

AGENDA REPORT
December 5, 2017**SUBJECT:**

Requiring a super-majority vote to suspend adherence to *Robert's Rules of Order*.

DEPT/OFFICE:

District 3

REQUESTED ACTION:

The Board discuss amending its Board Operating Procedures to require a 4/5th majority to suspend its adherence to procedures set forth in *Robert's Rules of Order*.

SUMMARY EXPLANATION and BACKGROUND:

On Nov. 21, 2017, the Board reaffirmed its adoption of Robert's Rules of Order as the primary guideline for conducting its meetings as part of its Board Operating Procedures. Additionally, Commissioner Curt Smith has proposed an ordinance which reiterates the need to maintain "strict order" during Board meetings.

The necessity of a standard parliamentary procedure for governmental bodies has been recognized, to some extent, for thousands of years. Not surprisingly, Thomas Jefferson recognized the importance of keeping order during parliamentary debate very early on in our nation's history. Indeed, the adoption of such rules was one of the first actions taken by the Continental Congress.

Robert's Rules of Order provides a modern guideline for keeping order in a manner which does not stifle debate and the free-flow of ideas. In essence, it provides a foundational structure to support debate, rather than a wall to prevent it.

However, it has become the practice of the Brevard County Board of County Commissioners to waive Robert's Rules of Order with a simple majority vote. Because one of the primary purposes of the adoption of these rules is to ensure that minority views are not suppressed by the current majority, this practice is self-defeating. By continuing this practice, the Board will be doing no more than taking part in an elaborate illusion to make it appear as if it is following the precedents set by those who, like Thomas Jefferson, recognized the importance of allowing minority views to be part of debate in a vibrant democracy; in reality, the Board will be actively suppressing these views.

As such, it is requested that the Board discuss amending its Board operating procedures to require a 4/5th majority to waive its adherence to Robert's Rules of Order. While this action will, beyond doubt, lead to vigorous debate on issues which the then-current majority is uncomfortable with, this is a designed element of, not an unfortunate side-effect of, a healthy democracy.

ATTACHMENTS:**Description**

No Attachments Available

REVIEWERS:

Department	Reviewer	Action
District 3	Tobia, John	Approved
County Manager	Abbate, Frank	Approved