



KEYSTONE

HOA BOARD RECRUITMENT & ELECTION HANDBOOK

A brief handbook for recruiting new board members and running a smooth board election.

As HOA management partners, we get a lot of questions related to HOA board membership, including:

- ?** How do we find new HOA Board members?
- ?** I'm thinking of running for the Board, what do I need to know?
- ?** What makes a great HOA Board member?
- ?** How can we encourage homeowners to run for the Board?
- ?** What's the best way to hold a smooth board election?

In this HOA Board Recruitment & Election Handbook, we answer all of these questions based on our years of working closely with HOA Boards.





HOW TO FIND NEW HOA BOARD MEMBERS

The main issue with finding new board members is that an HOA board is pulling from a group of people who already lead busy lives. Serving on the board is a volunteer position with no pay and no huge incentive, other than a desire to continue to make sure that the community is a great place to live. Here's how to find them:

- **Create an atmosphere that is conducive to volunteering:** Make sure that the way your board operates publicly and in closed sessions is a welcoming atmosphere. No one wants to sit on a caustic board fraught with negativity. When residents show up, make sure that the Board provides a constructive forum where everyone is treated fairly. This sets the tone for how the board operates and shows potential board members that yours is a productive and positive environment.
- **Set up a training ground through your committees:** Many HOAs have landscape committees, architectural control committees, finance or maintenance committees. Serving on a committee shows potential board members the day-to-day workings of the board and the positive impact their input can have on the association.
- **Share information to generate interest:** Many association members have no idea what's expected of a board member, so they never consider running for a seat. Use your community's newsletter and website to share details of the roles and responsibilities of the board. Always end with a call-to-action encouraging potential candidates to learn more.
- **Create an ongoing call for candidates:** Don't limit yourself to a one-time call for candidates just prior to an election. Let your members know that your board is always looking for interested people to participate in your community's HOA management.



WHAT POTENTIAL BOARD MEMBERS NEED TO KNOW

Thinking of running for a seat on your community's board? Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

1. Run for a seat if you want to support the overall success of the community, not just because you're interested in a single issue.
2. Everyone in the running has an opportunity to present a Candidacy Statement. Use this as an opportunity to introduce yourself to the membership and share your vision for the community.
3. Make sure you can remain open-minded, even if someone disagrees with you. Your role is to carefully consider all sides of an issue and make thoughtful decisions.
4. Speak to current and former board members about what to expect. Their input can give you a clearer perspective of how you can contribute.
5. You can make a difference by volunteering. Serving on your community's HOA board can be a rewarding process that enables you to make a tangible impact on your community.

Great board members are out there, they just might not know it yet.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT HOA BOARD MEMBER

There isn't one type of person that makes a great board member. There are, however, a few common traits of great Board members. In our experience, great Board members:

- **Enjoy volunteering:** They must have the time, patience and enthusiasm to dedicate themselves to community issues, even though they receive no monetary compensation.
- **Are civic-minded:** They put their community's best interests first and seek to build long-term value for their community, both socially and financially.
- **Are positive and optimistic:** Managing a community comes with many challenges. Great HOA board members set positive expectations and refuse to get discouraged, even when faced with tough decisions.
- **Exercise fairness:** Board members are there to serve their communities, not their own personal interests. Their friends receive no special benefits; they know that HOA rules must be evenly applied to all community members.
- **Know that the rules apply to them, too:** Good board members understand they aren't exempt from community regulations and never try to use their position for personal gain.
- **Take their role seriously:** Board members understand their responsibility as a fiduciary of a large non-profit company (the HOA) that controls millions of dollars in assets.
- **Have a mind for business:** Great board members are able to see the big picture and make smart long-term business decisions that will ultimately increase property values for all residents.
- **Understand that their authority comes as a board, not a board member:** They know they don't possess any individual authority. Therefore, they quickly support group decisions, even if they are counter to their own personal opinion.
- **Want to become more educated:** Changing laws, liability issues, and responding to community needs in real-time require detailed knowledge and deep understanding of the concerns that can impact a community. Great board members take advantage of the training and HOA management resources to ensure they are educated enough to make keen decisions.



