

Board Fundamentals, Roles, and Responsibilities

This is a guide to provide Charter Communities newly elected Presidents, Vice Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurers, Women's Reps, Youth Rep's a suggested overview of positions and duties. This guide is not inclusive and includes tips, skills, and knowledge to assist in the effectiveness of elected positions within our Chartered Communities.

A Board of Directors (commonly referred to as 'the board') is a legally recognized governing group of people who are jointly responsible for managing, or supervising the management of, the activities and internal affairs of the Chartered Community.

Board Members have a responsibility to act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the Chartered Community; to exercise reasonable due care, diligence, skill and ability; to act with a view to fulfill on the purposes of the Chartered Community; to act in accordance with the bylaws of the Chartered Community, and to act in accordance with the [The Societies Act and Regulation \[SBC 2015\]](#) (See Section II of Board in the Box).

Governance is how a Chartered Community and the sub committees and groups within it organize and make decisions. They set high level goals, direction and provide general oversight as well as their governance determines who has the power, who makes decisions, and how people are heard.

Role of the Chartered Community Executive

The Chartered Community executive (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) is responsible for the leadership and administration of the community. It is the responsibility of all Chartered Community Kaniikaniit (Leaders) to advance the interests of the Chartered Community Citizens. It is best practice to advance the interest of the community using a well-run executive using a culture of problem solving and a spirit of kaa-wiichihitoyaak, or "looking after one another".

Chartered Communities represent their Citizens at the local level and in working with MNBC to negotiate agreements, provide services and programs and in lobbying governments to improve laws that benefit Citizenship and ensure that Citizens' constitutional rights or laws (harvesting, health etc.) are not violated.

The executive's job is to coordinate activities where Citizens work together to solve problems and to ensure that the Citizens have enough information and funding to effectively deal with community concerns, issues, and goals.

All documentation including Chartered Community Agreements, Constitutions, and By-laws, (if available) are included in this Board in a Box Chartered Community Tool Kit.

The Suggested Role of the President

The President or Kaniikaniit (Leader) is the spokesperson for the Chartered Community and is responsible for identifying the needs and issues of its Citizenship; proposing and seeking solutions, creating strategies for community goals and with the assistance of the executive to develop and implement community solidarity; fostering cultural awareness and best practices, and to keep the community's Citizens up to date on the activity within the Nation that can affect the Charter Community.

The President is responsible for all of the activities of the Chartered Community Board, and in a well-run community, the President should not be undertaking all of the work but rather it is best practice to delegate efforts to the board and community members as much as is possible. This will make the President more effective as a kaniikaniit by encouraging others to be involved, to ensure that tasks are carried out, and completed on time. By following this best practice where possible, a President is supporting and helping to grow their Chartered Community by involving, encouraging, and motivating its board members and Citizens.

Suggested Duties of the President

The President should attend all Board meetings of the Chartered Community, as well as MNBC AGM, MNGA's, RGC's, and RLM's whenever possible. A Kaniikaniit or President may be a signing authority on cheques, contracts and may transact any other business as is pertaining to the office of Chartered Community President for the necessary and proper discourse of a functioning Chartered Community Board and Executive.

Suggestions for Meetings

- Report on the President's current activities
- Advise and ensure the activities by the Citizenship are being carried out
- Encourage and promote attendance and participation in all meetings
- Lead discussion on plans being made within the Chartered Community
- Lead discussion with the executive on any items to be taken to MNGA's or the AGM for ratification
- Assist in the information and preparation of any executive activities, initiatives and issues

- Ensure that all required reporting is ready for inclusions at meeting or for funding
- Delegate work and tasks as per community Citizenship and sets deadlines for progress and completion
- The President can sit as an ex-officio member of all committees
- Discuss and prepare strategic planning for the Chartered Community

General Administration Suggestions

- Oversee the general supervision of the board
- Enforce the Chartered Community bylaws and MNBC legislation
- Act as the Chartered Community's spokesperson where required ie. Press conferences, newspaper interviews etc.

At the end of the Presidents term of office, if not re-elected the President will need to turn over to their successor all properties and assets pertaining to their Chartered Community. This can include, but is not inclusive of, funds, books and records, computer, cellular phone, office supplies and equipment as well as documentation such as the informational Board in a Box.

The Suggested Role of the Vice President

The Vice President assists the President by performing the duties of the President in their absence. The Vice President may chair meetings and may chair all Chartered Community meetings allowing the President more opportunity to participate in the meetings. Chartered Community boards may give other responsibilities to a Vice President such as Citizenship communications, board governance and education, community outreach, equality issues, the representation of specific committees etc.

