



## **Board Member Roles, Responsibilities, & Expectations**

### **BOARD MEMBER JOB DESCRIPTION**

#### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

1. Define and oversee the vision and mission of the organization and keep it relevant to the needs of the region and its individual local governments and communities;
2. Approve programs and services and monitor their effectiveness and usefulness;
3. Provide strategic guidance to the organization and the Executive Director; and
4. Ensure financial solvency, integrity, and soundness.

#### **Keep Your Commitments:**

- a. Know the organization's vision, mission, goals, products, and services;
- b. Do your homework before all meetings; and
- c. Focus on solving problems and achieving positive results for the region.

### **Here are some tips to help you in this role:**

- Recognize and avoid, or make public, any conflict of interest your position may place you in as defined in Article XII of the CCRPC [Bylaws](#);
- Don't pursue special privileges;
- Maintain confidentiality;
- Let your behavior contribute to the smooth operation of the Board. Since so much of your time is spent in meetings, you can help them run efficiently by preparing ahead and following the rules and agreements;
- Ask questions to gain a fuller understanding of the topics at hand;
- Communicate regularly with your local legislative body and/or constituents; and
- Become familiar with the laws that cover public open meetings and hearings.

During your term, you will become conversant in planning lingo; new terms, acronyms, and legal citations such as Act 250, TIP, and ANR will be rolling off your tongue. There will be a virtual alphabet soup of just the acronyms. (Never be afraid to ask for explanations of terms you don't understand.)

You will form new relationships with other boards and commissions; you will learn to write legally binding policies; and you will have the opportunity to influence decision making that may stand for decades.

There will be times when your decisions, in whole or in part, may not be popular. Some of these may be challenged in court or written up in the local paper. You'll be thought of as a villain by some and a hero by others and the tides can change easily.

There will be times when the learning curve is steep, so take advantage of any training opportunities in order to learn about general planning issues and technical topics which will be the underpinning of your decision making process.



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### **Board Member Commitments**

1. Attend each meeting of the board or ensure an alternate is present
2. Participate in the board's retreats
3. Participate in statewide and regional activities of the organization
4. Serve on at least one committee
5. Hold the organization to a high, ethical standard and monitor its performance regularly
6. Prepare for all meetings thoroughly by reading the meeting packet
7. Listen carefully and considerately to others and maintain an open mind
8. Promote decisions and solutions that are in the best interest of the region and the organization
9. Respect the confidentiality of the board's business
10. Be familiar with the open meeting laws
11. Avoid conflicts of interest

### **Board Member Expanded Duties**

#### **A. Establish Policy**

1. Focus on the needs of your region and constituents
2. Focus on the common good of the region, not just your individual community or organization
3. Set policies that guide the regional board to run effectively , legally, and ethically
4. Recognize policy decisions as those that effect the region as a whole
5. Establish policy and governance frameworks needed to allow management and staff to implement the vision and priorities of the board

#### **B. Establish a Partnership with the Executive Director**

1. Set guidelines for authority, responsibility, and accountability of the Executive Director
2. Provide support as necessary for management to succeed in advancing board goals and policies
3. Do NOT micromanage the day-to-day operations of the organization
4. Understand that the board is not the same as a local government



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**C. Nurture a Vision**

1. Establish a shared vision, sense of mission, and common goals at the board level
2. Be able to articulate it to others
3. Take the long-term view with incremental performance measures to evaluate progress
4. Provide direction through regular strategic planning to establish long-term goals and objectives

**D. Communicate Effectively**

1. Conduct regular outreach and feedback sessions with the public
2. Don't limit your input and feedback to only board members
3. Convey the issues and decisions facing the region back to your local legislative body or organization, seek input, and relay their comments and perspectives back to the board
4. Provide constructive and timely feedback
5. Respect the diversity of thoughts and opinions
6. Speak for the board only when authorized to do so

**E. Maintain the Financial Integrity of the Organization**

1. Develop a financial vocabulary
2. Have a firm understanding of the financial condition of the organization including its financial position, obligations, operations, budget, and expenditures
3. Conduct an annual financial audit using a reliable outside firm
4. Monitor financial outcomes and performance

**F. Participate Responsibly**

1. Commit the time necessary to serve on the board
2. Understand your role as a leader of this organization
3. Keep local politics in perspective relative to regional needs and priorities
4. Review meeting agendas and materials prior to attending any meeting
5. Ask informed, thoughtful questions
6. Work at the board level, not at the staff level
7. Follow the conflict of interest policy
8. Be open to participating on committees and serve on at least one
9. Support member retention and recruitment efforts



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**F. Participate Responsibly (Continued)**

10. Maintain confidentiality
11. Develop trust
12. Think regionally even when you act locally
13. Evaluate performance at all levels including your own
14. Be a goodwill ambassador for the organization at the local, regional, and state levels