Purpose

This handbook is designed to inform and educate County advisory board staff and members about their roles and responsibilities, the Florida Sunshine Law, and how to properly conduct meetings.

The following the procedures and requirements are guided for advisory boards and committees to conduct themselves in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida and the Broward County Code and Rules.

This handbook includes summaries and refers to statutes, ordinances and policies in order to give general direction with regard to board and committee membership. The purpose of including the aforementioned is to provide you with sufficient information to alert board and committee members of issues that may arise. If an issue or question arises, please inform the County Boards Administrator ("Boards Administrator"). The Boards Administrator will contact the County Attorney’s office for specific advice and guidance as needed.

If you have any questions about this handbook, please contact the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Professional Standards at boards@broward.org or (954) 357-7575.
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Advisory Boards: A General Overview

Purpose and Role of an advisory board and committee

An advisory board is a group of individuals established by the County Commission through ordinance or resolution with the collective responsibility to provide advice and recommendations to the County Commission on a particular subject matter or issue. The specific duties of the advisory board are defined in the establishing ordinance. Members of the advisory board are appointed by the County Commission.

A committee is established by the County Commission to meet and perform a specific service or function for a limited duration of time. The ordinance or resolution creating such board or committee shall specify its powers and duties.

All boards and committees shall be part of the County government and shall use County employees for official administrative functions and the Office of the County Attorney for legal functions unless otherwise stated in the Charter, Ordinance, or Resolution.

Types of Boards

Quasi-judicial boards

Quasi-judicial means a board is required to hold hearings, receive evidence, and make decisions in a manner similar to that of the courts. Quasi-judicial boards: (1) consider items that may affect an applicant’s personal or property rights and (2) follow a procedure that allows evidence to be presented and a decision to be reached based on the evidence provided. The following advisory boards are quasi-judicial:

- Board of Rules and Appeals
- Central Examining Board of Electricians
- Central Examining Board of Engineered Construction Trades
- Central Examining Board of General Construction Trades
- Central Examining Board of Liquefied Petroleum Gas Contractors
- Central Examining Board of Mechanical Contractors
- Central Examining Board of Plumbers
- Consumer Protection Board
- Human Rights Board
- Unsafe Structure Board
- Value Adjustment Board

Boards subject to the Dual Office Holding prohibition:

- Central Examining Board of Electricians
- Central Examining Board of Engineered Construction Trades
- Central Examining Board of General Construction Trades
- Central Examining Board of Liquefied Petroleum Gas Contractors

Revised October 30, 2014
• Central Examining Board of Mechanical Contractors
• Central Examining Board of Plumbers
• Consumer Protection Board
• Health and Sanitary Control Board

• Housing Finance Authority
• Human Rights Board
• Unsafe Structures Board

Boards requiring members to file a financial disclosure:

• Board of Rules and Appeals
• Broward County Housing Authority
• Broward County Planning Council
• Children’s Services Council of Broward County
• Fire Rescue Council
• Florida Atlantic Research and Development Agency
• Hillsboro Inlet District
• Housing Finance Authority
• Performing Arts Center Authority
• South Florida Regional Planning Council
• South Florida Regional Transportation Authority

All other boards that are considered “Active”
Active boards are comprised of board members who discuss matters and create recommendations for the County Commission to consider. For these boards, minutes should be prepared and submitted at the next meeting for approval. In the case of an emergency, if an important opportunity would be lost, or if there is business that cannot be delayed, those present can, at their own risk, act with the hope that their action will be ratified at a later meeting when a quorum is present.

• Advisory Board for Individuals with Disabilities
• Affordable Housing Advisory Committee
• Animal Care Advisory Committee
• Bicycling and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
• Broward County Cultural Council
• Broward League of Cities (Board of Directors)
• Broward Regional Emergency Medical Services Council
• Broward Regional Health Planning Council
• CareerSource Broward
• Children’s Services Board
• Climate Change Task Force
• Cocomar Water District
• Commission on the Status of Women
• Community Action Agency Advisory Board
• Community Redevelopment Agency
• Courthouse Task Force Advisory Committee
• Diversity Advisory Council
• Early Learning Coalition
• Educational Facilities Authority
• Enterprise Zone Development Agency
• Florida Association of Counties
• Florida Atlantic Research and Development Authority
• Greater Ft. Lauderdale Alliance
Pursuant to Section 2.09(F), Charter, the County Commission shall adopt procedures to provide for the review of the performance of all boards, committees, authorities, and agencies at least once every four (4) years. As part of its review, the County Commission shall determine by resolution or ordinance that the applicable board, committee, authority, or agency (excluding those created by Charter) is needed to serve the public interest and the cost of its existence to the taxpayers is justified.

The following process is used during the sunset review period:

1. The Office Intergovernmental Affairs and Professional Standards (OIAPS) contacts the County Attorney Office to generate a list of boards that are subject to sunset review.
2. OIAPS schedules meetings to review the status of the advisory board and recommend changes if necessary with the staff liaison, agency director or designee, assigned assistant county attorney, OIAPS staff, and Chair of the advisory board.
3. The recommendations are brought before the advisory board at their soonest scheduled meeting through the staff liaison. Input from the members is requested and documented.
4. After all the advisory boards have met and given their input, the draft recommendations are brought before County Administration for relevant changes and input.
5. The recommendations with the suggested changes from County Administration are then brought back to the advisory boards for their final review.
6. The draft recommendations are then brought before the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) through an agenda item generated by OIAPS.
7. BoCC either approves the recommendations as is or sends specific directive(s) to the advisory boards with their recommended changes.
8. After final changes are made, the recommendations are set to be heard at the public hearing.
Serving on Boards and Committees

Eligibility

Section 1-233(b)(1), Broward County Code, requires that each member of an advisory board or committee be a resident of Broward County and maintain residency in Broward County during the term of appointment. Any appointee who fails to meet the requirements of his or her appointment, including residency if required to live in the district, is automatically disqualified and his or her appointment shall immediately cease and be deemed vacant.

