



THE COMPLETE GUIDE ON

HOW TO HOLD EFFECTIVE BOARD MEETINGS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION





All Directors on a Condo Board are expected to act with the **best interests of the condo corporation in mind, and behave accordingly.** Acting as Chair is an even greater responsibility, one that may leave many uncertain of how to begin. The first thing a Chair should learn is that **the success of a Condo Board begins with the success of its meetings.**

Without experience, running a board meeting is a daunting task with many pitfalls. It's easy for a meeting to get out of control if not mediated correctly, or for a Chair to begin the meeting unprepared, and this can lead to poor management of the Board and the Condo it directs. **A Condo Board functioning properly is essential to not only fulfil legal mandate but to serve the interests of all condo owners and the condo corporation.**

To best understand how to effectively run a meeting for a Condo Board, the Chair must first understand the purpose of a board meeting. Beyond discussing issues such as finance, board meetings are held to discuss creating or modifying vendor contracts, appointing new members to the board [1], any issues that have arisen between meetings, or anything the property manager needs to address. **With this in mind, running a successful board meeting requires sufficient knowledge, planning, and facilitating.**



CHAPTER 2

BE PREPARED



SECURE A FITTING LOCATION

The first, and often most overlooked, key to running an effective board meeting is **choosing the right location**. A board meeting is a meeting first and foremost, and must be treated as such. If it's not possible to secure a boardroom within the condo or nearby, **find a location that allows some level of professionalism** such as a Director's dining room or kitchen table [2]. Avoid places like public coffee shops or someone's living room, as the casual atmosphere will set the tone for a more casual meeting. Due to the private and confidential nature of these meetings, it is also important to **take privacy into consideration when choosing a location**. Make sure that a location is booked well in advance.

ATTENDANCE

A board meeting cannot run without meeting quorum - the minimum number of members in attendance - and therefore maintaining attendance is essential. Establishing communication of time and date in advance [3] maximizes the number of members available. Last-minute scheduling leads to conflicts, and less people are able to attend the meeting. If the Condo Board holds its meetings on a regular basis, **choosing one date and maintaining that as often as possible** also helps ensure that each member **knows when to expect the meeting to occur and plan around it**.



CREATE A STRONG AGENDA

Few things are more critical than having a plan. With an agenda firmly set before the meeting begins, the Chair has a format to follow and ensures that nothing slips through the cracks. It is the **responsibility of each board member** to raise any issues or reporting they wish to address well in advance of the meeting [2] to include it on the agenda. All materials required for these concerns should be provided by the board member in order to be circulated alongside the agenda. The agenda should be provided to all members of the board **several days before the meeting** to allow for thorough review before the meeting is scheduled.

Materials that should be provided with the agenda include:

- **Minutes** of **previous meeting**
- **Financial records**
- **Reports** from Committees, Property Manager, etc.
- **Records** or **information** pertaining to additional **agenda items**



BECOME AN EXPERT

The best way for a **Director to help a Condo Board function at its highest level** is to become an expert. **Keeping up-to-date** on laws, news, and condo industry professionals is one of the most effective ways to keep the board informed on all procedures and decisions. It is the responsibility of the Chair to **understand the issues on the agenda as thoroughly as possible** in order to facilitate productive conversations and decision-making on each topic. Come into each meeting with an **in-depth understanding** of all meeting materials, and **consider condo industry research** as a part of the pre-meeting process. Many boards **consider including an Education budget** for this purpose [4], though there are many free resources, conferences, and webinars available for these purposes [5].

WORK WITH THE PROPERTY MANAGER

The Condo Board doesn't work alone. A property manager is there to **help the condo corporation and the condo board function to the best of their abilities**, and with the job comes experience. Never be afraid to reach out to this resource. A property manager will often have **the best insight into the opinions and attitudes** of both condo residents and the condo corporation. In their position, property managers also **maintain good networks** to more resources and ideas based on what other condos in your area are doing. **This allows for great protocols to be set in place**, as best practices can be found and adjusted to suit your condo building. A good property manager is an **invaluable resource**, and provide **huge benefits prior to and during board meetings**.

KNOW THE TECHNOLOGY

The biggest trap for any new Chair is **not being familiar with the technology before a board meeting begins**. Fumbling with a projector or not knowing how to access files is a waste of the allocated time and does not maintain a professional image. **Become comfortable with the technology** that the Condo Board uses during meetings, and ensure that **everything is working beforehand** to avoid technical issues during the meeting [3]. Condo Board meetings are occasionally held virtually, making this an even more important element of a successful meeting.

The most commonly used video conferencing softwares are:

- Zoom
- Skype
- Cisco Webex Meetings
- Microsoft Teams
- Google Hangouts

Knowing how to use the software confidently **is essential**, and should be done **long before the meeting is scheduled to start**. Make sure all board members have a way to access the software when scheduling.



PLAN FOR SNACKS

This may seem simple, but **having snacks provided during a board meeting** is something **that is expected**. Everybody is taking time out of their busy days to attend, and if the meeting goes on for a **longer duration** people will start to get hungry. Providing snacks not only **proves consideration and care for the board members**, but also ensures that **attention doesn't start to wander if people get hungry**. Condo Boards often set aside a small budget for snacks during the meetings.



CHAPTER 3

FACILITATING A MEETING



ASSIGN ROLES

During a meeting, a Condo Board must have **roles assigned to be able to function as needed**. There must be a **Secretary, President, Vice President**, and commonly a **Treasurer** as well as other intermediary roles assigned to **Directors**. With reliable roles in place, the Chair is **free to focus on the meeting without worry**. While the Chair is typically the highest ranking member of the board, consider occasionally sharing the role with some of the Directors. By sharing this responsibility, not only does the primary Chair get a break, but **others get the valuable experience gained in this position** [4]. Always check with a Director well in advance to be certain they wish for and are available to take on this responsibility on the selected date, and are given sufficient time to prepare.

