

COMMITTEES HANDBOOK



2006-2007



Bonita Springs Area Chamber Of Commerce

**The Mission of the Bonita Springs Area
Chamber of Commerce is to:**

- *Serve our members*
- *Promote an environment
where business can grow and prosper*
- *Enhance the quality of life of
the Bonita Springs area*

What is the Role of the...

Board Member:

The Board of Directors is the policy making body of the Chamber of Commerce. It represents a broad cross section of the business and professional leadership of the community. It should be considered an honor to serve on the Board. Proven genuine unselfish interest in the Chamber and its objectives is the first requirement for a Board Member.

Committee Member:

The committee serves as the clearinghouse for all suggestions which are referred to it by the officers and the Board of Directors, members and others concerning priorities which are or should be receiving active attention of the Chamber. Suggestions are reviewed and acted on by the Board. Committees are action oriented.

Staff Member:

The Chamber staff oversees the actions of the committee. They make sure that all chamber policies and procedures are being followed. The staff person organizes the committee and makes sure that all pertinent information is available to them. The Chamber staff gives recognition to the committee. Staff, along with the committee chair, make sure that the budget is being adhered to. Staff is responsible for all expenditures and public relations for the committee. Staff is required to have a broad knowledge of the Chamber as a whole so that committees do not conflict with other committees and that their mission coincides with the mission of the Chamber. Chamber staff is ultimately responsible for the outcome of the work of the committee.

Most Often Asked Questions About Committee Involvement

Does a member of the committee have to be a member of the Chamber? *Yes, only members can serve on committees. At times it may be appropriate to bring in a guest as a reference or speaker but they are not to be added to committee rosters or become a regular part of the meeting.*

Does the staff or the Chairperson prepare the agenda? *The staff is more than willing to prepare the agenda with the help of the chairperson. If the chairperson prefers to develop the agenda on their own it needs to be provided to the staff 24 hours prior to the meeting so that appropriate copies and reference materials can be available.*

Who sends out the meeting notices? *The staff will send out the meeting notices 5-10 days prior to the meeting.*

Is it necessary for staff to be at all committee meetings? *Yes, we require that staff be in attendance at any official meeting regarding a chamber project or event.*

Is there an attendance policy for committee members? *In accordance with the Chamber's Bylaws any person who misses three meetings consecutively or four in a year will be removed from the committee. Staff will keep the chairperson informed of any attendance problems. It is very helpful if the chairperson contacts the individual to see if they can help to solve the attendance problem.*

How long should a meeting last? *Most meetings, unless otherwise noted, should be completed within one hour. It is important for meetings to begin on time and to keep non-pertinent discussions to a minimum. Chairpersons should not bring latecomers "up to speed" on what has been discussed until after the meeting is adjourned.*

Can non-members be solicited for sponsorships or gifts for events? *It is the policy of the Chamber to only solicit members for events and activities. If something is donated from a non-member they will not receive any promotion for the item. It is the Chamber's policy to do business with Chamber members only.*

How does the committee work with the budget? *Typically the chairperson and the staff member will prepare a budget request to be forwarded to the Board for approval in September. Committees are expected to generate the revenues that they proposed and keep within the expense line that they submitted. If it is anticipated that the revenues will be less than expected, then expenses will need to be cut accordingly. If the committee exceeds the projected net revenue for a particular project or event, that doesn't mean they have "extra" to spend in another area. Funds do not carry over from one program year to another. Committees cannot commit to spending money on behalf of the Chamber. Any significant project (printing, plaques, shirts etc..) must be sent out to bid to appropriate member firms.*

Who develops press releases for the events/programs? *All press releases must be sent out from the Chamber office. If a committee member writes the press release it should be e-mailed to the chamber so that it can be placed on chamber letterhead. At no time should a press release be sent from a committee member's office.*

How can we use the newsletter/website to promote our program/project? *The Chamber's newsletter and website is meant to be a very informative and proactive means of communications to our members on programs, events and issues. If a committee wants to submit an article, they must provide it to staff by the 20th of the month preceding the month that they want the article to appear in the newsletter. Information on the website can be dealt with at any time. Unfortunately, due to space limitations, we cannot give a committee a "standing article" or secured space each and every month.*

