

Effective Committees and Meetings: Some Best Practices

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Effective Committees Need:

- **Clear understanding of role**
 - ▶ oversight/advisory/operational
 - ▶ Standing, ad hoc, working group
- **Meaningful work**
- **Appropriate membership**
- **Openness, transparency and accountability**
- **Periodic evaluation of their role and effectiveness**

Develop Committee Terms of Reference!

Committee Terms of Reference

● **Mandate/Purpose**

- ▶ Responsibilities, authority and accountabilities clearly communicated to members and community
- ▶ Avoids overlap with other committees/management functions

● **Composition/Membership**

- ▶ Who are the best people to take on the work assigned?
- ▶ Who are the stakeholders? Diversity of perspectives is useful, but nimbleness may also be important
- ▶ Clear roles - *Ex officio*/voting/non-voting/resource
- ▶ Committee Chair designated

Committee Terms of Reference

● Meetings

- ▶ Number of meetings (e.g., minimum number annually)
- ▶ Quorum for taking action/making decisions (e.g., one-half of voting members)

● Time-frame

- ▶ Standing or Ad hoc – expectations for concluding and reporting on work

● Records

- ▶ Minutes – who records and maintains?

Effective Meetings Require:

● Advance Planning

▶ An agenda with clear purpose and timelines

- Usually prepared by the Chair and Secretary/Staff person
- Indicates clearly items for decision/discussion/information
- Circulated in advance
- Opportunity for others to propose items (within time limits)

▶ Meeting materials circulated in advance

- Reasonable time for review and reflection
- Allows meeting time to focus on discussion/decision rather than presentation of information

Effective Meetings Require:

● An Effective Chair:

- ▶ Demonstrates leadership and people skills
- ▶ Understands the role of the Committee
- ▶ Comes prepared and follows the agenda
- ▶ Guides rather than dominates discussions
- ▶ Encourages inclusion/participation from all members
- ▶ Maintains control and moves people/items along in order to complete business
- ▶ Confirms action items and the individuals who will follow up

Effective Meetings Require:

● **Dedicated and Engaged Committee Members:**

- ▶ Attend meetings
- ▶ Come prepared
- ▶ Participate
- ▶ Are respectful of and receptive to the views of others (Ground rules can be helpful)
- ▶ In some cases, possess knowledge and skills relevant to Committee responsibilities

Committee Evaluation

● Periodic evaluation of role and effectiveness

- ▶ Review terms of reference – Is the Committee fulfilling all of its responsibilities?
- ▶ Review work plan – Are we making progress and meeting timelines?
- ▶ Periodic meeting evaluation (“check-in”) – Are meetings effective?
 - What went well?
 - What could be improved?