Suggested Duties of the Vice President

The Vice President can preside and chair meetings when called upon by the President, or when the President is unavailable temporarily. They can also preform the duties of the President until the community can fill the Presidents vacancy should the President resign, be removed or upon the President's death.

Suggestions for Meetings

- Set the agenda and Chair meetings
- Act as spokesperson in the event of the Presidents absence
- Participate on committees

Suggested Council Administration

- Complete duties and tasks as assigned by the President
- Assume the Presidents duties in the absence of the President
- Review each item to be voted upon during an executive meeting to ensure that someone is assisting to carry out the motion and that possible deadlines are agreed to
- Ensure that the Executive, Citizens and Chartered Community Board members reflect the diverse peoples within the community and encourage involvement and participation

Suggestions for Chairing Meetings

- Review the Board in a Box document “VII. *You are the President of your Chartered Community, now what?*” to obtain an oversight on Chairing meetings in the Presidents absence should the Vice President not be familiar with meeting process
- Along with the Secretary, post and distribute a meeting agenda ahead of the meeting ensuring that all committees are prepared to report and that reports are brief and to the point
- When acting as Chair it is important to remember that too much involvement in the discussion is difficult as the Chair should act impartially. If the acting Chair of a meeting wishes to participate, they should hand the meeting over to the President and “leave the chair” before further participating in the meeting.

Suggested Communication Tactics

- The Vice President should know what is happening in all parts of the community and also what is happening within other provincial Chartered Communities. It is best practice to attend all required regular meetings, as well as required meetings with Regional Directors and working to establish positive relations where and whenever possible
- Encourage Citizen participation and ensure that all relevant and regular communication with Citizens is happening are key to a successful community

Suggested Skills and Knowledge to be an effective Kaniikaniit (Leader)

- Public speaking ability
- Negotiation skills
- Leadership proficiencies such as the power to inspire and motivate people to become involved in the community

Suggested Sources for Advice and Assistance

- Former Presidents and Vice Presidents
- Presidents and Vice Presidents in other Chartered Communities
- Regional Directors
- MNBC staff via Community Services at: communityservices@mnbc.ca

At the end of the Vice Presidents term, should they not be re-elected the Vice President should pass to their successor any property of asset pertaining to their Chartered Community. This may include, but is not inclusive of, funds, books and records, computer, cellular phone, office supplies and equipment as well as documentation such as the informational Board in a Box etc. should such items be in the Vice Presidents possession.

The Suggested Role of the Secretary

The role of the Secretary is key and vital in promoting Chartered Community's goals, solidarity, and innovation. The Secretary is responsible for record keeping and for written communications. In addition to the President and Vice President a Chartered Community may wish for the involvement of the Secretary in keeping Citizens apprised of Chartered Community activities and to encourage Citizenship participation.

In keeping and maintaining records of decisions, information such as letters to and from the Chartered Community, and with other organizations, the Secretary is assisting in ensuring the smooth and efficient running of their Chartered Community board.

Suggested Duties of the Secretary

It is suggested that the Secretary keep an accurate, complete, and impartial record of each Chartered Community meeting. Each record of proceeding should include any required documentation that may have been presented such as: financial reports from the Treasurer, all correspondence presented at the meeting, President/Vice President reports, special reports that may have been procured, and any quotations that may be presented at the meeting.

Further the Secretary may perform additional duties at the direction of the Chartered Community board or as directed by the Chartered Community by-laws.

Necessary Record Keeping

- Taking meeting minutes at the Chartered Community meetings
- Maintaining the Chartered Communities files

Suggested Internal Communications

- Prepare meeting notices and agenda for regular Chartered Community meetings
- Circulate and reading minutes from meetings
- Receive, log, and distribute incoming mail and correspondence to the Chartered Community
- Report on all important correspondence and leading the discussion on business arising from correspondence
- Maintain Chartered Community board directives and initiatives

Suggested External Communications

- Receive all communication from outside the Chartered Community board
- Respond to all correspondence
- Order and maintain supplies required to run the Chartered Community office and equipment if applicable

It should be noted that not all Secretaries in Chartered Communities perform all of these duties as other board members or members of the executive may be responsible for the above suggestions.

Tips for Secretaries

- The purpose of taking minutes is to record decisions and there is usually not need to take minutes that are word for word on the debate that leads to a decision
- It may be helpful to note who will be responsible for carrying out each motion passed and when the task will be carried out
- Where possible distribute and post meeting notices and meeting agenda at least a week prior to the meeting
- To keep non attending Citizens informed a one-page summary of important decisions and activities could be provided to the Chartered Community through social media or a community newsletter
- In writing correspondence, it is good to begin by listing reasons for writing the letter or email and listing the relevant points and then turning each point into one or two sentences

Suggestions for Filing

- Keep and file only relevant documents that will be required in the future and can not be obtained elsewhere
- Before changing a filing system, check with stakeholders and others who access files to avoid frustration and people unable to locate pertinent files and documentation
- If changing a filing system consider filing by date, month, day (ie. 20230131) or in a filing cabinet by subject by year. This will allow the movement of documents down a filing cabinet drawer each year before eventually archiving or in terms of electronic files that can easily be batched and archived by year.