A county employee *may serve* as a voting member on an advisory or other board, *as long as he or she is appointed by a body other than the County Commission*. No county employee shall be appointed by a County Commissioner to an advisory board or committee unless an exemption is found.

There are several boards which require members to meet specific categories - by profession, occupation, demonstrated interest or other specification such as registered voter - to serve on the advisory board. Any board appointee who fails to meet the categorical requirements of his or her appointment is automatically disqualified, and his or her appointment shall immediately cease and be deemed vacant.

A person may only serve on one advisory board at a time. However, an elected county or municipal officer appointed in an official capacity may serve on more than one advisory board or committee to which at least one such elected official is required to be appointed. In addition to serving in an official capacity, an elected county or municipal officer may serve on one advisory board in an individual capacity so long as such appointment does not otherwise violate the dual-office holding provision of the Florida Constitution.

For specific eligibility requirements, refer to the enacting ordinance or resolution for the particular board or committee or contact the Boards Administrator.
Staff Liaison (Board Coordinator/Board Assistant) Functions

The staff liaison (board coordinator/board assistant) is the county staff member assigned by the overseeing department, division, or office in which the advisory board or committee is housed. The liaison acts as a link and communicator between the advisory board, County Administration, and the Board of County Commissioners. The staff liaison works with the Boards Administrator.

Duties

1. Publicly notice the advisory board meeting and reserve the meeting room. Reasonably accommodate meeting room for teleconference ability.

2. Set up the meeting room and ensure that the digital audio recording system is operable (if necessary) and coordinate the audio recording with the minute’s secretary or minute’s contractor (if applicable).

3. Prepare the agenda and agenda backup materials and transmit copies to all members.

4. Announce the number of members as of the date of the meeting and the number that would constitute a physical quorum which will be included in the minutes of each meeting.

5. Ensure a guest speaker sign-in sheet is available and all guest speakers sign-in. The staff liaison maintains sign-in sheets in the file for each meeting. Guest speakers appear only in the minutes when they speak and are not reflected under the board’s attendance at the beginning of the minutes (guest speaker sign-in sheet is for guests not members).

6. Contact new members immediately, notify the incoming members of the next meeting date, and acquaint them with the board or committee process and rules. Contact member immediately upon receiving a removal letter in order to notify them of their changed status on the advisory board.

7. Keep contact information up-to-date and notify Boards Administrator of any relevant changes in a member’s residency status.

8. Maintain accurate information pertaining to changes in the board or committee’s enacting ordinance or resolution. Ensure the Board Overview Document is updated on the Boards and Committees website.

9. Submit attendance sheet to the Boards Administrator within 2 weeks after the meeting is held.

10. Ensure that a complete and cumulative attendance record appears on the front of each set of minutes. If a regular scheduled meeting was held the attendance record will reflect members who attended and those who did not attend. Those who did not attend will count as missing a
meeting. If there was no quorum the meeting will be cancelled and those who intended to participate via telephone will be marked absent.

11. Ensure that a complete file for each meeting is maintained. This includes video and/or audio of the meeting; member and guest sign-in sheet; copies of all material handed out or displayed during meeting presentations; and all agenda materials provided to the board or committee.

12. Distribute information to advisory board members (i.e. board member sends you information to distribute to other members).

13. Upload minutes to the assigned advisory board website found within the overseeing agency page. The upload should include: agenda/minutes (together), handouts, and presentations. Contact your public information officer if you have questions on how to upload the documents.

Notification Requirement

An appointee shall notify the board coordinator at least two (2) business days prior to the scheduled meeting date as to whether they will or will not attend the meeting, unless the occurrence of an excused absence as specified on page 18 makes notice impracticable. Failure to notify the board coordinator within that time period shall be considered an absence. This notification requirement will allow time for cancellation if it is determined the meeting will not have a quorum present.

What if a board or committee request requires staff time that goes beyond what is anticipated for that board or committee (e.g., developing a parking study or a neighborhood survey)?

A board or committee request that will require staff time beyond what is anticipated for the board or committee should be included in the minutes under “Communications to Department.” These types of policy decisions, which have a budgetary impact and require additional staff time, will be made by the Agency Director.
Meetings

A meeting is when all of the appointed members meet to conduct the business of the board or committee. The enacting ordinance or resolution may provide the location and the frequency meetings will occur. It will also specify if and how special meetings may be called. A meeting is conducted based on an agenda prepared by the staff liaison prior to a meeting.

Under the Sunshine Law, any time two or more persons on the same board or committee communicate about any foreseeable matter that may come before the board or committee is considered a meeting (this includes subcommittees). In addition, meetings of two or more members of a board or committee to discuss board matters must be: (1) open to the public; (2) noticed to the public; and (3) minutes (written) taken and recorded.

**Off-site meetings**

The location of board or committee meetings is not changed unless circumstances beyond the control of the board or committee require it to be changed. However, if the board or committee needs to visit a particular site or location, a tour may be scheduled. Board or committee members shall refrain from discussion until the tour is concluded and the board or committee convenes in their customary meeting place with active recording equipment. It is encouraged that changes be kept to a minimum. The staff liaison notifies and makes arrangements with the minutes secretary or minutes contractor (if applicable) in advance for any schedule changes.

