

# Successful Board Meetings

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# Status of Commissioner

- Appointed by an elected official
- Ethics issues
- Fiduciary issues

# Fiduciary Duty

- Annual Contributions Contract signed by the Chairperson of the Board.
- Therefore contract between Board and HUD.
- Creates a fiduciary or quasi fiduciary duty.
- Loyalty to the organization
- Do what's in its best interest.

# Ethics Issues

- HUD Ethics Manual
- ACC provisions
- Hiring relatives
- Contracting with relatives
- Appearance of impropriety
- Waiver issues

# Other Resources

- State Code
- Attorney General Opinions
- Ethics Opinions
- Federal Regulations
- Guidebooks
- Other agencies: Fair Housing, EEOC, Department of Labor, Investigator General, etc.

# What Are Our Goals?

- What's best for the authority, the residents
- Follow the rules, regulations and law
- Pass policies to help in the administration of the housing authority
- Looking “outside the box”
- Maintaining and developing housing
- Acting as the “team”

# The Team

- Only the team has the power and authority to act.
- The Executive Director is a member of the team.
- The Director works for the “Board”, not a member of the “Board”.

# Team Building

- Listening skills
- Explaining positions on issues
- Being friends with other members
- Be honest: tell other members when you agree as well as when you disagree. AND WHY!!



# Role of the Board

- Sets policy
- Hires director to manage the organization
- Achieving the balance of leading and delegating
- Monitoring, receiving reports, asking questions
- Fiduciary duty to HUD

# Monitoring and Evaluating

- Short/Long term plans: measurable indicators
- Finances: bottom line
- Vacancies
- Executive Director
- Health of the authority
- What will make us better?
- Become an advocate for the agency

# ED Annual Appraisal

- What method do we use?
- When is appraisal done?
- How is it performed?
- Legal issues: It is a test.
- Appraisers must have observed work

# Policies

- How do we develop?
- Need for action. Broad or narrow? Policy or procedure?
- Facts gathered
- Issues deliberated
- Policy written
- Reviewed regularly
- Watch for unintentional consequences

# Staff Relationships

- Chain of Command
- Don't allow staff to “short circuit” the chain
- Remind staff about proper channels for making complaints or grievances
- Watch out for “witch hunts”

# Becoming and Remaining Successful

- Know your policies
- Be ethical
- Make other members successful
- Check legal papers: cooperation agreement, Bylaws, Incorporation, ACC, Proof of Insurance

# Who is the Official Spokesperson?

- Who is it?
- What do I say?
- Who do I notify?
- What is the “chain”

# Working with Legal Issues

- Role of your PHA and insurance attorney
- General rules: confidentiality and record keeping
- Role of the attorney
- Establish protocol and guidelines before any issue arises
- Talking with media



# Staying Informed

- Legal reports: executive sessions?
- Insurance issues: working with the company
- Know your strategy
- Let ED know what you really do need to be successful

# Remember !

- Be a “TEAM”
- Listen
- Be individuals, but collective
- Negotiate and compromise
- Act of the majority is the act of the board
- Watch for ethics
- “Appearance of impropriety”
- Enjoy your service.

# Preparing for the Meeting

- What can I do to prepare?

# The Agenda and Materials

- When do I get the agenda and supporting materials?
- What notice is required by the Open Meetings Law of our state?
- Safeguarding the materials: confidential.
- Discussing with other members prior to the meeting.

# Policies

- ACOP
- Ethics Manual
- Section 8 Administrative Plan
- Procurement
- Lease and Grievance
- HUD Handbooks
- Prior Policies

# Questions

- Who do I ask?
- When do I ask?

# Reports

- What reports do I get?
- Do I need any other reports?
- How do I get reports?
- Are these for me or for the board?
- Confidentiality issues
- Public record yet?

# Identifying and Understanding the Issues

- Review materials
- Make notes of issues
- And questions/concerns
- Ask questions.
- Prior to the meeting if possible.
- Don't get on the soapbox.
- On board to help people, not fulfill personal agendas/politics.



