

Robert's Rules of Order

VSBA Member Webinar

August 4, 2022

Introductions

Today's Presenters



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Behind the scene...
Kerri Lamb
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Technical difficulties:
802-477-3601

Webinar Logistics

Technical difficulties: 802-477-3601

Questions

- Questions and comments are encouraged
- Please use the Q&A function for questions (not chat)
- All questions are facilitated anonymously

Evaluation

- After the webinar

Email follow-up

- Link to the video
- Presentation slides
- Other resources

Archived

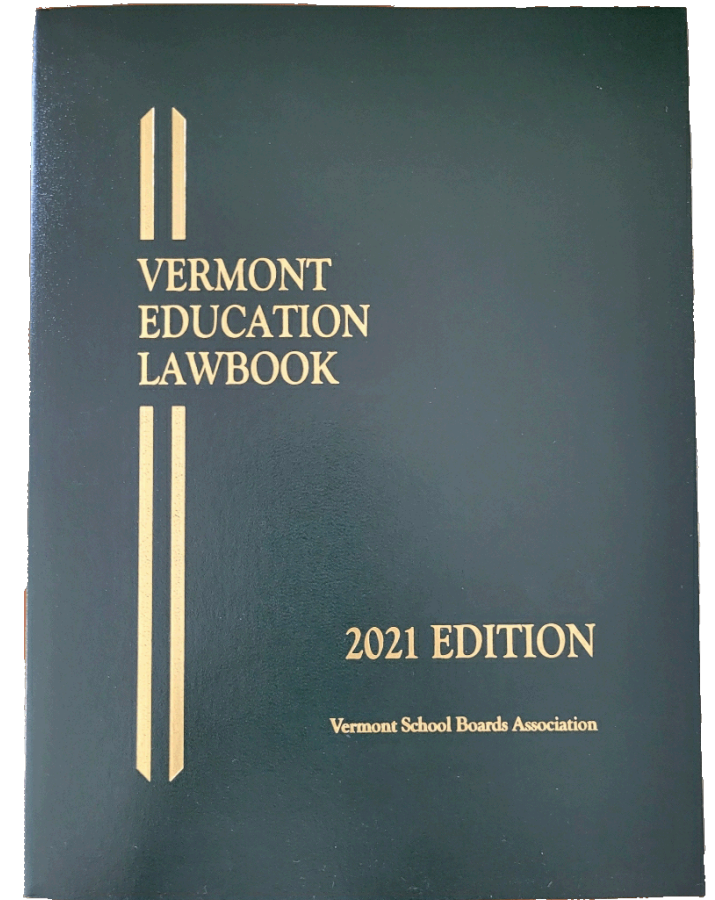
- VSBA website (Webinar Archive page)

Overview

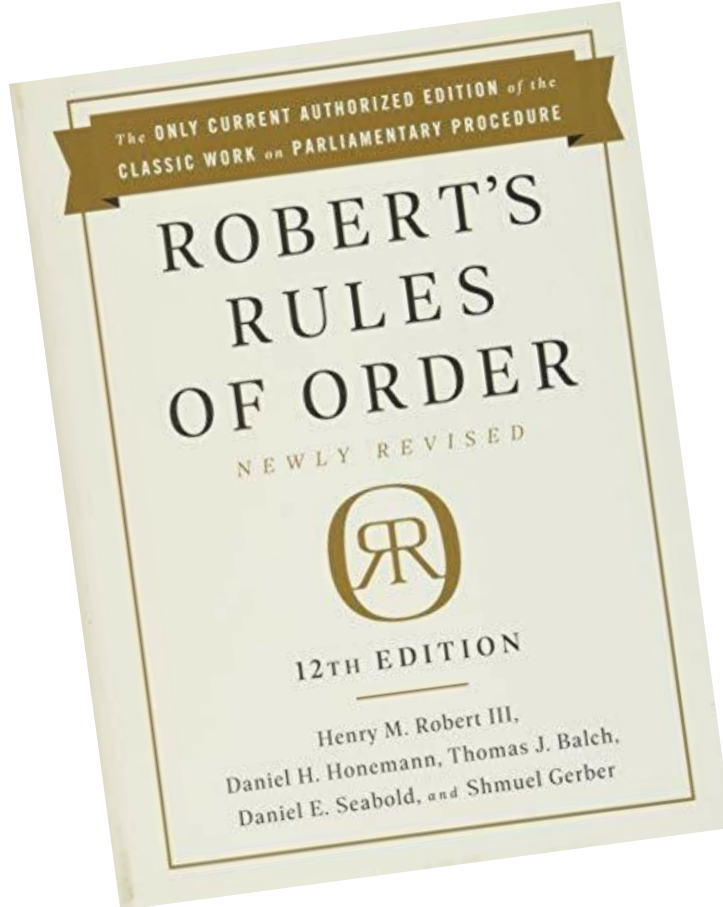
- Why Robert's Rules of Order
- Basic Principles of Robert's Rules
- Roles and Responsibilities of the Chair
- Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members
- Types of Motions
- Useful Resources