Who speaks to the media? *The Chairman of the Board and the Chamber President are the spokespersons for the organization. At times a staff member may refer a media call to you for comments but will inform you of these situations. If you get a media call you should contact the Chamber to verify what information is appropriate to share with the media.*

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

The Committee Chairperson provides progress reports to their Division Vice Chairman and evaluates the accomplishments of the committee on a regular basis. The Chairperson is to the Committee what the captain is to a ball team – his or her function is to explain the task, line up the team and advise and inspire them as the play moves from phase to phase.

Qualities of a Chairperson

The Chairperson must...

1. Be a leader. They must command attention and loyalty.
2. Be able to communicate, think clearly, and express himself or herself concisely.
3. Be able to listen – to encourage ideas and opinions.
4. Be deeply interested in the objectives of the task assigned.
5. Have the time to carry out their responsibilities.
6. Be willing to give the time and energy necessary to carrying out the committees assignments.

Duties of the Chairperson

1. Plan – The chairperson studies the task, clarifies any points not thoroughly understood in cooperation with the Division Vice Chairman or Chamber staff. The chairperson recruits individuals for committees whose skills will help and are needed. He/She charts the course of action and goes to work.
2. Conducts Meetings – The Committee meets only to utilize its members in accomplishing a goal. Meetings are to be held as needed, start and end on time, with all members having the opportunity to report, suggest and participate. The Chairperson keeps his/her eye on the objective and goals of the committee and keeps the discussion pertinent to the goal.
3. Gets Action – The Chairperson guides and stimulates the group to produce.
4. Evaluates – The Chairperson must constantly evaluate his or her work and procedures and the progress of the Committee and its members.

Responsibility

The Chairperson is responsible for carrying out the activities assigned to the Committee on time.

Authority

The Chairperson has the authority to add members as needed and release others as their function is finished.

The Chairperson does not have the authority to commit the Chamber financially to any project.

Budget

The Chairman of the Committee assists the staff in developing a budget for the upcoming year. Once the budget is approved by the Board of Directors it is expected that there will be no deviation. If changes to the budget are required, or a new item is requested, it must go to the Board of Directors for approval. All projects are expected to make a "profit" for the Chamber to help offset the operating costs of the organization.

Each year the budget starts from "0" and no money is held over from one year to the other. Staff must approve all expenditures. At no time should anyone make any purchases for the Chamber without the staffs knowledge.

Accountability

Each Committee Chairperson is directly accountable to his or her Division Vice Chairman for coordination, performance or assistance.

Scheduling\Meeting Notices

As soon as the Chairperson is appointed, he or she needs to consult with Chamber staff to select the time and frequency of the meetings. All committee meetings will require a Chamber staff person in attendance. Meeting notices will automatically be sent to all committee members 5-10 days in advance of the meeting. The Chairperson is responsible for letting the staff know if there has been any change in a regularly scheduled meeting.

Publicity

Before any report of action taken by a committee is given to the news media, it must be cleared and approved by the President. At no time should a committee member release information on any Chamber program or event without the consent of the Chamber staff.

Relationship to Staff

The staff member assigned will do everything possible to aid the Committee in achieving its goals including:

1. Scheduling meetings, writing progress reports and handling details for meetings to assure efficient use of time by all concerned.
2. Reservations for meetings to be held at the Chamber conference room as well as outside activities. Only Chamber staff will be allowed to confirm an attendance count for a meal function.
3. Prepare an agenda after consulting with the Chairperson.
4. Mail meeting notices 5-10 days in advance of meetings.
5. Approve any and all purchases previously approved in the annual budget. Whenever possible and where appropriate, the Chamber asks that items for purchase be sent out to bid to members of the Chamber providing the service or product.
6. Assemble such materials as needed for the meeting.

