



**CHAMBER BOARD OF
DIRECTORS HANDBOOK**

PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

The information found in this handbook is designed to help orient you to your responsibilities as a Monroe Chamber of Commerce board member and does not supersede the Chamber's Bylaws or Standing Rules. As a board member, you are assuming considerable responsibility for the smooth functioning of the Chamber's board of directors and the efficient and effective operation of the organization.

The various parts of this handbook form a type of advice for your future on the Board. For example, Board leadership is discussed to help you gain a better sense of your role in **leading** the organization's operations. Leading does not necessarily mean managing. The difference between the two is highlighted so that you can begin to separate, in your mind, the difference between your role as a member of the Board of Directors and the role of the Chamber's Executive Director and their staff. This distinction is important since you are not expected to actually oversee the day-to-day operations of the organization, but are responsible for assuring that the Chamber is well run.

WHAT IS A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

A chamber of commerce is a federation of business, industrial and professional firms and interested individuals working together to enhance the economic and socioeconomic health of their community.

It is a non-profit mutual benefit corporation of voluntary membership that invests time and money to carry forward programs relevant to members' needs and that affect the orderly growth and development of the community.

It is the catalytic agency that brings together all of the forces, both public and private, through which common goals can be resolved.

The mission of the Monroe chamber of commerce is to encourage economic development and vitality through enhancement and support of business, city and community. Focusing on networking, education and advocacy, the Chamber will promote a positive business climate by:

- Participating in community events and local programs
- Informing members of available resources for advancing their businesses
- Providing networking opportunities and events

The essential ingredients for an effective chamber of commerce are:

- a sound organizational structure
- a meaningful program
- responsible leadership
- a sound financial basis

The Chamber is not a social club, a charity or the city. Although it is not for profit, the IRS code for mutual benefit organizations is 501 (c) 6 **not** (c)3 as a church.

YOUR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Your chamber is a voluntary federation of business and professional people working together to build a healthy economy and to improve the quality of life in our community.

Chamber members are businesses, organizations and individuals concerned with the socioeconomic climate of our community. They have joined together because they know they stand a better chance of getting things done when they speak as one voice.

As stated in our bylaws, the Monroe Chamber's purpose is to create a thriving economic environment for business growth and sustainability. The Chamber and its staff provide networking, marketing, community engagement and educational opportunities to their members. The Chamber works to represent the business community on economic and governmental issues through various committees and partnerships.

The Monroe Chamber of Commerce is organized to achieve the following:

- Improve the free and competitive enterprise system by creating:
- A better understanding and appreciation of the importance of business.
- A better-informed public concerning city, county, state and national legislative and political affairs
- A greater appreciation of the value of investing one's time on behalf of the interests of the business community

Promote business and community growth and development by:

- Supporting economic programs designed to strengthen and expand the income potential of the business community.
- Promoting and maintaining positive functional and aesthetic characteristics of the community.

- Supporting community programs of civic, social and cultural nature.
- Identifying and responding to factors that prevent the promotion of business expansion and community growth.
- Representing the business community in areas related to business growth and development.
- Your chamber provides the means through which businesses can work together to the benefit of all.

CHAMBER AFFILIATIONS

The Chamber is affiliated with the following organizations and boards:

- Economic Alliance Snohomish County. EASC exists to be a catalyst for economic vitality resulting in stronger communities, increased job creation, expanded educational opportunities, and improved infrastructure within Snohomish County. We have joined forces with them to represent Monroe and to grow our professional base within the county.
- Rotary Club of Monroe. The Rotary Club of Monroe is a service organization that helps our city through service projects from fundraising for college scholarships for our local youth community to the creation of an all-weather field built to accommodate those with challenges to providing dinners at our local battered women's shelter to organizing our city's annual Night Out Against Crime. By being a member of this service organization the Chamber is able to give back to our community and help provide for the citizens our city. '
- Monroe Kiwanis Club. Being a member of the Kiwanis club is a great way to be a leader and example for our youth community. Business leaders are great mentors and examples for middle school and high school Key Club Members. The Kiwanis is also a wonderful service organization that helps our local food bank, youth community and city.
- Washington Nonprofits. As the state association for all nonprofits, Washington Nonprofits makes sure nonprofits have what they need to succeed. Washington Nonprofits helps nonprofits learn what they need to know to achieve their mission. It increases their influence with policymakers and philanthropy so that they have a place at the

table when decisions are made. It connects nonprofits to people and resources so that they can focus on getting the job done.