**Can an advisory board take an inspection tour?**

If an advisory board or committee requests a tour, the mode of transportation must be big enough to accommodate a reasonable number of members of the public (to be determined on a case-by-case basis). Board or committee members shall not have discussions on matters which may come before the board for official action until the members get off the bus and convene in a meeting that has been noticed, is open to the public and will have minutes taken. Inspection tours are not available to a board with an ultimate decision making authority.

**Public Notice**

All meetings must be properly noticed at least 10 days prior to the meeting date. The sunshine advertisement form is found at: https://browardauthor/Commission/Lists/Sunshine%20Meetings/BCMeetingNewForm.aspx.

**What types of communications qualify as a “Sunshine meeting”?**

Communication may include the following:

1. Face-to-face
2. Written correspondence
3. Telephone
4. Email
5. Indirect communication (hand signals)
6. Through an intermediary, a person who separately speaks to both board and committee members and tells one what the other says regarding a matter that may come up before the board or committee.

If a board or committee asks one of its members to communicate a board or committee concern to another person or bring back information to that board or committee, the action qualifies as a meeting under the Sunshine Law. Even though it is a single board or committee member going to another person, the single board or committee member is acting as a "delegate" for the board or committee as if two or more members are in attendance. Under the Sunshine Law, this action would qualify as a "Sunshine meeting."

**Email:** A board or committee member may send an email to their fellow members and staff liaison with their thoughts about a matter of business that has or will come before their board or committee. However, no reply emails are permissible. The subject of the email could only be discussed at a future board or committee meeting. Any reply email would be dialogue outside of the "sunshine." In these situations, it is recommended that the following footnote be added to the email:

"PLEASE NOTE THAT AS MEMBERS OF THE __________ BOARD OR COMMITTEE, TWO WAY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MEMBERS IS PROHIBITED BY SUNSHINE LAW. DO NOT REPLY TO ANY BOARD OR COMMITTEE MEMBER. DISCUSSION SHOULD TAKE PLACE AT A SCHEDULED BOARD OR COMMITTEE MEETING."

**Florida’s Government-in-the-Sunshine Law**

The Florida Sunshine Law is a set of laws and rules which provide the public with a right of access to government proceedings. The Sunshine Law was designed to afford the public entrance into the process of governmental decision making. Section 286.011, Florida Statutes, provides the framework which governments must follow when conducting a meeting and what happens to the documents and files used in conducting a meeting.

**Consequences of unintentional or intentional violations of the Sunshine Law**

If a government official is found guilty of an unintentional violation of the Sunshine Law, it is a non-criminal infraction punishable by a fine of up to $500.

A knowing or intentional violation is a second-degree misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not more than $500 and/or a jail term of not more than sixty days and the official may be subject to suspension or removal from office. Attorney fees and court costs may be awarded in a civil suit.


**Public Records**

Public records include all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, videos, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software or other material, regardless of the physical form, characteristics or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business of the county.

An agenda does not have to be retained; however, minutes and notes kept by members and staff liaisons that may be used for future meetings are considered public records. Such records must be kept for two years after the minutes have been adopted. After two years, the minutes must be archived. Additionally, all advisory board or committee member notes are subject to the public records rules and are to be maintained for two years. If a member’s term expires prior to the two year period, they should submit their notes to the board coordinator or assistant.

**Quorum**

How do you determine if you have a quorum?

The enabling ordinance or resolution for the specific board or committee may specify the number of voting members needed for a quorum. Generally, county boards and committees refer to Section 1-233 (g) which states:

“The number of members needed to constitute a quorum any advisory or other board shall be a majority of the total appointed board members. Once a quorum has been established by members who are physically present at a meeting, members who are not physically present may attend and participate in such meeting by telephone.”

If there is no quorum, the board or committee cannot meet.

**Basic Quorum Rules**

Appointees who have notified the board coordinator that they cannot attend the meeting will be considered absent even if the meeting is cancelled due to lack of a quorum. The Chair of the board shall, in his or her discretion, determine whether the appointee's absence meets any of the criteria outlined in 1-233, Broward Code for an excused absence.

If a meeting is scheduled and a sufficient number of members to constitute a quorum CONFIRMED that they will be physically present at the meeting:

- Members present will be marked as attending.
- Members who telephone in will be marked as attending.
- Members not present will be marked absent.
- Members who did not confirm they were attending but were physically present at the meeting will be marked as attending.
If a meeting is scheduled and a sufficient number of members to have quorum **DID NOT CONFIRM** that they will be physically present at the meeting, **THE MEETING WILL BE CANCELLED PRIOR TO THE MEETING DATE**:

- Members, who intended to telephone in, will be marked absent.
- Members who did not confirm that they were attending will be marked absent.
- Members who confirmed they would be attending will be marked present and it will be noted on the attendance sheet that the meeting was cancelled.

If a meeting is scheduled and sufficient number of members to constitute a quorum **CONFIRMED** that they will be physically present at the meeting, **BUT QUORUM WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE MEETING**, **THE MEETING WILL BE CANCELLED**:

- Members present will be marked as attending but it will be noted that the meeting was cancelled.
- Members not present will be marked absent.
- Members who telephone in will be marked absent.
- Members who did not confirm that they were attending but were physically present at the meeting will be marked as attending.

If a board or committee member excuses themselves because of a conflict of interest, leaving less than a quorum to vote on a matter, can the remaining members vote on the matter?

No. A quorum must be maintained for business to be conducted.

If a board or committee member momentarily leaves the room (e.g., for a drink of water) and less than a quorum remains, may business still be conducted?

