

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The board of directors is composed of the elected officers, the immediate past president, and elected directors. Whenever possible, the elected directors should reflect the composition of the membership by service, rank, sex, etc. They can be elected annually or biennially by the membership at the annual meeting.

***Electing officers biennially gives the board of directors much more continuity and simplifies the process of conducting chapter business.***

Changing approximately one-half of the elected officers each year (rather than the entire slate) has proven to provide for a measure of “corporate continuity” and also eases the task of the nominating committee in obtaining suitable and willing nominees.

The chapter’s board of directors is empowered to act for the membership in directing the affairs of the chapter. Certain important questions (such as the determination of annual dues and the establishment of positions) should be put to the membership for decision, but the board of directors should take final action on all routine matters. Thus, most of the business of the chapter should be transacted at board meetings, not chapter meetings. However, the board of directors is not authorized to adopt resolutions or to establish positions in the name of the chapter.

Normally, board meetings should be held monthly, even if chapter meetings are less frequent. The president chairs all board meetings. Chairpersons of all standing committees should attend and participate in all board meetings but should not, unless otherwise qualified, be entitled to vote. Any proceedings of general interest should be reported to the membership by means of the chapter newsletter.

## **ELECTED OFFICERS**

While each chapter is free to identify the various chapter offices they want filled via an election, the basic offices that should be filled by a regular or auxiliary member are:

- President**
- 1st Vice President**
- 2nd Vice President**
- Secretary**
- Treasurer**
- Chaplain**
- Director of Legislative Affairs**

**Note:** Chapters should keep in mind that identifying too many positions for “election” limits the resources to draw on to fill them. For instance, most chapters require that their elections include the positions of Treasurer, Secretary, and Newsletter Editor. In doing so, the chapter

is limiting the potential resource to fill these positions to regular or auxiliary members even though a member's spouse could (and in many cases does) do the job. Also, appointment of certain positions (instead of election) is often the most expedient way to operate.

The membership elects the officers at each annual meeting. If that meeting takes place in November, as suggested, the elected officers should be installed at the first chapter meeting in the next calendar year.

## **PRESIDENT**

Any chapter's success or failure hinges on the president's leadership. The president must chart a course for the chapter, be the prime mover in new programs and projects and appoint effective committees for all fields of activity. It is imperative, therefore, that the selection of a chapter president be accomplished carefully. The president's principal duties are as follows:

- Serve as the chapter's chief elected officer.
- Preside at meetings of the chapter and the board of directors.
- Appoint all standing and special committees except the nominating committee.
- Serve as an ex officio member, with right to vote, on all committees except the nominating committee.
- Communicate to the chapter or to the board of directors information or proposals that, in his/her opinion, would help in achieving the purposes of the chapter.
- Serve as the chapter's principal delegate to the state council of chapters.
- Perform such other duties as are necessarily incident to the office of the president.
- Appoint liaison representatives to local military bases by formal letter to the base commander, whenever or wherever appropriate.

The suggested bylaws in **Appendix A** indicate that an individual should not serve as president any longer than two consecutive one-year terms or, if elected biennially, two consecutive two-year terms. Whether it is in a chapter's best interest for one individual to serve two or more consecutive terms as president is open to question. Certainly, there are chapter presidents who have served their organizations with great dedication and ability for a number of years, and, as a general rule, having an interested, competent individual serving as president is more important than following a routine which directs election at specified time periods. However, there are distinct benefits of having regularly scheduled elections and installing new leadership at specified intervals. Chapters and their board must independently decide what's best for them.

## **VICE PRESIDENTS**

The two vice presidents must be prepared to perform the duties of the next higher office, should it be vacated, either temporarily or permanently.

Each vice president serves as a member of the board of directors and, in addition, performs whatever other duties the president might assign. It is a common and highly recommended practice for a vice president to serve as chairperson of one of the standing committees, for instance, the Membership Committee.