Committee chairman are asked to give ample notice for assignments. If staff is needed to work on a project it is requested that the chairman and/or committee member make an appointment so that they receive the attention they deserve.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members in good standing are eligible as committee members for the Chamber. A Chairperson, will be appointed by the Chairman of the Board to preside over the Committee. The Committee Chairperson will in turn recruit members for the committee with the assistance from Chamber staff and approval from the Chairman of the Board.

Function

The Committee serves as the clearinghouse for all suggestions which are referred to it by the officers, Board of Directors, members and other concerning priorities which are or should be receiving active attention of the Chamber. Suggestions for the creation of special Committees are reviewed and acted upon by the Board.

Committee Operation

Committees are action-oriented. They get the facts, face the facts, and take the action to get the job done. A successful Committee will:

1. **Understand objectives** – Make sure that you have a clear positive goal, study it, agree on exactly what is to be done. If there is disagreement, get clarification at once from the Chairperson.
2. **Analyze problem or activity** – Understand all parts of the problem and determine the sequence to be followed.
3. **Assign work** – Make specific assignments to members.
4. **Gather Facts** – Obtain the information required to intelligently work on the problem or activity. Avoid prejudices, previous opinions or beliefs.
5. **Get outside help if needed** – Get outside technical advice. Use outsiders as advisors or consultants, but do not give them the responsibilities that the Committee is expected to assume.
6. **Evaluate results** – Find out to what extent goals are being met, and to what extent each member of the Committee is doing his or her part.
7. **Conclusion** – When your task is finished and the goal is reached, you have completed your commitment to the Committee. In addition to public acknowledgement and thanks, every Committee member knows he or she played a part in the action. You have made a difference in your community!

Responsibility

A Committee is responsible for carrying out its assigned task as approved by the Board. Each member is responsible for his/her phase of the work as assigned by the Committee Chairperson.

Authority

Committee authority is delegated by the Board and action must have approval by the Board unless such action is specifically granted previously. Within the Committee, the authority lies with the Chairperson.

Accountability

The Committee members are accountable to the Committee Chairperson. The Committee as a body is accountable to the Board of Directors through the Chairperson and the Division Vice Chairman.

Qualifications

Members of Committees must be members of the Chamber of Commerce. Participation on a Committee requires only the interest of the member.

Cause for Removal

Committees will be continued as long as there is work to be done.

From time to time, a Committee must consider a problem of which a member has a close personal and financial interest. In these cases, the member is free to express his or her belief in the matter but then temporarily disqualify himself or herself as a member until this particular issue is settled.

Lack of interest in the task and its progress is considered adequate reason for dropping the member from the Committee. If a Committee member does not show up for three meetings in a row, with no notification to the Chamber, it will be assumed that the person is no longer interested in serving on the Committee and they will be removed from the mailing list.

The Chairman of the Board leads, the Board sets policy, initiates and receives reports; the staff advises, coordinates and implements the action taken. The members serving on the Committee do the work.

Guidelines for a Successful Committee Meeting

- *Start on time and end on time. Meetings should last no longer than 1 hour unless previous arrangements have been made.
- *Involve all committee members in discussion.
- *Have an agenda and necessary discussion items prepared.
- *Identify the purpose of the meeting.
- *Stick to the agenda.
- *Utilize the staff to guide and direct the work of the committees.
- *Remember that meetings are a time to conduct business, not a social occasion.
- *Provide the staff with the necessary time and information to prepare for the meeting.
- *Respect the staff's position and knowledge regarding policy and procedure.
- *Summarize your accomplishments.

HOW TO PLAN AN ACTIVITY

Whether the activity is of short duration or long duration, good planning is essential. The success of a project is directly proportional to the amount of planning that is done. Here are some hints.

1. **What?** Specifically, what is it you want to achieve? Define your objective.
2. **Why?** To eliminate unnecessary action, question each activity. Be able to tell why you are doing it. If you can't say Why, then maybe you shouldn't take the action.
3. **When?** A beginning and ending time should be established not only for the entire course of action, but for each activity which constitutes the entire course. Maybe you might not want to complete one phase before going on to the next as overlapping of activities can often save time.
4. **Who?** People must be assigned duties and responsibilities. Make sure that responsibility is fixed and clearly understood. Assign tasks to people according to their skills and abilities.
5. **Where?** Not only the physical location, but equipment and other physical factors available to speed the accomplishment.
6. **How?** The answer to this question is obvious if you have carefully answered the previous five questions. Never ask "how" first. Instead, follow the logical sequence of the previous five questions and then ask "how" to double check.