No. The meeting must be stopped until the board or committee member returns.

How often do meetings take place? What happens if there is a need to continue a meeting?

The enabling ordinance or resolution will indicate how often a board or committee meets. Advisory and other boards shall meet quarterly unless any such board determines that meetings are required more or less frequently.

Special meetings may be called. The manner in which special meetings are called is generally outlined in the ordinance or resolution or advisory board bylaws. If the enabling ordinance or resolution for a particular board or committee does not provide for the calling of special meetings, the board or committee may vote at their regular meeting to set a special meeting.

If there is a need for a regularly scheduled meeting to be continued to another date, a majority consensus or vote by the board or committee expressed on the record and reflected in the minutes is required. There is an understanding that the staff liaison may or may not be able to confirm a meeting room with audio recording equipment availability and minutes contractor arrangements.
Minutes

Minutes are a written record of the activities that take place during a meeting. Florida law requires minutes of official meetings (Chapter 286, Florida Statutes) be maintained as a permanent record of the county. All board and committee meeting minutes are maintained by the staff liaison. The staff liaison is responsible for posting their minutes on the designated agency website (see FAQ).

What should minutes include?

At a minimum, minutes should include:

1. A written record of the location and state and end time;
2. Names of board or committee members in attendance;
3. Official actions taken by the board or committee;
4. A brief summary of meeting activities, including an attachment of any presentation slides used; and
5. Any announcement by staff liaison of the number of appointed members as of the date of the meeting and the number of members that would constitute a quorum.

An electronic recording does not replace the requirement for minutes pursuant to state law. Written minutes must be taken and should include an attachment of any presentation slides used in place of detailed narrative.

Who can take minutes?

Minutes are taken by the staff liaison designated by their department director. Minutes can also be taken by the board member appointed to the Secretary role. If necessary, minutes can be taken by a secretary or contractor.

How are minutes corrected?

The staff liaison coordinates corrections to minutes. Board or committee members may make corrections to the minutes when approval of the minutes is scheduled on a subsequent agenda. The corrections are approved by a majority vote of the board or committee at the next meeting.

What if someone intended to say something or thought they said something and wants to change or add to the minutes?

Making corrections that include what one thought or intended to say is not permitted. Clarifications of this nature are made at the following meeting when the minutes or the particular subject is considered. As such, the individual makes that clarification and it is then reflected in the following meeting minutes.
Rules for Conducting a Meeting

Meeting Agenda

The physical structure of the meeting is determined by the agenda, a list of items to be considered at the board or committee meeting. After opening ceremonies, if any, the agenda includes approval of the minutes of the prior meeting.

The staff liaison with input from the advisory board Chairperson, prepares the agenda based on matters the board or committee is authorized to consider. The enabling ordinance or resolution contains information related to matters that can be considered by a board or committee. In addition, a board or committee may have requested at a prior meeting for an item to be placed on a future agenda. The County commission may also propose matters for consideration by a board or committee. Items of business not completed or postponed from the prior meeting will also be included on the agenda.

May the board or committee bring up new topics or recommendations?

Yes. The proper place on the agenda to bring up new topics or recommendations is under the heading of “New Business.” For new topics other than those of a purely general nature, notice is required. The new topic should appear on the agenda for the next meeting.

No. New topics, other than something of a general nature, may not be discussed at the present meeting because they have not been properly noticed to the public. The discussion is limited to the rationale for consideration and whether it is appropriate to consider the topic or recommendation. If approved, such items will appear on future agendas.

A majority of board or committee members may vote to have an item within their authority placed on the agenda for their own discussion. If staff time and funds are required to do research or report on the topic and it goes beyond reasonable staff duties for that board, the staff liaison shall inform the department director and await direction.

Communications to the County Commission

In all cases, when the advisory board has voted affirmatively to recommend issues for action or consideration by the Board of County Commissioners, the following process should be followed:

• A majority of the board’s members present at the meeting must vote affirmatively to send an issue to the County Commission for consideration, information, or action.

• The assigned board coordinator communicates the request of the advisory board, either through resolution from the advisory board or via a transmittal letter signed by the Chair of the advisory board, to the Mayor and members of the Broward County Commission.
• The Board of County Commissioners may choose to take action. If action is taken, the advisory board will be informed, usually through a letter from the Mayor or County Administrator to the Chair of the advisory board, indicating the action taken.

This process applies to the majority of active advisory boards with the exception of those with quasi-judicial powers. Advisory board members shall not take it upon themselves to relay the advisory board’s position to entities outside county government, without the approval of the Board of County Commissioners. In those instances when it is necessary to transmit information, only the approved Broward County letterhead stationery, provided by the board coordinator, shall be used.

Conducting Advisory Board Business

Board and committee business is generally conducted by motion.

Are there rules for conducting a meeting?

There are no official rules outlined within Broward County’s Administrative Code or Ordinances. However, it is recommended that parliamentary procedure or Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised be used to orderly conduct business at meetings.

These “written” rules of order allow everyone to be heard and to make decisions without confusion. *Examples of parliamentary rules are:*

1. A quorum must be present for business to be legally conducted.
2. Every member has the right to make motions, speak in debate, and vote.
3. A member must be recognized by the Chair before speaking or making a motion.
4. Before a motion is brought before the board or committee, it must be seconded.
5. Only one question or motion can be considered at a time.
6. The basic principle of decision is that a proposition must be adopted by a majority vote.
7. Once a motion is seconded and before the board or committee, it must be adopted or rejected by a vote or be disposed of in some other way before any other subject can be introduced.

What if a board or committee does not follow the agenda?

