

# Chair and Vice Chair Roles and Responsibilities

## Role of the Chair

As the chief volunteer officer, the board chair is responsible for leading the board. This position demands an exceptional commitment to the board/commission, first-rate leadership qualities, and personal integrity. The chair must earn the respect of fellow board members to be able to meet the challenges of this position.

To function effectively, groups need a leader. A board leader is approachable and available. He or she is objective and listens actively. He or she needs to be a strategist, knowledgeable about the organization and board practices, a coach, and a conciliator. The chair most commonly performs the following functions:

- Serves as the contact point for every board member /commissioner on board/commission issues.
- Sets goals and objectives for the board/commission and ensures that they are met.
- Ensures that all board members/commissioners are involved in committee activities; assigns committee chairs.
- Motivates board members/commissioners to attend meetings.
- Facilitator of board/commission meetings
- One of the trickiest responsibilities of a chair is to run effective and productive board meetings. Effective meeting facilitators must be able to create a purposeful agenda in collaboration and follow it.
- Know how to run a less formal and productive meeting.
- Engage each board member in deliberation.
- Control dominating or out-of-line behavior during meetings.

If the board/commission chair is not able to lead an effective meeting, it is better to delegate that task to someone else (such as the vice-chair) rather than risk unproductive or boring meetings.

### Should the chair vote?

The chair has the same right to vote as other board members. Some chairs vote, while others abstain and vote only to break a tie.

## Role of the Vice-Chair

The vice-chair most commonly performs the following functions:

- Prepares to assume the office of the board chair.
- Fulfills the board chair's duties when the presiding officer is absent or if that office becomes vacant.
- Assists the board chair in the execution of their duties.
- Serves on committees as requested to learn the operations of the board.
- Works closely with the board chair to transfer knowledge and history to prepare for leadership.