



Board Member Expectations

What do I need to know about being a board member?

Your nomination/selection for this role is something you should be very proud of. Chamber of commerce board responsibilities come with expectations...and perks!

Being a chamber board member is also a position of distinction and requires a lot of hard work. While each chamber is different, keep reading to prepare yourself for some of our Springfield Chamber expectations.

Some people have limited expectations about board positions because of the reputation that corporate board positions hold. Corporate board positions can seem more like perks than work. Being a sitting member of a chamber of commerce board will entail a lot of responsibility.

You should be able to commit 2 hours per week on average. The main responsibilities are laid out below.

Recruiting New Members

Our Chamber executive director recruits as well but recruitment efforts of chamber board members are very effective because even though you volunteer your time for the chamber, you are not paid by them. Thus, your opinion is not based on who signs your paycheck. Plus, chamber board members are often successful, well-respected business people. Your reasons for joining the chamber are very relevant and other businesses will want to hear those reasons.

Your "pitch" should be personal. That makes recruiting much easier. People do business (and join membership organizations) based on knowing, liking and trusting the people involved in the organization and the recruiting process.

Attending Meetings

As a chamber board member, there are going to be several meetings you will need to attend. As a matter of fact, there are attendance requirements to serve as a board member. You probably expected that as a chamber of commerce board member, this is

one of the prime responsibilities. You're right. Most chambers, along with ours, consider it grounds for removal from the board if you do not make it to the required number of meetings or miss three consecutive meetings.

The Springfield Chamber of Commerce holds monthly board meetings September - June, breaking for our very short Manitoba summer. We may have one board retreat or strategy meeting a year. Some of these are located offsite and may require an overnight stay.

It's also important that you understand how long your term is for and whether you are eligible to continue to run or be considered after your term is over. Our terms generally run for a two-year term with renewals allowed.

Voting

Chamber board members also participate in critical votes for the chamber. They could vote on by-laws, budgets, new member requests or any other issues that come before it. Some may be electronic; others may require in-person votes with a quorum.

Hiring and By-Laws

Our chamber board searches, interviews for, and selects the chamber executive director or president/CEO. This search may require additional time but (hopefully) it's not something you'll need to be a part of often.

While you may not be hiring during your time on the board, you will be evaluating the effectiveness of the ED/CEO through an annual review and/or the established annual planning activity, which takes place over the summer hiatus.

Another activity that is not a major part of the role but may come up is the rewriting of chamber by-laws. It is likely dictated exactly how the change process should work in the by-laws. By-laws should be reviewed periodically and amended as needed.

Dues structures are also a component that should be revisited periodically. You may decide as a board that it's time to raise dues or that certain things should be changed about dues such as how they are calculated.

Representing the Chamber at All Times

One of the things that may be difficult to get used to is understanding that as a board member you represent the chamber at all times. This is one of the other most significant chamber of commerce board responsibilities and **also applies to social media**. No, adding “this is just my opinion” on your post does not cover the chamber from any negative PR. For instance, if you have a terrible experience with a member business, and post a scathingly negative review on social media, understand that your review may negatively impact the chamber. Instead, it would be better to handle your displeasure directly with the business to figure out a solution and not on such a public forum.

Because you are a chamber board member, people may assume that when you speak in public you are speaking on behalf of the chamber. Be cognizant of this at all times.

It’s also important to consider that you may be called upon to become a vocal proponent of a chamber initiative or Representing the Chamber at All Times

Ribbon Cuttings and Other Public Appearances

As a chamber board member, you may be called upon to attend a specified number of ribbon cuttings or other public-facing chamber events. These could include new business openings, anniversaries, and public initiatives. Many of these are during the business day and may require a flexible schedule.

Heading Up Committees

Our chamber places their board members on committees or require they head them up. If there’s a particular committee you find interesting or one that fits your skill set well, let the chamber know.

Our committees, although reviewed annually in our strategic planning process, are as follows:

- Social media and website
- Chamber events (requires 2 co-chairs)
- Membership Development
- Finance