

**Part IV:**  
**Tools and**  
**Templates for**  
**Rural Fire**  
**Districts**



## **Part Overview**

This part provides tools and templates that may be useful for members of Rural Fire District committees (a Rural Fire District 'Board').

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These guidelines and templates have been taken from the Governance Toolkit for small to medium not for profit organisations (2006), produced by the North Shore Community and Social Services Inc ([www.nscss.org.nz](http://www.nscss.org.nz)).



## **'Good practice' guidelines – for the Chairperson**

The role of the Chairperson is to lead and coordinate the Board. Having an effective Chairperson can be fundamental to the Board operating effectively. The Chairperson also has a second key role in managing the relationship between the Principal Rural Fire Officer and the Board.

The responsibilities of the Board Chairperson are to:

- attend all meetings;
- promote co-operation between members;
- mediate between different perspectives;
- lead informed debate and decision making by the Board;
- ensure the meeting process is followed and all matters are attended to;
- endorse the meeting minutes;
- not use the position to influence voting;
- encourage and maintain relationships with key stakeholder organisations;
- liaise regularly with the Principal Rural Fire Officer;
- ensure a performance appraisal of the Principal Rural Fire Officer is held annually; and
- perform all of the duties of a responsible Board member in addition to being Chairperson.



## **'Good practice' guidelines – for Board members**

The Board is the legal entity that is the Fire Authority.

The responsibilities of Board members are to:

- attend all meetings;
- act in good faith;
- accept that the Board only has one voice and that once a decision has been voted on it is final (there is a place for dissention but that is in the boardroom, not in the public sphere);
- place primary importance on the success of the Fire Authority, rather than focusing on outside roles and agendas;
- challenge the thinking and positions of other members, but always remain respectful;
- help ensure the Board (as the Fire Authority) meets its statutory obligations for rural fire protection and control;
- help ensure that there is a high level of transparency in reporting;
- take into account the views of stakeholders;
- help ensure that all potential legal and financial risks are managed effectively; and
- contribute to the overall effectiveness of the Fire Authority by participating in subcommittees.



## **'Good practice' guidelines – for the Chairperson (financial obligations)**

The Chairperson of the Board is usually also responsible for overseeing all of the Board's financial matters. Many of these functions can be delegated.

Responsibilities are to:

- ensure money received is properly receipted and banked;
- invoice groups/members for services rendered, for example, rental of building space, equipment, uniforms etc;
- prepare budgets for the forthcoming year describing all sources of income and expenditure and present this to the Board/committee for approval;
- maintain accurate records of current income and expenditure;
- prepare annual financial accounts for auditing and provide the auditor and/or NRFA with information as required;
- authorise payments out of the Board's accounts;<sup>1</sup>
- file GST, tax returns and PAYE returns for employees as required;
- ensure annual returns are filed with the appropriate government department; and
- manage organisation investment programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> Note the requirements of regulation 25, FRFR.



## **Meeting minutes agenda template**

### **For Meetings**

[On letterhead]

#### **AGENDA FOR MEETING TO BE HELD**

[DATE]

[PLACE]

[TIME]

- 
- **Welcome**
  - **Apologies**
  - **Minutes of last meeting**
  - **Matter arising from minutes**
  - **Financial Accounts**
  - **General Business**



## Meeting minutes templates

*SAMPLE MINUTES OF MEETING (VERSION 1)*

### **MINUTES OF MEETING OF [name of organisation] held on [date] at [venue]**

**Present:** [List names or number of people present]

**Apologies:** [*List names of people who have apologised*]

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Approved by [name]  
Seconded by [name]

**Matters Arising:** [*Note any matters arising and the decisions after discussion e.g. who was delegated to do what and within what timeframe*]

**Financial Report:** The financial report for the period [insert] was tabled and  
Approved by [name]  
Seconded by [name]  
[*Record any discussion here*]

