

SIX RESPONSIBILITIES EVERY HOA BOARD MEMBER NEEDS TO MASTER

Serving as a homeowner association (HOA) board member is a rewarding and meaningful way to give back to your community. You can engage with your neighbors at a deeper level and get to know people you may otherwise have never met.

It's also a consequential role that presents its share of challenges. HOA boards are responsible for enforcing their governing documents, protecting property values, and maintaining common property. They are charged with financial stewardship and with executing service agreements and contracts for the HOA. In addition, the priorities and actions of a board directly contribute to a community's well-being and appeal. As a result, board members must sometimes make difficult decisions or be subject to complaints from neighbors and friends.

Understanding the role and responsibilities of a board member is crucial to serving in your new role with confidence. Here are six top-level responsibilities that will get you off to a good start:

- 1. Know the rules and regulations that govern your community.** This is one of the most critical responsibilities for a board member — both to keep the peace and to protect you and the board from liability. Every decision the board makes and action it takes must follow the rules and regulations established by your community. These include the community covenants and restrictions (CC&R) and your governing documents. Don't overlook the federal, state, and local laws that may also apply.
- 2. Understand your role's responsibilities.** The president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and at-large members all have specific functions and tasks spelled out in the board's governing documents. As a board member, you should be informed about what your role entails so that you can fulfill your duties as assigned. Likewise, board members need to respect the boundaries of each role to maintain positive community relations, orderly vendor relations, board harmony, and overall organization.
- 3. Understand your responsibilities versus that of your association manager.** Association managers can make life much easier for board members, but they can't do everything. For example, many new boards assume their management company is responsible for raising HOA fees or conducting special assessments. In fact, the board makes those decisions. Recognizing where their role ends and yours begins will help you avoid surprises.

- 4. Respect the line between board member and community member.** When you are elected to a board, you may be called on to make decisions that are good for the community but unpopular with individual homeowners. As you weigh the issues, you need to be ready to set your personal interests aside. This is true both for decisions that affect your property and that may affect your relationship with neighbors and friends.
- 5. Follow due process for disputes.** Homeowner disputes can trip up even seasoned board members. Unless the disagreement is related to a governing document violation, board members should refrain from getting involved. When disputes must be settled by the board, it is imperative to follow the due process outlined in your CC&R. It's natural to want to intercede, especially if friends are involved. But what you do for one, you must do for all. Following your due process guidelines will limit your liability and help ensure exceptions don't creep into the rules.
- 6. Speak with one voice.** You aren't required to agree with your fellow board members on every item that comes up for discussion or vote. However, once a vote is taken, it's essential that all board members accept the outcome. Supporting board decisions — or at least, not publicly detracting from these decisions — is key to promoting community unity.

RELY ON A TRUSTED PARTNER TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE

Figuring out the ropes can be overwhelming, but it doesn't need to be. Working with a professional and highly skilled association manager can make all the difference between proceeding with confidence and learning on the fly.

Effective association managers will provide coaching and guidance, help you navigate the sometimes-murky waters of homeowner relations, and facilitate meetings. They will help manage risk by ensuring the board complies with all governing documents. In addition, expert association managers will assist with everything from managing vendors to handling collections and enforcement.

At Towne Properties, our association managers undergo rigorous training to provide expert guidance and assistance to the boards they serve. Trusted by more than 800 associations, we are creative, client-first problem-solvers with an extensive track record of success.

Learn more about how our customized, full-service management solutions can improve your operations so you can achieve your priorities.



GREAT
PLACES
TO LIVE,
WORK,
SHOP
& PLAY®