Failure to follow the published agenda may raise legal issues about public notice (i.e., the public is not made aware or not prepared to listen to the discussion and respond to a certain matter).

Duties of the Advisory Board Chair

It is the duty and responsibility of the Chair to see the rules for conducting a meeting are followed. The duties of the Chair are outlined either in the advisory board’s enacting legislation, bylaws, or both. Examples of the Chair’s responsibilities include:

1. Enforce meeting rules.
2. He or she opens the meeting at the appointed time by calling the meeting to order, having determined that a quorum is present.
3. Announce that all speakers, including county staff, should sign-in.
4. Ask minute’s secretary, or minute’s contractor (staff liaison) to call the roll.
5. Announce the arrival of any and all members who arrive late.
6. Announce in proper sequence the business that comes before the board or committee.
7. Recognize members who are entitled to the floor.
8. State and put to vote all questions that legitimately come before the board or committee.
9. Restate all motions and amendments to motions.
10. Announce the name of the member who made the motion and the seconder and announce the name of those members, if any, voting no.
11. Ask the minute’s secretary or minute’s contractor (staff liaison) to call the roll to vote if a roll call vote is necessary.
12. Protect the board or committee from obvious frivolous or dilatory motions by refusing to recognize them.
13. Enforce the rules relating to debate and those relating to order and decorum within the board or committee and with the public in attendance.
14. Open the floor to public comment.
15. Expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of members.
16. Decide all questions of order, subject to appeal, unless submitted to board or committee for a decision.
17. Respond to inquiries of members relating to parliamentary procedure or factual information.
18. Declare the meeting adjourned when the board or committee so votes or at the time prescribed on the agenda.

Should the Chair fail to follow the agenda, both the staff liaison and board attorney must intervene to correct him or her. Additionally, staff time and each individual member’s time will be wasted.

Member’s Responsibilities

Members must understand and follow all of the laws, rules, or policies that apply to their respective board or committee. Additionally, every member has the responsibility to:

1. Know how to make motions and carry on the business of the board or committee;
2. Amend motions if they do not express the need of the majority;
3. Know and observe the rules of debate and decorum in debate;
4. Immediately call a point of order when a rule has been broken;
5. Appeal from the decision of the Chair on a point of order if not in agreement with the decision of the Chair;
6. Know the difference between the use of the motions;
7. Understand when one should consider abstaining from voting, step out of the room when abstaining and file a memorandum of voting conflict; and
8. Participate by contributing ideas, voicing meaningful concerns and opinions in debate, and voting for principle.
**Decorum and Debate**

**Decorum**

Decorum directly relates to the Sunshine Law. Sunshine Law provides the public with a right to attend and hear meetings and that a record of the meeting is documented and available for those who could not attend the meeting.

Sunshine Law also states that all meetings shall be subject to order and decorum.

“Order” is defined as customary or prescribed methods used in the conduct of deliberative, legislative or public meetings, (i.e., parliamentary rules of order).

“Decorum” is defined as customs of formality that are followed by a presiding officer and members of a board or committee; propriety and good taste in conduct or appearance.

**Rules of Debate**

1. A board or committee member, or member of the public shall be recognized by the Chair before speaking in debate.
2. Remarks must be confined to the merits of the pending question or topic under consideration.
3. When speaking in debate, a member shall refrain from attacking motives and avoid name calling.
4. All remarks shall be addressed through the Chair. Members do not address one another directly.
5. Makers of a motion are not permitted to speak against their own motion, although they may vote against it.
6. Do not interrupt anyone who is speaking except in special situations where the urgency justifies the interruption.
7. Obtain permission of the board or committee to read from any paper or book.
8. Members of the board or committee or the public shall not disturb the meeting by whispering or creating other ambient sounds.

What if a board or committee member or member of the public interrupts another board or committee member or a member of the public causing a meeting to be interrupted?

The Chair shall ask the member of the public or board or committee member to hold his or her questions and comments until he or she is recognized by the Chair.

What if a board or committee member walks away from the topic of discussion on the table?

If a board or committee member is speaking on a topic that is not within the authority of the board or committee to discuss, another board or committee member may ask the Chair for a point of order to bring the meeting back to a topic within the authority of the board or committee.
What is the procedure for handling an item of business on the agenda?

Generally, to handle an item of business on the agenda, a motion is made prior to discussion. In small boards or committees, informal discussion of a topic is permitted without a motion. The board or committee may need to fully explore an issue or proposed action before deciding on the course of action to be taken.

**Motions**

*Main motion* – a formal proposal by a member in a meeting that the board or committee take certain action. A motion may bring its subject to the attention of the board or committee or the motion may follow upon the presentation of a report or other communication. A main motion is made only when no other motion is pending.

*Secondary motion* – this is made and considered while a main motion is pending because of its relationship to the main motion or because of the procedural or emergency character of the specific secondary motion.

*Substitute Motion* – is used to propose an alternative action to the main motion. Up to one main and two substitute motions may be on the floor at one time. If a substitute motion passes, it does away with the prior motions. If it fails, the previous motion comes back up for consideration.

*Friendly amendments* – editorial changes that may be allowed if nobody objects. Any member may object and deny such requests.

*Call the question* – is used to end debate and vote on the motion at hand. If seconded and passed, the main motion is then voted on. If no second or fails, discussion continues. (The Chair can choose to end debate.)

*Motion to table* – this is non-debatable. If seconded, discussion ends and must be voted on immediately. A subsequent motion to take from the table is required to reopen discussion.

