



RONR 12th Edition - Changes from 11th Edition & Subsidiary Motions

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Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 12th ed., and RONR *In Brief*, 3rd ed.

The 12th edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (RONR), is now available. Although detailed update information is not yet available, book-seller websites note the following relevant changes, as applied to local governments:¹

- Expanded appendix of charts, tables, and lists;
- Sample rules for electronic meetings;²
- Guidance on postponing a motion, reconsidering a vote, and making and enforcing points of order and appeals; and
- Clarifications, additions, and refinements to improve the presentation of existing rules, incorporate new interpretations, and address common inquiries.

Also, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised *In Brief* (RONR *In Brief*) has been updated to the 3rd edition. RONR *In Brief* provides a concise and straightforward introductory guide for parliamentary procedure questions, and is cross-referenced to RONR 12th ed.

Municipalities whose meeting rules (or procedures) expressly reference RONR 11th edition may want to consider updating the reference to RONR 12th ed. If your meeting rules reference the "latest edition of RONR," then no action is required.

When the 11th edition was published, the Roberts Organization published detailed changes between the 10th and 11th editions. I expect a similar approach after the publication of the 12th edition.

Subsidiary Motions

This month, we discuss subsidiary motions and will focus on the differences between Lay on the Table (Table), Postpone, and Postpone Indefinitely. Subsidiary motions relate to the treatment or disposition of the main motion and other motions. A subsidiary motion applies to another motion and, if adopted, impacts the other motion. They are in order when the main motion is pending.³

RONR recognizes seven subsidiary motions. Ranked lowest to highest in order of precedence, they are the motions to:

- §11 Postpone Indefinitely – kills the main motion without a direct vote on the main motion. A majority vote is required to pass.
- §12 Amend – changes the main motion or amends certain other motions.
- §13 Commit or Refer – sends the main motion and any pending subsidiary motions to a committee (or other identified group) for consideration. This motion usually includes a defined time to report back to the governing body.
- §14 Postpone to a Certain Time (or Definitely) – delays consideration of the main motion and any pending subsidiary motions until the day/time set by motion.
- §15 Limit or Extend Limits of Debate (discussion) – changes the discussion rules, set by the approved meeting rules, by increasing or decreasing the number of times to speak or the length of time each speaker may use.
- §16 Previous Question – closes discussion, further action, and brings an immediate vote, for any motion or pending series of motions.

§17 Table – suspends consideration of the main motion and any pending subsidiary motions to allow for immediate consideration of more urgent business; usually, for consideration later at the same meeting, without specifying a time, but only when a majority decides to revisit it.⁴

Subsidiary Motions §11, §12, §13, §14, and §17 require a second and a majority vote to pass. Close Discussion and Limit/Extend Discussion (§15 & §16) require a two-thirds majority to pass.

Table, Postpone, and Postpone Indefinitely

An area of continuing confusion is when to use Table, Postpone to a Certain Time, or Postpone Indefinitely. Under RONR, to Table a motion does NOT mean to end the discussion on the item indefinitely. To “Table” means a temporary delay and implies that this motion will be discussed later (usually in the same meeting). Where it gets confusing is that when a motion is tabled, it requires another motion to bring the item off the table. A frequent misconception is that if a motion is tabled, it means ending discussion forever.

To avoid confusion, both the motion maker and the chair should make clear their intent about handling the motion. Does the maker wish to stop discussion for the foreseeable future? If yes, use the Motion to Postpone Indefinitely. Or does the motion maker wish to resume the discussion at the next or a future meeting? Then use the Motion to Postpone to a Certain Time. Finally, if the desire is to stop the discussion to take up a more pressing matter, using the Motion to Table clarifies that. Again, recognizing that a Motion to bring off the Table will then be required.

For now, let’s move to postpone further discussion of Subsidiary Motions to the October edition of *The Municipality*.

1. <https://www.robertsrules.com/>

2. <https://www.robertsrules.com/pdfs/electronic-meeting-sample-rules.pdf>

3. A FEW FAQ'S ON PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE, Larmer & Hill, 2006

4. RONR 12th ed. Pages 66-64 and 126-218

Legal Captions

Employees 365

HR Matters column article, by Attorney Lisa Bergersen, discussing five important facts about compensatory time for non-exempt employees, including: employee agreement to receive compensatory time, FLSA regulations regarding accrual and use, paying compensation time upon separation of employment, WRS late interest penalties that may apply to compensatory time carryover, and granting time off for extra hours to exempt employees.

Powers of Municipalities #939

A municipality may rely on its broad statutory and/or constitutional home rule powers to create a transportation

utility and charge property owners transportation utility fees. Alternatively, a municipality may charge property owners a street maintenance user fee under Wis. Stat. § 66.0627. Any fee must be reasonably related to the cost of the services provided. A transportation utility fee is most defensible against challenge if the basis for the fee is closely related to property occupants’ use of the local street network. Transportation utility fees with such a basis are accurately characterized as fees and not taxes. Such fees should be segregated and used only for street maintenance and other transportation services. To avoid needing to reduce the community’s property tax levy under § 66.0602(2m)(b) of the levy limit law, municipalities should avoid using transportation utility fee revenue to pay for snow plowing or street sweeping.



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