



San Mateo County Boards and Commissions Handbook

A publication of the Intergovernmental and Public Affairs Unit,
County Manager's Office



COUNTY OF
SAN MATEO



A Message from the Board of Supervisors

Welcome, and thank you for serving the people of San Mateo County.

It's the people who make this community so unique — from Daly City to East Palo Alto, Pacifica to Pescadero. And to serve those people, it's essential that our Boards and Commissions reflect the many backgrounds, experiences and viewpoints that make up San Mateo County. When residents from all walks of life take part in shaping policy, County government becomes stronger and more connected to the communities we serve.

People often ask how they can become more involved in their local government. The truth is, you already have — by stepping forward to serve. Whether this is your first time volunteering or one of many chapters in your public service, you're now part of the process that helps the County listen, learn and act on behalf of nearly 750,000 residents.

This handbook is designed to help you get started in your role. Inside, you'll find information about how Boards and Commissions operate, how to conduct meetings and how to communicate your recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. You'll also find guidance on laws, ethics, and the standards of professionalism that come with public service.

By serving, you help make County government more accessible, transparent and responsive. Your perspective and commitment ensure that County decisions reflect the needs of everyone who calls San Mateo County home.

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, thank you for lending your time, energy and expertise to this important work.

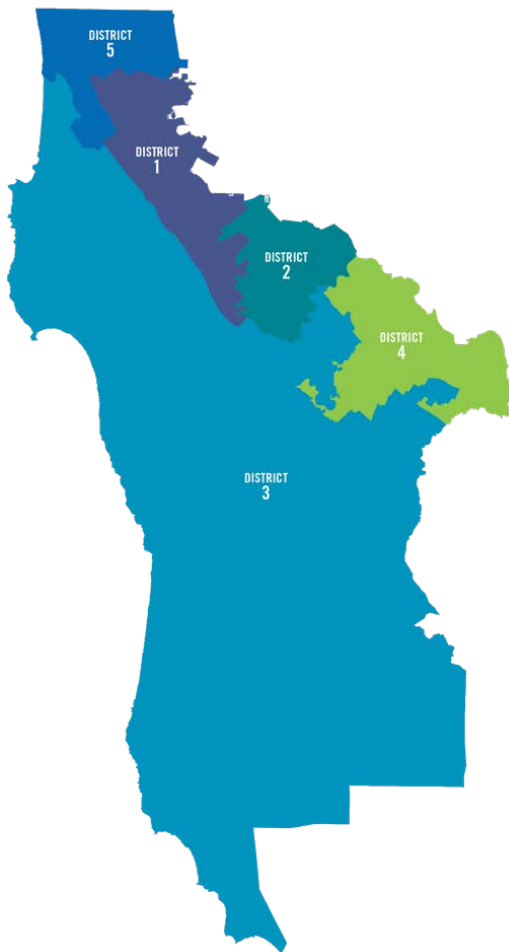
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

San Mateo County is governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors. Each supervisor must live in and represent one of five districts, which are roughly equal in population but vary greatly in size.

Supervisors are elected by voters within their districts to staggered four-year terms with a maximum of three terms in office. They appoint the County Manager to carry out the Board's policies and goals and oversee the efficient running of County government.

Voters also elect six additional San Mateo County officials. They are the Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder, District Attorney, Controller, Coroner, Sheriff, and Treasurer-Tax Collector.

The Superior Court appoints the Chief Probation Officer and the Superior Court Executive Officer.



JACKIE SPEIER, 1ST DISTRICT

Cities of Burlingame, Hillsborough, Millbrae, San Bruno (everything east of Interstate 280 and areas west of 280 and south of Sneath Lane), and South San Francisco (east of Junipero Serra Boulevard and south of Hickey and Hillside Boulevards). Unincorporated Burlingame Hills, San Mateo Highlands, and San Francisco International Airport.



NOELIA CORZO, 2ND DISTRICT

Cities of San Mateo, Foster City, and most of Belmont (excluding southeast portion).



RAY MUELLER, 3RD DISTRICT

Cities of Atherton, southeast Belmont, Half Moon Bay, part of Menlo Park (west of El Camino Real), Pacifica, Portola Valley, San Carlos, and Woodside. Unincorporated Devonshire Canyon, El Granada, Emerald Lake Hills, Harbor Industrial Park, La Honda, Ladera, Loma Mar, Los Trancos Woods, Menlo Oaks, Miramar, Montara, Moss Beach, Palomar Park, Pescadero, Princeton By-The-Sea, San Gregorio, Skyline, Sequoia Tract, Skylonda, Stanford Lands, Vista Verde, and West Menlo Park.




LISA GAUTHIER, 4TH DISTRICT

Cities of East Palo Alto, part of Menlo Park (east of El Camino Real), and Redwood City. Unincorporated North Fair Oaks.



DAVID J. CANEPA, 5TH DISTRICT

Cities of Brisbane, Colma, Daly City, San Bruno (north of Sneath Lane and west of Interstate 280), and South San Francisco (east of Junipero Serra Boulevard and north of Hickey and Hillside boulevards). Unincorporated Broadmoor Village.



A Message from the County Executive

Dear Board, Commission & Committee Member,

Congratulations on joining the County of San Mateo. A democratic system requires participation to provide local government by the people and for the people. As a Board and Commission member, you serve a critical role in direct civic life, and I hope you will find it rewarding.

San Mateo County is diverse and rich with residents who represent a wide range of races/ethnicities, cultures, sexual orientations, gender expressions, immigration statuses, abilities, and more. Our boards, commissions and committees provide a formal structure for inclusion of community voice in our democratic decision-making. Your unique perspective will help our Board of Supervisors and other policy makers better engage with our community, so that governance is informed and responsive to the needs of all our communities. This handbook aims to guide you through your service, outlining key responsibilities, basic laws, and procedures, and additional information that will aid you in carrying out your duties. Please use it as a resource as well as relying on staff assigned to your board, commission, or committee.

Public service is a noble and exciting journey that makes a real difference. Thank you for giving of your time, experiences, and talents to our County.

All the best,

Mike Callagy
County Executive/Clerk of the Board

The San Mateo County Boards, Commissions, and Committees' mission is to advise governmental bodies in their decision-making process through direct citizen participation.

SAN MATEO COUNTY
MISSION STATEMENT

We are committed to:

The highest standards of public service;

A common vision of responsiveness;

The highest standards of ethical conduct;

Treating people with respect and dignity.

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List of County Boards & Commissions

Advisory Boards and Commissions

Advisory Boards and Commissions provide recommendations or advice to the Board of Supervisors on a wide variety of topics. These include:

- Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Arts Commission
- Behavioral Health Commission
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee
- Commission on Aging
- Commission on Disabilities
- Commission on the Status of Women
- Farmworker Advisory Commission
- Independent Civilian Advisory Commission on the Sheriff's Office
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual Plus (LGBTQIA+) Commission
- Measure K Oversight Committee
- North Fair Oaks Community Council
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Veterans Commission
- Youth Commission

Advisory Boards and Commissions with Special Requirements for Appointment

- Emergency Medical Care Committee
- Housing and Community Development Committee
- Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC)
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJDC)
- Midcoast Community Council (publicly elected, open seats appointed by the Board of Supervisors)
- Pescadero Municipal Advisory Council (publicly elected)
- San Mateo County Child Care Partnership Council (CCPC)

Decision-Making Boards and Commissions

Decision-Making Boards and Commissions are those that are authorized to make final County decisions, can compel a County decision, can prevent a County decision, or make substantive recommendations that are regularly approved without significant modification by the Board of Supervisors. These include:

- Assessment Appeals Board
- Bayside Design Review Committee
- Board of Building Permit Appeals
- Charter Review Committee
- Civil Service Commission
- Coastside Design Review Committee
- First 5 Commission
- Planning Commission
- San Mateo Medical Center Board Of Directors
- Treasury Oversight Committee

Throughout this document, Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Councils will be referred to as “Boards and Commissions”.



