



*A Golden Past.
A Shining Future.*

GLYNN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1725 Reynolds Street, Third Floor, Brunswick, GA 31520

Phone: 912-554-7400 • Fax: 912-554-7596

Dear Citizen,

Thank you for your interest in serving on a Glynn County government advisory board! We are pleased you are willing to devote your time and efforts to improving the quality of life in our community.

Advisory board members are an integral part of the policy development process in county government. As an advisory board member, your role is to research and make recommendations or suggestions to the Board of Commissioners on various topics of public concern.

This handbook contains the information you'll need to better understand your responsibilities as an advisory board member. It also includes some of the rules which govern all board and commission members, such as parliamentary procedures and Georgia's Open Meetings Law.

Glynn County has an exciting future and we want you to be a part of it. Your valuable knowledge and expertise are essential as we prepare for the many challenges ahead.

Again, thank you for serving as an advisory board member. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Cindee S. Overstreet, County Clerk
Glynn County Board of Commissioners

WELCOME!

HOW COUNTY GOVERNMENT WORKS

The Glynn County Board of Commissioners operates under a Commission/Manager form of government. The Board of Commissioners is comprised of seven members. Five members represent single-member districts and two members represent the county at-large. All commissioners serve four-year terms. The Chairman and Vice Chairman are elected annually by the Board.

The County Chairman serves as the official and ceremonial representative of county government, presides at all meetings, and executes ordinances and other documents.

The Board of Commissioners is the legislative and policy-making body for county government. The County Manager, hired by the Board of Commissioners, works with the commissioners to assist in formulating policies and programs. The County Manager is the top administrator for some 800 employees and is responsible for the ongoing operations of all county services, including beach management, road repair, fire protection and environmental issues. The County Commission also appoints the County Attorney, the county's chief legal advisor.

The County Commission meets at 6:00 p.m. on the first and third Thursdays of each month in the Historic Courthouse, 701 G Street, Brunswick. The meetings are also broadcast live on cable channel 99 and on the county's website www.glynncounty.org.

HOW ADVISORY BOARDS WORK

WHAT IS AN ADVISORY BOARD?

An advisory board is created by ordinance, resolution, state statute or action of the County Commission. It is designed to provide advice and recommendations to the County Commission on diverse matters of public concern regarding items specifically related to that advisory board.

Advisory board members are appointed by the Glynn County Board of Commissioners.

REQUIREMENTS FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Board members should have:

- The expertise necessary to accomplish the board's objectives.
- A reputation for integrity and community service.
- An interest or experience in the board's area of service.
- Sufficient time to prepare for and attend meetings.

- A resume or letter of interest, which is required to be submitted when applying for a board.

ELECTING OFFICERS

Advisory board members elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and any other officers required by their bylaws.

SETTING GOALS

Advisory boards should set goals and provide annual status reports indicating achievements and progress for the year. The creation of this written report encourages boards to develop focused work plans and ensures the County Commission is kept informed of board activities. Your board may submit your report to your staff liaison or to the County Clerk at 1725 Reynolds Street, Third Floor, Brunswick, GA 31520 or via email at countyclerk@glynncounty-ga.gov.

CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION

Any use of county government logos or letterhead must be coordinated with your staff liaison to prevent misrepresentation of board or county policies. Formal correspondence which states the advisory board's position on an issue should always be coordinated with your staff liaison.

Be careful when communicating with the media – please be clear that you are expressing your own opinion and are not speaking on behalf of your advisory board , the Board of Commissioners, or staff.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

At the request of the department director, county advisory boards may assist the department with making funding recommendations. However, it is the responsibility of the department director and County Manager to recommend and direct budget issues.

OPEN RECORDS AND THE SUNSHINE LAW

PUBLIC RECORDS

State law defines a public record to mean all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, etc. prepared, maintained, or received by a county, including its advisory boards.

Georgia's open records law establishes rules for how long these materials must be retained and when they can be destroyed. Your county staff liaison keeps master copies of board

agendas, minutes, etc., and you should turn in any public records you receive directly to the liaison.

OPEN MEETINGS – SUNSHINE LAW

The Open Meetings Law establishes a basic right of access to meetings of boards, commissions, and other governing bodies of state and local governmental agencies or authorities. Visual and sound recording during open meetings must be permitted.

