



The Importance of Meetings

An association is a business that must conduct meetings of its “shareholders”—the owners or their elected representatives. Community associations conduct several types of meetings, each addressing a particular need.

BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings must be productive, orderly, free of disruptions, and open to members and residents unless an executive session is convened. (The board should only convene in executive sessions to discuss pending litigation, personnel issues, or contract negotiations.) The primary purpose of board meetings is to:

- Set policy.
- Review operations.
- Resolve disputes.
- Listen to residents.
- Plan for the future.
- Vote on business discussed in executive session.

TOOL 8.1: *Use the Sample Meeting Agenda located at the end of this section as a guide for organizing your own meeting.*

ANNUAL MEETINGS

The primary purpose of annual membership meetings is to:

- Present the annual budget to members.
- Elect directors.
- Deliver committee reports to members.
- Build community by bringing neighbors together.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings (sometimes called town meetings) are used to:

- Focus on one particular item of concern or interest.
- Present sensitive or controversial matters to residents.
- Garner support for large projects or clarify unpopular decisions.
- Provide a structured venue in which residents can explore issues and express opinions.
- Get resident feedback before the board takes action.
- Reach consensus or resolve an issue.
- Gain valuable insights into the character and values of the community.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Parliamentary procedure is a tool for conducting meetings. It can be as formal or basic as the association wishes, as long as it provides sufficient structure to keep a meeting orderly, fair, and productive. The advantages of using parliamentary procedure include:

- Staying on the agenda.
- Discussing one subject at a time.
- Giving each participant a chance to speak.
- Speaking only on the issue being discussed.
- Speaking only when recognized by the chair.
- Addressing questions and comments to the chair.
- Deciding issues through motions, seconds, and votes.

MEETING REQUIREMENTS

Associations must meet several important criteria before business can be transacted at a meeting; specifically the association must:

Notify members. The law requires community associations to notify members of meetings—especially annual meetings. Keep notices brief, focused, and simple; issue them at the appropriate time in the proper manner.

Achieve a quorum. Each association’s governing documents or state law specify how many members constitute a quorum—and it varies from one association to the next. Ensure that a quorum is present before calling any meeting to order.

Record actions taken—minutes. Minutes are the official record of decisions made at an association board or committee meeting. Good meeting minutes will include:

- Type of meeting: board, committee, regular, special
- Association name
- Time, date, and place
- Attendees’ names
- Approval or correction of the previous minutes
- Officer and committee reports
- Motions and their outcomes—approved, denied, or tabled
- Adjournment time
- Secretary’s signature

TOOL 8.2: *Use the Sample Minutes at the end of this section to guide you in taking minutes. Not every word of every discussion need be recorded.*

Cautions

Association governing documents or state regulations may specify the means or timing for giving notice of meetings. In some states, “sunshine” laws place specific requirements on how and when you should announce meetings. It’s important to follow these laws so that the business conducted at the meeting is valid and binding.

Convening an executive session to discuss an unpopular subject or to avoid confrontation is not only illegal, but it promotes dissent in a community. It’s important that boards don’t convey the impression that they’re hiding something, advancing hidden agendas, or conducting secret meetings.

Check your state’s laws; meetings are usually highly regulated regarding timing, notice, quorum, etc.

FOR MORE HELP

Available online at www.caionline.org/bookstore.cfm or call (888) 224-4321 (M–F, 9–6:30 ET).

Guide to Annual Meetings, Special Meetings & Elections, 3rd Ed., a Guide for Association Practitioners. By P. Michael Nagle. (Community Associations Institute, 1999.)

Conducting Meetings: A Guide to Running Productive Community Association Board Meetings. M. J. Keatts, Ed. (Community Associations Institute, 1998.)

The ABCs of Parliamentary Procedure. (Channing Bete, 2004.)

To download a PDF of the entire Board Member Tool Kit, go to www.caionline.org/toolkit.

Sample Meeting Agenda

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING AGENDA

Association _____

Date _____

Schedule	Discussion
6:00	I. Call to Order
6:00–6:30	II. Homeowner Forum
6:30–6:35	III. Reading and Vote to Approve Previous Meeting Minutes
6:35	IV. Agenda Changes/Approval
6:35–7:00	V. Manager’s Report
7:00–7:15	VI. Directors’ Reports
7:15–7:30	VII. Committee Reports
7:30–7:45	VIII. Correspondence for Review
7:45–8:00	IX. Unfinished Business
8:00–8:15	X. New Business
8:15	XI. Adjourn
	Next Meeting: _____

Sample Board Meeting Minutes

MINUTES OF THE [NAME] ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING

Date and Time: Pursuant to Article [number], Section [number] of the [name] Association, a regular meeting of the board was held on [date], at [time] at [location].

Officers and Quorum: The president, Mr. A, opened the meeting at [time]. The secretary, Mrs. P, was present to record the meeting. Directors Mrs. A, Mrs. B, Mrs. C, and Mr. F. were also present comprising a quorum.

Minutes: The minutes of the [date] meeting were distributed to all board members and committee chairs one week before the meeting. The following corrections were made:

Page 1, Paragraph 3: change "lien" to "line"

Page 7, Paragraph 4: substitute "review" for "report"

There being no other corrections or additions, Mr. B made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Mr. F and approved unanimously.

Financial Information: The treasurer asked if there were any questions relating to the annual audit that had been distributed with the agenda. He noted that Resolution 8 provided that copies be made available to all members who submitted a written request for the audit.

Manager's Report: The board had no questions regarding the manager's written report that was furnished with the agenda (attached).

Unfinished Business: A motion was made by Mrs. B and seconded by Mr. F to adopt proposed Resolution 308 (attached) regarding insurance coverage. The motion was approved unanimously. A motion was made by Mr. F and seconded by Mrs. C to table discussion of new playground equipment until all board members were present. The motion was approved unanimously.

New Business: A motion was made by Mrs. C and seconded by Mrs. B that the directors attending the CAI conference be reimbursed for the cost of parking at the airport, pursuant to the existing policy of the board on reimbursement for educational events. The motion was approved. Mr. F voted against the motion.

Adjournment: There being no other business, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at [time].

Respectfully submitted:

Mrs. P, Secretary

Date