

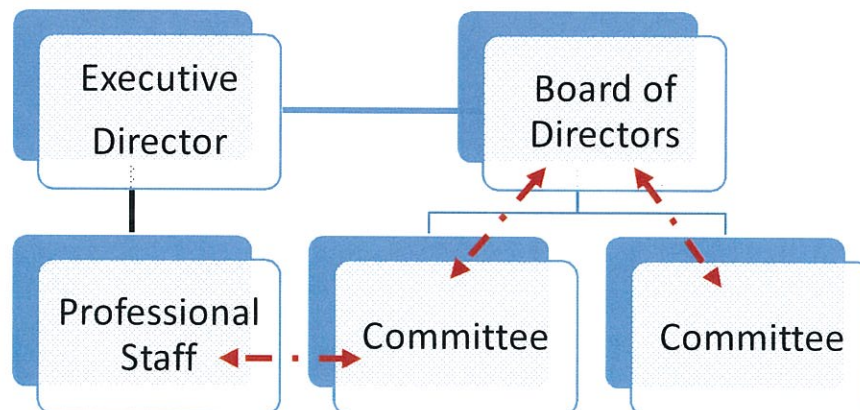
The Role of Board and Staff Liaisons to Committees

Liaisons serve as links to assigned committees. It is common for an organization to have one or both positions: **Board Liaison** and/or **Staff Liaison**.

The purpose of the **Board Liaison** is to serve as an advocate for the committee's progress and proposals to the Board of Directors. The Board Liaison facilitates communication between the committee (chairman) and the Board of Directors. Liaisons should always be aware of the progress and programs of their assigned committee.

The primary purpose of the **Staff Liaison** is to serve as a resource to the committee and to promote its work progress. The staff liaison should be viewed as a credible resource -- not an appointed secretary. The two-way channel of communications is between the committee and the office/executive director.

Liaisons to Committees



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Serving as a Committee Liaison

Members of the Board shall be assigned to act as a liaison from one committee to the Board and from the Board to that specific committee. In this capacity the Board member shall attend committee meetings and will ensure the lines of communication are open between the Board and the committee as follows:

- Ensures that the committee operates within parameters of the Committee Guidelines (agendas, meeting minutes, financial concerns, marketing, announcements, publications, and etc.)
- Ensures that regular reports are submitted to the Board from the committee
- Acts as an advocate for their committee during a Board meeting.
- Reports to their committee, any relative action taken by the Board.

Note: Committee Liaisons must be careful not to usurp the authority of the appointed committee chair. It has been seen that when a Board Committee Liaison sits in on meetings that the attention seems to improperly transition from the committee chair to the liaison. The Liaison should be a resource and encourage advancement of the work project.

Board Liaison Job Description

Definition

A Board Liaison is a member of the Board who maintains a critical connection between the Board of Directors and a designated committee or task force. Board Liaisons are appointed by Chairman of the Board and assignments are rotated annually. The primary purpose is to facilitate communication between the Board and the committee served.

Duties

Duties of the Board Liaison include:

1. Attend the assigned committee's meetings on a consistent basis.
2. Transmit non-confidential information, questions, and feedback between the committee and the board.
3. Consider whether committee discussions should be communicated with other committees for collaboration.
4. When sharing information, be clear whether the committee (through the liaison) is making a formal request or the liaison is simply offering observations and experience of the meetings they have attended.

Communications

1. Standard procedures should be established for committee – board communications:
 - If the communication is not time-sensitive, then the Board Liaison will raise the issue at the next regularly-scheduled meeting of the Board and/or committee.
 - If either the Board or the committee cannot provide a response to a time-sensitive matter, then the Board or committee will be apprised when a when a response can be provided.
2. The communications of the Board Liaison will be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting.

3. A Board Liaison may always request time on the Board's agenda in order to achieve adequate consideration of an issue or question.
4. The Chairman of the Board of Directors may rely on the Board Liaison to have working knowledge of the progress and programs of the designated committee.

This policy or description does not prevent any committee chairman from approaching the Board.

Board Committee Liaison Job.doc

Liaisons from the Board of Directors to Committees/Task Forces

The role of the Board Liaison assigned to serve as a “liaison” to an operating committee/task force is that of an adviser to the chairs and members. The liaison communicates the directives and strategic thinking of the board on topics of interest to the committee/task force, particularly the strategic thinking behind any assignments/charge given. In addition, the liaison provides counsel to the chair and members to ensure the alignment of committee strategies and specific work plans with the goals and objectives as set forth by the board.