Suggested Skills and Knowledge for a Secretary

- Knowledge of how Chartered Community boards operate and what makes them effective
- Ability to compose correspondence, newsletters etc.
- Ability to effectively organize files and filing systems
- Ability to verbally report to the board and Citizens

Suggested Sources and Advice for Assistance

- Former board secretaries
- Secretaries in other Chartered Communities
- Regional Directors
- MNBC staff via Community Services at: communityservices@mnbc.ca

At the end of the Secretary's term, should they not be re-elected, the Secretary should pass to their successor any property of asset pertaining to their Chartered Community. This may include, but is not inclusive of, funds, books and records, computer, cellular phone, office supplies and equipment as well as documentation such as the informational Board in a Box etc. should such items be in the Vice Presidents possession.

The Suggested Role of the Treasurer

The Treasurer is traditionally responsible for the Chartered Community's finances and money. They are responsible for maintaining and reporting on income, spending, funding, and all financial activities pertaining to the Chartered Community and its Citizens' interests. In general, the Treasurer ensures that the spending priorities of the Chartered Community are in line with the community's funding allocations and goals and in accordance with the Citizens' wishes.

Traditionally, Treasurers keep the community's Citizens informed on the financial health of the Chartered Community and how their money is being spent. This instills confidence and supports that the Chartered Community is transparent and acting in Citizens' best interests.

It is suggested that the Treasurer make regular financial reports in Chartered Community meetings and at the Chartered Community AGM, detailing all income and expenditures for the period.

Suggestions for Financial Reporting and Record Keeping

The biggest challenge here is to remain organized! Many of the financial reporting tasks are time-specific and deadline-driven. It is highly suggested that important dates and deadlines are diarized, including:

- Annual general meetings
- Regular meetings
- Fiscal year-end deadlines
- Year-end tax deadlines (if applicable)
- Major fundraising event dates
- Major cultural event dates
- Newsletter/communication dates/deadlines
- Reporting dates and deadlines
- Other key critical events or deadlines

Relevant financial reports include:

- Statement of financial position (i.e. balance sheet)
- Statement of operations (i.e. income statement)
- Statement of cash flows

Other considerations:

- Factor in the amount of time it will take to complete diarized tasks – for example, reporting deadlines will require that reports are generated – allow enough time to plan and execute and factor in other events, etc that may impact timing and planning
- Ensure the appropriate reporting templates, etc. have been obtained ahead of time. Contact communityservices@mnbcc.ca if a template is missing

- Communication dates are critical as they will allow the dissemination key information to Community Citizens

Suggestions for Presenting Financial Information at Meetings, etc.

The Treasurer will be required to present financials at board meetings and at AGMs. If possible the Treasurer should compare actual financial activity to budgeted with correlating variances. Our culture is full of story tellers – use this comparison to tell the financial story of the Chartered Community!

A few tips to help tell a good story:

- Distribute monthly copies of the Treasures Report to the Chartered Community board
- Focus on the events that have transpired since the last meeting and tie them to the figures being presented
- Highlight any financial problems and, if possible, provide thoughtful solutions
- Tie the financials back to events and activities that have happened within the community
- Don't dwell too much on the "business as usual" or "status quo" outcomes – they will be covered as the story is told anyway
- Keep in mind and be prepared to answer questions on all expenditures should they arise during meetings

Suggestions for Bookkeeping and High Integrity Maintenance of Financial Records

Much of the same information covered in the [Conduct a Privacy Audit](#) information sheet apply to Treasurers as far as financial information is concerned. Even though a privacy audit covers personal information, many of the same themes apply to safeguarding financial information. Segregating duties is also one of the key component to maintaining high integrity financial records.

Suggestions to improve segregation of duties:

- Ensure there are two signors on a cheque
- Ensure individual responsible for opening the mail is not the same person who issues receipts for all cash and cheques
- Ensure the individual depositing the cash and cheques is not the same person entering the information into the accounting records
- Ensure cheques are sequentially numbered and accounted for

- Related activities should be assigned to different individuals
- Payment of invoices/expenses should always have either a paper or digital trail of documentation
- Approval thresholds should be enacted so that larger expenses are vetted through someone of authority and smaller expenses are not held up
- Expenses that are paid out of pocket by community members and then reimbursed should be approved in advance in writing by someone of authority
- Keep copies of all meeting minutes where financial payments were authorized

Suggestions for Improved and More Robust Internal Controls

One of the key aspects of solid financial management is also to ensure solid control of the community's financial information as well as proper safeguarding the community's assets. This requires some basic internal controls that can easily be scaled according to the community's needs. Physical restrictions and physical controls are the basic principle when it comes to safeguarding assets and maintaining high quality financial information.

