
Building a better board

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CITY OF MISSOULA BOARD MEMBER TRAINING
PROGRAM

Thanks for your service!



Board Member Handbook/Resources

<http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/430/Board-Member-Handbook>

The screenshot shows the Missoula Montana website with the following elements:

- Header:** MISSOULA MONTANA logo on the left. Navigation tabs: RESIDENTS, DOING BUSINESS, YOUR GOVERNMENT (highlighted), HOW DO I?, EXPLORE MISSOULA. A search bar with 'Search Missoula' and a 'GO' button is on the right.
- Left Sidebar:** A vertical menu with icons and text: NOTIFY ME®, AT YOUR SERVICE, JOBS, CITY LAWS, PARKS & RECREATION, LICENSES & PERMITS.
- Main Content Area:**
 - Boards & Commissions:** Agendas & Minutes, Appointments, Boards & Commissions, Board Meeting Calendar, Board Member Handbook. This section is circled in red.
 - City Charter**
 - City Council:** Agendas/Webcasts/Minutes, City Council Committees Meeting Schedule, Domestic Partnership Registry, Ward Map.
 - City Attorney**: Court Decisions, Legal Opinions.
 - City Clerk**
 - Departments:** Animal Control, Cemetery, Development Services, Environmental Health, Financial Services, Fire Department, GIS Services, Grants, Health Department, Human Resources, Missoula Redevelopment Agency, Parking Commission, Parks & Recreation, Police Department, Public Works.
 - Contact Us**
 - Energy and Climate Action:** Emissions Inventory, Conservation & Climate.
 - Mayor:** A Message from the Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, Contact Us, Communications Initiatives, Mayor's Biography, Past Mayors, Proclamations, Schedule Request.
 - Neighborhood Councils:** Community Forum, Neighborhoods, My Neighborhood.
 - Other Governments:** Missoula County, State of Montana, Federal.
- Right Side:** A photo of two men, one older and one younger, looking at something together. Below it, text reads: 'See what is happening in City Hall, find contacts, or browse open documents available to Missoula Citizens.'

Areas we'll cover:

Governance

Developing a productive board environment

Conducting effective meetings

Governance

*NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED
CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD. INDEED, IT IS THE ONLY THING
THAT EVER HAS. MARGARET MEAD*

Mission

What is your board's mission?

How do you use it?

Tools:

Goal setting

Periodic self-evaluation



Roles

With the elected officials

With Staff

- Is there a clear and broadly understood distinction between where the board's role ends and staff role begins?



Board Responsibilities

Ordinance/resolution

Statute

Bylaws

Directives from the governing
body/appointing official



Bylaws and rules

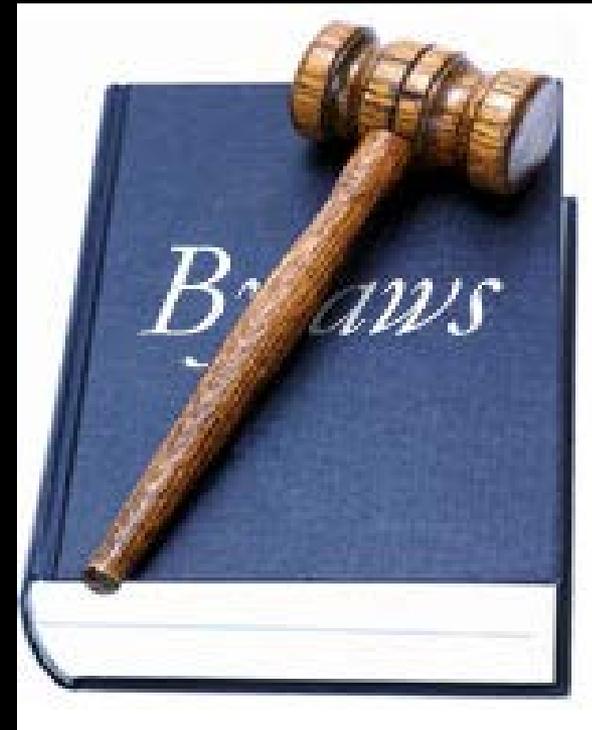
Know your bylaws

Available during your meetings

When the going gets tough...

Robert's Rules and Bylaws
Resources—

- Your Staff
- City Attorney
- City Clerk
- [Robert's Rules cheat sheet](#)



Accountability

Self-evaluation

Reporting to governing
body/Mayor

Appointment process



Ethics

*INTEGRITY IS DOING THE RIGHT THING EVEN
WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING. C.S. LEWIS*





Ethics

Represent

Public Benefit

Collaboration

Trust

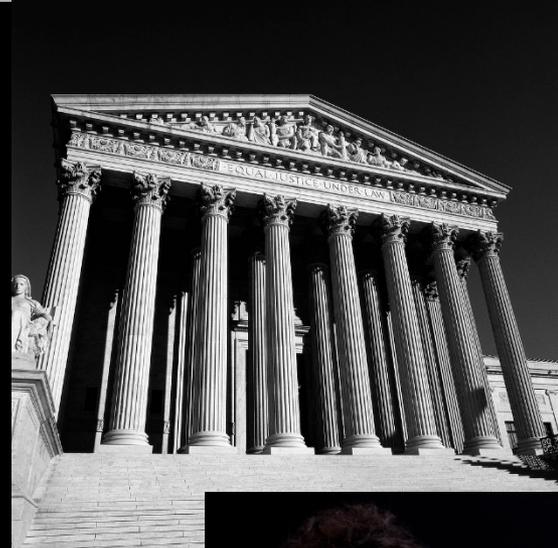
Transparency

Conflict of interest

Legal

- When there is personal or business financial influence, benefit or detriment at stake
- When the action adversely affects a competitor.
- See Legal Opinions in Board Handbook online

Perceived



Conflict of interest

What to do (legal)

- Disclose conflict publically prior to official action

What to do (perceived)

- Disclose
- Abstain from vote/participating in debate

ABSTAIN!