FOLLOW THE AGENDA

Coming into a meeting with a **strong agenda** only works if the agenda is followed. The Chair must use this as an **outline for the meeting** for several reasons: to avoid **forgetting any important information**; to **prevent unnecessary topics** from being addressed; to **manage the content**, and therefore length, of the meeting; and to **have a concrete reference for all to follow** before, during, and after the meeting. Board meetings should be succinct and professional, with proper management of conflict and no social discussions throughout. **Conversations must remain relevant** to the business on the agenda.

SET SOME GROUND RULES

It may not be a paying job, but being **a member of a Condo Board is a professional responsibility.** A successful board **must have a set of rules** [4] that they follow in order to maintain professionalism throughout meetings.

Examples of important ground rules include:

- **Be professional.** This is a meeting, and all members are expected to dress and act professionally throughout the duration.
- All members must **familiarize themselves with all materials** prior to the meeting.
- **Participation** for members is not required but **is highly encouraged.**
- **Meetings are to begin and end at the appropriate time** in order to respect the time commitments of all members.
- All **meetings are to be announced well in advance**, with consideration to the commitments of all members.
- **Communication between board meetings** is essential to proper Condo Board management.
- Respect all fellow board members, and **treat everybody with dignity and fairness.** Disagreements are to be handled maturely.
- **Cell phones are to remain on silent** for the duration of the meetings, and should not be used unless absolutely necessary. Respect other members by giving full attention at all times.

These ground rules set a board up for success through improved communication, identifies expectations for all board members, and ensures that **everyone is aware of proper conduct.**

PASSING A MOTION

In order for any decisions to be concrete during a board meeting, **somebody must put forward a motion**. The process to follow is generally to move the motion, have someone second it, discuss, and decide [5]. At this time, it is important to remember that **majority rules is essential**. Many people call for consensus, but a matter can't be overlooked simply because one person didn't agree. A decision needs to be made. **In the occasion of a tie, the Chair is the one who breaks the tie with a secondary vote** in order to carry the motion [6].



POWER TO ACT

It is important to understand when **certain motions need more immediate action**. Some decisions need to be made quickly, and there isn't time for it to be brought up at next month's meeting. In situations like this, the Chair must **delegate "power to act"** [6]. By doing this, **the Chair passes authority to the property manager** or one of the Directors along with a designated budget, to allow them to solve this issue as they see fit **within the budget they are given**.

CHAPTER 4

MEETING ENDS



A POSITIVE ENDING

Once all condo business is addressed, the meeting is ready to be completed. Before the meeting is adjourned, several things need to be addressed. Firstly, it is important to **recap the meeting in order to be sure that everyone comprehends the issues resolved**, and ensure that the minutes have been taken successfully. If there are no questions, the Chair can move on to one of the most overlooked tricks to successful board meetings: **celebrate successes** [2]. Taking a moment at the end of a meeting to **reflect positively on what was accomplished** creates positivity, and releases some tension if a meeting went poorly. This stops many people from walking away from a meeting feeling negative, and makes them less likely to resent attending the next meeting. **Remember:** a Condo Board isn't an obligation, it is a choice that people have made. **Make it as positive an experience as you can** while still getting business done **effectively**.

FINALIZE THE MINUTES

The work isn't done after the meeting is over. The Condo Act requires the minutes of the meeting to be **accessible as Condo Records** to any residents that request them [1]. This means that the **minutes must be completed accurately**, address all business, and once completed, must be circulated to all Directors. This also means that all **confidential information must be removed** prior to circulation [1].

Though there is no required format and the minutes don't need to be word-for-word, they should include information such as:

- Date, location, and attendance
- Business addressed
- **Motions put forward** and votes both in favour and against
- Any amendments to each motion
- **Results** of each motion
- Additional notes or **important information**

The Secretary is responsible for circulation of minutes, though quite often the Property Manager handles this aspect [3].



INFORM ALL OWNERS

Owners of the condo building maintain the right to know condo business, regardless of their involvement with the Board. The information collected during the meeting **must be made easily available** to all residents in the building [3], and can be circulated **via newsletter, email, or online portal,** depending on the systems of each condo building. Condo owners are part of a community, but they are also shareholders, and **have the right to stay informed** on business surrounding their home and their investments.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION



A board meeting is a complex affair, and facilitating conversation between passionate individuals is a difficult task. The Chair has taken on the responsibility to provide service to the Condo Board, which is a rare opportunity to **help real change in the community**. From start to finish, a board meeting is an **exercise in organization**. Materials, locations, attendees, motions, and minutes become a juggling act for any inexperienced Chair, but with **careful preparation** and **confidence** comes serious accomplishment. Proper leadership **maximizes the attitudes** of all board members, **creates positive change**, and **fulfils the responsibility** that a Condo Board holds for its entire community.



CITATIONS:

[1] <https://www.condoauthorityontario.ca/en-US/condominium-living/meetings-voting/board-meetings/#:~:text=The%20primary%20purpose%20of%20a,or%20management%20of%20the%20corporation>

[2] <https://newenglandcondo.com/article/the-one-hour-board-meeting/full>

[3] <https://iccpropertymanagement.com/how-to-chair-a-condo-board-meeting>

[4] Larlyn "Get On Board"

[5] <http://condoadviser.ca/webinars>

[6] http://www.condosincalgary.com/page_content-g8.html