Some chapters follow a policy, which has much merit, of grooming selected members for the office of the president by advancing them upward through an established sequence of offices. Clearly, by the time this person assumes the presidency, he or she will have become thoroughly familiar with the chapter's programs and methods of operations.

If this practice is followed, the nominating committee should consider these points:

- As much care should be taken in selecting a 2nd vice president as is commonly taken in choosing a president.
- The process of "progression" should not be so firm that the nominating committee could not deviate from it, if circumstances dictate.

## **SECRETARY**

Next to the president, the secretary is the key individual in the functioning of any chapter. The responsibilities of the position are numerous, the workload is heavy, and performance directly affects the chapter's success in all fields of activity. The secretary's principal duties are as follows:

- Provide to the membership timely written notification of all annual, regular, and special chapter meetings, generally by means of the chapter newsletter.
- Maintain a record of all proceedings at chapter meetings.
- Provide to board members timely written notification of all meetings of the board of directors.
- Maintain a record of all proceedings at board meetings.
- Process membership applications and resignations.
- Maintain or oversee the maintenance of the chapter membership records and ensure that a list of chapter members is sent to the Department of Council and Chapter Affairs at least once a year.\*
- Prepare required correspondence.
- Maintain the chapter's correspondence files.
- Prepare reports and returns required by law.
- Maintain and safeguard all important records and legal documents and ensure that they are passed on to the successor.\*
- Maintain and safeguard valuable equipment (such as U.S. and chapter flags) belonging to the chapter.
- Perform other duties that are commensurate with the office or as might be assigned by the board of directors or the president. (Generally, it is not advisable for the secretary to serve as editor of the chapter newsletter.)

Chapter secretaries should also ensure that updated Chapter Officer information is furnished to the Department of Council and Chapter Affairs as soon as possible following leadership changes.

Although it might not be the Secretary who maintains and updates the data, he/she should make sure it's being done on a regular basis.

\*MOAA's Department of Council and Chapter Affairs has the capability to "archive" a chapter's important documents, such as incorporation and tax exemption documents, if desired.

## TREASURER

The treasurer's principal duties are as follows:

- Collect annual dues.
- Maintain a record of all monies received and expended by the chapter.
- Make disbursements authorized by the chapter or board of directors.
- Deposit all sums received in a financial institution approved by the board of directors.
- Make a financial report at the annual meeting or when called upon by the president.
- Recommend to the board of directors, whenever appropriate, new or revised financial policies.
- Recommend to the board of directors, for approval prior to the annual meeting, a budget for the next calendar year.
- Recommend to the board of directors, whenever appropriate, changes to the approved budget.

The funds, books, and vouchers maintained by the treasurer are subject to inspection and verification by the board of directors that can include a formal audit. Audits should be performed every four years or whenever a new treasurer is the discretion of the board of directors (this precaution is usually unnecessary).

## CHAPLAIN

The suggested bylaws given in **Appendix A** do not provide for a chapter chaplain, since not all chapters have a chaplain or other clergy on its membership rolls. However, if a chapter does have one or more clerics as members (or a non-clergy member who volunteers to be the chapter chaplain), it is recommended that the president appoint someone to fill this position.

The chaplain should be an appointed officer, with a seat and voice but no vote in the board of directors. One of the chaplain's duties should be to deliver the invocation at chapter meetings and on other appropriate occasions. The chaplain can also be a great asset to the Personal Affairs Committee, and it is suggested that he or she be considered for appointment to that committee.