- Downtown Monroe Association. Downtown Monroe Association's goal is to sustain and enhance the downtown experience in Monroe, WA. The Main Street Approach is a community-driven, comprehensive methodology used to revitalize older, traditional business districts throughout the United States.
- City of Monroe Economic Development Advisory Board (Ad-hoc member). The 11-member advisory board will figure out ways to implement ideas that are already a part of Monroe's Downtown Master Plan and Economic Development Plan, which is a standalone plan adopted into Monroe's 2015-2035 Comprehensive Plan. The city's driving document sets six overarching areas of focus for economic development.
- Monroe Boys and Girls Club Advisory Board. The Boys and Girls Club Advisory Board is a great way to stay connected and involved with the youth of our community. The Boys and Girls Club helps us stay connected and learn about different ways to market and promote our local business community to our residents.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS QUALIFICATIONS

The Board of Directors is the policy body of the Monroe Chamber of Commerce. Its members represent a cross-section of the business and professional leadership in the community. It has always been considered an honor to serve on the Board. Genuine and unselfish interest in the Chamber and its objective is the first requirement for the Board members.

Other qualifications include:

- A willingness to make time and effort to give the proper attention to Chamber responsibilities.
- A business and work experience that will assist in the exercise of sound judgment in considering problems of the Chamber as they relate to the overall program of community development.
- The ability to inspire others and to command the respect of associates in responding to worthwhile initiatives sponsored by the

Chamber, and to motivate others to resolve community problems.

- The ability to work constructively and harmoniously with directors, members and staff of the Chamber in accordance with policies established by the Board of Directors.

GOOD BOARD MEMBER

- Approaches his/her responsibilities in the spirit of a trustee on behalf of the members.
- Treats staff as a partner in high calling, while maintaining overall supervision and control.
- Welcomes information and the best available advice, but reserves the right to arrive at decisions on the basis of his/her own judgment.
- Respects the right of other Board members and of staff to disagree with him/her and to have a fair hearing of their points of view.
- Accepts as routing and supports those decisions that are made by a majority vote that will a times go against him/her.
- Criticizes, when necessary, in a constructive way, if possible suggesting an alternative course.
- Recognizes that his/her time and energy are limited and that over-commitment may prove self-defeating.

FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD

Listed below are the more widely accepted functions or duties of a Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors shall:

- Set the overall policy of the organization
- Provide adequate funds to do the job through the annual budget
- Establish the dues structure
- Approve the structural organization to include an organization chart
- Provide elections of directors and officers in accordance with the bylaws
- Recommend changes in the bylaws
- Fill all vacancies occurring on the Board of Directors in accordance with the bylaws
- Meet as required in the bylaws, or more frequently on the call of the president, or on the board's own motion, and set the dates for such meetings

- Employ and annually evaluate the performance of the Executive Director

FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD MEMBER

You should plan to:

- Attend every meeting of the Board of Directors
- Volunteer to work on the Board's committees in areas where your own work and life experiences will best be used
- Take an active role in discussing and developing all new policies and procedures for all chamber matters, including the chamber's annual operating budget and spending plans
- Take an active role in reviewing and evaluating the major programs designed to serve the membership and committees
- Prepare for each meeting by doing any homework necessary to be informed and to take an active role in meetings
- Make sure that your opinions and thoughts on all matters that come before the Board are presented in a way that represents the interests of the membership
- Avoid any conflict between your personal interests as a citizen and your interests as a member of the chamber and Board of Directors.

Overall, serving on the Chamber Board of Directors does not come without obligation. It carries a strong need for commitment on your part. Serving on a Chamber Board of Directors, however, should also be enjoyable, and rewarding, both personally and for your business.

All of the activities and tasks listed under Function of the Board Member may make things sound like you have agreed to take on a full-time job. To assure that your time and energy are used efficiently and wisely we have developed a greater reliance on working committees. By creating committees that focus on specialized aspects of the organization's operational needs, board members are allowed to make valuable contributions to the success of the chamber without being deeply involved in every aspect of board business. The idea behind creating the committees is to allow a relatively small number of board members to become very familiar with one or two aspects of the organization's operations. These "few", then become the sources and/or create information on their committee's area of focus for the entire Board of Directors. It is this information and its flow to the larger board that helps the board become more effective in carrying out its management and leadership responsibilities.

MONROE CHAMBER COMMITTEES

- Government Affairs
- Economic Development
- Ambassadors
- Financial Advisory
- Special Events
- Membership

RELATION TO THE CHAMBER POLICY

It should be understood, of course, that an individual director has no authority to commit the chamber to any action or policy. A director's status is that of an individual acting in a legislative capacity. A director has a right to exert his/her influence with the board for the approval of such actions and policies as he/she favors, but his/her authority does not go accordance with the bylaws governing such decisions.

