

Mr. Roberts and VRA

1. **Why do we manage VRA by Robert's Rules of Order?**

It works! And historically, it has served organized management well. NRA and VRA Bylaws mandate it.

2. **The process is a guide or tool for the orderly transaction of business:**

- a) Aids presiding officer;
- b) Aids participants, ensuring everyone an opportunity to be heard;
- c) Provides a firm basis for resolving questions.

3. **Who is on first? The presiding officer.**

This person maintains impartiality and helps to preserve an objective, impersonal approach to business; does not enter into discussions unless removing oneself from the Chair.

4. **How do we begin a meeting?**

- a) The president extends greetings and calls the meeting to order;
- b) The president appoints a parliamentarian (This office is required for all business meetings and optional for Board meetings);
- c) The president establishes that a quorum is present. This ensures total representation. Without a quorum, the only action that can be taken is to set a time for adjournment;
- d) The president and the assembly establish an agenda. The presiding officer may initiate or the assembly may create it.

5. **The order of business:**

Call to order
Parliamentarian appointment, if required or desired
Quorum established
Establish the Agenda
Reading and Approval of Minutes
Reports of Officers, Board and Standing Committees
Report of Ad Hoc Committees
Special Order: Business postponed until this specific meeting/date.
Unfinished Business – matters coming forward from previous meeting
New Business – matters initiated through agenda preparation or in the current meeting

Note: Robert's Rules do not allow for proxy voting or representative voting; however, all VRA meetings are open to the entire membership.

6. **Means by which business is brought before the assembly.**

- a) Main Motion (VRA Officers and Board members are qualified to make motions and vote; committee chairs may take part in all discussions, but are not eligible to make motions, second them or vote in board meetings unless they hold an office or board position. They have full participation in the annual business meeting, as do all VRA members;

- b) Motions require a second – meaning, the matter should come before the assembly, but seconder may not be in full agreement with the motion;
- c) All motions are debatable;
- d) All motions may be amended;
- e) All motions require a majority vote to become official.

Motions may grow out of agenda items, reports or communications.

The maker of a motion has the right to modify or withdraw the motion. Any other changes must be made through an amendment. Members of the assembly may request the maker to accept a modification, which may be accepted or restated by the motioner. The modifier has in effect seconded the motion. The Chair then states “It has been moved and seconded.....”

The number and length of debates can be controlled by 2/3rds vote of the assembly. A motion is required for this action. Debates must continue on a “pro” and “con” basis only. No two persons in favor or again a motion may speak in succession. Debate remarks are addressed to the Chair, not the membership, i.e., no speech making.

The presiding officer should not enter the discussion, unless in rare instances when he/she leaves the Chair until pending business has been disposed of.

Presiding officers must hear all who wish to speak to an issue unless there is a time limit set for debate. When the debate appears to end, the presiding officer asks, “Are you ready for the question”? He/she calls for the affirmative vote, then the negative. A member of the assembly may “call the previous question”, which is a request to vote on the matter of discussion.

Time is often saved by use of unanimous consent when business is routine or of little importance. The Chair may say, “If there is no objection, we may consider this matter approved by unanimous consent”. This does not necessarily mean “everyone” approves, but the matter is not worthy of the time for additional discussion.

Help your Secretary and help yourself!

Do **NOT** expect a history report!

Minutes are a record of what was done, not what was said. They should not reflect opinions, favorable or otherwise.

- a) The first paragraph includes: what, where, when and who, plus who presided at the meeting;
- b) the body: There should be a separate paragraph for each subject, including the correct wording of each motion, name of each monitor and the disposition of the motion. (Persons who second motions are not named) If a special vote, i.e., ballot is necessary, it should be noted;
- c) Last paragraph includes the hour of adjournment and may include the date, time and

place of the next meeting.

Additional Notes:

When a committee report is of great importance or should be recorded for legislative history, the assembly can order it be “entered in the minutes” by the motion.

The names and subject of guest speakers should be recorded, but not summaries of addresses.

Minutes must be signed by the secretary and may be signed by the President, if so ordered by the assembly.

7. Treasurer’s Report

Requires no action. It is filed (accepted) for audit. Annual Treasurer’s Reports may be accepted by the business session for information purposes. The auditor’s report is the final approval of the Treasurer’s work and is filed with the minutes of the annual meeting.

8. The Budget

An organizational budget is a working tool, (not set in stone) but must be respected. No one has authority to obligate VRA funds, not approved by the Board. All unexpected expenditures must be approved in some manner by the Board, i.e. meetings, or communication by mail/email or telephone for approval.