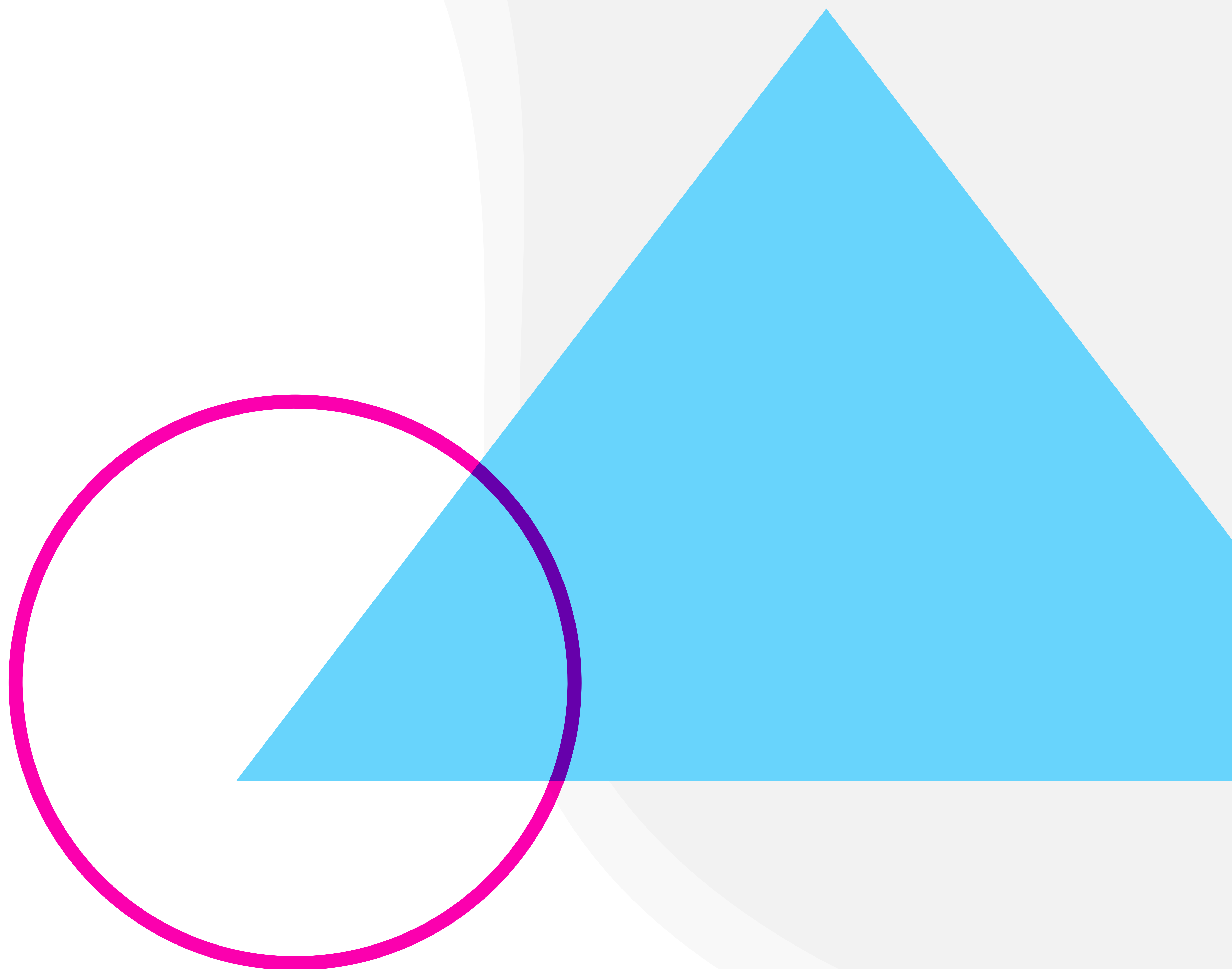


The Complete Guide to Running a Nonprofit Board Meeting



Board meetings are a key component of nonprofit governance, providing a structured environment for strategic decision-making, oversight, and planning. Regular board meetings enable the board to fulfill its governance role, while overseeing the nonprofit’s operations, finances, and compliance with legal and ethical standards.

Understanding how to conduct productive and engaging board meetings is crucial for the success and sustainability of your nonprofit, regardless if you’re a veteran board member, executive director, or new to the world of nonprofit leadership.

This comprehensive guide covers the various types of nonprofit board meetings, walks you through the necessary steps to draft an engaging meeting, and explores how board management software enhances nonprofit governance.

What is a Board Meeting?

A board meeting is a formal gathering of the board of directors. During the meeting, members discuss and make important decisions about the organization’s strategic direction and policies. These meetings are critically important to the governance and oversight of the organization. To run a board meeting effectively, it’s important to set long-term goals around compliance, financial performance, and more.

Nonprofits host board meetings for a variety of reasons, including policy development and decision-making, providing financial oversight, ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, mitigating risk, planning fundraising efforts, and more.

Board meetings typically include the full board, senior executives and advisors, as well as external stakeholders and guests. While corporate board meetings are confidential, nonprofit board meeting minutes are often made public.

The structure of a nonprofit board meeting includes:

- 1 Call to order
- 2 Roll call
- 3 Approval of agenda
- 4 Approval of previous meeting minutes
- 5 Financial and committee reports
- 6 Discussions and voting
- 7 Action items
- 8 Adjournment



Types of Nonprofit Board Meetings

Different types of board meetings address various aspects of the nonprofit's operations and strategic goals. Understanding the distinct types of board meetings and their specific functions ensures your organization runs smoothly and achieves its mission.

