

Stating "Treasurer's Report or New Business" is not enough – list the main points that will be discussed. Include benchmark times. For example: Call to Order 7:00 p.m., Approval of Minutes 7:05 p.m. This lets the board members know how time will be allotted and keeps the meeting moving.

Some associations post the agenda 5-7 days before the meeting. Board members can add or remove topics up to the point the final agenda is posted. At the meeting, the president will ask if an emergency has arisen that requires adding an item to the agenda. This method provides two opportunities to add agenda items.

4. Use Parliamentary Procedure:

Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules for conducting meetings. The abbreviated version of *Roberts Rules of Order* is a good resource.

Suggested Parliamentary Procedure to follow: Adhere to the agenda, discuss one subject at a time, give each board member an opportunity to speak, speak only on the issue being discussed, speak only when recognized by the chair, address questions and comments to the chair and decide issues through motions, seconds and votes.

5. Keep The Meeting Moving:

- Board members should arrive on time and prepared to participate.
- The board president should effectively start and guide the meeting pursuant to the timed agenda with the support of the board members.
- Board members should study their packet *before* the meeting so that they can discuss issues and make informed decisions.
- Keep the discussion focused on association business – avoid irrelevant side topics and personal discussions.
- Present an issue with a solution or solutions.

6. Participation by Board Members:

Support the board's efforts with a commitment to the goals of the board and the association.

DEALING WITH CONFLICTS DURING A MEETING

Name calling, interrupting and personal attacks by anyone should be prohibited at all board meetings.

Conflicts may develop when members feel shut out of the decision making process:

- Give all board members an opportunity to contribute with the same amount of time to speak on a subject.
- Consider enacting regulations, such as a three-minute discussion limit per member, per topic. A member could only speak a second time (set a time limit) on the topic *after* all board members had been given the opportunity to speak.
- Educate new board members on board processes and outstanding issues.
- Encourage the mentoring of new board members by well trained, seasoned board members.

The "Gadfly" is an expert at criticizing, cajoling and pinpointing the errors of others. S/he demands change, but does not give effort or time to make the change. A "Gadfly" raises parliamentary issues, alleges non-compliance with the statutory or governing documents' provisions, constantly interrupts and attacks personal integrity and alleges conflicts of interest.

How to Deal with the "Gadfly":

- Announce meeting procedures at the beginning of a board meeting, in a newsletter or in the meeting notice.
- Enforce these meeting procedures uniformly.
- Host a homeowner forum at the beginning of the board meeting with a strict time limit.
- No one should be allowed to interrupt the board meetings by speaking out of turn and raising irrelevant issues.
- Do not respond with anger, argue or trade insults. The board does not have to rebut the comments of any member.
- Utilize parliamentary control – by knowing when and how to (a) table a motion; (b) postpone a motion; (c) refer a matter to a committee; (d) adopt special rules of order; and (e) limit debate.

HOW TO TAKE PERFECTLY PROPER MEETING MINUTES

At A Minimum, The Meeting Minutes Should Contain The Following Elements:

1. Type of meeting - Regular, special or adjourned special meeting.
2. Association Name - Record the association's correct corporate name and the words, "Minutes of the Meeting of (insert association name)".
3. Event Information - Specify the meeting date, time and location.
4. Attendants' Names - List the names of the directors or members present, the name of the presiding officer, and secretary or substitute minute recorder. For open meetings, the non-voting audience should not be included.
5. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes - Unless the assembly waives the reading of the minutes, they should be read and approved or approved as corrected.
6. Officer and Committee Reports - Reports made by the manager, board and committee members often precede the business of the meeting. Such reports are usually for information only, and, if in writing, can be appended to the minutes with board approval. If not in writing, only the fact that the report was made needs to be stated in the minutes.
7. The Business of the Meeting -The minutes should follow the agenda, unless the board agrees to discuss a matter out of order. The motions returned to committee, etc., should be grouped according to subject matter. There is no reason to include the summary of debates discussions, drafts and revision of the motions. None of this information constitutes the official action of the association.
8. Adjournment - The last paragraph should state the time of adjournment.
9. Secretary's Signature - The signature of the secretary, preceded by the words "Submitted by:", must be included at the end of the minutes.

Notes:

Meeting minutes are the association's only official record of its board, committee or membership decisions and actions.

Meeting minutes reflect board decisions, not what members say.

Meeting minutes should be brief (one page if possible)!

The meeting minutes are not official until the board at a subsequent meeting approves them.

The secretary's primary responsibility is maintaining the association's official records.

The minute book is the association's principal record. The records should be printed on quality paper and placed in an official binder. Publishing of regular meeting minutes is generally not required, but it is recommended so that the membership is aware of the association's actions.

Executive session minutes of the board of directors should be placed in a separate binder entitled "Executive Session Meeting Minutes" and should be withheld from disclosure during records requests.

"Productive meetings create efficient boards, decrease frustration, increase morale and make it easier to recruit volunteers."

Beth Mulcahy, Esq.

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MULCAHY LAW FIRM, P.C.

3001 East Camelback Road, Suite 130

Phoenix, Arizona 85016

Phone: 602.241.1093

E-mail: bmulcahy@mulcahylaw.net

All Mulcahy Cheat Sheets are available on-line at: www.mulcahylawfirm.net