



# *A Board Member's Primer*

*for*  
*FMCA Directors, Candidates*  
*& Members*

*FMCA 2007*



## An active Board is key to the success of any organization.

This booklet is to help you fulfill your opportunities and responsibilities as a member of the Florida Marine Contractors Association Board of Directors.

### **Overview**

Board Members are elected to two-year terms. Half of the Board is elected one year; the other half, the next. Once seated, the Board selects its officers – President, Vice President, Treasurer and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. The President and Vice President must always be contractor members. The Treasurer and 2<sup>nd</sup> VP may be from any class of member. These four people, plus the Executive Director, comprise the “Executive Committee.” The Executive Director and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President are non-voting members.

Half of the Board is elected “at large” – that is, by all members. Half of the Board is elected within the Association’s five chapters. The purpose is to ensure statewide representation on the Board, to preserve continuity of leadership, and to encourage contested elections.

The Board currently meets four times a year at locations around the State. Board Members are responsible for their meeting expenses including lodging, travel and most meals. It is likely that serving on the Board will cost you \$300-\$700 per meeting.

The Board also conducts teleconference meetings. And there is an abundance of email to read and consider.

If you spend less than 10 hours a month on FMCA business, you probably are not accomplishing much. 20 hours is a good minimum target. Officers can expect to invest even more time. Later on, we’ll review how to make the best use of your investment in time as you prepare for meetings and events.



## **Retention and Recruitment**

Associations can't survive without members. That means recruiting new members, and helping to retain current ones. This is probably the most significant responsibility you have.

**GOAL: RECRUIT OR RETAIN AT LEAST ONE MEMBER EVERY QUARTER (BEFORE THE BOARD MEETING).**

**GOAL: DURING YOUR FIRST YEAR ON THE BOARD, EARN YOUR ANCHOR AWARD, WHICH REQUIRES RECRUITING TWO NEW MEMBERS.**

The Executive Director provides all Board Members with lists of renewing and past due members. These lists will usually include calling assignments – a certain number of calls per board member. Nonetheless, you should endeavor to call every one of them.

Why? Because these calls are often the only direct contact members have with the Board.

You also are expected to call your peers – and we emphasize peers – who are not members, to encourage them to join. By the end of your first year, your insurance agent, attorney, and materials suppliers should be members. By the end of your second year, you should have enrolled at least one contractor, preferably more.

Board Members are required to report their recruiting and retention efforts to the President every three months (four times per year).

Because a strong board leads by example, we strongly discourage members from purchasing from non-members. This is especially important for board members. Obviously, we can't forbid it! But, all things being equal, you should go with the Member. If you are buying from a non-Member – get that person to join!



## **Fundraising**

While not a requirement, fundraising is immensely important. Contributions and in particular event sponsorships account for one-quarter of the Association's annual budget.

**GOAL: EACH BOARD MEMBER SHOULD RAISE AT LEAST \$5000 IN SPONSORSHIPS ANNUALLY.**

This is not a commitment that your firm must contribute \$5000. It is your target to raise from any member or even non-members.



## Committees

Each Board Member is tasked with serving on at least one standing committee. Committees are the “arms and legs” of the Board of Directors, serving at the pleasure of the President and reporting to the President and the Executive Director.

Current committees are:

- Membership Services
- Professional Development
- Best Management Practices
- Permitting & Licensing
- Meetings & Events
- Government Affairs
- Legal Affairs
- Insurance & Benefits
- Chapter Oversight (comprised of local chapter directors)

Responsibilities:

- Committees develop a plan of operation: when and/or how often they will meet; specific items of interest; research/fact-gathering assignments; deadlines for completion of activities; and budget recommendations. These plans should be submitted to the President within one month of a Board election. The President then reviews the plan with the Executive Committee. At his or her discretion, the President may approve the plan, or refer it to the full Board for approval.
- Committees should convene a meeting at least quarterly. Please note that teleconferences are acceptable forms for these meetings and the Association can provide committees with access to a teleconference system. These are not formal meetings requiring a recording secretary, but due diligence should be taken to ensure that what’s reported to the President and Executive Director is, in fact, what took place.
- Each Committee Chair will submit at least one article to the *ADVOCATE* for publication each year.
- Committee Members are strongly urged to attend public hearings and other meetings that involve Committee items of interest.
- Committees have the power to make recommendations to the President and Executive Director, but they do not have supervisory authority over staff, nor any authority to speak or act on behalf of the Association



without the approval of the President or Executive Director. This is an important distinction. You may always represent yourself as a member of the Board, but you may represent the Board only with prior permission.

