

in the boardroom

BOARD MEMBER
TIPS AND TRENDS

Your role as a volunteer director is taxing indeed. As a fiduciary for your association, you are directing and overseeing the operations of an entire corporation. At times your directorship may seem like an overwhelming full-time job, one where you are expected to complete all your duties in your free (volunteered) time. Sound impossible? Make the impossible possible by working with your community manager to implement these basic strategies that can lead to sustained board success.

AGENDA ITEM #1: BECOME AN INFORMED DIRECTOR

First and foremost you must understand your role as a board member. Take the time to read and understand your association's governing documents, which will lay out the operational architecture for the association. Your community manager can help you reference these documents, but it's up to you to dive in. Reviewing these documents is vital to becoming an informed director.

Should you have questions or not understand some sections, that's OK. Keep a written list and work with your association's community manager and legal counsel to understand these sections.

AGENDA ITEM #2: LEARN HOW TO STAY ORGANIZED

Community managers are a great asset when it comes to organizing and referencing governing documents, budgets, financials and much more. Your manager can help organize and streamline your documents in a way that works for you. If you haven't already, consult with your manager and see what solutions they have for you.

AGENDA ITEM #3: REMEMBER YOUR ROLE

You and your fellow directors are on the board to make decisions that benefit the overall community. It should not be in your operational bandwidth to micromanage the landscape mowing crew or go door-to-door collecting assessments. It is important you spend your energy and efforts exercising good business judgment and defer the day-to-day issues to your community manager. It's also important for you to remember that community managers are management experts. They are ready to help and welcome any questions; if they don't have the answer, they'll get in touch with an expert who does.



AGENDA ITEM #4: UNDERSTAND EXPECTATIONS AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Help yourself and your manager by taking the time to read and clearly understand the information in your board packet before the meeting. Give yourself time to fully understand the actions required of you at the upcoming meeting. In addition, review and provide routine feedback to your manager on what works and what doesn't for your meetings. Be open to your manager's suggestions, as well. This information exchange can contribute to your community's continued success.

After you have made the time investment as a board and mastered the agenda items with the aid of your manager, is there a vehicle to formalize the work done thus far to help the community capitalize on all your hard work for future board members? The answer is yes!

There are a number of ways to formalize your conduct, policies and operational bandwidth in addition to your association's governing documents. One tool recommended by the California Association of Community Managers (CACM) is a code of conduct. Managers who are members of CACM have access to a code of conduct template drafted by professionals in our industry. Seek the advice of your community manager to establish and adopt your own board code of conduct.

Your time on the board can be a very rewarding experience if you become an informed director, refine your board member operational bandwidth and learn how to support your management team. In exchange, your community manager will also be diligently working toward the same goal: the success of your community.

Clint McClure, CCAM, is President & CEO of MMI-McClure Management Inc. in Carlsbad.

CACM's "In the Boardroom" feature is intended to provide key trends, tips and practical advice for association board members.

For easy sharing, you can also access this and other archived articles online at www.cacm.org.