B&C
ART
COMMISSION



Boards & Commissions in County Government

B&C
BICYCLE AND
PEDESTRIAN
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

The Basics

Boards and Commissions are groups of residents who address a specific area of interest with the expertise and experience they possess.

Boards and Commissions serve a vital role in County government by gathering and analyzing public input and recommending options to the Board of Supervisors. The guiding principle of any commission recommendation to the Board of Supervisors is to address the overall public benefit and hear from members of the public.

Some Boards and Commissions are mandated by State statute, while others are mandated by County Charter or ordinance. These Boards and Commissions vary in their legal status; some have an advisory capacity, while others make legally binding decisions. While some advisory groups directly advise the Board of Supervisors, others advise County departments.

Most Boards and Commissions are deliberative bodies that do not make final policy decisions, manage or direct programs, employ or supervise public employees, commit County resources, or take any official position that has not been approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Boards & Commissions Resources, Including Standing Rules

The Board of Supervisors has adopted a resolution describing the standing rules for County Boards and Commissions. The standing rules refer to the laws governing the Board, Commissions, and Committees, as well as the functional responsibilities of these groups. The notable responsibilities include terms of service, annual report plans, delegation powers, and removal of a Board or Commission.

To view the resources and standing rules, go to: <https://www.smcgov.org/bnc/resources>

Bylaws

Board and Commission bylaws are developed by each group. Bylaws, if adopted, are subordinate to the body's establishing resolution and other enactments by the Board of Supervisors regarding the conduct of business by advisory bodies. The bylaws sometimes supplement the establishing resolution by providing guidelines on essential organizational matters, including the frequency of body meetings, quorum requirements, methods of selecting or rotating officer responsibilities among members, and the designation of any subcommittees (along with their responsibilities). Bylaws should be understood and carefully observed by members of Boards and Commissions, as well as their staff liaisons. Board and Commission members and their staff liaisons should contact the County Attorney's Office whenever the Board or Commission considers organizational changes that could require amendments to its bylaws.

Requirements and Qualifications for Service

Living in San Mateo County is the sole requirement for service on most County Boards and Commissions, but certain Boards and Commissions may have additional requirements provided by the Board of Supervisors in the particular body's establishing resolution. County employees are permitted to serve, provided there is no conflict with their duties as employees.

Once appointed, it is encouraged that no member serve on more than one Board or Commission at a time. This request aims to promote broad participation. However, some members of Boards or Commissions may serve as liaisons to related Boards and Commissions. For example, a member of the Commission on Aging may act as a liaison with the Commission on Disabilities.

Length of Service

A typical term for members of a Board or Commission is three or four years, as specified in the establishing resolution or bylaws for that Board or Commission. Members may serve a maximum of 12 years, unless the Board of Supervisors grants a specific exemption. Members are allowed to fill a partial term and then serve a full 12-year term without counting the partial term towards the total.



The Benefits of Membership

The benefits of service on a Board or Commission include:

- » **MAKING A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE**
in the community
- » **DEVELOPING AND ENHANCING**
leadership capabilities
- » **HAVING A VOICE**
in decisions that affect the community
- » **EXPANDING**
networks
- » **LEARNING**
new skills
- » **BETTER UNDERSTANDING**
of the operations of government

Members whose terms have expired may continue to serve until they are re-appointed, or the Board of Supervisors appoints a replacement. If a member wishes to seek reappointment, they should submit a written request to their Board and the Commission staff liaison, who will forward it to the Clerk of the Board for review by the President of the Board of Supervisors. The usual interview process will occur only if requested by a Supervisor. It is important to note that reappointment does not necessitate the submission of a new application.

Consistent with the Charter, any member of a board, commission, or advisory committee may be removed, at any time, without cause, upon a 4/5 vote of the Board of Supervisors.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q **What are the attendance requirements, and whom should I contact if I am unable to attend a meeting?**

A Regular attendance by members of Boards and Commissions is not only required in order to fulfill their appointed roles, it may be necessary in order to establish a quorum for the board or commission which is necessary in order to hold a meeting. If you are unable to attend, you must notify the staff liaison or the Chairperson of the Board or Commission to explain your reason for absence.

It is the responsibility of the staff liaison to contact Board or Commission members one or two days before a meeting to confirm whether a quorum will be present for regular business meetings. If the staff determines that a quorum will not be present, they will, with the Chairperson's consent, cancel the meeting and inform the members.

Q **Are Board or Commission members compensated?**

A Board or Commission members generally serve without compensation, unless otherwise specified by law or by action of the Board of Supervisors.

Q **What is the time commitment to serve on a Board or Commission?**

A Some Boards and Commissions require greater time commitment than others. Generally, these bodies meet for approximately two hours each month. Additionally, members may participate in meetings of committees, subcommittees, or ad hoc committees, which have varying time commitments. The time commitments for Board and Commission members include preparation for meetings, attending meetings, participating in training sessions, and possibly attending some Board of Supervisors meetings and committee meetings.

Q **What training is provided for Board and Commission members?**

A The County Executive's Office offers training sessions for both current and newly appointed Board and Commission members. These training sessions are designed to explain the members' roles and responsibilities, familiarize them with County government operations and personnel, and provide basic skills for meeting facilitation and leadership, as well as addressing any other skills or needs.

The County Attorney's Office provides training on various topics, including Ethics and the Brown Act.

Additionally, individual Boards and Commissions may offer specific training related to their subject matter or operating procedures.

Q **What is the process for resignation from a Board or Commission?**

A Submit a letter of resignation to your staff liaison. You may also need to refile a Form 700 based on the Board or Commission on which you served.

Commissioner Responsibilities

B&C
COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS
OF WOMEN

Commissioner Traits

Board members and commissioners are greatly appreciated for the time and expertise they bring to the County. Along with the benefits of membership come important responsibilities.

The following traits are valuable for effective participation on Boards and Commissions:

Service-oriented

Interested in learning about the functions and workings of County government

Enjoys working for the greater good of the public

Willing and able to commit the necessary time to serve effectively and consistently, and attend meetings in person

Actively interested and involved in the community

Brings unique life experiences and expertise

Able to consider diverse perspectives and seek common ground

Represents the voices of impacted communities to provide a critical perspective on County governance

An effective communicator

Responsibilities of Membership

Board and Commission members perform a variety of important tasks. They are responsible for staying informed, adhering to established policies and regulations, and delivering high-quality service to the County government and the broader community.

As a member of a Board or Commission, you will be expected to perform the following duties, and training on several of these topics will be provided to you.

Attend in-person meetings regularly

Respect the opinions and spirit of your fellow Board or Commission members and the community you serve

Learn the role and functions of the Board or Commission you serve on and work collaboratively with fellow members and staff, as well as the Board of Supervisors and their staff liaisons

Develop a deeper connection with your community

Familiarize yourself and ensure compliance with regulatory statutes such as the Brown Act and the Public Records Act, and the Conflict-of-Interest Code

Actively participate in collaborative efforts to serve the community's best interests

Use County assets responsibly and efficiently, including personnel, time, property, equipment, and funds

Advance the goals of the Board or Commission

Maintain the highest ethical standards

Incorporate an equity lens into the composition, priorities, and recommendations of the Board or Commission



Commissioner Duties, Roles, and Conduct

B&C
BICYCLE AND
PEDESTRIAN
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

Taking the Oath of Office

A formal Oath of Office is required, as mandated by California law, for public officials in the state.

