



June/July 2019 - The Sharper Focus - HOA Board Edition


Thank you for reading our newsletter. The goal of this newsletter is to touch on general industry news and helpful topics that may help you in your role as an HOA board member.

Every Association is different in their type, size, scope, and how things are organized and established via the Governing Documents. There are, however, a number of universal topics common to all Associations. We hope you will find this newsletter a valuable source of information!

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Advertising Directory

We strive to continually add valuable content and resources in our newsletters. In 2019, you will see promotional ads from local businesses within the newsletter and on our website. Click the ads to view more from each business or view other promotions on our website, by [clicking here](#). We will be adding to the list throughout the year.



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Sharper Offers Board Training Opportunities

Sharper Management will present two free Board training opportunities in the coming months. Both sessions will be held at the Bell Plaza office building in Bloomington, MN (3800 American Blvd W). All Board members from community associations managed by Sharper are welcome to attend.



Tuesday, January 14th 2020 at 6 p.m. - "Board Basics: An Orientation for Board Members"
This general orientation session will be led by Sharper's two directors of community management, Candy Lee, CMCA, AMS, PCAM and Josh Reams, CMCA, AMS, PCAM. Topics covered will include:

- * Defining Types of "Associations"
- * Roles & Responsibilities of the Board
- * Financial Fundamentals
- * An Overview to Governing Documents & State Statutes
- * How to Run Effective Board Meetings
- * Insurance Basics
- * Property Management Practices

Tuesday, October 15th 2019 at 6 p.m. - "Financial Fundamentals and Simplifying Insurance"

This focused session coincides with most association's end-of-fiscal year and insurance renewal seasons. Insurance and financials are always large and complex topics. Led by Sharper's two directors of community management, Candy Lee, CMCA, AMS, PCAM and Josh Reams, CMCA, AMS, PCAM, in addition to trusted insurance vendor and expert, Eric Skarnes, of Insurance Warehouse, this session will cover topics such as:

- * Defining Types of Insurance Policies & How they Interact
- * Insurance Claims & How They are Handled
- * Market Place Update
- * Basic Financial Reporting
- * Understanding Operating Cashflow & Reserve Savings
- * Budgeting Process & Methods
- * Replacement Reserve Studies & Requirements

If you are interested in reserving your spot, please email info@sharpermanagement.com

So What Goes in Meeting Minutes, Anyways?

Ok... time to elect Officers! Who wants to be Secretary???.....Anyone?.....Hello?....

No one wants to be Secretary because most people find the role of taking Meeting Minutes to be a daunting task. If you refocus your view of what Minutes are supposed to be, however, it really isn't a tall task at all.



Minutes should document decisions made. They are not meant to be a dictation of everything that was said at the meeting. In fact, it is highly recommended that Minutes do NOT capture, in detail, general ideas discussed. It can lead to very creative interpretations by readers! Minutes should be short and concise. Bullet points are your friend. They should follow (and may be in the format of) your Agenda.

Here are the essential points your Minutes should capture:

- Correct legal name of the Association
- Type of Meeting
- Board Members in attendance and absent
- Date, location and time meeting was called to order and adjourned.
- Names of homeowners formally addressing the Board (example: those requesting, in advance, to be on the Agenda)
- A generalized listing of topics discussed (short bullet points recommended)
- A detailed statement of motions and resolutions proposed. Names do not need to be identified for "Yes" and "No" votes. The vote count, however, should be shown. Example: "Johnson moved to approve the Minutes from the June 15th meeting. Bartlett seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously."
- Finally, the date, time and location of the next meeting.

Again, the purpose of Minutes is to document decisions made and provide a listing of topics discussed.

Remember, Minutes can actually be used as a legal document and are the official record of your Association. Keep them concise and they will serve you well....and perhaps it won't be so hard to get an answer to question "so.....who wants to be Secretary!?"

Board Tips: Three Pitfalls to Excessive and Unproductive Meetings



We live in a culture of meetings - and unfortunately there is an epidemic of unproductive and unnecessary meetings. Just Google "make meetings more effective" and you are sure to pull up a plethora of Harvard Business School studies and countless Wall Street Journal op-ed pieces. Association Boards are certainly guilty of meetings that are too frequency, far too long, and not at all productive. Rather than focusing on how to make them more effective, below are three pitfalls, common themes observed by countless managers and homeowners, that can create unproductive and unsatisfactory Board meetings.

Don't Beat a Dead Horse: when facing a difficult task or polarizing decision, often times Boards will endlessly revisit the topic. Unless new facts or circumstances have come to light, make the best decision possible with the information you have and move on. Any progress and forward movement is better than the opposite, and most of the time better than being completely stagnate. And finally, don't waste time second guessing decisions already made.

Stop with the Hypotheticals: there is nothing that will make your manager's eyes roll and fellow Board member's heads spin more than brainstorming hypotheticals to a decision or task at hand. While thoroughly vetting issues and comprehensive discourse on complicate topics is necessary to sound decision making, there is also a point where it just gets downright unproductive. If the matter is truly complex, the Board and manager should be relying on expert information. Personal opinions, non-expert input, "what if's?" and "if this, then what's?" seldom help in constructively aiding the decision-making process.

Don't Allow Tangents: this should go without saying. All too often, however, one or multiple Board members can "go rouge" - "step on their soapbox" - or whatever other cliché statement you want to say, to make a point (which may be related to the point above about nonsensical hypotheticals) or pursue their personal agenda. There is nothing more distracting, and nothing more detrimental, to a constructive meeting than tangents. A strong meeting facilitator is essential to control excess or non-productive dialog.

Sharper News

Sharper Scramble Golf Tournament - mark your calendar for the 3rd Annual Sharper Scramble Golf Tournament to be held Friday, July 19 at Boulder Pointe Golf Club in Elko. This FREE afternoon of fun, food, and golf is Sharper's way of showing our appreciation to you, our valued client, to our Sharper staff, and to our trusted vendors.



If you are interested in securing your spot for the Sharper Scramble, contact Matt Froehlich by emailing matt@sharpermanagement.com.

Your Feedback Is Important to Us:

As Board members, we truly value your feedback. If you appreciate the work we do for you and your association, we want to encourage you to take a few

moments and write some positive feedback and comments via an online "review." Among others, Google, Yelp and BBB are common sources of reviews that pop up on search engines. Please help us establish a review log that is reflective of the excellent service we feel we provide!



Additionally, in the coming month, you will receive a survey to help us better understand our performance for you and your association. This is an annual initiative and we use the information to improve our processes and to incorporate the feedback into performance annual employee performance reviews. Please watch for an email and take the time to share your valuable feedback.

Need Help Renting and Managing a Townhome or Condo?

Think Advantage Home



A sister company to Sharper Management, Advantage Home helps homeowners and investors manage their single-family residences.

Since your Association is already affiliated with Sharper Management, renting your home through Advantage would have extra benefits you wouldn't find in another property management company. Those benefits include:

- A thorough understanding of Associations
- Information sharing regarding governing documents, rules, and regulations is efficient between Sharper and Advantage Home - Advantage is literally right down the hall
- The Sharper Management maintenance staff is already familiar with your Association's property
- Our emergency response team is fast and effective

If you or someone you know is interested in renting their townhome or condominium, have them contact jeff@advantagehomemn.com.

Learn more at advantagehomemn.com