HOW TO PERSUADE A HOMEOWNER TO RUN FOR A HOA BOARD POSITION

If there are great potential Board members in your community that are on the fence about running for a position, it can be tough to convince them. Here are three great things you can tell them to persuade them to run:

YOU'LL HELP TO PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT

Board members are tasked with making important decisions on behalf of the homeowners association. As a board member, you will have a significant influence on assessments, community improvement projects, scheduling and operational aspects of projects and the overall future vision for your community. These decisions have a major impact on the trajectory of the property values in your community.

YOU'LL MAKE YOUR COMMUNITY A NICER PLACE TO LIVE

In addition to administrative and operational tasks, board members can act as cornerstones to enrich community life through events and community-building activities. As a board member, you'll play a role in shaping your community's identity and providing input into a strategic plan that establishes its long-term vision. You'll also get the opportunity to meet your neighbors, learn about what matters to them and help bring those priorities to life.

YOU'LL BRING VALUABLE SKILLS TO THE TABLE

Your community can benefit from the skills you have to offer, especially if you have specialized experience in finance, legal, operations or communications. Some of your hobbies can also enhance your association. Your love of landscaping, recreational sports, design or event planning can help your board make more informed decisions about projects that will improve your community.



HOW TO HOLD A SMOOTH HOA BOARD ELECTION

An HOA board election is a meeting of the membership during which homeowners come together to elect officials to serve on the board of their HOA. Here are some expert tips to ensure that your HOA's board election runs smoothly:

- 1. Read your bylaws:** Your bylaws are part of your HOAs governing documents. This set of regulations stipulates the details and constructs for the election meeting itself. Bylaws often include things like: the number of board seats that will be up for election during a given period, term limits, whether or not voting can be done by proxy, etc. Understanding your bylaws will help you familiarize yourself with your HOA's process for holding elections, so you'll know what to expect.
- 2. Understand your HOA's specific election rules:** Your HOA might have important election rules that are not covered in your bylaws. These can include who can serve as an election inspector, the timeline to distribute relevant election information, the process for secret ballot submission, who will register the ballots, etc. Get to know these.
- 3. Create a clear timeline:** Well in advance of your election, hold a meeting of your HOA board to establish all important dates. Key dates for an HOA election include the date of record (the date when residents must own their property in the HOA in order to qualify to vote in this election cycle), the date candidacy forms must be submitted, the date of the election and the date election results must be distributed to the membership.
- 4. Assign the inspectors of the election ahead of time:** Election inspectors are trusted parties who conduct the physical election and ensure that the process is fair, transparent and truthful. Election inspectors perform significant duties during your election, including registering ballots, establishing proof of quorum, removing secret ballot envelopes from external envelopes, counting ballots, evaluating the validity of ballots, and creating the official tally. Your election inspectors might be your property management company (if your governing documents allow it), a trusted resident, or a third-party independent election company.

- 5. Prepare for election day:** Facilitating a smooth election requires preparing ahead of time for the actual day. Get there early, make sure that your inspectors are prepared and understand their roles and duties. Ensure that all necessary materials are on hand, including letter openers, office supplies for tally sheets, etc.
- 6. Record meeting minutes carefully:** Just like any other HOA meeting, a board election requires minutes. Make sure that whoever is writing down the meeting minutes is clearly recording everything that happens. Election records should be comprehensive and transparent.
- 7. Clearly announce the winners:** After the results have been tallied, announce the winners formally (note this in the minutes) and seat the new officers at the end of the dais or at the board member table. This helps to ensure that there is no confusion about who was elected.
- 8. Follow up quickly:** After the election's conclusion, mail out your election results in a timely manner, per state code, so all members have a record of what happened on election day. Your property management company can help you organize and distribute your election results.

As with everything related to HOA management, staying organized is part of the overarching blueprint for success. With foresight and preparation, your HOA's board member election can be a smooth transition to new leadership.

LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT HOA MANAGEMENT PARTNER FOR YOUR COMMUNITY? CONTACT KEYSTONE PACIFIC TODAY TO LEARN MORE.

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