The Oath is the same for all public officials in California and is basically a promise to protect and defend the constitutions of the United States and the State of California. The Clerk's Office will contact new Board and Commission members to schedule a time for them to take their oath of office.

Meeting Basics

As a new member of a San Mateo County Board or Commission, you have a responsibility to prepare for the meetings you attend and contribute to their productivity. The information below is intended to assist you in your new role. Boards and Commissions are asked to adhere to guidelines for meeting procedures, such as Rosenberg's Rules of Order, while conducting their business.

What Are Rosenberg's Rules of Order?

"Rosenberg's Rules of Order" is a simplified version of the more widely recognized *Robert's Rules of Order*. These rules were designed to outline the procedures for meetings in state and local government and are based on four core principles:

- 1. Rules should establish order.** The first purpose of the rules of procedure is to establish a framework for the orderly conduct of meetings.
- 2. Rules should be clear.** Simple rules lead to wider understanding and participation. Complex rules create two classes: those who understand and participate and those who do not fully understand and do not fully participate.

3. Rules should be user-friendly. That is, the rules must be simple enough that members feel they can fully participate in the process.

4. Rules should enforce the will of the majority while protecting the rights of the minority. The ultimate purpose of the rules of procedure is to encourage discussion and to facilitate decision-making by the body. In a democracy, the majority rules. The rules must enable the majority to express itself and fashion a result while permitting the minority to also express itself (but not dominate) and fully participate in the process.

A link to Rosenberg’s Rules of Order can be found here: <https://www.calcities.org/detail-pages/resource/rosenberg’s-rules-of-order-simple-rules-of-parliamentary-procedure-for-the-21st-century>.

Ground Rules

Every group should establish basic agreements on how meetings will be conducted, how members will interact, and what behaviors are encouraged to support the group’s work. Since each group member is an individual, they each have different ways of accomplishing tasks. These varying approaches can sometimes lead to friction among members and slow down the group’s overall process. For this reason, the following agreements, if adopted, can be highly beneficial in fostering positive and productive meetings.

All group members are expected to respect these agreements, as they usually help prevent misunderstandings and disagreements. Typically, three to five agreements are sufficient for most groups.

Some of the Most Frequently Used Agreements



Attendance

Groups should place a high priority on attendance at meetings. Talk about what would be legitimate reasons for missing a meeting and establish a procedure for informing the group leader of a member’s absence from a scheduled meeting.



Basic conversational courtesies

Listen attentively and respectfully to others; do not interrupt. Limit the group to one conversation at a time.



Participation

Everyone’s viewpoint is valuable. Every member can make a unique contribution; therefore, emphasize the importance of both speaking respectfully to a topic and listening attentively.



Promptness

Meetings should start and end on time.



Breaks

Decide whether there will be breaks, when and for how long.



Agendas, minutes, and records

Decide how the group will handle these requirements.

Group Roles

All members contribute uniquely through their presence and participation. However, some members may take on additional roles within the group. Each role has guidelines that help ensure success.

The following are general guidelines that may vary with the requirements or needs of each group.

Chair

As group leader, the Chair is responsible for following established directions and goals, and if needed, suggesting updates or modifications to the directions and goals.



Provides an inclusive, supportive environment for group members.

Coordinates activities of sub-committees.

Ensures that agendas are developed, shared with the group and modified as needed.

Sets the tone and pace for the group.

May share the role of meeting preparation with the staff liaison.

Usually represents the group in other

Group Member

As a group member, the member serves on the appropriate subcommittees and understands the role of the Board or Commission.



Arranges adequate time to carry out responsibilities as a group member.

Comes to meetings prepared and engaged.

Listens to other group members and follows the agreements of the group.

Participates in group discussion and decision-making.

Helps to keep the group on track with the process.

Cultural Humility

Boards and Commissions play a crucial role in fostering an equitable community by serving as the formal and permanent platform for community voices in County decision-making.

Cultural humility is the ability to maintain openness toward the cultural identities that are most significant to others. This practice requires us to:

Approach individuals with humility and an openness to learn.

Be aware of unfair or unnecessary power imbalances between people or groups, and work to rebalance power equitably.

Partner to improve the understanding and power of all cultures, especially those that are not part of the dominant culture.

Members of Boards and Commissions can adopt a culturally humble approach when engaging with other members, the public, and the work they do. By adopting a cultural humility perspective, Boards and Commissions can cultivate an environment where everyone feels respected, heard, and valued. Importantly, this approach can improve their work outcomes by effectively incorporating diverse cultural identities and insights.



Role of the Chairperson



All members of the Board or Commission should be familiar with and understand the rules of procedure; however, it is the chairperson (“Chair”) who is responsible for enforcing these rules.

The Chair must have a thorough understanding of the rules, as they hold the authority to make final decisions regarding their application. All decisions made by the Chair regarding the rules of procedure during meetings are final unless they are overruled by the governing body. The staff liaison is available to support the Chair as needed.

Since the Chair conducts the meeting, it is essential for them to facilitate discussions in a strong and fair manner, ensuring that all members’ expertise is fully utilized. Best practices suggest that the Chair should contribute to the discussion only after other members have had a chance to speak. At the beginning of each discussion, the Chair should clearly state the purpose and summarize the discussion as it has concluded.

Decisions begin with motions to call for a vote. Typically, the Chair does not make or second a motion. When appropriate, the Chair can “call for the motion,” inviting members to make and second motions, then proceed to call for a vote.

Motions

Motions serve as tools for decision-making. It’s usually best to have a motion before the body before discussing an agenda item, to help everyone focus on the proposed action to be taken, rather than conduct an unstructured discussion of the problem or issues at hand.

Motions are made in two steps:

The chair recognizes the member.

The member makes a motion by using the words: “I move that we ...”

The Chair Usually Initiates the Motion by:

1. Inviting the members to make a motion: “A motion at this time would be in order.”
2. Suggesting a motion to the members: “A motion would be in order that we give a 10-day notice in the future for all meetings.”
3. Making the motion – only if the other members have not done so.

As noted, the Chair has every right as a member of the body to make a motion but normally should do so only if the Chair wishes a motion to be made, and no other members seem willing to do so.

Courtesy and Decorum

The rules of order are designed to create and maintain an environment where both members of the body and the public can engage in business efficiently, fairly, and with full participation. It is essential for the Chair and the members to uphold common courtesy and decorum during discussions to build trust and establish and sustain collegiality and positive relations among Board and Commission members. Proper conduct also enhances public confidence in the integrity, effectiveness, respectfulness, and fairness of the advisory body.

To this end, it is vital that members comply with the following principles:

Commitment to the highest ideals of integrity and recognition that advancement of public interest and betterment of the community are their primary concern. Board and Commission members will use their public position to advance the interests of the County and its residents, and not for private or personal interests.

Conduct will further the ability of their advisory body to carry out business in an orderly and uninterrupted manner. Members will refrain from behavior that brings the County government into disrepute, including, but not limited to engaging in abusive conduct toward staff, the community or other Board or Commission members; using inappropriate or abusive language during meetings; or engaging in unsubstantiated or intemperate verbal or written attacks on the character or motives of other Board or Commission members, staff, and members of the public.

