Robert’s Rules of Order:

The Motion to Amend — Perfecting the Main Motion

LSU Agricultural Faculty Council Meeting
September 18, 2026

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AFC Series on Robert's Rules of Order

- 3/20/2026 - Robert's Rules of Order: Why They Matter
- 4/24/2026 - Robert's Rules of Order: How Meetings Work
- 8/21/2026 - Robert's Rules of Order: Motions and Their Hierarchy
- **9/18/2026 - Robert's Rules of Order: The Motion to Amend — Perfecting the Main Motion**

Where We Left Off

Four Classes of Motions

From Last Time

Robert's Rules recognizes four major classes of motions:

1. Main Motions
2. Subsidiary Motions
3. Privileged Motions
4. Incidental Motions

← Our focus last time

They serve different purposes.

Where We Left Off

Main Motion

What do we want to do?

Subsidiary Motion

What should we do with the proposal?

AMEND

Amend is a subsidiary motion. It ranks above both Postpone Indefinitely and the Main Motion, and so it would be dealt with first.

Why Amend?

A Main Motion is a starting point—not necessarily the finished product.

The assembly may agree with the general idea...

...but disagree with its exact wording or details.

Amend allows us to perfect the proposal.

Three Ways to Amend

A motion can be amended by:

1. **Inserting or Adding**
   Put something into the motion

2. **Striking Out**
   Remove something from the motion

3. **Striking Out and Inserting**
   Replace something with something else

Start With a Main Motion

Start with a Main Motion:

MAIN MOTION

“I move that the AFC recommend that the College hold an annual faculty forum.”

This is our starting point.

Amend by Adding

Main Motion:

“...hold an annual faculty forum.”

Amendment:

“I move to add the words ‘each fall.’”

If adopted:

“...hold an annual faculty forum each fall.”

We vote on the amendment first—not yet on whether to adopt the Main Motion.

Amend by Striking Out / Substitution

Examples of the other two ways to amend

Strike Out

Remove “annual”

Strike Out and Insert

Replace “each fall” with “during the spring semester”

The principle is the same:

Perfect the wording before deciding the proposal.

What Are We Voting On?

Are we voting on the Main Motion?

Not yet.

Amendment → Main Motion as Amended → Final Vote

An Amendment Can Be Amended

Main Motion

→ Primary Amendment

→ Secondary Amendment

A secondary amendment seeks to amend the primary amendment, not the main motion.

An amendment to an amendment is permitted.

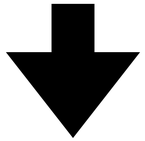
But:

We cannot amend the secondary amendment again.

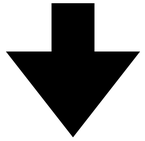
Working Back Down

the LIFO Stack

Secondary Amendment



Primary Amendment



Main Motion

Principle: Deal with the immediately pending question first, then work our way back down the stack to the main motion.

One Important Limitation

Germaneness

An amendment must be germane.

That is:

It must relate to the subject matter of the motion being amended.

This prevents unrelated subject matter from being introduced through the amendment process.

Important point: The chair rules on whether a proposed amendment is germane.

One Important Limitation
Example

An amendment must be germane.

Main Motion:

"...the College hold an annual faculty forum."

Proposed Amendment:

"...and that faculty parking fees be reduced by 25%."

Not Germane

The amendment introduces an unrelated subject rather than something directly related to the pending proposal.

Amendment Is Not Opposition

An amendment can mean:

“I support what we're trying to do, but I think we can make the proposal better.”