*Motion to reconsider* – this can only be made by a member on the prevailing side of a previous vote. If seconded and passed, it rescinds the previous vote and brings the motion back for discussion.
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<tr>
<td>Item introduced is open for informal discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developments or conclusions reached from open discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A member or the chair makes a main motion putting the conclusion (or one of the conclusions) into a formal motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The motion is seconded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The chair states the motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The motion made is open to debate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The motion is also open to amendments or other disposition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The chair puts the question to a vote (the wording of the motion should be repeated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair announces the result of the vote.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair makes an announcement of the next item of business.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How are motions made?

Board and committee members refer to Robert’s Rules of Order when making motions.

Can the Chair make a motion?

In parliamentary terms, the Chair does not make motions in order to remain impartial and run an orderly meeting. It is good practice for the Chair to hand over the gavel when he or she wishes to make a motion, so that the Chair would not have two jobs at that time, (1) advocating the motion, and (2) running the meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Objective</th>
<th>Motion to Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bring up business; propose an idea for action</td>
<td>MAIN MOTION: Can only be made when no business is pending. &quot;I move that...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kill a main motion</td>
<td>DEFER INDEFINITELY: Avoids a direct vote on the main motion and &quot;kills&quot; it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a main motion better, perfect the wording.</td>
<td>AMEND the main motion. You may add, delete, change or even substitute one motion for another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put off the vote on a main motion.</td>
<td>POSTPONE the main motion to a later time or to another meeting. The time must be DEFINITELY specified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call the question, close debate / stop amendments</td>
<td>PREVIOUS QUESTION: This requires a two-thirds vote and, if adopted, the vote is taken immediately on the pending motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a break</td>
<td>RECESS: A recess is a short intermission; the interrupted business is resumed after the recess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to know something</td>
<td>POINT OF INFORMATION: Ask the Chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point out a violation of the rules</td>
<td>POINT OF ORDER: Calls the attention of the Chair to the problem. The point of order must be made immediately at the time the infraction occurs. The chair must rule at once if the point of order is well taken or not well taken.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voting

A vote is a formal expression of the will or preference of the members of a board or committee in regard to a pending matter. A majority vote is required for approval of an action or choice by a board or committee. Majority means more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote at a properly noticed meeting with a quorum.

Is it necessary to record how each member voted on every motion? What about a roll-call vote?

The vote of each member is recorded on every main motion or recommendation decided by the board or committee. The Chair asks for a roll call vote on all matters specifically listed on the agenda if any member dissents. If there are no dissenting members a voice vote is sufficient. If there are any dissenting votes, the Chair asks the staff liaison or minutes secretary to call the roll for a roll call vote.

Can there be a secret vote?

There can be no secret votes. Votes can be written, but the written vote is a public record.

Voting Conflicts

What should a board or committee member do if he or she has a conflict of interest?

If a board or committee member has a conflict, the member should announce the nature of the conflict and get the required memorandum of voting conflict form which can be found on the Commission on Ethics site at: www.ethics.state.fl.us/forms/form8b or request an electronic copy of the form from the Boards Administrator.

The board or committee member should remove himself or herself from the table and sit with the general public. If the member wishes to address the board or committee, he or she must do so as a member of the general public. The memorandum of voting conflict shall be filed within 15 days after the vote with the staff liaison. The board or committee staff liaison attaches the original memorandum to the minutes. Certain exceptions and waivers may be available. The county attorney assigned to the advisory board should be present during the vote to guide staff and members through the process.

The staff liaison should contact the county attorney assigned to the board or committee if a member is unsure as to whether or not there is a conflict. If the county attorney is unavailable, staff may contact the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and Professional Standards at boards@broward.org or 954-357-7575.

Can the board or committee member abstain from voting?

Section 286.012, Florida Statutes, states that board and committee members must vote unless there is a legal conflict. If there is a legal conflict, the member must file a Form 8B – Memorandum of Voting Conflict for County, Municipal, and other Local Public Officers and abstain from voting.
Appointments, Terms, and Attendance

Rules and Regulations

According to Chapter 112, Part III - Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees - a public officer “includes any person elected or appointed to hold office in any agency including any person serving.” This includes all board and committee members.

Dual Office Holding

Section 5(a) Article II, Florida Constitution states:

An individual is precluded from holding two incompatible offices at the same time in order to assure the actuality of undivided loyalty.

A list of boards subject to the dual office holding prohibition is identified in the Advisory Boards: A General Overview (beginning of the handbook).

General Terms of Appointment

Pursuant to Section 1-233, terms of appointees to Broward County agencies, authorities, boards, committees, commissions, councils, and task forces; quorum, all advisory boards shall be subject to the following requirements except where inconsistent with the Broward County Charter general or special law, or the enacting ordinance or resolution of such advisory or other boards:

1. A fixed-term appointment shall expire on the last day of the fixed term unless the appointee is removed for cause under applicable law.
2. If the appointment is not for a fixed term, the appointee shall serve until:
   a. He or she is removed by the appointing/nominating Commissioner or other appointing/nominating authority; or
   b. The sooner of (1) or (2) below:
      1. A successor is appointed, or the incumbent appointee is reappointed, by a newly-elected or newly-appointed Commissioner; or
      2. Six (6) months after the official date on which a newly-elected or newly-appointed Commissioner enters office.

If a newly-elected or newly-appointed Commissioner fails to appoint a successor, or reappoint the incumbent appointee, within six (6) months of entering office, the County Administrator or his or her designee (Boards Administrator) shall notify the appointee of the expiration of his or her term, and the board seat shall remain vacant until filled.
Attendance Requirements

Board and committee members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings.

Removal from an advisory board

The staff liaison shall notify the Boards Administrator when a member resigns from a board.