Tips for electronic files and information storage:

- Password protect accounting software and other financial applications and programs and only ensure they are only accessible by key people within the community
- Passwords should be changed frequently, especially when there is a leadership change
- Ensure all computer applications and software programs are updated to their latest versions
- Ensure that laptops and computers are being stored in secure locations when they are not in use (this includes when they are stored off-site)
- Ensure there are adequate backups (cloud-based or physical hard-drive) should there be an issue with computers or other hardware and store these backups in a separate location from the electronic equipment (i.e. a different facility; take them off-site at night and secure them if not using cloud technology)
- Do a periodic review of the information technology (IT) environment to ensure it is robust and high integrity

Tips for tangible files, information storage, and paper cash management:

- Use safes or cash boxes to store petty cash in and provide the keys only to key persons of authority
- Use locked filing cabinets and/or drawers for paper copies of invoices, receipts, and other financial records

- Ensure that cheques are also stored securely and access is limited to key people

Tips for safeguarding community assets:

- Create and maintain a capital register. This is a list of inventory or capital items (i.e. equipment, computers, furniture, etc) that are on hand as well as where they are located. The capital register should reflect what appears on the balance sheet
- The responsibility for record keeping of the capital assets or inventory should be separate from physical custody of the asset
- Ensure regular inspections and maintenance of community assets, including contingency plans for replacement or repair
- Ensure the community's contents insurance policies are up to date and that they accurately reflect the value of the assets under insurance
- Perform routine audits of the furniture, equipment, and other tangible assets to compare what's indicated on the balance sheet with what's actually under ownership of the Chartered Community

Suggestions for Adequate Maintenance of Financial Records

- Record all financial transactions in a timely fashion, including routine bank reconciliations
- Present a monthly financial report to the Chartered Community board at regular monthly meetings
- Complete a statement of operations on a routine basis
- Ensure timely and accurate maintenance of financial records, including a receipt book for cash transactions and backup for all expenses (cheque stubs, invoices, etc)
- Ensure there is an organized filing system to file all expenses, invoices, and receipts should they be required for reporting or audit purposes

Suggested Tips for Budgeting

- Treasurers traditionally prepare the annual budget and the discussion of the budget should center on what the Chartered Community will need and want to do in the upcoming year
- Budgets should remain somewhat flexible and include some "aspirational" goals as funding types and amounts are sometimes not known until well into the fiscal year
- The plans for new activities should be costed along with estimates of the costs for ongoing activities
- Budgets should be presented to the board for approval

Suggested Skills and Knowledge for a Treasurer

- Knowledgeable on the Chartered Community Bylaws
- Adequate bookkeeping skills
- Working knowledge of financial procedures
- The ability to generate and present verbal and written financial reports

Suggested Sources for Advice and Assistance

- Former Treasurers
- Treasurers in other Chartered Communities
- Regional Directors
- MNBC staff via Community Services at: communityservices@mnbca.ca

At the end of the Treasurer's term, should they not be re-elected, the Treasurer should pass to their successor any property of asset pertaining to their Chartered Community. This may include, but is not limited to funds, books, manuals, records, computers, cellular phones, office supplies and equipment.

The Role of an MNBC Senator

The Senate shall act as the judicial arm of the Métis Nation British Columbia in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution; Consist of seven (7) appointed Senators, one Senator per Region.

The Senate is the judicial arm of Métis Nation of British Columbia. It derives its powers from the Senate Act and is responsible for upholding the guiding principles in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Legislation.

The Métis Nation of British Columbia was founded on the principles of democracy meaning rule by its Métis Citizens. There are several guiding principles that act as the foundation of a democracy, such as rule of law, protected rights and freedoms, free and fair elections, and accountability and transparency of elected officials. Métis Citizens have a responsibility to uphold and support these principles.

The Senate fulfills this mandate, in part, by carrying out the following duties:

- Mediation

- Citizenship and Central Registry appeals
- Election appeals
- Regional and community disputes
- Ceremonial activities and exchanges
- Conducting opening and closing prayers
- Directing swearing-in ceremonies and oaths
- Displaying Métis flags and sashes
- Natural resource appeals
- Citizenship challenges

