

BVA Executive Meeting – Proposed Rules of Order

At our Oct. 21, 2015 BVA Executive Meeting, we moved, discussed and then tabled a motion to adopt Robert's Rules of Order until the November meeting.

We subsequently had a brief explanation about the Consent Agenda Item concept, however did not move the motion that had been proposed.

From the discussion on both Robert's Rules of Order and the Consent Agenda Item concept, a few needs emerged:

- BVA Executive members need to have an understanding of the key elements of both Robert's Rules of Order, and the Consent Agenda Item concept. *Some information and links are provided below.*
- There is a concern that for BVA committees or one or two people, there is a need for being able to bring forward certain items that are beyond just information, but where there are no 'motions' either. These would be items where a small Committee is looking for some input, feedback or help from the BVA Executive. *This can be enabled by Committees tabling / outlining a topic in advance of the meeting, and outlining that they are looking for some input / guidance.*
- Desire for more discipline in our meeting process, but concerned about what this will mean in practice. *This change will take some adjustment and there will be some learning along the way, however the net result will enable more efficient meetings that cover more items and make more decisions.*

I will not be able to attend the Nov. 2015 BVA Executive Meeting, due to an evening engagement. In my absence, Courtney will take the lead on this item.

To support Courtney, and consistent with an expectation that Executive members are provided with advance information on BVA Executive agenda topics, I offer the following:

To support BVA Executive Members in understanding Robert's Rules of Order:

The following is a link to the official website:

<http://www.robertsrules.com/>

To ease your understanding, the following are links to simplified summaries:

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Documents/RROO_Simplified.pdf

<http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/meetings/RobertsRulesSimplified.pdf>

http://diphi.web.unc.edu/files/2012/02/MSG-ROBERTS_RULES_CHEAT_SHEET.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions:

<http://www.robertsrules.com/faq.html>

Ultimately the intent of Robert's Rules are to provide to enable:

- An organized disciplined meeting, that stays on the agenda topic, allows for everyone to be heard, and makes needed decisions in an efficient manner.

To enable that meetings are focussed on topics that need discussion or decisions (i.e. via motions), and that information only topics that don't need discussion, input or decisions, can be grouped together as a single Consent Agenda Item.

- Unless a member specifically requests a discussion on a Consent Agenda Item, there would be no discussion on such information only items. Information only items are provided in a written report to committee members in advance of the meeting.
- By example, at our Oct. 21st meeting, I provided a verbal MAGA report (which I have since put in writing to the Secretary, such that it can be included in the meeting minutes). This was information only, with no input needed and no decisions were being requested. Therefore, the MAGA report for our Oct. 21st meeting could have been an information only item, and included under the Consent Agenda Item.
 - A key to this working, is that I would have had to provide a written MAGA report in advance for Executive members to review.
 - If I had not provided a written report in advance, and had no requested motion to table for a decision, the Chair should rightly refuse to have the MAGA report as a separate topic on the agenda.
 - The Chair should ask me to provide my written information report to Executive committee members after the meeting, rather than consuming time at the meeting for an 'information only' item to which no advance information has been provided.
 - In this manner the Chair preserves the meeting time for items that need discussion, direction, and decisions, and for which advanced information has been provided for members to have considered.

The two motions are outlined below. Note these two motions could be combined into one:

BVA Executive Meeting Rules of Order:

Motion:

- Moved by Eric Bristow, seconded by Courtney Doldron, that BVA Executive and Annual General Meetings follow, and are documented consistent with 'Robert's Rules of Order'.
 - Any specific exceptions to following Robert's Rules of Order need to be documented and approved by the BVA Executive.
 - Add this decision into the BVA By-laws.

Supporting rationale:

- Robert's Rules of Order are well developed and time proven rules to support the efficient and appropriate conduct of meetings. BVA does not need to re-invent the wheel.

Consent Agenda Item Concept

Proposed Motion:

- Moved by xxxxxxxx, seconded by xxxxxxxx, that the BVA Executive Committee adopt the Consent Agenda approach for use, starting with the November 2015 meeting.

Supporting rationale:

Below is a brief explanation of this concept, for our BVA Executive to consider. It is an approach to improve meeting efficiency, and in turn to focus limited meeting time on the 'critical few' important decision items:

- A **consent agenda** is a meeting practice which packages routine committee reports, Board meeting minutes, and other non-controversial items not requiring discussion or independent action as **one agenda item**.
- To free the committee's time for discussing matters that the committee can actually have an effect upon (i.e. the future), a consent agenda is a tool that eliminates as much as ½ hour or more of reviewing what has happened in the past - things the board can do nothing about.
- The consent agenda is a SINGLE ITEM that encompasses all the things the committee or board would normally approve with little comment, e.g.:
 - Minutes; Financials; Program reports; Perfunctory items such as formal approval of a contract that has already been talked to death at past meetings.
 - All those items combine to become one item for approval - The Consent Agenda.

Regards, Eric Bristow.