The law requires:

- Meetings of boards, commissions, and committees must be open to the public
- Reasonable notice of meetings
- Minutes of every meeting
- An agenda to be prepared prior to the meeting

A “meeting” is a gathering of a quorum of the members of the board, commission, or committee at which any official business, policy, or public matter of the county is formulated, presented, discussed, and/or voted upon.

If four members of a seven-member board meet to discuss an item related to the county, a meeting, as defined by the open meetings law, has occurred.

INSPECTION OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES

The gathering of a quorum of the board or committee to inspect physical facilities or property under the jurisdiction of Glynn County is not a meeting as long as no other official business of the county is discussed or official action is taken.

MEETINGS WITH STATE OR FEDERAL OFFICIALS

The gathering of a quorum of the board to meet officials of the legislative or executive branches of state or federal governments at state or federal offices at which no official action is to be taken is not considered a meeting.

CARPPOOLING

The gathering of a quorum for the purpose of traveling to a meeting or gathering as otherwise authorized is not a meeting so long as no official business, policy, or public matter is formulated, presented, discussed, or voted upon by the quorum.

SOCIAL, CIVIL, CEREMONIAL OR RELIGIOUS EVENTS

The gathering of a quorum at social, ceremonial, civic, or religious events is not a meeting so long as no official business, policy, or public matter is formulated, presented, discussed, or voted upon by the quorum.

EMAIL

Email communications among members of the board, commission, or committee do not create a meeting subject to the open meetings law. However, emails are subject to disclosure under the open records law.

PROPER NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETINGS

The boards, commissions, and committees subject to the open meetings law must prescribe the time, place, and dates of regular meetings. The schedule of regular meetings must be available to the general public. The notice must include the time, place, and date and must be posted at least one week in advance of the meeting and kept in a conspicuous place available to the public at the regular place of the meeting as well as on the county's website. For example, the Blythe Island Regional Park Advisory Board's list of regular meetings should be posted at the Blythe Island Park office and on the county's website. While meetings generally follow a regular schedule (for example, the first Monday of every month at 4:00 p.m. in the park office), regularly scheduled meetings may be canceled or postponed as appropriate.

PROPER NOTICE OF SPECIAL CALLED MEETINGS

For special called meetings, written or oral notice must be given at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting to The Brunswick News (the county's legal organ).

The law requires that a copy of the meeting's agenda be provided by fax, email, or mail to any local media outlet if requested.

EMERGENCY MEETING

When the members of a board, commission, or committee declare that special circumstances exist, a meeting may be held with less than 24 hours' notice so long as notice of the meeting and subjects expected to be considered at the meeting is provided to the county legal organ (The Brunswick News). The reason for holding the meeting with less than 24 hours' notice must be recorded in the minutes. An example of an emergency meeting would be to discuss evacuation orders in the event of a natural or manmade disaster. Emergency meetings of advisory boards are strongly discouraged.

MEETING AGENDAS

Before any meeting, an agenda must be made available and must include all matters expected to come before the board, commission, or committee at the meeting. The agenda must be available upon request and must be posted at the meeting site, as far in advance of the meeting as reasonably possible, but no more than two weeks before the meeting. In other words, the agenda must be posted at some time during the two weeks before the meeting.

An issue not on the posted agenda MAY be considered or voted on in the meeting if it becomes absolutely necessary. The board would need to vote to add the item to the agenda. This provision should not be used as an excuse to add controversial topics at the last minute in hopes of avoiding scrutiny. Adding agenda items after the agenda has been posted could place the advisory board, committee, or commission at a disadvantage having not had an opportunity to research and discuss the topic. Such items could also give the impression that the board and staff are not prepared for the meeting. These items are strongly discouraged.

MEETING GUIDELINES

You'll become very familiar with meetings as an advisory board member and you'll quickly learn to appreciate meetings which run smoothly as opposed to those which drag on endlessly, yet accomplish little.

Always make an effort to study any background materials beforehand so that you will be prepared for the meeting.

MAKING MOTIONS AND VOTING

A member must request recognition by the chairman by saying, "*Mr....*" or "*Madam Chairman...*"

The chairman should recognize the member.

The member should state the motion: "*I move that....*"

Another member may second the motion by saying, "*Second.*" If no one does, then the chairman may ask: "*Is there a second?*"

If there is not second, the chairman announces, "*The motion fails for lack of a second.*"

If there is a second, the chairman notes, "*It is moved and seconded that*" (Chairman repeats the motion for the record).... "*Is there any discussion?*"

The member offering the motion initiates the discussion after being recognized by the chairman.

