



Roles and Responsibilities of the Management Committee

There are some general responsibilities which apply to all members of the management committee. These include:

- Ensuring that the association complies with its rules and the *Associations Incorporation Act*, such as those regarding calling and holding meetings
- Acting honestly and in the best interest of the association
- Exercising care, skill and diligence in carrying out its role

The management committee under the act and/or the rules also has the responsibility for some specific tasks, such as:

- Ensuring a secretary is appointed
- Conducting the business of the association
- Taking out appropriate insurance
- Preparing the audited financial statement and presenting it to the annual meeting
- Authority to interpret the meaning of its rules

Committee members should work to maintain and enhance the organisation's unity and sense of purpose. Internal disputes which escalate can cripple the organisation and lead to its eventual demise. Some important principles for creating a good working environment should be noted:

- If you agree to be involved in a particular project or a sub-committee, be involved; don't leave it to others to carry your workload.
- Listen to what others have to say. Try to understand their point of view, especially if it is different from your own. The general aim of a committee is to arrive at an acceptable and workable mix of the suggestions that have been made.
- Do your best not to invade another committee member's authority. For example, if someone has responsibility for publicity and you have noticed that some opportunity or avenue of publicity has been missed, don't launch into an attack. Talk privately, offering help and suggestions.
- Support the legal decisions made in meetings of the organisation. Even those who have been opposing a certain course of action are expected to accept responsibility for the final decision and its implementation. However, if you have some concerns about a decision, you may wish to suggest an evaluation of the chosen course of action after a trial period.

The chairperson, secretary and treasurer have a number of specific tasks, which are discussed below.

1. Chairperson/President

The chairperson or president has an important role as a leader within the organisation, as well as the legal duty of ensuring orderly and correctly conducted meetings. An involved chairperson and committee can give paid and unpaid workers a great deal of support and practical help. Where good communication exists, the organisation is stronger and better.

The chairperson will also take the chair at meetings of the association and be responsible for good meeting procedure.

Sometimes the chairperson is also the organisation's spokesperson. The role of spokesperson can be played by any member of the committee as long as everyone is clear who it is, and what the role means.

In the role of representing the organisation, the chairperson usually signs all official letters concerning changes in policy and letters to workers, committee members, and government departments and so on. Such official correspondence should be held on record and tabled at the subsequent management committee meeting.

2. Deputy/ Vice-President

Acacia has included a position of deputy or vice president. This person assists the president and fills in if he/she is unavailable. It is essential that the president and deputy president have a good working relationship to ensure that duplication or confused direction does not occur.

The role of president is a large and responsible one and there are many aspects of this work which can and should be shared with other committee members. Thus, the role of deputy president is largely the same as has been described for president, but the two people should share that workload as a team.

3. Secretary

The secretary is responsible for ensuring that the records of the association are maintained and for being the public point of contact for the association. Duties and obligations placed by the Act are:

- The secretary to notify any change of address of the association's registered office
- The secretary is responsible for ensuring the change of records for any land owned by the association on its incorporation or afterwards
- The secretary's statutory declaration on amendment of the rules
- The secretary is required to provide members with a copy of the association's rules on request and payment of reasonable charges
- The secretary is required to ensure that the rules are in a legible state
- The secretary to lodge financial statements
- The secretary to notify any change to officers
- The secretary to notify any change of the secretary's address

The following are the duties and obligations placed on the secretary by the model rules:

- Members may resign by giving notice in writing to the secretary
- Rejected or terminated members can give written notice of appeal to the secretary and the secretary must convene a general meeting to determine the appeal
- The secretary usually keeps possession of the register of members and must allow members to inspect it
- Special meeting of the management committee to be convened by the secretary on a written requisition
- The secretary shall give at least 14 days' notice of any special management committee meetings
- How a special general meeting can be called and convened by the secretary
- The manner of the notice to be given by the secretary for the convening of all general meetings to hear membership appeals
- Responsibility for the minutes of the association
- The secretary may countersign the affixing of the association's seal

Usually the secretary is also generally responsible for:

- Preparing for management committee, general and annual general meetings (e.g. preparing agendas in consultation with the chairperson, ensuring venues are available and, if needed, catering is provided, coordinating guest speakers, etc....)
- Carrying out tasks during meetings (taking minutes, attendance lists, generally assisting the chairperson)
- Following up after meetings (writing up and distributing minutes, monitoring and acting as needed on correspondence)

Taking minutes at meetings is a very important role of the secretary. Minutes provide a written record of what went on and what decisions are reached. With full and accurate minutes, people can refer to that record to find out exactly what was decided. As a basic guide, minutes should include:

- Date of the meeting and time started
- Place of meeting
- Names of those present
- Names of those who conveyed their apologies for not being able to attend
- Reference to the minutes of the last meeting including a note that they were accepted as being an accurate record of that meeting (or detail precisely what amendments had to be made to them) and recording any business left over from that meeting.
- Record of the decisions made. This will mean writing down the exact words of the motion passed at the meeting, noting the names of the mover and seconder.
- Reference to any reports that are presented. This is the minimum minute entry required. Some secretaries like to appendix the full report to the minutes to provide the most thorough and detailed account of the meeting, or you could ask anyone who provides a report to also provide a one paragraph summary for the minutes.