## **DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS**

The responsibilities of the Legislative Committee, under the general direction of the board of directors, are as follows:

- ❑ To monitor local, state and national legislative developments that might affect service retirees, active duty personnel, the dependents thereof, or national security.
- ❑ To keep the board of directors and chapter members informed about legislative developments of particular interest.
- ❑ To recommend to the board of directors, whenever appropriate, new or revised policies or objectives in the field of legislative affairs.
- ❑ To recommend to the board of directors, whenever appropriate, courses of action to achieve legislative objectives.
- ❑ To execute tasks related to lobbying that the board of directors might specifically direct or authorize.
- ❑ To maintain liaison with other local organizations concerned with military or veterans' affairs or retiree problems, with a view to obtaining their support for the achievement of the chapter's legislative objectives.
- ❑ To maintain liaison with the Legislative Committee of the state council of chapters and MOAA's Government Relations Department, relative to state and national political offices on matters vitally affecting service retirees or national security.
- ❑ To ascertain and disseminate to chapter members, but not the general public, the records and positions of candidates for local, state, and national political offices on matters vitally affecting service retirees or national security.
- ❑ As far as possible, establish and maintain good working relations with local, state, and national legislators (and their key assistants) representing voters in the chapter area.

The Legislative Committee should consist of at least three members. Historically five to seven has proven to be better. If possible, one of the members should be a lawyer to conduct legal research and to interpret legal phraseology as required. It is also advantageous, if possible, to have a former member of the state legislature serving on the committee.

And, finally, sustaining a high degree of continuity is most important because usually very little can be accomplished during the course of one year.

Committee members should be assigned responsibility for monitoring legislative developments at each of the three levels of government: local, state, and national. For example, at the local level one would follow local elections, city or county ordinances, and local tax proposals.

The responsibilities of the Legislative Committee, under the general direction of the board of directors, are as follows:

At the state level, one would follow statewide legislative matters, in part through subscribing to appropriate journals or newspapers published in the state capital. At the national level, the focus would

be on developments on Capitol Hill. If the chapter area does not lie entirely within one congressional district, it might be preferable for a separate committee member to cover each district.

Many states have legal restrictions on lobbying, and these vary greatly from state to state. Before engaging in any form of lobbying, the Legislative Committee should become thoroughly familiar with pertinent provisions of state law, especially requirements for registration and for filing of financial reports.

The Legislative Committee should bear in mind that the chapter should be politically non-partisan. As an organization, the chapter should do nothing to support or oppose any candidate for political office. (See the discussion of political activity in **Chapter 7.**) However, the Legislative Committee can and should make a deliberate effort to inform the membership of the records and positions of opposing candidates so the members are well informed when they make their choices.

Another helpful thing that the committee can do is to arrange for opposing candidates to speak at chapter meetings. The committee can also help by preparing and submitting written questions on a few selected issues to the various candidates and then publish the replies. However, care must be exercised so as not to show any bias in the questions that are asked.

## **COMMITTEES/CHAIRPERSON**

The president-elect's first and probably most important task is the selection of members to serve on the committees or act of Chairpersons required by the bylaws as well as any necessary additional standing and special committees. The selection of committee chairpersons is especially important.

The president-elect should carefully survey the entire membership, decide which individuals would serve most effectively as committee chairpersons, and then privately persuade each one to accept office. The vice presidents and elected directors should not be overlooked as prime possibilities for appointment as committee chairpersons.

Once the selections have been accomplished, the new chairpersons should be encouraged to select and recruit other members for their committees so they will function together smoothly and productively.

When looking at members for possible committee service, give particular consideration to any presently underrepresented member group, i.e.: auxiliaries, Guard and Reserve officers, etc. Often the new committee members bring a fresh point of view and prove to be the most enthusiastic and dedicated supporters of chapter activities.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

Even though others might have been involved in the selection process, it is the president who actually appoints all standing and special committees except the nominating committee. These appointments are, however, subject to the approval of the board of directors.

If at all possible, a newly installed president should announce committee assignments immediately after the installation ceremony, so that the new administration can begin functioning without delay.