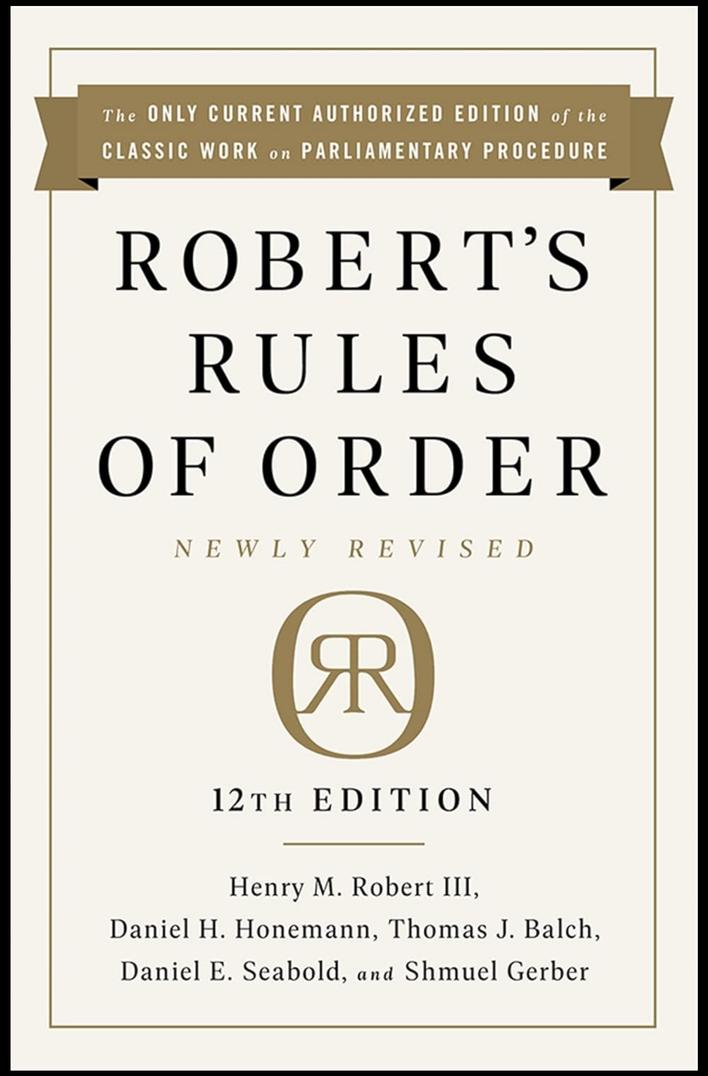
Deliberation → Amendment → Better-defined proposal → Decision

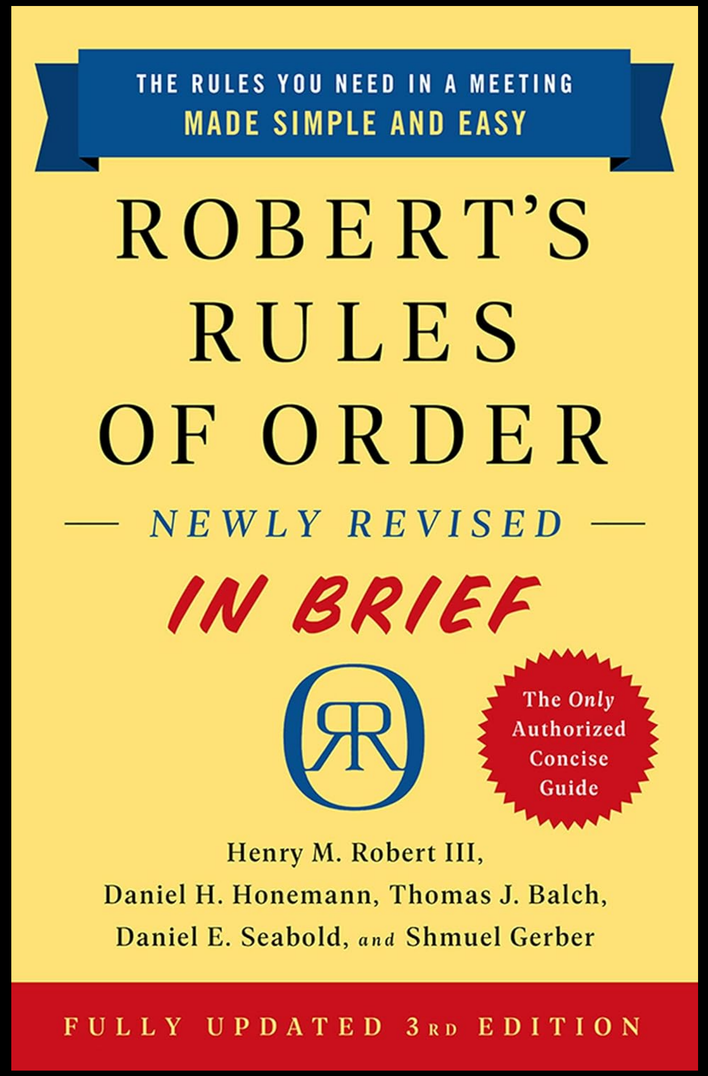
The amendment process is a system for turning deliberation into improvements in the actual proposal before the body.

