

**MEETING MINUTES** – The laws of most states require that all HOAs hold at least one board meeting and one general meeting of the HOA membership each year. The annual meeting of the HOA will often be scheduled to occur at the same venue and on the same date as a regular board meeting, but not always. Larger HOAs typically hold board meetings more frequently than once a year, although they may or may not be scheduled at regular intervals.

The frequency of board meetings is often related to the size of the HOA and hence the amount of business that must be attended to by the Board of Directors. If the Association is large enough to have a sizable six or seven figure revenue stream it is imperative that the board meet at regularly scheduled intervals to attend to the business of the organization.

When a board does not meet regularly and frequently it runs the risk of having management exert an undue amount of influence over the fiscal affairs of the Association. It is important for the Board of Directors to accept responsibility for managing the management company rather than allowing management to assume control of the organization and it is difficult for a board to supervise the activities of the management company when meetings are not held on a regularly scheduled basis.

The laws governing HOAs require that meeting minutes be taken at every meeting. Once the minutes have been approved by the Board of Directors they must be recorded in the Association's meeting minute book, which must be made available to any member of the HOA upon request. In most instances, the meeting minutes are supposed to be recorded in a format that is consistent with the requirements established by Robert's Rules of Order (Robert's). Similarly, the board meeting itself is supposed to follow the protocols established by Robert's for conducting an open meeting.

When purchasing a home in an HOA the buyer should request the meeting minutes for at least twelve months prior to the date of the purchase. If the Board of Directors does not hold regular monthly meetings and instead is only meeting a few times a year it is advisable to ask for the minutes for several years prior to the purchase date. The meeting minutes provide valuable insight into the governance practices of the organization. The minutes are where a buyer will learn of potential *hidden dangers* such as lawsuits, special assessments and increases in the regular dues that may have been the topic of discussion at previous board meetings, but for various reasons may not be disclosed by the seller at the time of sale.