

## MAINTAINING CONTROL OF A MEETING

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In reading this article, it may remind you of parenting. Who is in control, who wants to be in control, and who should be in control?

Please don't be offended by the above analogy, but even business owners should think this through in regards to their employees. Yes, you want your employees to like you, like working for you, but you need to make a profit. Who is in control, who wants to be in control and who should be in control because of the financial investment made originally?

In choosing the Officers of the Corporation careful thought should be given to personalities. These are normally the same volunteers as the Directors, unless the documents allow otherwise. The Treasurer should be able to read a financial statement and like numbers, the Secretary should understand the importance of keeping and understand the importance of accounting for Association records, but the President (and the Vice President in the President's absence) should be able to control a meeting, clearly be able to handle running a meeting and keeping control at the same time. The Board meetings are not about members voting and wishes, but is all about running the corporation and getting business done while giving all directors an opportunity to have their opinion heard. The Board has a fiduciary responsibility to make decisions in the best interest of the corporate vs. any personal agenda they may have thought they wanted to work on when serving on the Board.

Members voted for the Directors to run their corporation, if incorporated, and expect these Directors to protect, preserve, maintain and enhance the value of the assets of their organization. Not everyone is going to agree with who was elected to serve on the Board, but the Directors were elected non-the-less and have to take their duties seriously.

Some personalities work well in the position of President, but one of those personalities that does not work is a dictator type personality. Yes, the President should be able to control the meetings, but not feel as if the Association is his or her own kingdom to reign in the manner he or she wishes.

If the Board adopts a Parliamentary Procedures Resolution, the meetings will run much more smoothly. A majority of Directors makes the decision on how the meetings will be conducted and it is the job of the President to ensure that this policy is followed. You will find a sample for discussion under the forms section of the website.

In teaching a Parliamentary Procedures class recently for CE credits in Reno, several of the managers liked and/or didn't like some parts of this resolution, but in these likes and dislikes, they were thinking about particular clients with which it may or may not work. This was perfect as the Resolution is a living document that should be used to proactively or reactively handle issues unique to each Association.

Some Directors like to have owner input as the Board Meeting goes along with each line item on the agenda. This causes the meetings to run longer than they should. Is this really fair to the other Directors, the other owners in attendance and particularly the Manager? None of the owners in attendance were most likely given a copy of the Board package that is distributed to each member of the Board in accordance with the Management Contract, which is normally 3 – 5 days before the Board meeting. Normally, it totally depends on whether there is a weekend involved for Directors to go through the package in advance vs. opening the package at the meeting. Managers know that there will be painfully long meetings if Directors open the package at the meeting as they clearly won't be prepared to make decisions.

Savvy business owners members who you would like to attend these meetings, serve on the Board or serve on the Committees will not stay at meetings or even show up if the meetings are not controlled, not run efficiently, and comments from owners in attendance controlled. They will feel like it is a waste of time and won't have time for this nonsense.

Nevada law requires that the owner comments be held twice, once at the beginning on agenda items and once at the end on any item the owner wishes to speak about. Setting two time limits will keep these from getting out of control. If the Parliamentary Procedures Resolution states that each owner can only speak at these two times and their comments are limited to a particular time limit, the meeting should not run painfully long. Most Associations have 2 egg times and limit the comments to 2 or 3 minutes. The idea of two timers is that each owner can see how much time they have left and you won't have to wait to reset it. Larger associations have found a stop light that works for this too as it shows when they have one minute left when the stop light changes to orange.

Regardless of what form the Community chooses to use, it is important that the Board adopt some type of parliamentary procedure as those of you located in Nevada are required by law to have some type of parliamentary procedure outlined in your Bylaws. If this has not been done, minimally have the resolution and follow it.