Removal from boards based upon attendance:

When an advisory board, committee, or other board whose enacting ordinance or resolution adopts the attendance requirements of this subsection meets on a quarterly or less frequent basis, an appointee shall be automatically removed as a member if he or she has two (2) consecutive unexcused absences or has two (2) unexcused absences of properly-noticed meetings in one (1) calendar year.

If any such board meets more frequently than quarterly, an appointee shall be automatically removed as a member if he or she has three (3) consecutive unexcused absences or has four (4) unexcused absences of properly-noticed meetings in one (1) calendar year.

Other removal reasons:

- Term ends
- Commissioner term ends
- Resignation
- Death
- Disqualification

Effective date of Removal

The automatic removal of an appointee is deemed effective when written notice of the reason for the removal has been sent by the County Administrator or his or her designee to the appointee.

Excused Absences

The following are guidelines the Chair must use to determine an excused absence:

a. When the member is performing an authorized alternative activity relating to outside board business that directly conflicts with the properly-noticed meeting;

b. The death of an immediate family member, defined as a spouse, father, mother, stepparent, one who has stood in the place of a parent (in loco parentis), child, or stepchild domiciled in the member's household;

c. The death of a member's domestic partner;

d. The member's hospitalization;

e. When the member is summoned to jury duty; or

f. When the member is issued a subpoena by a court of competent jurisdiction.
Public Participation in a Meeting

Open to the Public

Does the public have a right to participate in a Sunshine meeting?

Section 286.0114, Florida Statutes, requires a board or committee to provide the public with an opportunity to be heard on a proposition before the board. The Chair will announce the manner of public participation at the beginning of the meeting and prior to a vote on any official action, and provide members of the public an opportunity to be heard. The Chair is responsible for enforcing reasonable time limits that govern how long members may speak within the requirements of the law.

Guidelines for Public Participation in a Meeting

When recognized by the Advisory Board Chair each speaker shall state his or her name, who he or she represents, and if asked, whether he or she is being compensated by the person(s) or organization(s) for which he or she speaks. A participant shall be required to complete a speaker form prior to addressing the advisory board.

Members of the public may be allocated up to 3 minutes to speak on an agenda item. However, the Chair may reduce the amount of time if such reduction is required due to the total number of persons desiring to speak regarding the agenda item, the remaining meeting time, and other agenda items remaining to be considered by the advisory board.

The opportunity for public participation is not available in emergency situations (affecting the public health, welfare, or safety), official acts involving no more than ministerial acts (e.g. approval of minutes), meetings exempt from Section 286.011, Florida Statutes, and meetings where the board is acting in a quasi-judicial capacity. Any action taken by a board or commission that is found to be in violation of Section 286.0114, Florida Statutes, is not void as a result of such violation.
Ethics

The Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees is found in Chapter 112, Part III, Florida Statutes. The goal of the Code is to promote the public interest and maintain the respect of the people for their government. The Code is also intended to ensure public officials conduct themselves independently and impartially, not using their offices for private gain other than compensation provided by law. While seeking to protect the integrity of government, the Code also seeks to avoid the creation of unnecessary barriers to public service.

Gifts and Lobbying Prohibitions

Gifts

Section 26-70.31, Broward Code of Ordinances prohibits advisory board members from accepting a gift directly or indirectly, regardless of value, from any lobbyist registered with Broward County, or from any principal or employer of any registered lobbyist, or from a vendor or contractor of Broward County (“prohibited donors”).

Public officers, employees, local government attorneys, and candidates are prohibited from soliciting or accepting anything of value, such as a gift, loan, reward, promise of future employment, favor, or service, that is based on an understanding that their vote, official action, or judgment would be influenced by such gift. (Sec. 112.313(2), Fla. Stat.)

Lobbying

Chapter 26, Broward County Code, Article V: Conflicts Of Interest, including the lobbying prohibitions in Section 26-70, Broward County Code specify the following:

Any person appointed to a board is prohibited during his or her term of appointment and for a period of two (2) years after the appointment, from lobbying the division, office, or department that oversees the board on which the individual served.

Any board member who lobbies or engages in lobbying activities with a county division, office, or department overseeing or affiliated with the board upon which the member currently serves, shall be disqualified as a member of the board and his or her appointment shall immediately cease.

A public officer cannot vote on any matter that would inure his or her special private gain or loss, or the gain or loss of any relative, principle or business associate.

A current or former public officer may not disclose or use information not available to members of the general public and gained by reason of his or her official position, for his or her personal gain or loss, or the gain or loss of any other person or business entity.
No board member shall accept a gift, directly or indirectly, regardless of value, from any lobbyist registered with Broward County or from any prohibited donors.

No advisory board member shall accept a gift with a value in excess of $50 per occurrence from sources other than prohibited donors, when such gift is given to the member in his or her official capacity.

**Financial Disclosures**

**Who files a financial disclosure?**

Certain advisory board members must file a Form 1 – Statement of Financial Interests because they are considered a local officer. The county Supervisor of Elections Office mails a limited financial disclosure form to the permanent resident of each of the board members (listed on pages 3 and 4) no later than June 1st of each year. Members receive the form to file upon appointment, if the member is required to file a financial disclosure.
**Additional FAQ**

What if two members of a county board or committee are also members of the same homeowner association or area group and an item that may come before the county board or committee is coming up before the homeowner association or area group? Can the board members participate and discuss the item at the homeowner association or area group meeting?