Board liaison role appointments are assigned annually by the seated President-Elect for their upcoming board term

Specifically, Board Liaisons will:

- Communicate the goals and objectives for the committee/task force, and ensure ongoing communication and alignment, as established annually by the Board of Directors.
- Attend all committee/task force meetings and conference calls.
- Ensure recommendations, budgets and operating plans presented to the Board are aligned with original goals and objectives for the committee/task force and present recommendations, budgets and operating plans to the board for discussion.
- Facilitate effective communication between the committee/task force and the board of directors – e.g. board decisions, approvals, changes in scope or work, recommendations, etc. immediately following a board meeting.
- Identify potential cross-collaboration opportunities (e.g., between/among committees and Chapters, or between/among committees and Association_headquarters) and initiate/facilitate conversations on these opportunities to ensure alignment with each committee’s strategic priorities and scope of work (as per organization-wide strategic priorities) while avoiding duplication of effort.
- Work with committee leaders to ensure appropriate committee succession planning and leadership development of committee members.
- Foster collaborative working relationships between staff, chair and committee members. If the committee is unable to perform its work successfully for any reason, escalate concerns to the Executive Director.



- In the event a committee/task force chair or committee is not performing, the liaison works with the staff liaison to strategize on steps to be taken to get the chair or the committee to perform, including seeking removal by the board.
- Ensure reports are submitted to the board of directors in a timely fashion by the chair or personally submit the reports in advance of Board meetings.

Liaisons from the Board of Directors to Committees.doc

Staff Liaisons to Committees/Task Forces

The role of the Committee Staff Liaison is to:

- With committee chair(s), steward committee with strategic goals and priorities in mind - ensure the alignment of committee strategies with the goals and objectives as set forth by the board.
- Assure that the committee's work is effectively represented at Board meetings.
- Work with committee/task force chairs and board liaisons to draft operating budgets for approval by the board.
- Communicate and share information.
- Attend meetings.
- Conference call/meeting protocol –
 - Schedule meetings (via an Outlook calendar appointment) for quarterly/monthly committee meetings – usually done as a recurring appointment so they are in people's calendar for the year.
 - 24 hours before a committee call, a reminder (with agenda developed by committee/task force chair) should be distributed.
 - Serves as call lead and will initiate calls on conference call system.
 - Maintain accurate roster of committee members.
 - Save committee minutes to network files - organized by committee and year;
 - Ensure a committee report is produced and received prior to each board meeting.

Staff Liaison to Committee

Job Description

Every committee has a designated staff liaison. The staff liaison's roles and responsibilities include:

- Working with the committee chair to facilitate a meeting or conference call;
- Help in developing a clear and concise committee mission statement if needed; and working to develop effective agendas with supporting handouts;
- Keeping the committee's work focused on the mission and charges of the Board of Directors;
- Understanding the strategic plan to ensure that the committee's work "fits" without the plan;
- Adhering to the bylaws and policies of the association;
- Ensuring that someone takes minutes and keeps records for the committee;
- Keeping the committee on track to advance the work with which it is charges;
- Reporting to the Executive Director any challenges or problems that may arise.

Because the staff is empowered to work with committees, it is critical that these responsibilities be taken seriously. We do not want to lose our important linkage to the committees and their work efforts.



VAR Staff Committee & Work Group Liaison Responsibilities

12/1/09

Objective: To create a uniform, practical set of internal procedures governing how VAR staff liaisons serve and interact with VAR committees and work groups.

Committee Formation:

1. Within 10 days of appointment decision by leadership, Membership Manager shall enter committee members' names in VAR database and generate rosters for each staff liaison. Membership Manager shall also send notification letters to those assigned, not assigned, and those rolling off committees. Membership Manager will add committee members to receive Leaders Digest distribution list.
2. Staff Liaison will report promptly any declined committee appointments to CEO.
3. Staff liaison will confirm that new committee chairs, vice chairs, and members have been notified of appointments, and that letters of appreciation have been sent to all former members not re-appointed. Appointments take effect the first day following the annual NAR Convention.
4. Once chair is notified, contact chair immediately after appointment is made and make arrangements to meet with them in person. Invite vice chair to attend.

Meeting with Chairman/Vice Chair:

1. Provide previous two years of minutes for chair's review and reference, along with copy of Strategic Plan and description of committee charge/mission and VAR policies regarding committee member responsibilities.
2. Review Robert's Rules of Order. Provide reference guide.
3. Ensure that chair is familiar with committee mission as well as duties (including budget, program direction, meeting management, attendance at VAR major meetings, antitrust, and reporting to BOD). Reinforce chair's responsibility to present policy-related committee motions at VAR Board of Directors meeting. Chair and staff liaison should both be fully aware of each other's role.
4. Discuss prospective dates for the year's meetings.
5. Review appointees; provide any pertinent information.
6. Make contact with chair at least once a month.
7. Discuss role of vice-chair (run meetings in absence of chair, attend all meetings, prepare to step into role of chair should that person step down, etc.). Encourage committee chair to have this discussion with vice chair.

