

WHAT SHOULD BOARD MEMBERS EXPECT FROM THEIR MANAGER?

Being elected to a community's board of directors is an honor – but one that can come with a steep learning curve.

After the rush of the election is over, new board members need to set their sights on fulfilling their responsibilities. But what are the duties of an association board member? What does your sphere of influence entail? How can you most efficiently prioritize the association's needs? How do you balance your time with the daily requests of the homeowners you represent?

These are not uncommon questions for newly-elected board members. The good news is, you don't need to have all of the answers. The key to success is hiring an experienced association manager to provide guidance and support.

An association manager can be your most important ally in ensuring the board's obligations – and the community's expectations – are met. By leaning on an association manager for day-to-day business, you will have more time to focus on big-picture items.

8 WAYS AN ASSOCIATION MANAGER MAKES LIFE EASIER FOR COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

Here are eight services a professional manager will provide to help ensure you have a successful board:

- 1 Board coaching and guidance.** If you're feeling lost about what comes next after the election, you're not alone. Questions about roles, responsibilities, and governance can trip up even seasoned board members. An effective association manager will coach the board of directors on their duties and assist with strategizing for future needs.
- 2 Homeowner relations.** Skillful association managers understand how to navigate the ebb and flow of community relations. Yes, this includes fielding questions and concerns from homeowners. But it also involves other duties, such as maintaining all homeowner files. By serving as a single point of contact for homeowners, association managers are well-positioned to ensure homeowners are treated equally and fairly under the community's governing documents.
- 3 Association communications.** Keeping homeowners informed is vital to keeping satisfied homeowners. Because communications are so closely aligned with homeowner relations, this is another service that is best entrusted to an association manager. Your association manager should, at a minimum, provide routine updates to the members and regularly update your association website with relevant information.
- 4 Meeting organization and management.** Well-trained association managers will double as facilitators. They should play an active role in preparing for and conducting meetings, including creating agendas, putting together board packets, documenting action items, and ensuring proceedings stay on track.
- 5 Maintenance and repairs.** Not sure what it takes to hire a roofing company, fix a pool, or repair concrete curbs? You don't need to; your association manager should execute all Board-approved exterior maintenance and repairs. Effective association managers will build and maintain a pool of trusted and vetted vendors that can deliver high-quality service for the best deal possible. Some maintenance needs, like a burst pipe or backed-up sewers, can't wait. Your association manager should also handle these emergencies by providing a 24-hour answering and emergency system.

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Financial and accounting services and recordkeeping.

Managing community finances and accounting require dedicated time and attention. Association managers should do the heavy lifting for the board by providing full accounting services, from supervising banking and reserve accounts to handling accounts payable and receivables. In addition, they should take inventory, keep ongoing records, and review and maintain documents with the board, committees, and legal counsel.

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Risk management. Like any organization, associations need to ensure proper risk management controls are in place and followed. Board members can lean on their association managers to ensure vendors are properly insured, arrange for the right HOA insurance and review and file insurance claims. The association manager should also ensure the association is compliant with laws and statutes and advise when board discussions or actions are at risk of deviating from the association's and board's governing documents.

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Collections and enforcement. This is one of the most sensitive topics of community management. It is also another area that board members can and should turn over to their association managers. From conducting property inspections to tracking delinquency to initiating collection efforts, association managers are trained to handle these matters with persistence and tact.

FINDING THE RIGHT ASSOCIATION MANAGER FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

The list above encompasses duties that all association managers should be able to fulfill. However, not all association management firms are equal. Experience, capabilities, and cultural fit are essential to building trust with residents.

At Towne Properties, our association managers go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure the communities we serve are at their best. Trusted by our association clients for over 60 years, we are creative, client-first problem-solvers with an extensive track record of success.

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ASSOCIATION MANAGER DUTIES AT-A-GLANCE

A high-level summary of the duties and services an association manager should provide:

- Manage the community's day-to-day business, including responding to members' questions and concerns.
- Coach the board of directors on their duties and assist with strategizing for future needs.
- Oversee association communications, including website management and routine updates.
- Provide a 24-hour answering and emergency system.
- Provide homeowners with the community's rules and regulations.
- Provide governance.
- Review and maintain documents with the board, committees, and legal counsel.
- Organize, manage, and document meetings.
- Take inventory; keep ongoing records.
- Establish banking and reserve accounts.
- Provide full accounting services for the HOA.
- Manage collections of delinquent accounts.
- Conduct regular property inspections.
- Vet and manage vendors.
- Obtain bids.
- Execute approved exterior maintenance and repair.
- Supervise all employees and contractors.
- Reserve recommendations to the board/coordinate planning with engineering study.
- Arrange for proper insurance coverage.
- Review and file insurance claims.
- Maintain all homeowner files.