

What do you need to lead?

So, you submitted your name, you spoke with a few folks around the neighborhood, you may have even created a flier or posted your stand on issues on the association web site. And then the outcome of the election is announced and you are now on the board!

The pay is not great, (in fact, nonexistent in most states) the duties are many and varied, and the hours are undefined. Your goals are noble, your drive and perseverance are renowned, and your dedication is unquestionable. You are ready to stand up and be recognized!

Hold on for just a minute though – – like most jobs, you need your tools in order to do a good job, and you certainly want to do a good job in your new volunteer position! Let's take a look at the tools available that will make the job easier, keep you focused properly on the parameters of the job, avoid wasting precious time, assist you in making decisions as issues arise, and keep you on the right track. For this job, the tools you need in your tool belt are:

The Association's Governing Documents - Every association has a primary document that was recorded at the inception of the association. It may be titled Declaration of Covenants Conditions and Restrictions, Deed Restrictions, or Declaration of Condominium Ownership, or some other variation. This primary document is the core of the association. Often it will describe which areas of responsibility belong to the owners and which belong to the board.

The Articles of Incorporation - This document brings the association as a corporation into existence. Sometimes it may contain other descriptive information that is pertinent to the purpose of the corporation.

The Bylaws - This document addresses administrative issues and outlines how the association will operate, what powers the board has, what obligations the board has, and details how the board is elected. Because the board members are the decision makers for the association, this document is of the utmost importance.

Applicable State Statutes - Many states have statutes that supersede the association's governing documents. Every board member should be well versed in this area so that they do not make mistakes that can have serious consequences. Many CAI chapters offer free access to copies of the applicable state statutes, as do many attorneys. Become very familiar with these state statutes and how they apply to your association.

The Three R's

Rules, Regulations, and Resolutions - Much like the original three R's (reading, riting, and rithmatic!), the association's rules, regulations and resolutions are mandatory basics to learn prior to embarking on decision making, budgeting, and communicating to the owners as well as your fellow board members.

Board Member Binder - Not an official document but nonetheless important and often called by other names, the **BMB** is a notebook that contains all current contracts, at least two year's worth of budgets, meeting minutes, a couple of month's worth of manager reports, the latest reserve study, and all of the documents listed above.

If you have all this, you have a well outfitted tool belt. You are ready to take your position and begin your job! You have past history, you have current information, you have guidelines and procedures, you understand protocol, you know what is not yours to deal with and you know what needs to be accomplished. You are a well informed, well prepared, eager and focused board member. You wear your tool belt with pride and confidence and you will contribute a great deal to your association and sleep peacefully knowing yours was a job well done!