Staff Liaison Preparation:

1. Be thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the committee, including committee charge/mission, budget and strategic objectives. If necessary, review last two years' of minutes and current budget.
2. Review Parliamentary Procedures chart and handbook.
3. Double check to be sure committee roster in VAR database is accurate and up to date.
4. Prepare a description of the committee and its mission, as well as roster of committee members, to provide to the group.

Committee Meeting Preparation:

1. Most meetings will be held at VAR with the exception of those held during VAR Major Meetings. Schedule use of VAR classroom or boardroom in advance if meeting is held at VAR. If lunch will be provided, order 24 hours prior to meeting.
2. In consultation with chairman, draft agenda for meeting, using VAR style as provided in VAR Style Guide manual. Remember that most people will recall most clearly items discussed at the beginning and end of the meeting. Briefing your chair and vice chair of any issues to come before the committee is among the liaison's most important responsibilities. Briefings should be timely and assure that committee leaders have a firm grasp of all agenda items.
3. Agendas and minutes are companion documents. Together they allow someone not present at a meeting to see both what was discussed and what actions were taken. Each agenda should begin with a statement of meeting objectives, and should include VAR's statement on antitrust, harassment, and conflict of interest policies (reverse side).
4. In consultation with chair, prepare agenda at least 3 weeks in advance of meeting.
5. Distribute agenda at least 10 days prior to meeting, per VAR policy.
6. Prepare VAR Fiduciary Pledge for all committee members to sign at first meeting.
7. Post handouts on VAR meeting website by sending documents to webupdates@varealtor.com and send link to members.
8. It is generally a good idea to remind members of meeting by email or telephone call a few days prior to the meeting.
9. Remind chairman to summarize accomplishments and next steps at conclusion of each committee meeting.
10. When sending group email notifications, use the 'bcc' field so as not to display numerous email addresses to recipients or encourage members to "reply all."

During Meeting:

1. Either call roll of meeting attendees or provide an attendee sign-in sheet.
2. At first meeting of the committee year, distribute and explain VAR Fiduciary Pledge and have all members sign. Return to Executive Assistant for filing.
3. At each meeting, chair should always call attention to the VAR antitrust, harassment, and conflict of interest policies.
4. Any work groups formed should include members from outside the committee whenever possible. A list of potential work group members may be requested from the Membership Manager. Work group reports should be made to full committee; if a work group leader is appointed, that leader should present the report.
5. Staff members and non-committee members do not vote. If there is a tie, the chair will cast the deciding vote.
6. In general, visitors will be seated in the outside ring of chairs as observers and will not have a voice. Names of visitors are typically not recorded in the minutes, but liaison may keep notes of visitors' names for any follow-up or later appointment.
7. Ensure that a quorum is present. Refer to VAR bylaws for definition of quorum (half of attendees plus one).
8. The staff liaison is responsible for minute-taking, and this responsibility should not be delegated.
9. Motions should be as succinct as possible. If they are unclear, then they should be clarified *before* the vote is taken. *All* motions must be recorded in the minutes, no matter their outcomes.
10. All *policy* motions are presented to the Board of Directors for approval, amending or referring back to the committee.
11. Do not record the name of the maker and seconder of the motion. You must record the *outcome of every motion* – whether or not it was passed, amended, tabled, withdrawn or failed by a vote or for lack of a second. For example, "A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously" or "A motion was made and withdrawn...."
12. Discussions should not be recorded in detail. Minutes should include only motions and action items, not conversations, reports, etc.
13. Always repeat the motion aloud before the vote is taken.
14. If the date and location for the next meeting is set, it should be recorded in the minutes.
15. The name of the staff liaison recording the minutes should be identified at the bottom of the last page.
16. Meetings should begin and end on time; staff liaison should monitor the time and alert the chairman.
17. Meetings held by web conference or by telephone generally adhere to same guidelines.

Post-Meeting Guidelines:

1. Prepare minutes for review by the chair following style guidelines set by VAR in Style Guide manual. Attach a copy of the agenda to the minutes, and use the documents folder under VAR Templates to prepare the minutes.
2. All minutes require legal review by VAR legal counsel before posting on the VAR website.
3. Minutes should be posted to the VAR website within 10 days after the committee meeting.
4. Once approved by the chair and VAR counsel, minutes are submitted to webupdates@varealtor.com in the following format:
 - a. One file per committee meeting submitted in .pdf format. All supporting documentation should be combined with actual minutes in one file.
 - b. The file should be named MINUTES_[Committee Acronym]_YYMMDD.pdf.

Budget Preparation:

1. Staff Liaison will work with the committee chair and vice-chair to prepare the annual budget.
2. Staff Liaison is responsible for monitoring the financial reports and ensure that programs remain within budget.