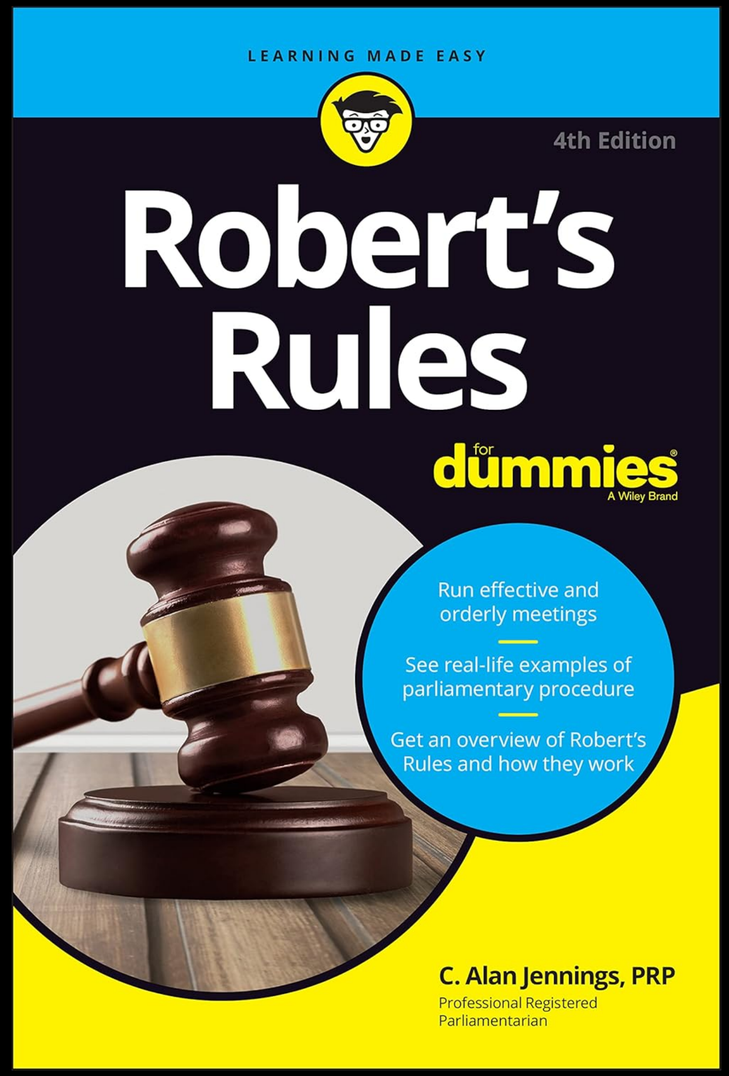
Final Thought

Robert's Rules doesn't exist to constrain deliberation; it gives deliberation an orderly mechanism through which it can improve the decision.

Resources


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


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4th Edition
Robert's Rules
for dummies
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C. Alan Jennings, PRP
Professional Registered Parliamentarian

End of Today’s Presentation