Compliance with all local, State and Federal, as well as County policies. Members will strive to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

Respect the collective authority of the Board of Supervisors and accurately represent the official policies and positions of San Mateo County and make clear the distinctions between such policies and position and their individual positions and opinions. When stating their individual opinions and positions, members will explicitly state that they are not sharing the position of the entire Board or Commission, or the County of San Mateo.

Commitment to compliance with the Brown Act, the Public Records Act and other applicable laws.

When communicating with staff, members cannot direct them and should refrain from giving directions regarding operations.

In addition, when conducting meetings, it is essential that only one person has the floor at a time, and it is always best for every speaker to be recognized by the Chair before speaking. With rare exceptions, no one in the room should begin speaking or interrupt another speaker unless they have obtained the Chair's permission to do so.

The Chair should strive to ensure that debate and discussion remain focused on the specific agenda or policy at hand. The Chair has the authority to terminate discussions that stray from the topic or become threatening in nature.

While debate and discussion should be focused, they should also remain free and open. To manage time effectively and to ensure all voices are heard, the Chair may limit the speaking times of all speakers, including members of the body.



Basic Format for an Agenda Action Item Discussion

Board and Commission meetings are required by law to have a written and published agenda. The agenda serves as the agreed-upon roadmap for the session, guiding the meeting's proceedings. In addition to providing structure and order, the agenda ensures that public business is conducted transparently and in accordance with consistent rules and regulations.

The Chair should follow this basic format.



1

The Chair should clearly announce the agenda item number and should state the subject.

The Chair should describe the format that will be followed.

2

The Chair should invite the appropriate people to report on the item, including any recommendations they might have.

The appropriate person may be the Chair, a member of the governing body, a staff person, or any other person charged with providing information about the agenda item.

3

The Chair should ask members of the body if they have any technical/clarification questions.

At this point, members of the governing body may ask questions of the people who reported on the item, who should then be given time to respond.

4

The Chair should then invite public comments or, if appropriate, at a formal meeting, open the meeting to public input.

If numerous members of the public indicate a desire to speak to the subject, the Chair may limit the time of each public speaker. At the conclusion of the public comments, the Chair should announce that public input has concluded (or that the public hearing, as the case may be, is closed).

5

The Chair should invite a motion from the governing body members.

The Chair should announce the name of the member who makes the motion.

6 The Chair should determine if any member of the body wishes to second the motion.

The Chair should announce the name of the member who seconds the motion. It is normally good practice for a motion to require a second before proceeding, to ensure that it is not just one member of the body who is interested in a particular approach. However, a second is not an absolute requirement, and the Chair can proceed with consideration and a vote on the motion even when there is no second. This is a matter left to the discretion of the Chair.

7 If the motion is made and seconded, the Chair should make sure everyone understands the motion.

This is done in one of three ways:

1. The Chair can ask the maker of the motion to repeat it;
2. The Chair can repeat the motion; or
3. The Chair can ask the secretary or the clerk of the body to repeat the motion.

8 The Chair should next invite discussion of the motion by the members of the body.

If there is no further need for discussion, the Chair should announce that the body will vote on the motion. If there has been no discussion or a very brief discussion, the vote should proceed immediately, and there is no need to repeat the motion. If there has been substantial discussion, it is normally best to ensure everyone understands the motion by repeating it.

7 The Chair calls for a vote. Simply asking for the “ayes” and then the “nays” is normally sufficient.

If members of the body do not vote, then they “abstain.” Unless the rules of the body provide otherwise or a super-majority is required (as delineated later in these rules), a simple majority determines whether the motion passes or is defeated. If any member is participating in the meeting remotely, all votes must be conducted by “roll call” with each member and their vote identified individually.

10 The Chair should announce the result of the vote and should announce what action (if any) the body has taken.

When announcing the result, the Chair should indicate the names of any members who voted against the motion. This announcement might take the following form: “The motion passes by a vote of 3-2, with Smith and Jones dissenting. We have passed the motion requiring a 10-day notice for all future meetings of this governing body.”



Commission Meetings

B&C
ASSESSMENT
AND APPEALS
BOARD

Agenda Development

To develop a meeting agenda, the Chair collaborates with the staff liaison to coordinate the meeting's agenda.

The process for producing the agenda can differ based on the specific procedures of each Board and Commission. Some Boards and Commissions allow members to suggest items for the next agenda before concluding the current meeting. Others may form an executive committee or involve department staff in developing the agenda. Additionally, any member of a Board or Commission can request that an item be included on the agenda. The Chair must collaborate closely with staff to ensure that the agenda and supplemental materials are prepared on time, so they are publicly posted in accordance with the Brown Act requirements.



The draft agenda and supplemental documents are uploaded to the Board or Commission website prior to the meeting pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act. The purpose of the Brown Act is to facilitate public participation in local government decisions and to curb misuse of the democratic process by secret legislation by public bodies. Boards and Commissions exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business, and the meetings must be open to the public.



The agenda must be posted in an area that is accessible to the public at least 72 hours before the meeting and must include all items that will be discussed or acted upon by the Board or Commission.



The Board or Commission cannot take action on any item not included on the agenda. The agenda must include time for any member of the public to address the Board or Commission on any item not on the agenda which is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board or Commission. The agendas will include a statement that such items cannot be acted upon or discussed in depth unless they are included on a subsequent agenda for consideration and possible action.

Meeting Minutes

Formal meeting minutes are recorded at every public meeting to document key issues discussed, motions made, votes on action items, and ongoing activities. Minutes serve as an accurate record of **decisions** made during a meeting. It is not necessary for minutes to recount the discussion or public comments received. However, it is sometimes helpful to record the names of public speakers, but not necessarily a complete description of their comments. According to the minimum standards for a Brown Act meeting, it is essential to record the motion, the individual who made it, the person who seconded the motion, and the votes taken on any action items listed on the agenda. If any members are participating remotely, the minutes should record the specific legal basis allowing them to do so.



Tips for Conducting Effective Meetings

Members of San Mateo County Boards and Commissions have a responsibility for the content and productivity of the meetings they conduct. Members must come prepared and take ownership of their contributions to the meeting's outcome. Meetings are important and have a significant impact.



Here are some ways in which member groups produce a product and contribute:



Participants actively listen to one another and speak respectfully



There are clear ground rules/group agreements that all agree to honor



Physical environment is comfortable, and seating assigned – members are identified by name placards/tents



Agenda is written and shared



Meetings start and end on the times agreed on by the group



All participants contribute



Process advances smoothly and remains focused



Outcome is clear to all



Work to be accomplished is defined



Laughter and fun are encouraged



All participants arrive on time and prepared

Special Notes about Public Input

The rules outlined here are designed to make meetings clear and accessible. Additionally, it is important, particularly for the Chair, to remember three key principles for each agenda item:

Rule One Inform the public about what the Board or Commission will be doing, such as receiving information, discussing, or taking action.

Rule Two Keep the public informed during the meeting as the body carries out its tasks.

Rule Three After the body has acted, communicate to the public what decisions were made.

Public input is vital to a healthy democracy, and community participation in public meetings is a key part of that input. The challenge for anyone chairing a public meeting is to incorporate public input in a meaningful, timely manner while ensuring that the agenda items progress smoothly. The rules provided here are intended as tools for effective leadership and the development of sound public policy.

Assessing the Effectiveness of Meetings

From time to time, all group members should take responsibility for assessing the effectiveness of meetings and making suggestions for improvement as needed.