**Business 1**

**Business 2**

**Business 3**

*SAMPLE MINUTES OF MEETING (VERSION 2)*

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF [name of organisation]  
held on [date] at [venue]**

Present: [List names or number of people present]

Apologies: [List names of people who have apologized]

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Approved by [name]  
Seconded by [name]

Matters Arising:

Financial Report: The financial report for the period [insert dates] was tabled and Approved by [name]  
Seconded by [name]  
*[Record any discussion here]*

<b>ISSUE</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>DATE BY</b>

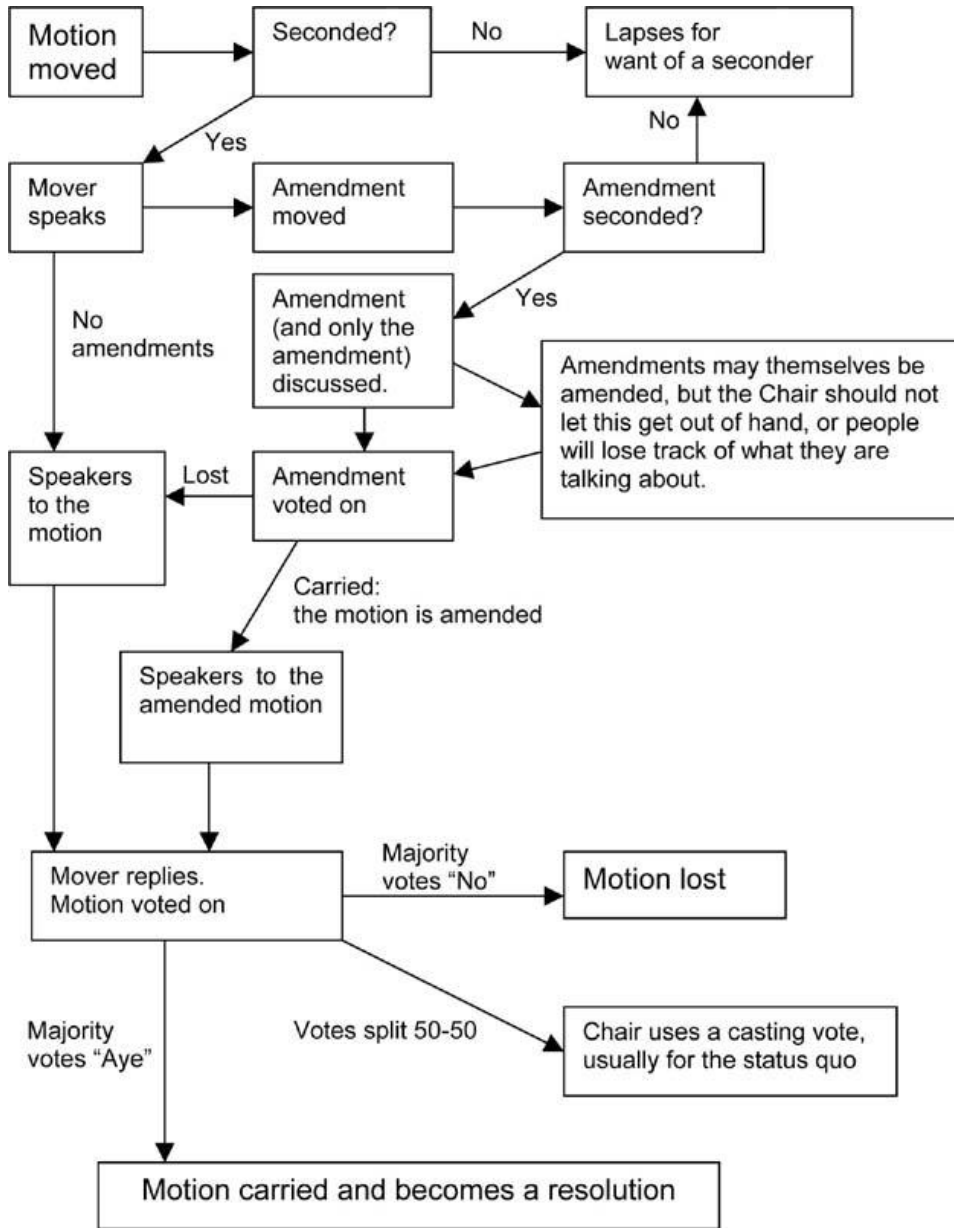
**The meeting closed at [insert time]**

## **Reference list and flowchart showing meeting procedure**

### *QUICK REFERENCE FOR MEETING PROCEDURE*

- Welcome by Chairperson
- Introductions
- Minutes of last meeting
- Matters arising from the minutes
- Financial Reports
- Manager's Report
- Correspondence
- Agenda item 1
- Agenda item 2
- Agenda item 3
- Agenda item 4
- General Business
- Close of meeting

**FLOWCHART FOR FORMAL MEETING PROCEDURE**



*Points of Order:* these are introduced by the words "Point of order, ...". These refer to a breach of rules, a violation of the bylaws, or a misrepresentation. Points of order must be made at the time of the breach, and are subject to the Chair's ruling.

*Department of Internal Affairs, Running Meetings Resources*

## Self-evaluation template for the Board

This is a basic example of a self-evaluation by the Board. Implementing an annual self-evaluation can help enhance the success of the Board. It gives Board members a chance to voice their opinions on how they feel the Board as a whole is going, and illustrates the areas that could be improved. There is no formal requirement for Board evaluation but it may help, especially for new Boards who may be struggling with the format and other requirements.

### NAME OF ORGANISATION

Circle one   **Y**=Yes   **N**=No   **P**=Possibly   **D**=Definitely Not

<b>THE BOARD</b>				
The Board has a concise, yet comprehensive, set of policies clearly outlining the procedures and responsibilities of the Board.	Y	N	P	D