## STANDING COMMITTEES

Ideally, a chapter should have the following “Standing” committees:

- ❑ Membership
- ❑ Programs
- ❑ Personal Affairs
- ❑ ROTC/JROTC
- ❑ Service Representatives

Under certain circumstances, if the chapter is large or engaged in an unusual number of activities, one or more additional standing committees might prove useful. As previously noted, chairpersons of standing committees should attend and participate in board of directors’ meetings but should not, unless otherwise qualified, be entitled to vote.

## COMMITTEE/CHAIRPERSON RESPONSIBILITIES

### *Membership*

The Membership Committee’s responsibility, under the general direction of the board of directors, is to retain existing members and recruit new members. Although every chapter member should be considered a “recruiter,” it is the membership committee’s function to establish goals, to plan and carry out membership solicitation drives, and to follow up on all leads concerning potential members.

Depending on the size of the chapter, ideally about three to five individuals should serve on the committee, depending on the number of potential members in the chapter’s area and the extent of the area. It is helpful to have committee members living in various parts of the chapter area so that they can easily make personal contact with prospective members.

Names of potential new members are received from various sources, including those contained in current member MOAA National. Other sources are the personnel support units at local military bases, the local newspapers, and other media.

More detailed information and suggestions for recruiting new members are discussed in **Chapter 6**.

### *Programs*

The responsibility of the Programs Committee, under the general direction of the board of directors, is to plan and carry out a program of activities in consonance with the purposes of the chapter and the desires of the membership. ***It is vital that planned activities be varied and appeal to all members so that they will want to participate and keep up their membership.***

Both long and short-range planning is required. Long-range planning entails the development of a schedule of activities for a full year. Short-range planning involves the detailed plans and arrangements for individual activities.

The Programs Committee should make a conscious effort to inject a measure of imagination and variety into its schedule of activities. While most often members might prefer a monthly dinner or luncheon meeting with a guest speaker, it would be advisable to offer something different from time to time. There are all sorts of possibilities—see **Chapter 6**.

The Programs Committee should recognize that getting good speakers for chapter meetings requires adequate lead-time—few good, interesting speakers are available at the last minute. You also want sufficient time to publicize the event once an individual has agreed to speak (with the objective of ensuring a good turnout). As such, an invitation to speak should be extended at least two and preferably three months before the date of the event.

Now and then a chapter meeting speaker cancels at the last minute. Therefore, it is good practice to have a potential speaker in reserve, someone that has agreed to speak on short notice if a need arises. A chapter member with some unusual expertise might fill this role nicely.

### ***Personal Affairs***

While this committee's role might not be as clear-cut as those of other standing committees, the Personal Affairs Committee should do the following:

- ❑ When called upon, provide information to members and survivors on their entitlements.
- ❑ When called upon, help members and survivors in the submission of inquires, applications, and claims to governmental agencies, for example, the Department of Veterans Affairs offices, military personnel offices and finance centers, and Social Security offices.
- ❑ In case of serious illness or death, express sympathy to the next-of-kin and offer assistance as needed.
- ❑ Keep members informed, generally by means of the chapter newsletter, on facilities and services available in the area such as commissaries, exchanges, hospitals, dispensaries, and officers' clubs.

Unless the chapter is exceptionally large or covers an unusually large area, a Personal Affairs Committee comprised of three to five members should be sufficient. It would also be helpful if some of the individuals had some experience in a field related to personal affairs such as "Personnel Administration," and it would also be prudent if at least one of the members was an Auxiliary member. Where possible, it would be desirable to have all of the military services represented on the committee so that each case can be handled by a committee member of the appropriate service,



the rationale being that a surviving spouse would be more likely to be receptive to an offer of assistance by a retired officer of the deceased's service.

- ❑ A library of essential personal affairs publications should be established to help the Personal Affairs Committee do its job effectively. The reference library should include all MOAA publications concerned with personal affairs material as well as information available at local Department of Veterans Affairs and Social Security offices. A basic assortment of MOAA publications, which are available to order, is listed at **Appendix G**.

