

The Board Secretary

An association is a business and—like any other—must preserve its history, maintain its records and protect itself from liability. The association secretary is the officer assigned this responsibility. In fact, the secretary can be considered the association’s chief information officer.

Naturally, a secretary needs to be good with details, efficient, well organized and have a commitment to the future of the association.

Volunteer-managed associations might find it helpful to spread the secretarial responsibilities among two or three people; professionally managed associations can delegate some of the secretarial tasks to the manager.

What are some typical duties of a community association secretary?

- Preparing and distributing meeting notices.
- Recording meeting minutes and resolutions.
- Affixing the corporate seal to legal documents.
- Witnessing and verifying signatures.
- Accepting and verifying proxies for elections.
- Maintaining association records.
- Filing forms with government agencies.
- Maintaining a membership list including voting percentages.
- Maintaining correspondence and documents.
- Keeping documents safe and accessible.

Individual association bylaws may also include other responsibilities for the secretary, and they usually allow boards to appoint assistant secretaries if help is needed. While others may assist,

the association secretary must ensure that records are handled properly.

An association’s documents or state law usually let a member vote by proxy—selecting someone to vote on his or her behalf. The secretary must verify that the person issuing a proxy is the owner of record and is eligible to vote.

Some records are more important than others. Documents that govern the community, protect it from liability and affect its monetary position require special attention. The secretary makes copies of the association’s professional contracts, articles of incorporation, bylaws, deeds and covenants, and stores the originals in a safe deposit box or with the association attorney.

Recording actions, discussions, motions and votes at membership and board meetings for transcription and approval does not have to be a monumental task. While the minutes should reflect all matters brought before the board—whether they’re adopted, rejected, deferred, tabled, dismissed without discussion or vote or simply presented as information—the secretary actually has only three objectives when taking minutes:

- Record the association’s actions.
- Record why the actions were taken.
- Preserve board members’ voting records.

Depending on the demands of the association, the secretary may be called to perform other duties, such as typing documents, mailing materials, proofreading, letter writing and purging files.