Vermont Law Requires Use Of Robert's Rules

“Robert’s Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of school board meetings.”
16 V.S.A. § 554(b)



Most Current - Newly Revised 12th Edition



- Robert's Rules of Order, 12th Edition, 2020
- Supersedes all previous editions
- Section and paragraph numbering
 - **(12)** boldface number refers to an entire section (here section 12)
 - 12:1 two numbers separated by colon refer to a paragraph
 - first number indicates section in which paragraph is located and second number indicates paragraph within the section (here, the first paragraph in section 12)

Basic Principles of Robert's Rules of Order

Protect the rights of:

- The majority to decide
- The minority to be heard
- Individual member
- Absentee members
- All these together



Purpose of Robert's Rules

- Facilitate and expedite the transaction of the board's business
- Promote cooperation
- Consider one thing at a time
- Have free and full debate
- Protect the rights of absentees
- Record action which is taken and make it a matter of record

Chair's Role and Responsibilities

Preside and conduct the meeting in a manner that is:

- Impartial
- Fair
- Objective
- Calm



Chair's Role and Responsibilities

- Call meeting to order
- Announce agenda items in proper order
- Recognize members who are entitled to the floor
- State and put to vote all proper motions and announce the result of each vote
- Protect the board from obviously dilatory motions
- To enforce rules relating to debate, order and decorum
- Decide questions of order

Chair's Role and Responsibilities

- The chair protects their impartial position by voting only when the vote would affect the outcome, in which case the chair can either vote and change the result or abstain
- As presiding officer, the chair does not enter discussion of the merits of pending questions (unless they leave the chair until the pending business is finished as described in Section 43:29-30)
- On rare occasions, the presiding officer may decide to participate in debate – must turn the chair over to another member and cannot return to the chair until the pending question has been disposed of

Board Members' Decorum in Debate

- Confine remarks to the merits of the pending question
- Refrain from attacking a members' motives
- Address all remarks through the chair
- Avoid the use of members' names
- Refrain from speaking adversely on a prior action not pending
- Refrain from speaking against one's own motion
- Refrain from disturbing the assembly (e.g. side conversations)

Obtaining the Floor

- Before a member can make a motion or speak in debate, they must obtain the floor (be recognized by the chair as having the exclusive right to be heard at that time).
- To claim the floor, a member raises their hand and waits to be recognized by the chair.
- If the member is entitled to the floor, the chair recognizes them.
- When a member has the floor, other members may not interrupt except for a few specific purposes outlined in section 42:18 and then only when the urgency of the situation justifies it.

When A Meeting Is Out Of Order

- Individual members making personal remarks
- Members bringing up the same motion or essentially one like it
- Putting a debatable issue to vote before the full debate is complete
- Debates are not directed to motions but to motives, principles and personalities.
- Members yelling out in opposition
- Members not being recognized by the Chair

Steps To Making A Motion

1. Member rises (raises hand)
2. Chair recognizes member
3. Member states the motion
“I move to...”
4. Another member seconds
the motion

Steps To Handling A Motion

1. Chair states motion and places it before the assembly
 - *“It is moved and seconded that....”*
 - *“Is there any discussion?”*
2. Members are recognized and debate the motion (subsidiary motions may be introduced during this time)

Steps To Handling A Motion

3. Chair puts question to a vote

- *“The question is on the adoption of the motion to...”*
- *“Those in favor please say aye”*
- *“Those opposed please say nay”*

4. Chair announces the results of the vote

- *“Those in favor have it, the motion has been adopted to...”*
- *“Those opposed have it; the motion to... does not pass”*
- *“The next order of business is...”*

Three Types of Motions

1. Main motions
2. Secondary motions
 - Subsidiary motions
 - Privileged motions
 - Incidental motions
3. Motions that bring a question before the board again

Main Motions

- Only motion whose introduction brings business before the assembly
- Sets a pattern from which all other motions are derived
- Can only be made when no other motion is pending
- Ranks lowest in the order of precedence of motions