These policies have been reviewed in the past three years.	Y	N	P	D
There is a clear-cut organisational chart of the Board.	Y	N	P	D
There is a clear-cut organisational chart of the staff.	Y	N	P	D
There is a clear-cut organisational chart showing the relationship between the Board and the staff organisation.	Y	N	P	D
There is a broad representation of interests on the subcommittees.	Y	N	P	D
I feel the present Board organisation allows for sufficient attention to the Board's work.	Y	N	P	D
There is sufficient opportunity for rotation of officers and committee chairpersons.	Y	N	P	D
The limit of the powers of the Board is clear and in the policies or constitution.	Y	N	P	D
The position of Board Chairperson/President is filled by fair election and is not monopolised by one individual.	Y	N	P	D
The responsibility for supervising committee chairpersons and for the functioning of all committees rests with the Chairperson/President of the Board of Directors, not the staff.	Y	N	P	D
The number and duration of Board meetings are adequate to conduct the Board's business.	Y	N	P	D
Board and committee procedures follow an agreed pattern.	Y	N	P	D
Agendas are jointly constructed by the Chairperson and the staff assigned.	Y	N	P	D

Agenda approval is the first item on any meeting agenda with Board members feeling free to recommend amendments, deletions and/or additions.	Y	N	P	D
Agenda and previous meeting minutes are sent out in advance.	Y	N	P	D
Concise background material is sent out to assist my comprehension of the issues involved.	Y	N	P	D
Minute-taking is an assigned function, enabling full participation by all Board members.	Y	N	P	D
We have adequate attendance at Board/committee meetings, with at least a majority of members present.	Y	N	P	D
Board meetings are set well in advance with a reminder as each meeting approaches.	Y	N	P	D
Our meetings are achievement oriented. Our productivity is high, working hard at important issues.	Y	N	P	D
Board/committee meetings begin and end on time.	Y	N	P	D

**You may wish to delete some questions and/or add some of your own questions to the list above.**