


ASC of NSW Ltd

Effective Governance and Smooth Running Committees

17 June 2023

John Peacock AM
Chief Executive Officer, Associations Forum


Disclaimer: This is practical advice based on our work with associations and charities. The contents of this presentation do not constitute legal advice, are not intended to be a substitute for legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. You should seek specialist advice in relation to any particular matters you or your organisation may have. This presentation is the intellectual property of Associations Forum and may not be re-presented without our permission.

 © Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 1 >

1

Basis of Effective Governance


1. **Be incorporated** – so chance of individuals being sued is a remote likelihood
2. **Legislation** – plus explanation of what it means to your association
3. **Constitution / Rules** – voted upon and changed by Members at General Meeting
4. **By-Laws e.g. Governance Charter** – can be changed by the Board – including behaviour
5. **Purpose and Plan** – stating what/who/when and presented in grid format
6. **Budget** – linked to Plan; drafted by CEO; approved by Board not members
7. **List of Committee members and Office Bearers** – how long on Board & 'day job'
8. **If staffed, Staff org chart** – will staff structure achieve Plan?
9. **Minutes** – Board meetings, committee meetings and General Meetings
10. **Annual Report** – records achievements, challenges; acknowledges efforts
11. **Audited financial report** – last 5-10 years equity history
12. **"Harvesting harmony"** – results are required and harmonious culture makes this happen

 © Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 2 >

2

Volunteer-run or Volunteer + Staff?


1. Country shows all commenced with volunteers only
2. Shows in larger regional towns and cities able to employ staff
3. Suggest employed staff not be on committee or be "office bearers"
4. Hence there is a difference in type of "smooth running committees"
 1. Some committees do everything
 2. Other committees oversee staff
 3. Some committees are grateful to be unofficially led by staff
5. Regardless, human factors influence whether committees are smooth running

 © Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 3 >

3

Members Role in Governance

1. Committee governs a Show Society
 - If they have no staff, Committee completely runs the show
 - If they have staff, Committee moves towards governance less operations
2. Committee is voted in (and potentially removed) by the Voting Members
3. So consider carefully who is able to be a Voting Member
4. Consider exactly (say) 50 Voting Members who are people of good judgement who genuinely care for the long term interests of the show

 © Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 4 >

4

Composition of Committee in Rules

1. Decide how many people will be on committee
 - If the show society has no staff, perhaps 10 elected Committee Members?
 - If the show society has staff, perhaps 8 elected Committee Members?
2. Elect half the committee every year for a two-year term
3. All the committee to appoint up to two more Committee members for up to 4 one-year terms
4. Don't elect people directly into portfolios e.g. President or Treasurer – committee should decide and switch portfolios if required
5. Term limits are required
 - If the show society has no staff, perhaps 10 years maximum?
 - If the show society has no staff, perhaps 8 years maximum?



© Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 5 >

5

Plans

1. Every show society needs a plan and a budget
2. Annual Planning Days boost outcomes and motivate participants
3. Consider using a skilled facilitator
4. Structure is important:
 - Activities – what needs to be done to achieve pillars
 - Responsible – who will do what
 - Time – apply discipline to achieving stretch results but be realistic
5. Plan can be strategic and operational
6. **Planning Days and Plans are very motivational!**



© Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 6 >

6

Board Minutes

1. Minutes show attendance, date and decisions
2. Minutes record decisions (incl failed motions), context and logic, but no individual comments unless requested
3. No need to record mover and seconder
4. Minutes are not verbatim, transcript or a report
5. Use impartial, objective and unemotional language
6. If contentious, do minutes live rather than audio record
7. Minutes are private but communiqué OK depending on constitution
8. The company has to be able to demonstrate the minutes are a correct record



© Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 7 >

7

Good Financial Governance

1. Know at least the 'big picture' of finances: equity, income, expenses, profit
2. Show ten-year financial history of the show society
3. Maintain high standard of financial reporting: timely and accurate
4. Budgets must follow and be linked to Plans
5. Have a Finance, Audit & Risk Committee
6. Get professional advice on investments and other important decisions
7. Discuss minimising opportunities for fraud with external auditors



© Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 8 >

8

Induction & Training

1. Volunteers & committee members need training to make them aware of what's coming
2. Induction requires history, constitution, finances, plans, policies and governance training
3. Training starts with the written documents
4. Chair requires specific training on leadership or chairing meetings, and perhaps coaching to be a good Chair
5. Senior and former leaders can be mentors



© Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 9 >

9

Ways to Attract New Volunteers

1. Volunteers benefit from personal development, training, networking and friendship
2. Efficient structures that maximise the use of a volunteers time
3. Clear expectations of level of commitment expected and limits
4. Clear plans for the show
5. Good briefing, communication and reports that impress the potential volunteer
6. Volunteers publicly acknowledged and thanked
7. Why "it's quicker to do it myself" is not the answer
8. Shows are not as important as your and your family's health and wellbeing
9. Feed them ☺



© Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 10 >

10

Volunteers Like Good Organisation & Reliability

1. Give people appropriate notice of meeting dates and a forward schedule
2. Have a clear agenda with likely timing per item
3. Past minutes should be presented and agreed, with action items carrying over to go into the agenda for this meeting
4. Have an appropriate degree of formality at meetings
5. Stick to timing, chair to move things along or dive deeper
6. Board papers out on time and reluctance to accept late papers
7. Volunteers want achievements – not to waste their time
8. Culture of a show society is very important



© Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 11 >

11

Show Society President

1. Chair is first among equals
2. Tactful and diplomatic
3. Able to reconcile opposing views
4. Have strength and clarity of purpose
5. Ability to lead
6. Impartial
7. Do the work
8. Resign if presence is disadvantageous for the association




© Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 12 >

12

Committee Members Behaving Badly

1. Missing, being late and/or being unprepared for meetings
2. Dominating discussions or going off on irrelevant tangents
3. Distracted during meetings
4. 'Pushing their own barrow'
5. Bullying, intimidation and abuse
6. Not adhering to meeting decisions
7. Not following up on assigned tasks
8. Breaking confidentiality
9. Incessant emails between meetings
10. Directing staff




© Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 13 >

13

"The Committee" - by Leslie Lipson

<p style="text-align: center;">Oh, give me your pity! I'm on a committee, Which means that from morning to night,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We attend and amend And contend and defend Without a conclusion in sight.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We confer and concur, We defer and demur, And reiterate all of our thoughts.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We revise the agenda With frequent addenda And consider a load of reports.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">We compose and propose, We suppose and oppose, And the points of procedure are fun,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">But though various notions Are brought up as motions, There's terribly little gets done.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We resolve and absolve. But we never dissolve, Since it's out of the question for us To bring our committee To end like this ditty, Which stops with a period, thus.</p>
--	---




© Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 14 >

14

Thank You

John Peacock AM, Chief Executive Officer, Associations Forum
jpeacock@info.net.au 02 9904 8200

www.associations.net.au



© Associations Forum 2004-2023 | < 15 >

15