The following checklist helps complete that assessment:

- ✓ Was the purpose of the meeting clearly stated and understood?
- ✓ Did people understand their roles?
- ✓ Was the established process followed?
- ✓ Was the agenda followed?
- ✓ Did all members contribute?
- ✓ Were visual aids or written materials used effectively?
- ✓ Was the time well spent?
- ✓ Was consensus encouraged, and if so, was it reached?
- ✓ If the group could not reach consensus on a topic, was a backup plan in place?
- ✓ How were participants with divergent viewpoints handled?
- ✓ Was there a clear understanding of the next steps following each discussion? (Who will do what and when?)
- ✓ Was there an opportunity for members to provide feedback about the meeting?
 - ✓ What worked?
 - ✓ What didn't?
 - ✓ What needs improvement?
 - ✓ What would you have changed?

County Staff Roles

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Staff Liaisons

Staff liaisons work for the County Department or Agency that houses the Board or Commission. They are the Board's or Commission's most significant resource. These individuals help coordinate Board and Commission activities through providing administrative support, sharing subject-matter expertise, and liaising between County staff and the Board or Commission. Staff liaisons work to welcome and train new Board or Commission members, update their websites, spearhead recruitment efforts, and provide support to the Chair, among other tasks.



Board Liaisons

Board liaisons are staff members for the County Board of Supervisors. They ensure communication between the various Boards and Commissions and our Board of Supervisors. Nearly all Boards and Commissions are assigned to a Supervisor. The Boards and Commissions with Board member assignments are listed on the annual "Board of Supervisors' Committee Assignments and Responsibilities" memorandum. Board liaisons assist their Board members with application review and the interview process when vacancies arise on Boards and Commissions. They also act as a conduit of information between their Supervisor and a Board or Commission by attending meetings and building relationships with County staff liaisons and Board and Commission members.



Clerk of the Board

The Clerk's Office assists mainly with the vacancy-filling process for Boards and Commissions. The Clerk's Office works to post vacancy notices, prepares application packets for Supervisors to review for interviews, prepares Board agendas and board memos for appointments and reappointments, and, importantly, administers the Oath of Office to new Board and Commission members.



County Attorney

The County Attorney's Office assigns a lawyer to all Boards and Commissions. Their role is to advise the County's Boards and Commissions on procedural matters. Most notably, they help Boards and Commissions maintain compliance with the Brown Act, including by clarifying specific rules and by providing general training.



Boards and Commissions Coordinator

The Boards and Commissions Coordinator is located in the County Executive's Office (CEO). Their role is to provide ongoing administrative, coordination, and training support to all County Boards and Commissions, both commissioners and staff. The County's Chief Legislative Officer serves in this capacity for the CEO.



Communication with the Board of Supervisors



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There are several ways for Boards and Commissions to communicate with the Board of Supervisors.

Members can attend the Board of Supervisors' bimonthly public meetings to present informational materials or recommend that the Board take formal action.

When conveying business matters to the Board, Board and Commission members should work through their board liaison. Please note that Boards and Commissions cannot unilaterally place an item on a Board of Supervisors' agenda. What items go on the Board of Supervisors' agenda is at the discretion of the County Executive and the President of the Board of Supervisors.

More informally, members of the Board of Supervisors often have an Aide assigned to work with Boards and Commissions. This Aide, or Board Liaison, is often the primary point of contact and typically attends Board or Commission meetings to keep the Supervisor informed about commission activities. The Board of Supervisors is committed to facilitating the work of your board or commission and welcomes any suggestions you may have.

Board and Commission members are encouraged to establish a good rapport with their staff liaisons and Board Aides. The Board of Supervisors values timely information that highlights upcoming issues and concerns since early awareness enables them to address matters more effectively.



Annual Reports to the Board of Supervisors

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It is the responsibility of the Board or Commission to prepare an annual report for the Board of Supervisors.

These reports can include updates on accomplishments, events, recommendations for action, and plans for the following year. This task can be delegated to sub-committees or individual members, who will draft the report for review by the full Board or Commission. Once the Board or Commission approves the content, staff liaisons can prepare the final documents and coordinate with the Clerk's Office to include these reports in the agenda for the Board of Supervisors' meeting. A member of the Board or Commission should be present at the Board meeting to answer any questions or address concerns when the recommendation is considered. Sometimes, the Board will include the item in the consent calendar and approve the recommendation without discussion.

Legislation and Lobbying

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The County Executive's Office Intergovernmental and Public Affairs (IGPA) Unit develops the County's Legislative Program, which outlines the County's legislative priorities, budget priorities, and policy statements at the State and Federal levels.

The program is available at <https://cmo.smcgov.org/intergovernmental-and-public-affairs>. The unit regularly updates the Board of Supervisors on ongoing legislative actions at the State and Federal levels through informational items at Board meetings and coordinates County advocacy according to the County Legislative Program, the Board of Supervisors, and the County Executive.

Boards and Commissions might be interested in legislative activities at the State or Federal levels. If a board or commission wishes to advise the Board of Supervisors on taking a position on State or Federal legislation, it must vote to recommend a specific position to the Board of Supervisors. **This activity should be communicated in advance with the IGPA Unit through your staff liaison to ensure consistency with the County's Legislative Program.**

Boards and Commissions can obtain information on upcoming legislation by contacting the IGPA Unit through their designated staff liaison. The departmental staff working with your commission can also collaborate with IGPA to keep you informed about legislation relevant to your Board or Commission's work. State legislative information is available online at <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>, and additional detailed information on how Boards and Commissions can engage with state and federal legislative matters can be found in the Resources section of this Handbook.



To reach a wider audience, streamline processes, improve communication, foster collaboration, and enhance information exchange, the County of San Mateo departments may use social media as a tool to support the County’s goals and the missions of its departments and/or commissions, where appropriate.



Engagement Guidelines: Board and commission members serve as ambassadors and should ensure that their activity on social media channels (such as following, liking, reacting, sharing, commenting, linking, retweeting, forwarding, direct messaging, favoriting, or any other form of social media interaction) reflects the values of the County of San Mateo, including accuracy, transparency, and impartiality.

Only County of San Mateo employees (staff liaisons or authorized workforce members) may operate social media accounts on behalf of Boards and Commissions. Commissioners are not required to include a disclaimer but are recommended to state that their views are their own. Link to San Mateo County Social Media Policy:

<https://www.smcgov.org/hr/san-mateo-county-social-media-policy>

Below are some general guidelines for commissioners to consider when using social media platforms:



Do's for Commissioners:

- DO** share and amplify official County or commission content.
 - DO** highlight and celebrate programs, events and achievements related to the County and commission work.
 - DO** direct community members to official County websites for services and resources.
 - DO** use professional, respectful and inclusive language.
 - DO** correct misinformation by linking to official County resources.
 - DO** handle negative comments respectfully. Provide factual information or acknowledge differing opinions without censoring speech.
 - DO** consult staff liaisons if unsure about posting or responding.
 - DO** ensure that all engagement aligns with the County's Legislative Advocacy Policy.
 - DO** clarify when speaking as an individual rather than as a representative of the County or a commission.
 - DO** limit engagement with elected officials to posts related to their official County duties.
-



Don'ts for Commissioners:

- DON'T** communicate a County affiliation or role when engaging with political campaign sites or endorsing a candidate, political party, or elected official.
- DON'T** communicate a County affiliation or role when interacting with partisan sites, organizations, or posts that promote or oppose candidates, parties, ballot measures, or campaigns.
- DON'T** use County or commission accounts to take positions on political issues, pending legislation, or matters before the Board of Supervisors.
- DON'T** use County resources, including social media accounts, to support or oppose ballot measures.
- DON'T** disclose confidential, privileged, or non-public information.
- DON'T** make statements that could be mistaken as official County positions.
- DON'T** delete, hide, or block comments unless they violate the County's Social Media Policy (e.g., obscene, threatening, commercial solicitations, copyright violations, political endorsements).
- DON'T** delete erroneous posts. Instead, acknowledge mistakes transparently and correct them promptly. Before deleting or blocking content, consult with the County Attorney's Office and Chief Communications Officer.

