	<b>Information</b>	No	Any time	No	No	No
	<b>Appeal</b>	No	Immediately following Presiding Officer's decision	No	No	Majority of quorum
MAIN	<b>Principal Motion</b>	Yes	When no motion is pending	Yes	Yes	Majority of quorum usually but may depend on special law. Rule 7.6
	<b>Reconsider</b>	Yes	When no motion is pending but with limited availability. Section 19	Yes	Yes, only as to the reason to reconsider	2/3 of quorum
	<b>Adjourn</b>	Yes	When no motion is pending	Yes	Yes	Majority of quorum

TYPE	MOTION	FLOOR?	WHEN IN ORDER?	SECOND?	DEBAT-ABLE?	VOTE?
MAIN	<b>Continue or Postpone</b>	Yes	When no motion is pending	Yes	Yes	Majority of quorum
		Yes	When a Principal Motion is pending	Yes	Yes	Majority of quorum
SUBSIDIARY	<b>Amend</b> a pending debatable motion	Yes	When a debatable motion is pending	Yes	Yes	Majority of quorum
	<b>Close Debate</b>	Yes	When a debatable motion is pending	Yes	No	2/3 of quorum
PRIVILEGED	<b>Recess</b>	Yes	Any time	Yes	No	Majority of quorum
	<b>Executive Session</b>	Yes	Any time	Yes	No	2/3 of quorum



# Special Matters

- How to Revise and Adopt *Bob's Rules*
- “Friendly Amendment”
- “Friendly Withdrawal”
- “So Moved” Motion
- Abstaining from the Vote
- Leaving the Dais During a Pending Motion
- Appointment & Election Processes



*(Hope We Have Time for)*  
Questions.







# THANK YOU

To Reach Bob Widner:

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# THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

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