



# Chapter 5

## *Preparing For Board Meetings*

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## Preparing for Board Meetings

### **What is the best way to prepare for board meetings?**

Your attendance and participation in all board meetings is *essential*. When members are absent, it adversely affects the board's decision-making process. This also applies to the meetings of any committees you are assigned to, as well as those for which you may volunteer.

When members skip a meeting, it slows down the discussion during subsequent meetings. Absent members miss the earlier discussions and valuable meeting time is wasted bringing them up to speed. This can mean the difference between settling an issue in five minutes or thirty minutes.

### **How can I get an issue on the agenda?**

Seven to ten days before a board meeting, you will receive a "Request for Agenda Items," from the Executive Director. Simply call or email the Executive Director and ask that a certain issue be placed on the agenda. As schedules permit, you will receive the agenda packet prior to the board meeting.

### **What is an agenda packet?**

This is information your Executive Director and board president put together for board member before each meeting. It contains the order of business at the meeting, the previous meeting's minutes, financial reports, and any other background information on issues to be taken up at the meeting.

### **What should I look for in financial statements?**

Your number one concern should be whether the Association is operating responsibly, so go directly to the bottom line. Then ask yourself these three questions:

- ☒ Is THA on target with planned expenses and revenues?
- ☒ Is THA financially solvent? (Is there enough money in the bank to carry out the current budget?)
- ☒ Will THA have income to meet future expenses?

### **Why is approving the minutes so important?**

The minutes are the legal record of a board meeting. Therefore, it is essential they be accurate. If you notice an error, bring it to the attention of the Board President **before** you vote to approve the minutes.

### **What should I do after the meeting starts?**

When the President calls the meeting to order, give your full attention to the meeting. Listen carefully and give your opinions, at the appropriate time. Be sure to observe proper parliamentary procedure.

### **What is the proper parliamentary procedure?**

Parliamentary procedure is another name for rules of order. These rules vary, and different boards may observe different ones. THA uses Roberts Rules of Order. However, the general order of business will be as follows:

- ☒ Approving minutes of the previous meeting.
- ☒ Approving financial report(s).
- ☒ Hearing committee reports.
- ☒ Hearing regional reports.
- ☒ Making motions to discuss new and old business.
- ☒ Discussing issues which require board action.
- ☒ Voting.

### **What are committee reports?**

Each committee chairperson will report on the activities of their committee. It is also likely that the committee chairperson will be bringing a recommendation, in the form of a motion, from the committee to the full board for a vote. Not every committee will have a report for each board meeting.

### **What are regional reports?**

Each regional director will be asked to report on any ongoing activities, or any concerns they may have received, from their area of the state.

### **How and when should I make a motion?**

A formal motion is required for board action, including approval of meeting minutes.

Because motions keep the focus on specific items, they should precede discussion. If the board decides that the original motion needs to be changed, it can be amended.

You can make a motion whenever parliamentary procedure calls for one. Simple say, “I move that .....” and state the issue.

When making a motion, and whenever a motion is seconded, please state your name clearly. Transcribers need to be able to identify the person speaking for the correct typing of meeting minutes.

### **How much discussion on any one issue is enough?**

In any discussion, there comes a point when nothing new can be added. This is the signal for you and your board peers, that it is time to vote. A board member may also “call for question,” which will then end discussion and the vote taken.

### **ASK QUESTIONS!**

The Association recently celebrated its 70th Anniversary. There is a lot of history documented and undocumented throughout those years; as well as many events and activities held over the years. It is not possible for everyone to know everything, nor is it expected! If the Board is discussing something you are not familiar with, never be embarrassed to ask questions. It will only make you a better, and more well-informed board member.