

Board Member Foundations: Part 7

# Conducting association meetings



Life, simplified.<sup>SM</sup>

# Conducting association meetings

Association board meetings are the foundation for effective governance of the community. These gatherings serve as the platform where board members, homeowners, and the management team come together to address a range of critical issues, foster community engagement, and ensure the smooth operation of the association.

In order to carry out a meeting successfully, it is important that board members understand how to conduct and what their respective roles are throughout.

## Types of meetings

### 1. Homeowners Meetings

*Annual, budget and election*

A meeting of unit owners must be held as outlined in the community bylaws.

Homeowner meetings typically have quorum requirements in order to approve or enact any changes in the association. The number or percentage of votes required depends on local or state/provincial laws and the community's governing documents

### 2. Board Meetings

*Board of directors*

Meetings are generally open to homeowners but are for the board members to act on association business.

Business usually includes:

- Approving minutes
- Approving financial statements
- Engaging in association contracts
- Approving new policies or updating existing ones

Homeowners may speak as outlined by the community's governing documents.

### 3. Executive Sessions

*Closed/confidential session*

The board of directors may meet in closed session for matters, which may include:

- A consult with counsel on legal issues or litigation matters.
- A review of personnel issues.
- A discussion of a personal matter that is confidential, such as delinquency or violation.
- A consult about contracts.

Homeowners may only attend an executive session if invited to discuss their individual property.

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## Tips for conducting meetings

### 1. Prepare an agenda:

An agenda should be created in advance of the meeting and outline the topics to be discussed, allocate specific time slots for each item, and identify the purpose or objective of each agenda item.

### 2. Set a date, time, and location and notify attendees:

Typically, local, state/provincial laws, as well as the community's governing documents, will dictate the location, how much notice is to be provided for each type of meeting, as well as the methods of communicating the meeting time, date, and location.

### 3. Follow established meeting rules:

Community associations often have established rules of order, which are usually delineated in the community's bylaws. Common rules include procedures for addressing the chairperson, speaking time limits, and the process for making motions and voting.

### 4. Review and approve previous meetings' minutes:

Usually, board members begin the meeting by reviewing the minutes from the previous meeting. Attendees should have the opportunity to suggest corrections or clarifications. Once any changes are made, the minutes should be formally approved by a vote of the attendees.

### 5. Follow the agenda:

This helps maintain focus and all important topics. If a topic requires more time than allotted, consider tabling it for further discussion or assigning it to a committee for review.

### 6. Encourage Participation:

Actively encourage homeowners to participate in the meeting. This can include providing opportunities for questions, comments, and suggestions.

### 7. Stay organized and maintain order:

The board president should keep the discussion organized and ensure that the meeting stays on track. This includes enforcing established meeting rules, such as decorum and respectful communication.

### 8. Address key issues:

Focus on addressing important issues relevant to the community, such as budget approvals, rule changes, maintenance concerns, or upcoming events.

### 9. Vote on decisions:

When the meeting requires a board or homeowner vote (normally when deciding on a project or change in the community), conduct clear and transparent voting procedures. This may include a show of hands or secret ballots, depending on the community's rules. It's important that decisions are properly recorded in the meeting minutes for future reference.

Associations should be run according to its bylaws, and board members should have an understanding of what is contained within them regarding conducting board meetings. By adhering to these guidelines and best practices, community association meetings can be conducted effectively, fostering engagement and productive decision-making within the community.