The committee should have available the telephone numbers and addresses of the following:

- ❑ The local military retirees' activities offices or offices that have appointed survivor assistance officers.
- ❑ The Defense Finance and Accounting Service Center and the finance centers for the USCG, NOAA, and USPHS.
- ❑ The nearest Department of Veterans Affairs Regional office: 1 (800) 827-1000.
- ❑ The nearest Social Security office: 1 (800) 772-1213.
- ❑ MOAA's Benefits Information Department: 1 (800) 234- 6622, x 116 or [benefitsinfo@moaa.org](mailto:benefitsinfo@moaa.org).

In providing information and counsel, the Personal Affairs Committee should handle only relatively simple questions and problems that have readily determinable answers and solutions. **Inaccurate information or poor advice is worse than none at all.** Refer difficult questions and problems to MOAA's Benefits Information Department.

If, in the case of a member's death, an active-duty officer stationed nearby has been appointed as the survivor assistance officer (done by the various services "as available"), the Personal Affairs Committee should not attempt to duplicate his functions. In this situation, the committee can be most helpful by giving the survivor someone to talk to initially and someone to turn to later if necessary, *after* the survivor assistance officer has completed his assignment.

To further assist the Personal Affairs Committee in executing its responsibilities, a "Benefits Information Council and Chapter Help Center" is on the MOAA web site and can be accessed at [www.moaa.org/BenefitsInfo/HelpCenter/ChapterCouncilroles.asp](http://www.moaa.org/BenefitsInfo/HelpCenter/ChapterCouncilroles.asp).

- ❑ This site contains a Council/Chapter Benefits Information "Help Book" which includes, among other things, comprehensive information about the MOAA Benefits Information Department, major departmental publications, Benefits Information Department "Fact Sheets," Benefits Information-related articles previously published in the *TROAGRAM* or *The Affiliate*, and the monthly Benefits Information e-mail "updates."
- ❑ The site also includes guidance for council and chapter participation in Military Appreciation Days and an Online Assistance service "link" to MOAA's Benefits Information Department. This site can also be accessed at the web site address listed above.

## **ROTC/JROTC**

The primary responsibility of the ROTC/JROTC Chairperson, under the general direction of the Board of Directors, is to maintain the Chapter's annual ROTC/JROTC awards program, including:

- ❑ Recommend to the Board the ROTC/JROTC programs for chapter support
- ❑ Order medals and certificates and other authorized awards in a timely manner
- ❑ Establish and maintain contact with persons responsible for awards at each program
- ❑ Annually contact each program to determine nominee names and awards program dates.
- ❑ Deliver awards to each program in a timely manner by:
  - A volunteer chapter member to attend the Awards ceremony, or
  - Arrange for delivery of award to the program's contact for awarding.

Other responsibilities include, at direction of the program committee, contacting several programs to invite cadres and cadet participants to the annual ROTC Appreciation Day.

## **Newsletter**

The publication of a regular chapter newsletter is vital to the health of any chapter. It can and should serve as the chapter leaders' principal means of communication with the membership. It can also be tremendously helpful in the maintenance of an active and effective organization. Ideally, a chapter newsletter should be prepared monthly or at least every other month.

It should be more than a "bulletin" that announces the time and place of the next chapter meeting. It should be a well-edited document containing all sorts of information on matters of interest to members and their spouses, especially the latest news on on-going legislative actions that are happening at the national and state level.

It should be periodically mailed to non-chapter members as a potential recruiting "tool." Complimentary copies should also be sent to the legislators' local offices so they become familiar with what the chapter is doing as well as the types of legislative issues the members are focusing on.

## **Editor**

Any chapter member or spouse with the interest, writing ability, and time to devote to the effort could serve as the newsletter editor. If possible, it should be someone who has no other chapter responsibilities and is "facile" with a computer.

For the full Council and Chapter Policy and Procedures Guide click here [MOAA: Council and Chapter Resources](#)