- The Executive Director and other staff are not members of Committees and are resources that should be used frugally. Example: rather than asking the Executive Director to write a letter about XYZ, the Committee should draft the letter and refer it to the Executive Director for review. The Executive Director may be contacted for counsel at any time. Other staff, however, should be contacted only after receiving clearance from the Executive Director.
- If you currently belong to a Committee that has not developed a plan, you should endeavor to complete a draft within the next 30 days.

Committees historically have been the weak link in the Association. That needs to change, as the challenges we face grow more complex, and the amount of information needed to make informed decisions continues to grow.



## **Budgets**

FMCA is not a large business. It has total revenues of less than \$500,000. It has no office. It has no staff. The Executive Director and all other “staff directors” are actually sub-contractors: our meeting planner, our lobbyist, and our bookkeeper.

The fiscal year begins July 1.

**GOAL: HAVE THE PREVIOUS YEAR’S PROPOSED BUDGET VERSUS ACTUAL NUMBERS COMPARISON READY FOR REVIEW AT THE JULY MEETING.**

**GOAL: A DRAFT BUDGET FOR THE YEAR AHEAD READY FOR REVIEW AT THE JULY MEETING.**

The Board adopted a protocol for budget development and review, with the preparation being handled by the Executive Director, then provided to the Exec Committee for review. Once the Executive Committee approves the proposed budget, it is presented to the Board as a whole for discussion. The Bylaws of the Association do not require Board approval of the budget, but a consensus is obviously desirable.



## **Representing FMCA**

Board Members are FMCA's ambassadors to our industry and beyond.

### **Expos and Meetings**

At our Expos and Meetings, every Board Member is required to spend at least four hours as a "host" at the registration table(s).

Each Board Member is required to visit and thank every exhibitor.

Each Board Member should strive to meet and greet every attendee.

Each Board Member should strive to assist staff, exhibitors and instructors. This is especially true the morning of opening day!

### **Public/Civic Events**

Board Members are strongly encouraged to participate in local meetings of consequence to marine construction. Examples include the CAMA management plan meetings; the NOAA dock aesthetics meetings; FWC meetings; and more.

At these meetings, please wear your FMCA shirts.

### **Other Organizations**

Board Members are also encouraged to serve on advisory committees, such as local Maritime Councils, Construction Licensing Boards, etc.



## **Supporting FMCA Publications**

For many members, the ADVOCATE and the FMCA.US website are their only contact with the Association. It is therefore of vital importance that we offer as many different voices as possible in our publications.

Each Board Member is therefore responsible for writing and submitting at least two articles for the ADVOCATE each year.

Articles should be submitted as Word documents. If there are pictures or illustrations accompanying the article, please be sure to submit separate files of those images in JPG, PDF, RAW or TIF format, 266 DPI or better.

If you absolutely hate writing, you may get permission to reprint an article of interest from another publication/source. However, you are responsible for getting that article into the Executive Director's hands.



## **Preparation for Meetings**

Nothing is more enervating than calls from board members asking when is the next meeting.

The meeting schedule is published every month in the ADVOCATE, and is online at [www.fmca.us](http://www.fmca.us). Each Board Member should log those meeting dates and locations into his/her calendar, computer, and phone.

Board Members should always keep track of issues to be on the agenda of a future meeting.

In addition to keeping a list, you should contact the relevant Committee Chair to ask if this item is on their radar screen, and also the relevant Chapter Director.

Questions to ask: is this an issue elsewhere? If so, what is currently being done? What needs to be done? What information/resources does FMCA need to address the issue? What is the plan?

Once those questions are reviewed – and it's possible the answer to all those questions is – we don't know, but we need to discuss this – contact the Executive Director and ask that the item be agendaed either on the next meeting, or on a specific coming meeting.

In addition, you should prepare for meetings by reviewing other items on the agenda. If appropriate, contact either the relevant Committee head or Executive Director to ask for more information, or to offer more info.

At the meeting (and during teleconferences), promptness is a real virtue, as is brevity.

## **Completing Your Term of Service**

In general, Board Members should plan to serve two or three terms (four to six years). You should recruit your successor.

Missing Instructions?

Please feel free to submit suggestions to improve this primer by emailing them to: [swebster@fmca.us](mailto:swebster@fmca.us).

###