

MEETINGS, MEETINGS, MEETINGS...

The new year may be a time for change.

Everyone attends meetings; everyone complains about meetings, however, effective meetings can make a positive difference. Well run board and committee meetings increase the likelihood that participants will readily attend future meetings – which helps ensure continuity of information, consistency in decision making, improved communication, and better working relationships among members. FCC has a comprehensive Secretary Manual that includes meeting set up, agenda, taking minutes, accuracy & confidentiality, and Board communication. It is available upon request at a cost of \$10.00+GST=\$10.70. This is a valuable resource that can become part of the Secretary “tool box”.

All meetings should include:

- Sufficient advanced notice of date, time and location of the meeting
- It is ideal to have the agenda and support information prior to the meeting
- At the meeting provide the written agenda and allow an opportunity for Board approved amendments
- Decisions should be by motion, duly recorded
- Minutes need to be taken, recorded, distributed and retained in the organization’s Minute Book

Effective meeting behaviour:

- Start and end the meeting on time. Should the meeting need to be extended get participant agreement to continue, or adjourn the meeting to another specific day and time
- Participants arrive on time and stay for the duration of the meeting
- Listen for understanding and without interruption
- Each member contributes and participated
- Ask questions on topic to increase understanding and clarity. No side conversations
- Share information openly and accurately. Identify assumptions and opinions and separate these from the facts
- Stay focused on agenda items
- Constructive and respectful disagreement is welcome
- Open hostility or disrespectful behavior is not tolerated. The group focuses on problem “solvers” not problem “finders”
- Decisions are clear, supported by a motion and acted on by all members, regardless of whether or not the decision meets with a member’s personal approval

Evaluating meeting efficiency:

- Essential to get feedback for the chairperson in planning future meetings
- The Board may decide on the frequency of the evaluation
- A brief survey is an effective tool to get feedback from the members in a non invasive manner
- Develop your own list of questions, possibly with a 5 point rate and include space for written comments and suggestions
- Follow up with improvements in response to the feedback, and if a suggestion can not be implemented the chairperson should follow up with the Board member privately or the Board as a whole

Information taken from Great Boards Plain & Simple 2003



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