Special rules for land use matters

When private property rights are at stake on subdivisions, zoning and/or other land use projects, board members assume a quasi-judicial role:

- Board members must maintain an appearance of fairness ([See Legal Opinion Board Member Handbook online](#))
- Avoid ex parte communications ([See Legal Opinion Board Member Handbook online](#))



Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

Resources for advice/help:

- Legal Opinion
- City Attorney's office
- Montana Code Annotated--[Title 2, Chapter 2, Part 1](#)
- Missoula Municipal Code--[Chapter 2.88](#)



Developing a Productive Board Environment

*THE TRUE CIVILIZATION IS WHERE EVERY MAN GIVES TO EVERY OTHER
EVERY RIGHT THAT HE CLAIMS FOR HIMSELF. ROBERT INGERSOLL*

Build Trust/Respect

Attend meetings and request to be absent if you have a conflicting obligation

Arrive on time and be prepared

Professional demeanor

Active listening

Constructive debate

Respectful dissent

Joy, humor and satisfaction



Develop a productive environment

Personal strategies for civility

- Wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking
- Separate people from the problem
- Obtain the facts
- Limit personal misunderstandings
- Use fair processes
- Be open for opportunities to understand, compromise, persuade, or be persuaded

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi

Develop a productive environment

Presiding officer's role:

- Set the tone of civility up front
- Be fair and impartial
- Polite reminders urging civility
- Recognize speakers

Board/staff role:

- Model civil behavior
- Support the chair's efforts to maintain civility
- Wait to speak until recognized by the presiding officer

Introduce the item: We have an agenda item that has generated a great deal of interest. I'd like to start the meeting by saying that we want to hear from everyone, and the board members would like the meeting to proceed in a thoughtful, respectful, productive manner.



Develop a productive environment

Promote civil dissension

- Model civil behavior when you discuss issues
- Speak to the issue directly
- Avoid interrupting a speaker
- Avoid emphatic language (always, never)
- Avoid escalating uncivil dissension (loud talk, non-verbal cues, sarcasm, zingers)
- Avoid monopolizing the debate
- Avoid personalizing the debate (you must be crazy to think....)
- Seek points of agreement and build compromise.

Develop a productive environment

Establishing ad hoc groups, task forces, working groups, subcommittees, etc

- Purpose
- Scope
- Membership/voting privileges
- Timeframe
- Decision-making structure
- Public notice/agenda/minutes rules apply



Effective meetings

Develop an agenda

Provide public notice

Ensure participation for members of the public

Maintain a respectful atmosphere and keep the discussion on topic



Effective meetings

Rights and responsibilities at stake in a public meeting

- Open meeting—liberal construction
- Right to know
- Public notice
- Right to participate
- E-mails/web 2.0, social media, oh my!
- Legal Opinions—Board member handbook:
 - [Open meeting, public participation](#)
 - [E-mail, e-mail voting, etc.](#)



Effective meetings

Develop the agenda with your staff.

- Identify topics
- Talk with staff, other board members, and interested parties
- Meeting logistics/notice
- Time management
 - Presentations
 - Issue complexity
 - Public interest
 - Agenda order



Effective Meetings

Suggested order to take a matter up:

1. Staff presentation or other introduction to the agenda item (if necessary)
2. Other presentation (Developer, applicant, appellant, etc.)
3. Board questions
4. Public Comment
5. Parliamentary debate (if necessary)
6. Vote (if necessary)



Effective meetings

Public comment

- Public comment on items not on the agenda (state law)
- When to invite public comment during the meeting
 - After a motion & before debate
- Reasonable speaking limits are permitted.
- Have speakers queue up for larger meetings
- Put people at ease
- Thank you



Effective meetings

Motions—a great tool to focus discussion of an issue

- Affirmative motions are easier—A yes vote means yes and a no vote means no.

Chair may call for a motion & a second then call for public comment.



Effective Meetings

Effective meetings

Chair participation

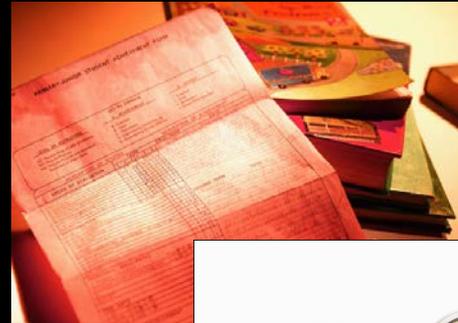
- A little participation is okay
- Chair may consider passing the baton to participate extensively.



Effective meetings

Debate

- Staff and citizens may be called on during debate to answer a question or offer a clarification.
- Tips to encourage the pace of debate
- Tips to focus debate on the motion



Effective meetings

Voting

- Bringing debate to a close
- Voice vote
- Roll call vote

Announce the results



The motion
carries.

Questions?