Secondary Motions

Motion whose relationship to main motion is such that

- It can be made and considered while main motion is pending without violating the principle of taking up only one question at a time
- When the secondary motion has been made and admitted by the chair as “in order,” it must be acted upon or disposed of before direct consideration of the main motion can be continued

Precedence of one motion over another

- Secondary motions take precedence over the main motion
- Certain secondary motions take precedence over others – related to the division of secondary motions into the classes of subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions (see chart in Robert’s Rules 12th edition for determining when each subsidiary or privileged motion is in order)

Subsidiary Motions

- Assist the board in treating or disposing of a main motion
- Have all five of the following characteristics:
 - Always applied to another motion while it is pending
 - Can be applied to any main motion
 - Fit into an order of precedence so that no subsidiary motion can be moved when a subsidiary motion of a higher rank is pending
 - Are out of order when another member has the floor
 - Are in order during the entire time that a motion to which they can be applied is pending

The Seven Subsidiary Motions

- Postpone the Main Question Indefinitely
- Amend the Main Question
- Commit the Main Question (refer to a committee)
- Postpone to a Certain Time (a.k.a. Motion to Postpone Definitely)
- Limit or Extend Limits of Debate
- Move the Previous Question
- Lay on the Table

Privileged Motions

- Do not relate to the pending business
- Special matters of immediate and overriding importance which, without debate, should be allowed to interrupt consideration of anything else
- All privileged motions take precedence over motions of any other class
- Like subsidiary motions, the five privileged motions fit into an order of precedence

The Five Privileged Motions

1. Call for the Orders of the Day
2. Raise a Question of Privilege
3. Move to Recess
4. Move to Adjourn
5. Move to Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn

Incidental Motions

- Deal with questions of procedure arising out of another motion or an item of business
- Usually related to the main question in such a way that they must be decided immediately before business can proceed
- Most incidental motions are undebatable

The Eleven Incidental Motions

Point of Order – if member feels chair is failing to follow the rules, the member can call attention to it by making a point of order **at the time the breach occurs** (23)

Appeal – any two members, by moving and seconding an appeal **immediately after the chair has made a ruling** on a question of parliamentary procedure, can require the chair to submit the matter to a vote of the entire board (24)

Precedence of Incidental Motions

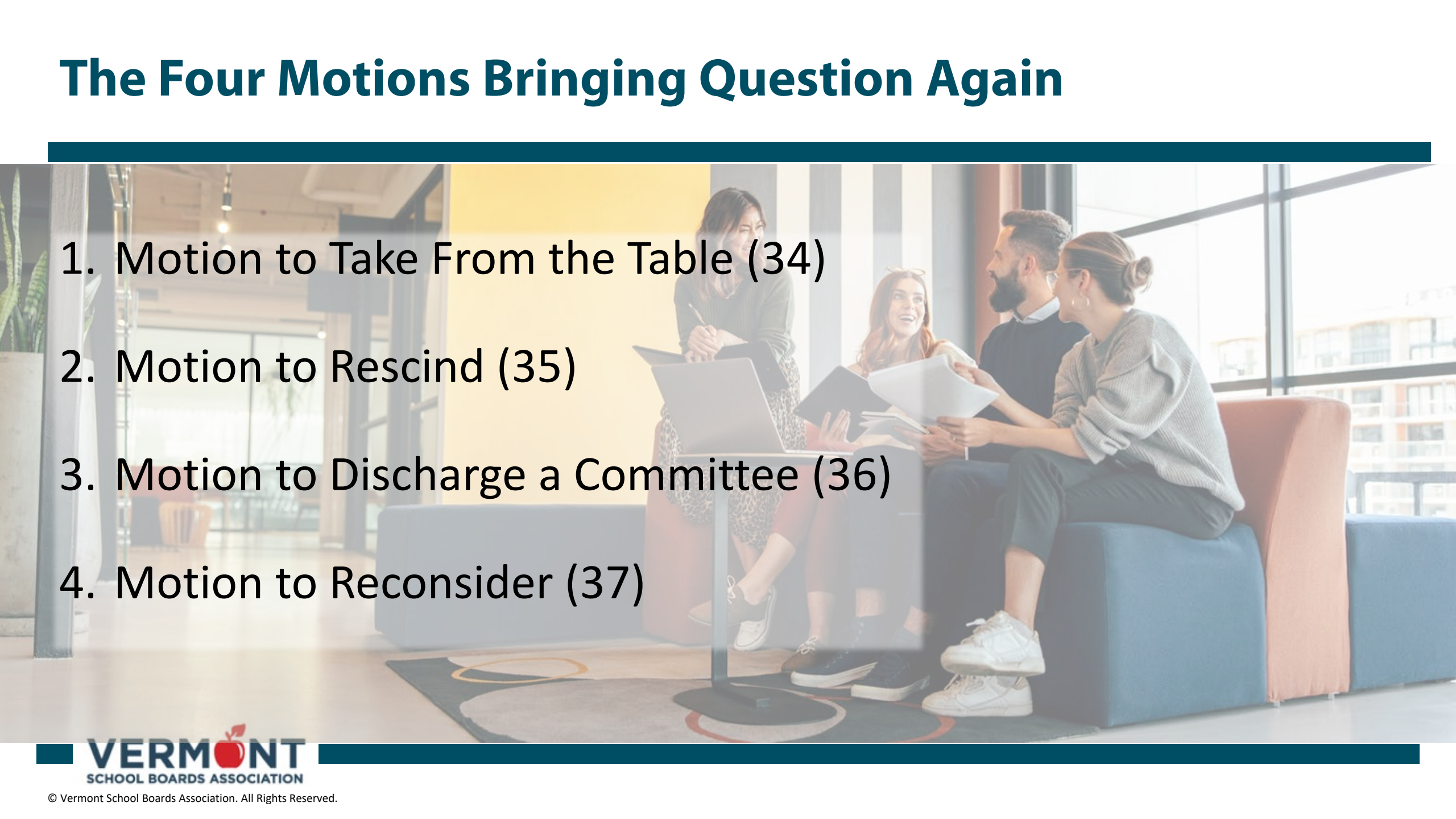
- An incidental motion is in order only when it is legitimately incidental to another pending motion, or when it is legitimately incidental in some other way to business at hand
- An incidental motion that is in order takes precedence over any other motions that are pending