Commission Vacancies and Recruitment



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COMMITTEE

Recruitment and Appointment Procedures

The Board of Supervisors appoints and reappoints most members of Boards and Commissions that advise the Board.



In most cases, a subcommittee of the Board, consisting of one or two Supervisors, will review applications and conduct interviews with applicants.

However, the subcommittee may designate other appropriate persons to review applications, conduct interviews and make recommendations to the subcommittee. The subcommittee's recommendations are then forwarded to the full Board of Supervisors for consideration and review.



In some cases, membership on Boards or Commissions is limited to one (or two) representative(s) from each of the five supervisorial districts.

This is the case for the Planning Commission, the Parks Commission, the Arts Commission, the Measure K Oversight Committee and the Civil Service Commission. Membership on other Boards and Commissions may be limited to individuals with specific qualifications related to experience or employment relevant to the board or commission's focus.



Vacancies occur year-round.

To help spread the word about vacancies, openings are advertised in local newspapers and are sent to various community groups. Notices are also posted on the County's website. You can sign up to receive notices of vacancies at bnc.smc.gov.org/vacancies.



Boards and Commissions require an application that will be listed with the recruitment.

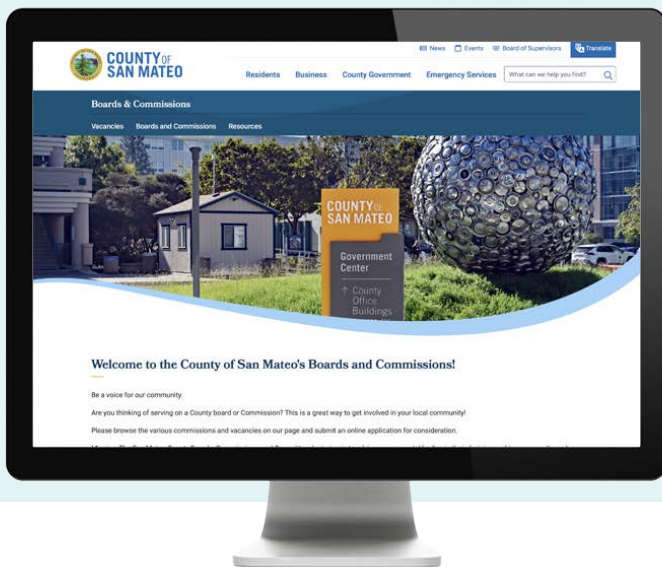
Many utilize the application found at <https://bnc.smcgov.org/webforms/application-boards-commissions-and-committees>. Membership applications are retained for a period of twelve months in the event of another vacancy.



The Board of Supervisors has the discretion to remove an appointee, unless the appointee's term is specified by law.

More Information

The primary sources of information for open recruitments are the Boards and Commissions' website and the staff liaison for each Board or Commission. The liaison's name and contact information are listed under the "Contact" section for each Board and Commission at bnc.smcgov.org. San Mateo County has a number of resources where residents can learn more about the County, its role, the operations of County government and the community's priorities.



San Mateo County Shared Vision 2025

bos.smcgov.org/shared-vision-2025

Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

cmo.smcgov.org/clerk-board

Boards and Commissions

bnc.smcgov.org

Civics 101

cmo.smcgov.org/civics-101-academy

The Ralph M. Brown Act



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Boards and Commissions are subject to specific legal requirements that protect the public’s right to know how decisions are made.

These include the Brown Act (open meeting law) and the Public Records Act. If your group would benefit from legal advice on the Brown Act, the Public Records Act, or any other legal issues, the Chair or your group’s staff liaison may contact the County Attorney’s Office at (650) 363-4250.

The Brown Act applies to advisory Boards and Commissions created by the Board of Supervisors. All meetings of Boards and Commissions must comply with the notice and agenda requirements of the Brown Act, and all members must adhere to the provisions and requirements of the Brown Act.

What Is a Meeting?

Per California state law, any congregation of a majority of the members of a Board or Commission at the same time and place to hear, discuss or deliberate on any matter within its jurisdiction is considered a meeting.

What this means: A majority of the members of a Board or Commission may not gather (physically or virtually) outside of a properly noticed public meeting to discuss any business that may come before them.

What Is Not a Meeting?

- Individual contacts between a board member and non-board members. However, beware of intermediaries or serial meetings. This can occur when a non-board member contacts several board members and communicates the position, thoughts or reactions of one board member to the others.

- Communications or discussions between members of the board that do not make up a majority of the board. For example, if a board consists of five members, two of the members can communicate outside of the public meeting. However, if either of those members then communicates with a third member on the same topic and shares the position, thoughts or reactions of the other board members, that could constitute a discussion by the majority of the board and may violate the Brown Act.
- Majority of the board at conferences that are open to the public (as long as the majority does not discuss board business).
- Majority of the board at social or ceremonial occasions (as long as the majority does not discuss board business).
- Majority of the board at a public meeting on topics of local community concern.

Can I Attend Meetings Via Teleconference?

The Brown Act operates under the assumption that the gold standard for public accessibility to government decisionmakers is a conference room where all members are physically in attendance and can interact with the public. The Brown Act provides the opportunity for participation of some members via teleconference, but the rules for participating in this manner are complicated and change frequently. Every situation is unique. The rules are so complex and specific that different procedures must be followed for a person with a temporary contagious illness than for a person with a permanent physical disability. If you have a need to participate in a meeting by teleconference for any reason, you should consult your Staff Liaison for guidance about your needs and how the rules apply to your situation. Your situation may be such that the only applicable way to teleconference is to post an agenda at your location 72 hours in advance of the meeting and to allow members of the public into the room with you; if that is the case, the Staff Liaison needs to know at the earliest possible time in order to comply. You may decide that the rules applying to your situation are too burdensome and your absence from that meeting is preferable to you.

Given its complex nature and the recent, and continuous changes to the remote attendance provisions of the Brown Act,



Reasonable Modification for Meeting Participation

County of San Mateo Board and Commission members with a disability or medical condition that limits their ability to participate in the meetings or activities of their Board or Commission may be eligible for a reasonable modification to facilitate participation. Reasonable modifications may include things like assistive listening devices or remote meeting attendance. Reasonable modification requests are evaluated based on individual circumstances to ensure full access to County programs and services.

If you believe you require a reasonable modification or have questions, please contact your Board of Commission staff liaison.

look to the Boards and Commissions website and to your Staff Liaison for updated guidelines on a regular basis.

Brown Act: Illegal Meetings

A majority of members may not “develop a concurrence as to action” on business through serial meetings, intermediaries, electronic or telephonic communication, or other means of subterfuge.

Caution is warranted to avoid the possibility of creating an illegal meeting when using social media. Even though social media platforms appear to be publicly accessible and discussions on these platforms seem open and transparent, the Brown Act forbids members of legislative bodies, including Boards and Commissions, from conducting any of their discussions there. You should therefore exercise caution about following other members of your Board or Commission on social media platforms, and you should avoid using that platform to express support for each others’ positions outside of properly agendized public meetings held in full compliance with the Brown Act.