- Any information that members want to make known, or positions they have reached and wish to be recorded.
- Task lists - it is a very good idea to write down who is to do what and when it is to be done. This part of decision making is sometimes forgotten or never recorded and all kinds of problems can arise because of it. This information can usually be written next to the relevant decision or resolution in an action column or listed separately at the end of the minutes. When minutes are sent out, a task list also serves to remind people of their tasks.
- Brief notes on matters or ideas discussed, rejected or amended and the reason for rejection. This minimises later discussions and rescission motions. (A rescission motion is when the group changes its mind.)
- A list of correspondence received by the organisation since its last committee meeting and a list of correspondence sent during that time. The secretary should draw the attention of the committee meeting to any correspondence which requires urgent attention or discussion to formulate a reply.
- Assurance that the minutes are official and correct and keep an official minutes book. A copy of the minutes should be pasted into the minutes book soon after each meeting. When minutes from a previous meeting are accepted at a meeting, another member of the executive committee (usually the Chairperson) should sign and mark them as accepted. This will avoid any future disputes about whether minutes were accepted or not.
- In small organisations, details of all letters written and received could be given at all meetings so that the whole meeting can decide how to reply to each letter. A larger group may give this responsibility to the secretary or a sub-committee and would expect a list of correspondence to be sent out with the agenda and the correspondence to be tabled at the meeting. The secretary or worker should draw the attention of the committee only to letters of particular importance. Members might then request further information on particular items of interest to them.

4. Treasurer

While all members of the management committee are responsible for managing the association's finances, the treasurer is generally charged with the task of ensuring that financial transactions are properly recorded and reported on.

The treasurer presents financial reports at management committee meetings. It is important that these reports are easily understood by all the committee members because the whole committee is responsible for keeping a check on the finances of the organisation. There should be receipts for all money received, evidence that it has been banked, and available documentation for all money paid out.

While the treasurer may not be able to do all these daily duties personally, it is the responsibility of the treasurer to ensure that good systems are in place to allow these tasks to be done efficiently and in a foolproof manner.

Other tasks of the treasurer may include:

- Making sure finances are well planned by preparing an annual budget and then regularly monitoring this budget to see that the organisation is staying within it.
- Making sure that the books are up to date and in order – this means that there is a proper record of all payments and money received, and that accounts are reconciled at least once a month.
- Taking reasonable steps to make sure that the organisation's finances are arranged so as to prevent funds from being stolen or misused.
- Ensuring that the necessary information and account books are ready for an audit each year and that an audit takes place. Auditors will usually provide valuable information to the organisation about the way the books are being kept and the general financial position of the organisation. It is essential that the whole management committee considers this information and does not see the ' on the treasurer once a year. Your auditor as simply 'checking up constitution will require an audit to take place at a certain time, usually so that audited accounts can be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

The specific tasks of preparing financial reports and maintaining the financial record-keeping system may be delegated to volunteers or a paid bookkeeper.

Sub-Committees

Sub-committees are a way of distributing the workload of a management committee, and for making the most use of the expertise of the organisation's members. In this way, people who may not have the time

to serve on the management committee can be co-opted onto a sub-committee for a limited time to carry out a project.

The role, responsibilities and its relationship to the management committee should be clearly defined. In setting up a sub-committee, remember the following:

- It performs a specific task – such as reviewing staff salaries, preparing a submission or a budget, or looking after the grounds.
- It should be small in size – often 3 - 5 people are enough.
- Establish the sub-committee formally at a management committee meeting. Nominate one person to act as a convener to call meetings, and co-ordinate the activities of the sub-committee. It is a good idea to actually state that the sub-committee is responsible to the full management committee.
- Do not take communication for granted. Make sure everyone is clear about what has to be done and who is going to do it.
- Give the sub-committee specific written guidelines, time frames, duties and powers. This information should be minuted at a management committee meeting.
- A sub-committee minute taker should be nominated. Minutes and reports of the sub-committee should be presented regularly at full management meetings.
- Any action or policy recommended by the sub-committee needs to be approved by the full committee before anyone can act on that policy.
- It is useful to set clear goals and time limits on the life of the sub-committee and to allocate specific funds or other resources at your disposal to enable the sub-committee to do its job.

References:

Adult, Community and Further Education Board

- *Learn Local Committee of Management (CoM) Workbook, A practical guide on governance for Committees of Management in the Learn Local sector, Adult, Community and Further Education, State of Victoria 2012.*

Consumer Affairs Victoria

- *The Management Committee Fact Sheet, Consumer Affairs Victoria, Sep 2004*

State of Victoria

- *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*
- *Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012*

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