



RESOURCE CENTER

Best Practices: The Roles and Responsibilities of a Committee Chair

Before the meeting:

1. Prepare an agenda and send it, in advance, to all committee members (including ex officio members). Include a copy of the minutes from the previous meeting, if appropriate. Also include any necessary attachments. Place a note next to each agenda item explaining whether it is information only, for discussion, or for action. If appropriate, also note the names of the people responsible for reporting on each agenda item.
2. Inform committee members of dates, times and locations of meetings at the beginning of the year, if possible (distribute a master meeting calendar to all board members). Request that members who cannot attend a meeting inform you in advance and provide you with information about the status of the tasks that have been assigned. This will enable you to report to the committee on the absent member's accomplishments.
3. Come early, and if necessary, set up the meeting room, arrange handout materials, etc. Have extra copies of the agenda available for committee members and observers.

At the beginning of the meeting:

1. Start on time.
2. Have members and guests introduce themselves.
3. If the committee is a large one, circulate an attendance sheet.
4. Review, revise and re-order the agenda, as needed.
5. Set clear time limits, if necessary.

During the meeting:

1. Take minutes (or assign a member to do this).
2. When assigning tasks, make sure specific dates are set for their completion and each member knows what his/her specific task is.
3. Allow all individuals the opportunity to contribute to the discussion.
4. Keep the discussion focused on the agenda item at hand.
5. Stay within time limits on each item and draw the discussion to a close by summarizing what has been discussed/decided.
6. Call for a motion if the item requires one.

7. Close the meeting crisply and positively. Summarize what has been done during the meeting and what the expectations are for each committee member between the end of the meeting and the next one.

After the meeting:

1. Prepare the minutes. Distribute the minutes to committee members and agency staff with the agenda for the next meeting.
2. Follow up as necessary with members of the committee regarding their tasks between meetings. Hold committee members accountable for their assignments.
3. Begin to prepare for the next meeting.