Agenda Requirements

Subject to rare exceptions, every meeting of a Board or Commission must be preceded by a posted agenda that advises the public of the meeting and the matters that will be transacted or discussed.

Regular meeting - agenda posted 72 hours in advance.

Special meeting - agenda posted 24 hours in advance.

Limited exceptions where business not on the agenda may be transacted. (See below)

Must contain a brief description of every item to be discussed.

Close session items must be listed (refer to section on “Permissible Closed Meetings”).

Must include time for public comment.

There will be no consideration of matters not properly agendized unless:

- A majority vote of the board determines an emergency, as defined in the law, exists.
- A two-thirds vote of the board determines there is a need to take immediate action if the matter came to the agency’s attention after the agenda was posted.

Rights of the Public

The public has the following rights:

Right to attend without identifying oneself.

Right to speak before or during consideration of an item.

Right to say anything, even if unrelated to agency business.

Right to record the meeting.

Right to see Board agenda materials.

Under limited circumstances, members of Boards and Commissions may speak to an item not on the agenda, including when:

Briefly responding to statements or questions.

Briefly announcing or reporting on their own activities.

Clarifying questions are asked.

Referring to staff for information.

Permissible Closed Meetings

The Brown Act allows Boards and Commissions to meet without public access in certain circumstances, provided they follow specific procedures. It would be extremely rare for Boards and Commissions to be involved in the types of activities that would justify a closed session. Therefore, we advise that Boards and Commissions check with the County Attorney’s Office when considering whether to conduct a close session.

Standing and Ad Hoc Committees of a Board or Commission

If a Board or Commission wishes to establish a standing or ad hoc committee of certain members, please check with the County Attorney regarding the establishment of such a subcommittee and the applicability of the Brown Act.

Violation of the Brown Act

The consequences for violations of the Brown Act include:

- Lawsuit brought by the District Attorney or any interested persons
- Violations may be stopped by a civil lawsuit
- Some actions, if not “cured” may be declared void
- Criminal sanctions for intentional violations (up to 6 months in jail/\$1,000 fine)
- Attorney’s fees



Public Records Act

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Principle Behind the Public Records Act

“Implicit in the democratic process is the notion that government should be accountable for its actions. In order to verify accountability, individuals must have access to government files. Such access permits checks against the arbitrary exercise of official power and secrecy in the political process”

CBS Ins. v Black, (1986) 42 Cal. 3d 646, 651

What Is a Public Record?

Records include any writings containing information relating to the conduct of the public’s business that are prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency, regardless of physical form or characteristics.

- Board reports and files of Boards or Commissions are open to the public under the Public Records Act.
- Materials distributed to the Board or Commission, except privileged items, are public records and must be made available for inspection and copying “without delay.”
- Assume that e-mail and text messages sent among members of the Board or Commission and/or staff are public information. (Don’t send anything you wouldn’t want to read in the newspaper.)

What Is Not a Public Record

There are a wide variety of specific exemptions where records may be withheld and not disclosed to the public. The most often specific exemptions include:

- Some preliminary drafts that are not retained in the ordinary course of business.
- Legal advice.
- Some private personal information, if disclosure would constitute unwarranted invasion of personal privacy (e.g., social security number, medical information, tax information).
- Some law enforcement records.

Public Records Requests

If a Board or Commission receives a public records request, it should immediately forward the request to your Board or Commission County Attorney, notify your staff liaison, and work with the County Attorney to:

- Respond to the request in writing within 10 days.
- Assist the member of the public in making a focused and effective request if the request is unclear.
- Turn over copies of documents within a reasonable time.
- If the public record is in an electronic format, the agency may be required to turn the record over in an electronic format.

The consequences for failing to turn over public records are serious and may include:

- Lawsuit
- Paying plaintiff's court costs
- Paying plaintiff's attorney's fees

For further details, the full text of the Public Records Act, or advice on application in a particular instance, contact:

San Mateo County Attorney
500 County Center, Fourth Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
SMC-CountyAttorney.smcgov.org



Information on a Phone or “Smart Phone”

Information kept on a personal computer or “smart phone” related to government business is subject to disclosure unless exempt. This includes e-mail, text messages, and appointment calendars.

Personal information is not subject to disclosure and may be redacted to protect privacy interests.

If the County pays for the device, it is subject to County computer policy. There is no “personal” information on a County computer.

Requests for public records can be made orally or in writing.

Public records shall be open for public inspection.

Ethics and Form 700



A key responsibility of Board and Commission membership is maintaining a high standard of ethics. Members are expected to demonstrate the highest degree of principle and integrity.

Core Concept

An ethics code is a framework for day-to-day actions and decision-making by officeholders and, depending on how the code is written, an entire agency.

Ethics Code Goals

An agency usually has three ethical goals:

1

Encouraging high standards of behavior by public officials

2

Increasing public confidence in the institutions that serve the public

3

Assisting public officials with decision-making.

Ethics Training

All members of Boards and Commissions that are paid a stipend for attending meetings and/or are reimbursed for any expenses (e.g., parking, attending a conference, mileage etc.) must receive ethics

training every two years. All members of such Boards and Commissions must receive the training, even if they did not personally receive a stipend or reimbursement. If you are unsure if you need to complete ethics training, please contact the staff liaison. Online ethics training is available at the Fair Political Practices Commission website at fppc.ca.gov,

Ethics training covers topics like:

- Laws relating to personal financial gain by public servants, including laws prohibiting conflicts of interest
- Laws relating to limits on accepting gifts and travel, use of public resources or gifts of public funds, and mass mailing restrictions
- Government transparency laws such as financial interest disclosure requirements, the Brown Act, and the Public Records Act

Conflict of Interest

Under the Political Reform Act, a public official has a disqualifying conflict of interest in a governmental decision if it is foreseeable that the decision will have a financial impact on their personal finances or other financial interests. In such cases, there is a risk of biased decision-making that could sacrifice the public's interest in favor of the official's private financial interests. To avoid actual bias or the appearance of possible improprieties, a public official is prohibited from participating in the decision and may recuse themselves from discussing, hearing or voting on the specific item.

The Political Reform Act defines "public official" broadly, and in the standing rules for Boards and Commissions, the Board of Supervisors has specified that **all members** of Boards and Commissions are subject to its provisions.

All four of the following conditions must be met for a conflict to exist:

- The individual makes, participates in or uses their official position to influence a governmental decision;
- It is foreseeable that the decision will affect the individual's economic interest;
- The effect of the decision on the individual's economic interest is material; and
- The effect of the decision on the individual's economic interest is distinguishable from the effect on the general public.

In addition, members of Boards and Commissions that are listed as "designated employees" on the County of San Mateo's Conflict of Interest Code (see below) shall comply with the filing requirements in the Political Reform Act, such as the Form 700 (Statement of Economic Interests form).



Acknowledgment of Financial Conflict of Interest Laws Form

Members of Boards and Commissions who are not required to file Form 700 are still required by the County to sign the Acknowledgment of Financial Conflict of Interest Laws form. This form serves as an acknowledgment to a member of a Board or Commission that financial conflict laws do apply to them and cautions them against participating in decisions where they do have such a conflict.

Conflict of Interest Frequently Asked Questions

Q Where Can I File My Form 700?

A San Mateo County Boards and Commissions members may file their form 700 at:
County Executive's Office/
Clerk of the Board
500 County Center, 5th floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
Phone (650) 363-4123
bnc.smcgov.org

Board and Commission liaisons help facilitate this process for members.

Q When Do I Have to File My Form 700?

