

THE COMMUNITY BUILDER

On boarding a New Board Member

This morning I was particularly reminded how important the introduction of the business of your association is to new board members. We are holding Board Certification classes today - three sessions full. Florida requires new board members to either take a Board Certification class that introduces them to the responsibilities of a board, a review of laws that apply, and provide a general overview of conducting a board meeting successfully or to sign an affidavit that becomes part of the official books and records, that they have read and understand the documents of their community and the laws of the state of Florida as it pertains to associations.

I'm going to make a confession...I sit on the board of directors in my own community. I also took this class, but I also requested from our management company a visit prior to my first board meeting to review the recent past Minutes, review the current adopted policies and procedures for covenants violation enforcement, collections, etc. I also requested a review of the current contracts the association was involved with and a copy of the most recent financial statement. This provided me with a fairly good understanding of what the current board had been doing and how, what commitments we had contractually and how we were doing financially. It made my first board meeting much more instructive as I was able to actually participate with some level of knowledge about the workings of our community.

What do you do to introduce your new board members to the business of the association? Have you asked your manager to post items on the Board Room by creating a new drawer for these items, making orientation to your new board members easier and more accessible to their schedule? If you haven't, you should know this is very much an option. This drawer would only be accessible to board members and would be a great place to put those documents that all board members should have access to, without having to have them printed out.

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With the inclusion or infusion of new blood to the board, it might also be a great opportunity to review those policies and procedures that were adopted to ensure that everyone is on board with the process and that they still comply with the most current statutes (if any) or with the times and conditions that exist in your community. Does your Collections Policy represent the best process for collecting past due assessments? Is there sufficient notification to those with covenants violations? Do you publish these policies on a routine basis to ensure the owners know what the processes are? It might be a good idea to include these items or this information when sending out the coupons for the coming year.

Communication is always a good idea. While not everyone may welcome this knowledge, at the very least, the board has done their job in communicating what theirs is.