

Board/Commission/Committee Member Responsibilities

1. What makes an effective committee member?
 - a. Interest and concern for the importance of the charge of the committee
 - 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 committee's business.
 - e. Ability to speak effectively and to communicate stands on issues.
 - f. Ability to make decisions.
2. What is a committee member's responsibility as an individual?
 - a. To keep informed about matters of concern to the committee's charge.
 - b. To maintain a posture of availability to the people represented.
 - c. To always remember that the committee's decision prevails over individual concerns.
 - d. To subordinate personal interests for the good of the committee.
 - e. To make decisions, usually on a wide range of topics.
 - f. To support the staff in their authorized functions.
3. What is a member's responsibility to the committee?
 - a. Committee members have a responsibility for total committee operation. They should adopt a questioning attitude toward committee procedure, always trying to improve those procedures. They should be aware that a committee must have written policies and that the committee uses them.
 - b. Effective members are conscious of relationships with other people. They are willing to work with other committee 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 committee 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.
- d. Above all, effective committee 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 committee or board member.
- e. Within the responsibilities to the board are included:
 - i. Being able to weather criticism
 - ii. Maintaining firm convictions
 - iii. Being willing to take sides in a controversy
 - iv. Sharing responsibility for board decisions
 - v. Recognizing conflict of interest situations and abstaining from actions relating to them.

4. Members of any public committee should:

- a. Understand that their basic function is decision-making (within the committee's authority), and not administrative.
- b. Discourage subcommittees which tend to nullify the main committee's or board's responsibility.
- c. Insist that all business transactions be on an ethical and above-board basis.
- d. Refuse to use the position or the committee in any way for personal gain or prestige.
- e. Refuse to bring personal problems into committee consideration.
- f. Give staff the 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 committee's responsibility and authority.

5. In summary:

Being a board or committee 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.