

How to stop this behavior...

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Jurassic Parliament Newsletter
January 2016 Vol. IX, No. 1

Do you have a bully on board?

Reader Lon Garrison from Alaska asks how to deal with a bully who intimidates other members of the school board, including the chair. There are several things a body can do to resolve this unfortunate situation. Points to consider:

1. Bullying is never allowed at board or council meetings. It's just common sense that when people are intimidated, angry or frightened, they can't reach good decisions.
2. If you have adopted Robert's Rules of Order, you automatically have tools to deal with this situation.
3. Even if your body has not adopted Robert's Rules or another parliamentary authority, common parliamentary law supports the necessity for order and respect in meetings.
4. The chair has the duty of stopping bad behavior by any member, interrupting the member if necessary.
5. If the chair isn't responding as she should, members can raise a "point of order" to request that the chair take action. The chair must issue a ruling as to whether the point is correct or not.
6. Any ruling of the chair can be appealed by any two members of the board, in which case the board will decide the matter.
7. If a member continues to offend, a majority of the members can pass a motion that will:
 - a. Request that the member apologize, or
 - b. Censure or reprimand the offender (a statement of displeasure by the body), or
 - c. Direct the member to leave the current meeting, or
 - d. Remove the member from committees to which he has been appointed
8. It's helpful to have a specific policy to deal with difficult behavior. The City of Kenmore, Washington invested a lot of effort into their "Council Rules and Procedures" some years ago, which can be found [here](#). You will of course have an attorney review your policy to ensure that it conforms to the laws governing your board or council.



If you want to go more deeply into the methods that parliamentary procedure offers, here are two resources:

- Next week's webinar entitled ["Mastering Bad Behavior Using Robert's Rules"](#) on **Wednesday, January 27 at 9:00 am Pacific time.**
- *The Guerilla Guide to Robert's Rules*, by [Nancy Sylvester](#), provides detailed guidance in her section entitled "Be a Bully Buster."

Share your war stories with us! Next month we'll talk about what to do when the chair is the bully.

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