Motions that Bring a Question Before Board Again

Related to the following principles of parliamentary law:

- The same or substantially same question cannot be brought up again except through special procedures
- While a question is temporarily disposed of, but is not finally settled, no similar or conflicting motion whose adoption would restrict the board in acting on the first question can be introduced
- To change what the board has adopted requires something more (in the way of a vote or previous notice to members) than was necessary to adopt it in the first place

The Four Motions Bringing Question Again

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- A group of four professionals (three women and one man) are gathered in a modern office environment, likely a lounge or meeting area. They are seated on a large, colorful modular sofa (blue and orange). One woman is standing and holding a laptop, while the others are seated, looking at documents and the laptop. They appear to be in a collaborative meeting. The background shows large windows and modern office decor.
1. Motion to Take From the Table (34)
 2. Motion to Rescind (35)
 3. Motion to Discharge a Committee (36)
 4. Motion to Reconsider (37)

Motion to Rescind

- Takes precedence over nothing; can only be moved when no other motion is pending (35:1)
- Previous notice of intent to offer this motion at the next meeting can be given while another motion is pending, provided it does not interrupt a speaker (35:1)
- Can be applied to any decision which has continuing force and effect, made at any time as the result of the adoption of a main motion (35:2)
- Requires majority vote when notice of intent to make the motion was given at the previous meeting or in the agenda; otherwise, 2/3 vote (35:7)

Robert's Rules Resources

Table of Rules Relating to Motions

- Type of motion?
- In order when another has the floor?
- Must be seconded?
- Debatable?
- Amendable?
- Vote required for adoption?
- Can be reconsidered?

Action	What to Say	Can interrupt speaker?	Need a Second?	Can be Debated?	Can be Amended?	Votes Needed
Introduce main motion	"I move to..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by...." (add or strike words or both)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Move item to committee	"I move that we refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Postpone item	"I move to postpone the	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

Sample Forms Used in Making Motions

Open Meeting Law

- Any addition to or deletion from the agenda shall be made as the first act of business at the meeting (1 V.S.A. §312(d)(3)(A))
- Any other adjustments may be made at any time during the meeting (1 V.S.A. §312(d)(3)(B))

Public Comment

*Board meetings are public meetings,
but they are **not** a meeting of the public*

- *16 V.S.A. §554(b)*: a reasonable opportunity to appear and express views on any matter considered by the board shall be given to any person in the school district
- *1 V.S.A. 312(h)*: public comment shall be subject to reasonable rules established by the chair

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