Any plan to accomplish a real result with minimum effort, time, money, and effort must be well organized. The above steps are offered as a suggested checklist for you to use.

PROBLEM SOLVING

We can all think of a time when we or others have gone forward to solve a problem without attacking the situation correctly. Sometimes we never nail down the actual problem and end up with a solution that still leaves the real problem unsolved! Sometimes we don't get the facts and are just as bad off. These steps are suggested to eliminate irregular thinking and incorrect problem solving. They are designed to save you time and effort.

1. **Awareness** – Something is not quite right...don't jump to a conclusion as to what this is, yet.
2. **Observation** – Gather all information possible pertaining to the situation. Disregard previous beliefs and opinions. Avoid prejudice.
3. **Definition** – Armed with facts, state the real problem. Try to put it in writing. If you can't you may not really know what the problem is. Also, look for subproblems for often the solution of a subproblem may lead to the solution of the main problem.
4. **List Solutions** – Not just one, but all possible solutions.
5. **Evaluate Solutions** – Study all suggested solutions. Combine solutions or parts of solutions. Maybe one alone isn't the answer. For a criterion in eliminating solutions, examine them all in terms of time, money, and effort as to degree of difficulty.
6. **Select the Best One** – Using the previous steps, pick out the one best solution. It may not be the ultimate, but it will be the best that you can select. Then, put it to work.

BETTER MEETINGS

HANDLING “PROBLEM PERSONALITIES” IN CONFERENCES

1. *The know-it-all* – The person who wants to impose his opinion on everyone else. Encourage other members to comment on his/her remarks freely. Let the rest of the group take care of him. Build up the confidence of the group in themselves so they will not be imposed upon by this member.
2. *The person who wants to argue* – This type is always trying to cross up the leader. He will quibble over the most trivial details, and he loves to get the other fellow’s goat. The first rule in this situation is to keep cool. The leader should not lose his/her head nor allow others to do so. Use questions. Draw him/her out and turn him/her over to the group. Keep members from getting personal. Get the opinion of the majority.
3. *The person who thinks your telling him how to run his job and resents it* – This person may feel he knows his job better than anyone else. Get him to feel that his experience can be valuable to others; that the purpose of the conference/meeting is to exchange ideas and pool experience.
4. *The over-talkative person* – The one who wants to do all the talking. Be very tactful, but interrupt and ask others to comment.
5. *The shy member* – Call him/her by name to give an opinion, but ask any question sure to be answered well, then offer praise. Find something for this person to do to assist in the program, activity or meeting.
6. *The obstinate person* – has no time “for school” – doesn’t believe in these “new ideas”, and delays the progress of the meeting. Can wreck a meeting, conference or activity if not handled properly. In a tactful way, bring the discussion to a close by calling for a vote on the question. Study him/her to determine likes, dislikes, and special interests. Try to win his/her personal friendship.
7. *The uninterested member* – Ask questions. Ask advice about some features of the meeting. Quote tactfully some statement he/she has made to you outside the meeting. Carefully bring up things in which you know he/she is interested.
8. *The person who attempts to get your opinion instead of giving their own* – Refer the question back to the group and then back to him/her.
9. *The person who carries a personal grudge* – Avoid discussion about pet peeve. Explain that any problems discussed must be for the greatest number, and that no personal gripes will be discussed. If the grudge is between two individuals in the group who hold a grievance against each other, avoid discussion between them and reschedule one of them for another time with a different group.
10. *The person who is wrong, but who others in the group, out of respect, refuse to correct* – Always avoid direct criticism, sarcasm, and ridicule. Use indirect methods. Analyze a similar case without reference to him/her personally. Talk to him/her in private.