



Strata Gal's Field Notes

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SELF-MANAGED COUNCILS

This is not legal or professional advice. These guidelines are for educational purposes only, to help self-managed strata councils govern and operate more effectively. Based on the Strata Property Act (SPA) and industry best practices, this document aims to assist council members with their day-to-day operations. Additional practical guidance, templates, and governance resources for strata councils can be found at: <https://groundbreakingstrata.com/resources>.

THE GOLDEN RULE

All councillors must act honestly, in good faith, and for the benefit of the strata corporation, putting in the reasonable care and effort of an ordinary, responsible person in similar circumstances.

MEETINGS + DECISION-MAKING

- Hold the AGM within 2 months of fiscal year-end, giving proper written notice per the Act, and including council election, budget and financial statements, and insurance report.
- Hold at least one council meeting per year after the AGM (more if needed).
- That first meeting should include, at minimum, electing officers, signing authority/banking, meeting schedule, maintenance priorities, records/document access roles, and insurance/vendor review.
- Check the strata's registered bylaws for quorum.
- Most regular council decisions require a simple majority vote.
- Record clear minutes of decisions (who, what, when). Distribute minutes to owners within 2 weeks.
- If an owner or tenant requests a hearing in writing, council must hold it within 4 weeks and provide a written decision within 1 week.
- Owners may generally attend council meetings as observers, except for matters involving privacy, bylaw hearings, arrears, or other sensitive issues.
- Before fining an owner or tenant, give written notice of the complaint or alleged contravention, include particulars, and give them a chance to respond or request a hearing; fines must be authorized by the bylaws.

COMMUNICATION + RECORD-KEEPING

- Appoint one council member to coordinate access with owners and vendors.
- Provide written notice to residents and owners for repairs or maintenance, access to units, meetings, and any other matters pertaining to residents.
- Most records requests must be provided within 2 weeks, bylaws/rules requests within 1 week; per page copy fees may apply per the Regulations.
- Keep records, as a practical guide, including:
 - Meeting minutes? *6 years*.
 - Invoices & bank statements? *6 years*.
 - Insurance, contracts? *6 years*.
 - Correspondence? *2 years*.
 - Building or engineering report? Court decision? Legal doc? *Keep it permanently*.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Use separate strata bank accounts for operating + savings (CRF) + any approved levies.
- Require two council members to sign off on payments.
- Follow the AGM-approved budget for all operating costs.
- Council can spend on routine operating matters within budget.
- Emergency spending is allowed to prevent significant loss or damage.
- Delegated spending authority should be clear and recorded.
- Larger expenses may require a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote at a general meeting.
- Keep up with arrears. If an owner fails to pay strata fees or a special levy, and the strata is entitled to lien after proper written demand, council may authorize lien action.

MAINTENANCE + REPAIRS

- Perform an annual walk-through of common areas after the AGM.
- Keep written scopes and contracts.
- Record in the minutes what work was approved, for how much, who was authorized to act, and what follow-up is required.
- No need to over-solicit quotes for small jobs. But get a comparison quote for non-urgent repairs over \$2000 (or as agreed).
- Using the Depreciation Report and other governing documents, create a basic maintenance track chart so that necessary testing and preventive maintenance is not missed.

INSURANCE + CLAIMS

- Must cover full replacement value of all buildings, common assets, and common property for all perils listed in the Regulations, and minimum \$2M liability.
- Report water, fire, or major damage to the insurer promptly.
- Document everything with photos, contractor reports, and receipts.
- Council may be able to charge back repair costs or insurance deductibles to an owner where the bylaws allow it and the documentation supports it.

PRIVACY + CONFIDENTIALITY + CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- Appoint a Privacy Officer per OIPC/PIPA requirements.
- Personal information (emails, financials) must be kept secure and only used for strata business.
- Sensitive issues (e.g. complaints, arrears) should be discussed privately, not at open-forum meetings.
- Any council member with a personal or financial interest (real or perceived) must disclose the conflict and not vote or influence the decision.

COMMITTEES

- Council may form committees and can be incredibly helpful for research, preparation or work parties (e.g., special project, landscaping, maintenance).
- Committees may not be delegated authority for bylaw enforcement or other council-specific duties under the Act.
- Each committee should have a clear purpose & scope, clear budget parameters (if applicable), a council member lead, and a report back at council meetings.