

Leadership “Rules of Engagement”

The responsibilities of volunteer leaders are generally stated in the governing documents: bylaws, articles of incorporation and policies. The rules of engagement have been developed to communicate **cultural expectations and preferred behavior** for governance. *(Every organization has its own leadership expectations developed over time; this is a sample.)*

Timeliness and Courtesies

- Meetings start and end on time; arriving on time and staying until business is completed.
- Cellphones and digital distractions are off, or on silent during meetings.
- Communications are acknowledged within 48 hours of receipt; if a reply is pending, do so within three days and more immediately for urgent issues.
- Written reports and requested documents must be submitted in a timely manner.

Knowledge and Information

- Conduct business and make decisions based upon *knowledge*—not assumptions.
- Information, reports and financials will be read for understanding. If information is lacking, ask critical questions in advance of meetings so everyone is fully prepared.
- Agree that a lack of knowledge is not an excuse for not taking action, or attendance.

Decorum and Protocol

- The organization operates in an environment of transparency.
- Conduct board business in front of all board members and speak up at meetings.
- Meeting decorum is respectful and no member will reproach another for speaking honestly.
- Factual information will not be withheld from the board by any director, or staff member.
- Respect and give fair consideration to diverse and opposing viewpoints; realize the impact of image and words when discussing and representing the Chamber.
- Accountability to any and all commitments by volunteers and staff is crucial.
- Decisions and outcomes must benefit the organization, members and the community—without personal interests, or conflicts¹
- Confidentiality of all proceedings and information is required.
- Decisions of the board are for the whole—dissenting opinions should be expressed only inside the board meeting.
- Rules of Order guide board discussions and directors should familiarize themselves with protocols of motions, speaking, authority, *etc.*

Organizational Traditions

- Attendance at an annual orientation, as well as the periodic board retreat, is expected.

¹ Directors submit an annual conflict of interest statement.

- Board members are encouraged to be role models in making contributions to the Political Action Committee.
- Directors should reach out to members to determine their needs and contact at least two prospects per quarter to invite them to join.

I am clear about my roles and responsibilities as a board member, or volunteer and can conform to the Rules of Engagement as indicated.

Rules of Engagement General 7-09.doc
Adapted with Permission
Contact: Bob Harris, CAE — bob@rchcae.com