The two members should not participate and discuss with each other what may be business to come before their county board or committee no matter where this may take place. Each member may voice their position at the non-county group but should not respond to each other's positions either directly or indirectly. If there is concern that the non-county group will involve possible sunshine discussion, it is best to give notice of the meeting, announcing what board or committee members will be there, and take minutes of the meeting and post the minutes on the website.

Are members allowed to use proxies or alternates? If a member sends a representative in their place, can the representative vote? Is the representative counted towards quorum?

Unless authorized in the advisory board's enabling legislation, advisory board members cannot use a proxy or alternate. If a member chooses to send a representative in their place, the individual will not be able to vote or count towards quorum.

*Note:* if an advisory board allows for alternates, the alternates are not counted towards quorum, and therefore, cannot be removed from the advisory board if he or she misses a meeting. The attendance policy is applied to the primary member.

Can advisory board members communicate on any subject, not related to the advisory board?

Yes. Advisory board members may speak to each other about anything NOT related to the advisory or anything that will come up for a vote by the advisory board. Members may speak at city commission meetings or homeowner association meetings in the capacity of a private resident or citizen and not as a board member.

Advisory board members are prohibited from speaking to each other about advisory board business in the following instances:

- Before a publicly noticed meeting
- After a publicly noticed meeting
- Any other forum

Is the board or committee in charge of the Staff Liaison?

**The board or committee does not control the staff liaison.** The staff liaison is present to help meet the required objectives of the advisory board or committee.
The County Attorney will assign an assistant County attorney to attend a board or committee meeting, as he/she deems appropriate. This assigned attorney is considered the board attorney and may also attend meetings where legal questions may arise during a meeting.

If the advisory board coordinator cannot attend the scheduled meeting, who is the staff liaison?

In instances where the advisory board coordinator cannot attend the meeting, the board assistant will run the meeting and take notes. **Only staff identified by the overseeing agency is responsible for ensuring that meetings are conducted appropriately. The Boards Administrator must be notified of any staff change.**

Where do I upload advisory board minutes and additional materials?

There are designated areas containing advisory board minutes and materials for the public to view. The following are the designated sites for each advisory board:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory Board Name</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Board for Individuals with Disabilities</td>
<td><a href="http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/AdvisoryBoardforIndividualswithDisabilities.aspx">http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/AdvisoryBoardforIndividualswithDisabilities.aspx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing Advisory Committee</td>
<td><a href="http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/AffordableHousingAdvisoryCommittee.aspx">http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/AffordableHousingAdvisoryCommittee.aspx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Care Advisory Committee</td>
<td><a href="http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/AnimalCareAdvisoryCommittee.aspx">http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/AnimalCareAdvisoryCommittee.aspx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling and Pedestrian Advisory Committee</td>
<td><a href="http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/BicyclingandPedestrianAdvisoryCommittee.aspx">http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/BicyclingandPedestrianAdvisoryCommittee.aspx</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Board of Rules and Appeals</td>
<td><a href="http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/BoardofRulesandAppeals.aspx">http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/BoardofRulesandAppeals.aspx</a></td>
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<td>Broward County Housing Authority</td>
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<td>Broward County Planning Council</td>
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<td>Broward Cultural Council</td>
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<td>Broward League of Cities</td>
<td><a href="http://broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/BrowardLeagueofCities.aspx">http://broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/BrowardLeagueofCities.aspx</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Broward Regional Emergency Medical Services Council</td>
<td><a href="http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/BrowardRegionalEMSCouncil.aspx">http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/BrowardRegionalEMSCouncil.aspx</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Broward Regional Health Planning Council</td>
<td><a href="http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/BrowardRegionalHealthPlanningCouncil.aspx">http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/BrowardRegionalHealthPlanningCouncil.aspx</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>CareerSource Broward</td>
<td><a href="http://broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/WorkforceOneCouncil.aspx">http://broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/WorkforceOneCouncil.aspx</a></td>
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<td>Central County Community Advisory Board</td>
<td><a href="http://www.broward.org/INTERGOVERNMENTAL/Pages/CentralCountyCommunityAdvisoryBoard.aspx">http://www.broward.org/INTERGOVERNMENTAL/Pages/CentralCountyCommunityAdvisoryBoard.aspx</a></td>
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<td>Central Examining Board of Electricians</td>
<td><a href="http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/CentralExaminingBoardofElectricalContractors.aspx">http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/CentralExaminingBoardofElectricalContractors.aspx</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Examining Board of Engineered Construction Trades</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Examining Board of General Construction Trades</td>
<td><a href="http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/CentralExaminingBoardofGeneralandBuildingContractors.aspx">http://www.broward.org/Intergovernmental/Pages/CentralExaminingBoardofGeneralandBuildingContractors.aspx</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Examining Board of Mechanical Contractors</td>
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<td>Metropolitan Planning Organization</td>
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<td>Performing Arts Center Authority</td>
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<td>School Oversight Committee</td>
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<td>Small Business Development Advisory Board</td>
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<td>South Florida Regional Transportation Authority</td>
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<td>Substance Abuse Advisory Board</td>
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<td>Tourist Development Council</td>
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<td>Water Control District #4</td>
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</table>
An EXAMPLE as to how minutes are posted on the website:

Within the “library” both agendas and minutes are found – you may choose to upload them together.
Have the Public Information Officer insert a tab titled “Agenda/Minutes” or “Recent Activity”. This is where all minutes and additional material must be uploaded after being approved by the board at their next meeting.

Contact your Public Information Officer (PIO) so they may assist you in creating a designated space to post advisory board information (i.e. meeting dates, member roster, and minutes).

Note this handbook is subject to change.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact our office at boards@broward.org or 954-357-7575.

Amended: 10/30/2014