

HOA Board Members: many in wrong position

HOA Boards manage the financial, managerial, and administrative operations of a homeowners association. The Board members are volunteers of the community and elected by the homeowners. The authority vested in the Board is clearly spelled out in State law and in HOA governing documents.

Home owners serve (or should) as Board members for a variety of reasons: service to the community, getting involved in governance, a desire to ensure oversight of HOA assets, an ability to make change/improvements, or other altruistic reasons. Then there are those accused of simply seeking self-identify through their position as a Board member and expressing a desire to control, rule and dictate their own agenda.

There is no particular resume that stands out or is required to serve on a Board. The idea is community service and learning on the job is typical. Knowledge of community needs, activities, and problems is a great starting point for qualifications. Although many skills from the private sector transfer and can be beneficial as a Board member they may not necessarily be an asset. The Chief Executive Officer, Treasurer, etc. who operated with much autonomy will have to adapt to a collective effort among Board members and also have to be part of an HOA management team guided by HOA governing documents much different than working in the corporate world. Those elected to the Board should also understand that the property management company hired by the Board can be utilized as an excellent resource in making financial and administrative decisions and gaining clarification on legal responsibilities and State law.

Those seeking to serve should self-examine and ensure they have the people skills to serve: this is the number one qualification. If you are excitable and get easily upset when challenged then this job may not be for you. The same if you are not empathetic but only see things through your eyes, you are not patient, you have an uncontrollable temper, and/or you lack an ability to be open-minded and discuss suggestions that are contrary to your ideas or not understood. Finally and maybe most importantly, if you can't handle confrontation then this is not the position for you.

Regardless of the intention to serve on a Board too often the elected official is simply a bad fit for the position. Many simply don't have the temperament to serve. They simply lack basic skills as "listening", "compromise", can't operate in a team environment and/or can't tolerate criticism and take it not as constructive or revealing but a personal attack (one can't have a thin-skin). Those serving to fulfill personal aspirations for authority and control will be serving more for themselves than the benefit of the community eventually leading to problems. Too often a candidate wants the position not the job description.

There is remedy to rectify a mismatch between job and incumbent when residents determine the office holder is to the detriment of the community: 1) vote them out in the next election or through a petitioned special election 2) hold other Board members accountable for allowing the situation to continue 3) require training on such topics concerning people skills and/or HOA law 4) implement term limits to ensure turnover in Board members to curtail the impact the self-

serving and 5) demanding that all Board members preclude any other from cutting off discussion from home owners at Board meetings (which is typical when a Board President wants to dictate vs lead and democratically manage the community) to mitigate the impact of a "bully" Board.

The HOA Board is the most important entity in ensuring quality of life and financial issues for HOA residents. There is no "temperament" test to serve on the Board and not all elected are good "fits" for the job. When dysfunction exists it is up to residents to address the situation and this is when apathy, not the errant Board member, becomes the main problem in HOA governance.