Robert's Rules of Order
The Basics for Small Boards

Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules for conducting orderly meetings that accomplish goals fairly. Benefits of parliamentary procedure include the following:
- Justice and courtesy for all
- Maintenance of order
- Consideration of one item at a time
- All sides get heard
- Ability for each member to provide input
- Majority rule
- Protection of the rights of all members including the minority

Basic Principles
- A quorum must be present for business to be conducted
- All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations
- [No person should speak until recognized by the chair]
- Personal remarks or side discussions during debate are out of order
- Only one question at a time may be considered, and only one person may have the floor at any one time
- Members have a right to know what the pending question is and to have it restated before a vote is taken
- Full and free discussion of every main motion is a basic right
- A majority decides a question except when basic rights of members are involved or a rule provides otherwise.
- Silence gives consent. Those who do not vote allow the decision to be made by those who do vote.
- [The Chair should always remain impartial.]

Basic Definitions

Motion – A formal proposal made to bring a subject before an assembly for its consideration and action. Begins with "I move that..."

Second – A statement by a member who agrees that the motion made by another member be considered. Stated as "Second," or "I second the motion."

Amendment – Before the vote is taken on a motion, it may be amended by:
- Striking out words
- Inserting or adding words
- Striking out words and inserting others in their place
- Substituting one (1) paragraph or resolution for another

Presiding officer/Chair – The individual who facilitates the meeting, usually the Chair [President]. In the absence of the Chair [President], the Vice Chair [President] is next. If neither are present, the Clerk [Secretary] calls the meeting to order and conducts an election for a Chairman Pro Tem (a presiding officer for that meeting only).

Role of the Presiding officer
- To introduce business in proper order per the agenda
- To recognize speakers

• To determine if a motion is in order
• To keep discussion focused on the pending motion
• To maintain order
• To put motions to a vote and announce results

General procedure for Handling a Main Motion
• A member [must] may obtain the floor by being recognized by the chair
• Member makes a main motion
• A motion must be seconded by another member before it can be considered
• If the motion is in order, the chair will restate the motion and open debate
• The maker of a motion has the right to speak first in debate
• The main motion is debated along with any secondary motions that are debatable.
• Debate on Subsidiary, Privileged and Incidental motions (if debatable or amendable) take precedence over debate on the main motion and must be decided before debate on the main motion can continue.
• Debate is closed when: Discussion has ended, or A [2/3] majority vote closes debate.
• The chair restates the motion, and if necessary clarifies the consequences of affirmative and negative votes
• The chair calls for a vote by asking "All in favor?" Those in favor say "Aye." Then asking "All opposed?" Those opposed will say "no"
• The chair announces the result

General rules of Debate for small Boards
• All discussion must be relevant to the immediately pending question
• No member should speak more than once [twice] to each debatable motion until [. The second time takes place after] everyone wishing to debate the motion has had an opportunity to speak once
• [All remarks should be addressed to the chair – no cross debate is permitted]
• Debate must address issues not personalities
• When possible, the chair should let the floor alternate between those speaking in support and those speaking in opposition to the motion
• Members may not disrupt the assembly
• Rules of debate can be changed by a [2/3] majority vote or general consent without objection