After the discussion, the chairman should call for the vote. *“Those in favor say “aye”.....”Those opposed say “nah”* Members should raise their hand and also say “aye” or “nah” as appropriate. This will help the chairman, other members, and staff liaisons determine the vote.

THE BOARD MEMBERS

Courtesies expected from all members of the board include:

- Arrive at all meetings on time and prepared.
- Address the chairman as “Madam Chairman” or “Mr. Chairman” (The word “chairman” is not related to gender.)
- Do not speak during the meeting without being recognized by the chairman
- Only one member speaks at a time. There should be no talking or whispering among members during the meeting.
- All comments should be addressed to the chairman
- Only one question or motion is discussed and decided at a time.
- Willingly accept the decision of the board.
- Read and respond to email and memos as appropriate.
- Place items on the agenda by the deadline

THE CHAIRMAN

The chairman should always provide the following courtesies to his or her board:

- Arrive at all meetings on time and prepared.
- Become knowledgeable of Roberts Rules of Order for parliamentary procedures.
- Be impartial.
- Always re-state the exact wording of a motion before the vote.
- Always call out the vote. “The motion passes 6-1 with _____ opposed”
- The chairman should try to keep members focused and moving to a conclusion. One way is for the chairman to occasionally summarize what is being discussed. When the chairman thinks the debate has been brought to a close, he/she should “call for the question” or ask members if they are ready to vote. Other board members can also call for the question.

IN SUMMARY

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD:

- Notify staff or the chairman of the advisory board of any anticipated meeting absences. A majority of members (4 for a 7-member board) must be present for a meeting to be held.
- Speak openly and clearly during meetings.
- Listen and respond to members of the public who attend the meetings.
- Vote on all motions (unless you have a conflict of interest)
- Be responsible for tracking term limits and reapplying for another term if able and willing.

County advisory boards are often the first step for many important issues that go before the County Commission. The purpose of advisory boards is to advise the County Commission and staff. It is not to make policy or direct staff.

Your recommendations will always be considered, but keep in mind the recommendations your board makes may not always be adopted by the County Commission, which frequently must take other factors into consideration before making a policy decision.

STAFF MEMBERS

- Work with the advisory board chairman to create the meeting agenda
- Supply background information on agenda items and make recommendations to the board members
- Attend board meetings in a non-voting capacity
- Provide technical and administrative assistance to the board when necessary

BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF SHARE THESE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be on time for meetings
- Know and practice parliamentary procedure
- Be familiar with the issues. Review background information, the agenda and previous minutes before the meeting
- Be courteous to each other and to members of the public
- Be open and responsive to questions and concerns

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How often does my board meet?

A. The number of times a board meets depends on its area of service, goals and mission. Please check with your staff liaison regarding meeting times, dates and locations. Boards usually hold at least one meeting per month.

Q. What if I miss a meeting?

A. You should always notify your County staff liaison or your advisory board chairman if you are unable to attend a scheduled board meeting.

Your advisory board's bylaws may provide attendance guidelines. Excessive absenteeism may be cause for removal from the board.

Q. How long will I serve?

A. Most board member terms are four years with the opportunity for reappointment. In most cases, members may be removed by the County Commission without cause, meaning no reason must be given.

Q. What if I can't finish my term?

A. Submit a letter of resignation to your county staff liaison and to the County Clerk.

Q. May I serve another term?

A. We hope this will be a rewarding experience for you and for county government. When your term is nearing expiration the County Clerk will advertise the vacancy in the classifieds section of The Brunswick News. If you are interested in being considered for reappointment, please notify the clerk by submitting a letter of interest and/or your resume.

There are no term limits for most county advisory boards, but the County Commission has the final say on appointments and reappointments.

Q. May I serve on more than one board at the same time (dual office holding)?

A. No. Glynn County Code of Ordinances prohibits dual appointment.

Q. Who do I call if I have a question about advisory board procedures or need more information on some aspect of County operations?

A. Usually a county representative is present at each advisory board meeting. This person will assist you in getting the information you and your board need.

County staff members can be reached through the county switchboard at 554-7111 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday or via county email. Most employees' email addresses consist of first initial and last name @glynncounty-ga.gov.