

## **SUCCESSFUL COMMITTEES.....SUCCESSFUL BOARDS**

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**DEFINITION:** A Committee is any group that has a specific job to do for the board.

**WHY?** Strong Committees are crucial to a Board's success. They ensure that debates and work are completed "off-line" from the board meeting itself.

**FORMATION :** Committees are formed *by* the Board and make recommendations *to* the Board for Board Action. Board members **MUST** rely on the diligence and thoughtfulness of the Committees that are recommending action.

**DOCUMENTING :** Committees must have a clear "description of responsibilities" that is agreed to by the board. Each committee's responsibilities and annual objectives should be reviewed by the committee and approved by the board on an annual basis. Each committee member must have a "task list" showing his/her tasks on the committee.

**WHO? HOW MANY? :** A Committee should be comprised of one or more board members and can include organization members or volunteers that are not on the board. Committees are sound training grounds for potential board members.

**CHAIRMAN :** The Committee Chair should have a term length that is specified in the by-laws.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS :** Committee reports **MUST** have a brief, one-page executive summary which includes **CLEAR** recommendations for Board action. These executive summaries and any additional written reports must be distributed to all board members at least 1 week prior to the Board meeting – and should be verbally summarized in 5-7 minutes at the board meeting. Board debate should be limited. Boards accept, reject, revise for approval, or return for more work each committee's recommendation.

**FOR BOARDS WITH BUSY PEOPLE :** Standing Committees could include two board members. One (more experienced board member) can act as the Chair of the committee. The second will become the Chair of the Committee when the Chair's term expires and a new member is brought onto the committee. For special projects or peak workloads (events, fund-drives, etc) additional members (from the board or elsewhere) can be added to the Committee. After the project is completed, the Committee shrinks back to two people.

**WHAT IF I'M NOT ON THE COMMITTEE ? :** Other Board members who want to "weigh in" on Committee decisions or projects **MUST** communicate with one or both of the Committee members **OUTSIDE OF THE BOARD MEETING** so these opinions/comments can be factored into the committee's recommendation. If the board member forgets to let his/her view be known when input is being reviewed, time should **NOT** be taken during board meetings for them to provide it.

**BOARDS MUST BE EXCEEDINGLY CAREFUL NOT TO DO COMMITTEE WORK WHEN THEY MEET AS A FULL BOARD. THE BOARD MUST CONCENTRATE ON POLICY, PLANNING AND FINANCIAL ISSUES.**