# Preparing Questions

- No question is “dumb”
- Be sure questions are based on substance and are relevant to the topic.
- Distribute questions in advance?
- Getting advice from others.
- Lobbying the other members.
- Watch out !!

# Staff Interaction

- Understand the protocol for asking questions.
- Go through the Executive Director or Department Head?
- Make your notes in an accurate manner.

# Politics

- You are a public official since you are appointed by an elected official
- Watch for political pressure
- If you can't support something, let the person know AND why.
- If you have a question, ask your ED. Don't violate the Ethics, ACC, Procurement or any other policy.

# The Media

- Be careful if contacted by the press prior to a meeting relating to a matter on the agenda.
- What do I say: going to listen to all of the discussion, ask questions, and vote in a manner consistent with my duty as a commissioner.

# Meeting Attendance

- If you cannot be present, let the staff know as soon as possible.
- If you are going to be late, let them know that as well as this could be very important to a quorum.
- Leave on time and be on time.

# Takeaways

- Remember the importance of your position.
- Preparation for board meetings is essential so that important decisions can be made in the best informed manner possible.
- Ask questions and be prepared to justify your thoughts and possible decision.
- Work toward having a good board meeting.
- Know what you are doing !!

# Meeting Dynamics

- What kind of board member am I?
- How do we deal as a board, not as individuals
- What is our goal and interest

# Board Member Types

- Facilitator?
- Rubber Stamp?
- Clique?
- Roadblock?



# Facilitator

- A person who tries to reach consensus and guides others through a meaningful discussion and thought process.
- This person brings about an outcome by helping reach common objectives and plan to achieve them.

# Rubber Stamper

- Sits idly and votes without participating in the discussion.
- Watch for voting cliques.
- This person can easily be influenced by a person with power.

# Roadblocker

- Feels that all decisions must be made by going through him/her.
- Feels that they must have decisive input on all matters, no matter how minor.
- Feels they have to have the last word.
- Or they develop way to stop the action until the rest of the groups comes to his/her side.

# Meeting Goals

- Working toward the same goal.
- Working to fill the needs of the HA.
- Working toward compromise
- Understanding what we are voting on.
- Voting our conscience.
- Being willing to listen and modify our final decision.

# Other Member Opinions

- All board members have special abilities and talents.
- Everybody does not always have the same views.
- Members have their own experiences, opinions, preconceived notions.
- Engage in discussion and good questions to see if their opinions have merit.
- Don't take a difference of opinion personally.

# Making the Decision

- Agree to disagree.
- Once decision is made, that is the decision until changed.
- Don't attack the decision outside the meeting.
- Support the decision.
- Work toward change in a progressive manner
- Listen to other members.

# Asking Good Questions

- Ask informed questions.
- Review and study the policies, reports and other materials in advance of the meeting.
- Ask questions before the meeting if possible.
- Keep questions relevant.
- Watch your gestures: body language and facial expression.
- Be sure you express yourself in a manner others understand.

# Meaningful Discussion

- All board members have special abilities and talents.
- Everybody does not always have the same views.
- Members have their own experiences, opinions, preconceived notions.
- Engage in discussion and good questions to see if their opinions have merit.
- Don't take a difference of opinion personally.



# Stay Relevant

- Don't ramble.
- We are not experts on everything.
- Help others stay on point.
- Utilize discussion methods.
- LISTEN
- Reach consensus: give and take
- Don't draw conclusions without sufficient information.
- Don't leave a relevant question on the table.

# The Decision

- Evaluate alternatives and options.
- Vote your conscience.
- Once vote taken find a way to support the decision.

# Confidential Information

- Be aware of what is confidential.
- Tenant files, legal matters, personal information
- Subject to open meetings law in various states.
- Executive session.
- Conferences with attorney
- Don't talk about these outside the meeting

# Conclusion

- What is best for the HA, the residents, the staff, the community?
- Loyalty and fiduciary duty
- Ethics matters
- Rules, Rules, Rules
- Work as a board for the good of the agency
- Take advice when given
- Be a “team” member