A Within 30 days of assuming office.

Annually, typically by April 1. Please check with your Board or Commission staff liaison to determine the exact date.

Within 30 days of leaving office.

Q Where Do I Go for Help with My Acknowledgment of Financial Conflict of Interest Laws Form?

A Questions regarding this form should be directed to:
County Executive's Office/
Clerk of the Board
500 County Center, 5th floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
Phone (650) 363-4123
bnc.smcgov.org

Q What is the Purpose of Filing a Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700)?

A The purpose of financial disclosure is to alert public officials to personal interests that might be affected while they are performing their official duties, i.e., making government decisions. Disclosure also helps inform the public about potential conflicts of interest. The Statement of Economic Interests (Fair Political Practices Commission Form 700) form must be filed annually, as well as when assuming or leaving office. Filed forms are public documents that must be made available to anyone who requests them. Online forms are available from the Fair Political Practices Commission [here](#).

In San Mateo County, only members on decision-making Boards and Commissions who are "designated employees" on the County's conflict of interest code must file Form 700. These Boards and Commissions are:

- Arts Commission
- Assessment Appeals Board
- Board of Building Permit Appeals
- Civil Service Commission
- Design Review Committee
- Treasury Oversight Committee
- Licensing Board
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission

These members are specifically mandated by state law to file Form 700.

The fact that a member of a Board or Commission is not required to file a Form 700, however, does not relieve that member from the obligation to comply with state conflict of interest laws when carrying out their duties. Filing a Form 700 reminds Boards and Commission members that they should be aware of financial conflicts of interest during their tenure.

Conclusion and Questions

We hope you have found this handbook useful.

If you have any questions that are not addressed here, please direct your questions to the San Mateo County Executive's Office at (650) 363-4123.

For more information about San Mateo County Boards and Commissions, please visit:
<https://www.smcgov.org/bnc>

Thank you for your service.

Resources



(1) Full text of the Brown Act

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=GOV&division=2.&title=5.&part=1.&chapter=9.&article=

(2) Legislative Engagement Policy

San Mateo County Boards and Commissions Legislative Engagement Policy

In order to facilitate consistent and coordinated legislative advocacy on behalf of the County of San Mateo, all County Board and Commission members are expected to follow the Legislative Coordination and Advocacy Policy.



Key Points to Remember

Do not take any action that would imply the County's support or opposition to any pending legislation, budget proposal, or other policy unless it is consistent with Board-approved positions.

All legislative engagement must be coordinated through the Intergovernmental and Public Affairs Unit (IGPA) in the County Executive's Office. Your staff liaison can facilitate conversation with this Unit.

If you appear before a legislative body to express a personal opinion, you must state for the record that you are speaking as a private citizen, and not on behalf of the County or your Board or Commission.

Resources

The Intergovernmental and Public Affairs Unit

<https://www.smcgov.org/ceo/intergovernmental-and-public-affairs>

California Legislative Information

<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

The California State Senate

<https://www.senate.ca.gov/>

The California State Assembly

<https://www.assembly.ca.gov/>

The California Legislative Analyst's Office

<https://lao.ca.gov/>

United States' Senate

<https://www.senate.gov/>

United States' House of Representatives

<https://www.house.gov/>

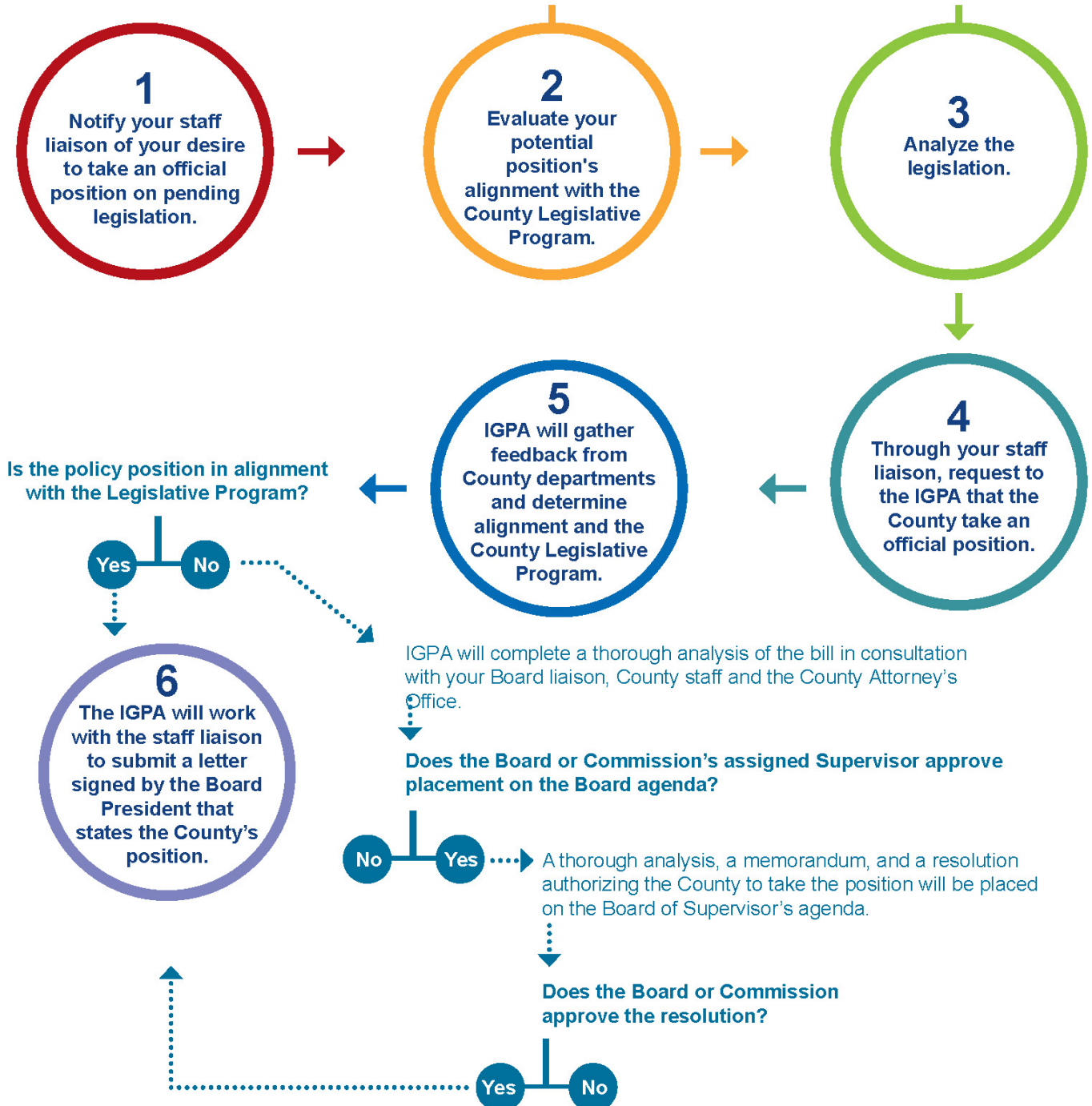


A Publication of the County Executive's Office/Intergovernmental and Public Affairs
Connie Juárez-Diroll, Chief Legislative Officer, (650) 599-1341

How to Take a Position on Pending Legislation

The Board-approved County Legislative Program outlines the County's legislative priorities and standing policies on a variety of issues impacting the County and its residents.

Understand what the bill does, who is supporting or opposing the bill, and what potential impacts the bill could have on County operations or County residents.





**COUNTY OF
SAN MATEO**