Regular Board Meeting

Regular board meetings take place at consistent intervals, such as monthly, quarterly, or annually, depending on the nonprofit's needs and governing documents. These meetings are fundamental to the governance and operation of the organization, providing an opportunity for the board to discuss and address the nonprofit's activities.

Closed Board Meeting

A closed board meeting is a gathering of the nonprofit's board of directors that is closed to the public or outside stakeholders. The primary purpose of a closed board meeting is to ensure sensitive information remains confidential.

Closed board meetings often address hiring or firing of members, legal issues, sensitive financial matters, internal investigations, conflict resolution, and confidential information.

Emergency Board Meeting

Emergency board meetings occur when the nonprofit organization's board of directors need to address urgent and unforeseen issues that require immediate attention. While procedures vary by nonprofit, emergency meetings typically follow Robert's Rules of Order.

These meetings can be called to order by the board president or any two directors other than the president, once the organization's executive committee determines the need for an emergency meeting. During the session, the board members can only act on matters deemed an emergency.

Annual General Meeting

An annual general meeting (AGM) is a yearly meeting between the nonprofit organization's members, board of directors, and sometimes other stakeholders.

Participants question the board, vote on organization issues, choose new directors, and collaborate with each other. The board presents an annual report and annual financial accounts for approval, which shareholders use to evaluate the organization's health.

Ultimately, the AGM provides a formal opportunity to review the nonprofit's achievements, discuss future plans, fulfill legal and governance requirements, and ensure transparency and accountability.

How to Run a Nonprofit Board Meeting

The steps below outline the process for preparing for and executing a nonprofit board meeting.

STEP 1

Pre-Meeting Preparation

Preparing for a board meeting is paramount for ensuring the nonprofit board meeting runs smoothly and achieves key goals and objectives. Effective preparation helps board members come to the meeting informed and ready to engage in meaningful discussions and decision-making.

Pre-meeting prep involves setting the agenda and determining topics to address, gathering and distributing reports and board packets, making logistical arrangements for a venue and equipment, helping members and committee chairs prepare presentations, sending out meeting notifications, and reviewing bylaws and regulatory requirements to ensure the meeting is conducted in compliance with these guidelines.

STEP 2

Approval of Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes

Approving the agenda and previous meeting minutes typically follows a structured process to ensure transparency, accuracy, and efficiency.

To approve the agenda, the board chair presents the proposed agenda to the nonprofit board members. This includes a list of items to be discussed during the meeting, organized in a logical sequence. Board members review the agenda and have the opportunity to make a motion during a board meeting to suggest any additions, deletions, or modifications. Finally, the motion to approve the agenda is put to a vote. Depending on the organization’s bylaws and procedures, voting may be done by a show of hands, voice vote, or roll call vote.

To approve board meeting minutes, the secretary presents the minutes of the previous meeting to the board members. These minutes summarize the discussions, decisions, and actions taken during the previous meeting. Members review the minutes for accuracy, have the opportunity to file motions, and then vote to approve the meeting minutes.

To streamline the process, some organizations leverage a nonprofit board meeting minutes template.



STEP 3

Reports and Updates

Key leaders, such as the board chair, executive director, and committee chairs, have the opportunity to present reports on the organization's activities, finances, and strategic direction.

Reports are often used to:

- Guide decision-making
- Track progress
- Spotlight challenges
- Monitor financials
- Evaluate programs and initiatives

Following presentations, board members can ask questions, seek clarification, and discuss the implications of the reporting. They may consider potential actions or recommendations based on the information presented.

STEP 4

Old Business

Old business refers to topics discussed in previous meetings that still need resolution or finalization. These are issues or actions that require follow-up, further discussion, or a decision. Addressing old business ensures continuity and accountability in the board's work, allowing members to revisit important matters.

STEP 5

New Business

New business encompasses any new issues, proposals, or initiatives that nonprofit board members wish to discuss. Introducing new business allows the nonprofit to consider fresh ideas, opportunities, challenges, and decisions that may impact the organization's strategy and overall mission.

STEP 6

Action Items

Action items include specific tasks or activities that require attention following the meeting. These tasks are assigned to individual board members or committees and are intended to address decisions made or issues discussed during a nonprofit board meeting. Action items prove key for ensuring the board's decisions are implemented effectively and progress is made on critical initiatives and projects.

Closing the Meeting

Closing the meeting refers to the formal conclusion of the board meeting proceedings. It involves wrapping up discussions, ensuring all agenda items are addressed, and officially ending the meeting in an organized manner.

Properly closing the meeting ensures all participants leave with a clear understanding of the meeting topics, key priorities, and necessary next steps. It reinforces accountability by reviewing and confirming action items and responsibilities.

Typically, a board member makes a formal motion to adjourn the meeting, another member affirms it, and the board votes to approve the adjournment.

OnBoard Supports Nonprofit Boards

Nonprofits address important social, educational, environmental, and cultural needs that might not be adequately met by the government or private sector.

Well-executed board meetings ensure nonprofits operate efficiently, stay true to their mission, and maximize the impact on the community they serve. By effectively utilizing board meetings, nonprofits enhance their effectiveness, sustainability, and overall contribution to society.

OnBoard's all-in-one board management software includes powerful features and capabilities to help nonprofit organizations enhance meeting collaboration and achieve their mission and goals.

Key OnBoard features include:

- Drag-and-drop agenda builder
- Ability to take minutes directly in the platform
- Anonymized and aggregated meeting analytics
- Zoom and Office 365 integrations
- Seamless voting and collaboration tools