RELATION TO THE PUBLIC

Each member of the board of directors is an official representative to the membership and unofficially to the public. He/she should be ready at all times to defend the chamber against criticism or, where the criticism appears to be justified, take steps to remedy the condition causing the criticism by bringing it to the attention of the Board of Directors for action.

RELATION TO THE STAFF

While the board is the legislative and judicial arms of the chamber, the chamber staff is the administrative arm.

The board employs an Executive Director whom the board holds responsible for hiring a staff of specialists to carry out the chamber program as approved by the board in a smooth and effective manner.

The relationship of the board member to the Executive Director is advisory as it relates to the other members of the staff.

The relation of the board member is legislative as it affects the organization as a whole. Individual board members should not assume executive responsibilities more properly performed by the staff members. At the same time, staff members should not in any way decide matters of policy which rest only with the board.

"DO'S" AND "DON'TS" FOR INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAFF

- Don't make commitments to staff. Only the full board can do that.
- Don't act as a superior or supervisor to staff (that's your Executive Director's job).
- Do volunteer to help your organization -- like any other volunteer.
- Do go through proper channels -- your Executive Director -- when volunteering to help staff.
- Do show your concern for the well-being of staff.
- Do remind staff members, if they contact you, that they should follow the chain of command when they have a problem -- and that they should not take their problems directly to board members.

HOW SHOULD A MEETING BE RUN AND WHAT CAN I EXPECT THE OUTCOME TO BE?

The most important means of communicating plans, accomplishments, problems and the current state of affairs with the chamber, is through board meetings. If the meetings are run well and the expected outcome of each meeting is well stated, your work as a board member can be more effective and more enjoyable. If you leave the meetings wondering what took place or how and why a particular issue came up, chances are you will be frustrated. If this frustration continues from meeting to meeting, you may lose your motivation to be a board member and may become suspicious of your fellow board members' motives in serving on the board.

To assure that this frustration does not build and that you remain highly motivated, you must be active in working to make each board meeting informative, productive and effectively run.

EXPECT THE FOLLOWING:

Each meeting should be outlined in an agenda. The agenda should include the date, starting time and place of the meeting and a listing of the items to be covered during the meeting. To make matters move more quickly, the printed agenda is emailed to each board member a few days prior to the meeting. A soft copy of the minutes from the last meeting and the financial report will also be included in this email.

Sometimes, any other materials that relate to matters to be addressed will also be included in the email.

The meetings should be conducted by the President of the Board of Directors. In his/her absence, the President-Elect should preside. To make the meeting orderly, the Board should follow Robert's Rules of Order or some other formalized method for conducting regular business.

Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month, except for those Tuesdays that fall on a holiday or directly after a holiday. The dates of those exceptions shall be announced at the meeting before to all board members. Prior notification will be made if there are any changes. Please plan your calendar accordingly. If you cannot attend the board meeting, please call the chamber office with your reason to be excused.

Overall, board meetings that are well planned and well run make your work as a board member more worthwhile. Each board member has a responsibility to assure that the meetings are well planned and well run.

BOARD JOB DESCRIPTION

The board performs essentially a legislative function. That is, it makes all policy decisions for the Chamber. However, from time to time, the board may direct a poll of the membership when considered desirable as a guide to member opinion and interest. Specifically the board shall:

- Set the overall policy for the organization.
- Determine the goals of the Chamber through its approved program of work
- Provide adequate funding through the annual budget to carry out the program of work.
- Establish the dues structure of the Chamber to support the program.
- Elect officers in accordance with the bylaws of the Chamber.
- Recommend and approve changes to the bylaws.
- Fill all vacancies that occur in its membership
- Meet as required by the by-laws, or at the call of the President, or on its own motion.

- Provide adequate facilities and equipment for Chamber operations.

As individuals, each director is expected to:

- Attend all meetings of the Board.
- Consult with the membership in order to be truly representative and communicate board action.
- Offer suggestions of persons who may be willing to serve on Chamber committees or task forces.
- Perform such other duties, within his/her capabilities, as may be requested by the President.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

The Employee Handbook is meant to serve as a general guide to the personnel policies and practices of the Monroe Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber).

All Board members and Employees are urged to read it promptly as you will be expected to know and understand its contents to ensure employees are performing to the board's expectations.

CHAMBER CONTACT INFORMATION

Physical Address: 125 S. Lewis St, Monroe, Wa 98272

Phone Number: (360) 794-5488

Website: www.choosemonroe.com

Facebook: choosemonroe

Twitter: choosemonroewa

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Remember....

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Chamber Members
First**

&

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and RIDE!**

**Monroe Chamber of Commerce
& Visitor Information center**

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