

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Advisory Committee Meetings & Revised Robert's Rules of Order

The Monument Advisory Committee is a citizen-based committee appointed by the BLM Secretary, consisting of up to 15 members representing commodity, non-commodity, local area interests, and scientific disciplines. This Committee will play an important role in providing information and recommendations to the BLM throughout the development of the resource management plan and beyond.

The function of an advisory committee is solely advisory, and recommendations shall be made only to the authorized representative specified in its charter. Determinations of actions to be taken on the reports and recommendations of a committee shall be made only by the Secretary or the designated Federal officer. (43 CFR § 1784.5-1)

To keep these advisory committee meetings running in an orderly and efficient manner, this group will utilize a revised version of Parliamentary procedure. How we apply the rules of parliamentary procedure will be entirely up to the advisory committee members.

Enclosed is a proposed basic meeting engagement:

1. **Conduct business one item at a time.** Jumping around from one item to another can be confusing, and it generally delays progress on any of the items.
2. **Let the chairperson do their work.** The chair is the gatekeeper for the meeting. A good chairperson keeps the group on task and the meeting flowing.
3. **Let committees do their work.** Your general meeting is to resolve the major issues. Save everybody's time by letting committees deal with the smaller details.
4. **Do not allow too much crosstalk.** This helps you keep control and ensures everyone will hear the business at hand. Allow time for socializing before or after the business part of the meeting.
5. **Limit discussion to the topic at hand.** Keep things focused, and do not be shy about asking speakers to deal only with the current topic.
6. **Cut off discussion when it becomes redundant.** For controversial issues, setting a time limit for each speaker can help. When discussion becomes circular, summarize the points on each side and ask for anything new—or shut off discussion by calling for a motion.

Robert's Rules, there are a few fundamentals to be mindful of.

I. Agenda

The agenda is a detailed list of specific items, in the sequence in which they will be covered. Use a consistent order of business from meeting to meeting and distribute electronic copies of the agenda to attendees. The agenda will be posted ahead of time at <https://www.blm.gov/utah/public-room/rac-meetings/gsenm-monument-advisory-committee>.

A typical order of business for a regular Advisory Committee meeting might be:

1. Welcome
2. Approval of minutes (from last meeting)
3. Discussion of Needs and Activities
4. Committee reports

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5. Unfinished business
6. New business
7. Announcements (including date and time of the next meeting)
8. Adjournment

II. Motion

A motion is a formal way to propose something on which the group should vote. The proposer says, "I move that..." and clearly states what is being considered. Someone else "seconds" the motion. Guided by the Chairperson, the group discusses the motion until they are ready to vote. Finally, the Chair asks for an indication of "all those in favor" followed by "those opposed."

There is no need to ask for "abstentions" (those who choose not to vote at all), because abstentions are not counted toward the outcome of the motion.

III. Tabling a Motion

If a motion cannot or should not be voted upon at the current time, it is typical to postpone ("table") it until the next meeting. Technically there should be a new motion to table the current motion, but most groups can agree to delay discussion without layers of parliamentary procedure. Often, it helps to appoint a committee or a member to study the issue and report back to other members at the next meeting. This tactic can save time on circular debate, especially when all the facts are not available.

IV. Quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of members required to conduct business at a meeting. For the GSENM MAC it has been defined as 50% +1, which is 9 of a possible 15. Usually, this number is stated in the committees' bylaws.

Committee bylaws are being drafted and will be presented to the MAC during the October 11, 2022, MAC meeting. The MAC will be asked to review and vote at the following meeting.

V. Minutes

The minutes are the permanent record of the business conducted during a meeting, prepared by the district public affairs specialist. They include details such as the date, time, and location of the meeting, who was present, whether a quorum was present, and the presiding officer. Specific motions and their outcomes (but not exact vote counts) are also included in the minutes. The minutes for each meeting will be placed online approximately two weeks after a meeting concludes and presented for committee approval at the next meeting.

VI. Adjournment

Adjournment is simply a formal way to close a meeting, so everyone knows the session has come to an end. The time of adjournment is recorded in the meeting minutes.

Reference:

"Robert's Rules: What You Should Know", by Christy Forhan; *"Robert's Rules: What You Should Know"*, by Christy Forhan; <https://www.ptotoday.com/pto-today-articles/article/402-roberts-rules-what-you-should-know>