

BOARD/COMMISSION MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

I. WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE BOARD/COMMISSION MEMBER?

- A. Interest and concern for the importance of the charge of the board or commission.
- B. Understanding and loyalty to the democratic process.
- C. Willingness to function as a team member.
- D. Willingness and ability to devote time and effort necessary to conduct the board or commission's business.
- E. Ability to speak effectively and to communicate stands on issues.
- F. Ability to make decisions.
- G. Ability to understand how groups function.

II. WHAT IS A BOARD/COMMISSION MEMBER'S RESPONSIBILITY AS AN INDIVIDUAL?

- A. To keep informed about matters of concern to the board or commission's charge.
- B. To maintain a posture of availability to the people represented.
- C. To always remember that the board or commission's decision prevails over individual concerns.
- D. To subordinate personal interests for the good of the board or commission.
- E. To make decisions ... usually on a wide range of topics.
- F. To support the staff in their authorized functions.

III. WHAT IS A MEMBER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE BOARD/COMMISSION ITSELF?

- A. Board or commission members have a responsibility for total board/commission operation. They should adopt a questioning attitude toward board/commission procedure, always trying to improve those procedures. They should be aware that a board or commission must have written policies and that the board or commission uses them.
- B. Effective members are conscious of relationships with other people. They are willing to work with other board or commission members even though there are personality differences. Effective members always attempt to treat others fairly and ethically. They are convinced of the value of the democratic process and the rights of others to be heard.
- C. Effective board or commission members are constantly learning their jobs. They read publications given to them by the staff representative...and carefully prepare for

each of the meetings by reading all the material provided with each agenda. When appropriate, they become familiar with items to be acted upon, i.e., visit the site to learn what is at issue; talk with those most affected by a possible decision of the board or commission.

- D. Above all else, effective board or commission members must be COURAGEOUS. In all matters of public concern, members will be at the point of conflict. If they cannot stand the pressures and the acrimony of conflict, then they should not be a board or commission member.
- E. Within the responsibilities to the board are included:
 - 1. Being able to weather criticism.
 - 2. Maintaining firm convictions.
 - 3. Being willing to take sides in a controversy.
 - 4. Sharing responsibility for board decisions.
 - 5. Recognizing conflict of interest situations and abstaining from actions relating to them.

IV. **MEMBERS OF ANY PUBLIC BOARD OR COMMISSION SHOULD:**

- A. Understand that their basic function is decision making...within the board or commission's authority and not administrative.
- B. Discourage subcommittees which tend to nullify the main board or commission's responsibility.
- C. Insist that all business transactions be on an ethical and above-board basis.
- D. Refuse to use the position or the board/commission in any way for personal gain...or prestige.
- E. Refuse to bring personal problems into board/commission consideration.
- F. Give the staff respect and consideration that is due skilled, professional personnel.
- G. Understand and abide by **Robert's Rules of Order.**
- H. Understand Alaska statutes and municipal ordinances which affect the board/commission's responsibility and authority.

V. **SUMMARY:**

Being a board or commission member is a challenging job, but it is also rewarding. There is true satisfaction gained from serving the community in which you live and that service is vital if our nation is to continue ... and prosper.