

Ex Officio Member Definition (Skinner, 2023)

Robert's Rules of Order (Robert III, 2023) defines an ex officio member as someone who holds another office or position of importance or relevance and is also part of a body, such as a board, committee, or council. In non-legislative organizations, this is the most widely used "parliamentary procedure" manual and provides order and fairness in decisions while protecting the rights of the minority and expediting meetings.

Ex officio members are not necessarily elected or appointed. They agree to serve in a position because the organization requires their expertise or influence in that position.

Members of an organization should not use the term to describe a type of membership in the organization. Instead, one should use the word to describe an obligation or privilege they have to serve on a committee or board. Ex officio members whose offices entitle them to membership will have their membership on the board terminated when they cease to hold those offices.

It is also common when establishing a board that certain board members are required to be government representatives, corporate officers, or voting delegates that represent the entity that they work for. They are appointed as ex officio members by virtue of their position. When a member terminates employment with an employer, their successor becomes an ex officio member.

What is an Ex Officio Member on a Board of Commission? (Skinner, 2023)

Ex officio members who are also members of the board or commission, such as the treasurer of an organization, the chair of a standing committee, or an employee representative, generally have all the rights and responsibilities of membership in the board or committee they serve on. Making motions, speaking in debates, and voting are some of the rights of membership. Being an active and contributing member is also one of the obligations.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Having Ex Officio Members on Your Board (Skinner, 2023)

First, their expertise and experience can often provide valuable insights and guidance to your board. Their connections and influence can also help the board in fundraising efforts or strategic partnerships and collaborations. Plus, since ex officio members typically serve for longer terms, they can also provide continuity and institutional memory to the board. This ensures important knowledge and perspectives are retained even as other board members change.

It's important to carefully consider the potential disadvantages of having ex officio members. The drawbacks may vary depending on the organization's goals, structure, and the individuals involved.

For example, ex officio members may have conflicting loyalties or interests, as they often hold positions within the organization or related entities. This may lead to conflicts of interest that could undermine the board's decision-making processes.

If ex officio members hold significant power or influence, it can lead to power imbalances within a board. Other board members may feel intimidated or less inclined to voice their opinions if ex officio members dominate the discussions or decision-making processes, and this can impact the overall effectiveness of the board.

Finally, ex officio members may limit diversity of the board, as they are often selected based on their roles or positions. The lack of diversity in background, perspectives or expertise can restrict the range of ideas and perspectives brought to discussions and decision-making processes.

City of Madeira Beach City Charter, Section 5.2 City Clerk

For the Civil Service Commission, the City Clerk was chosen as the ex officio secretary to the CSC based on the position held in the organization. Section 5.2 of the City Charter of Madeira Beach states “The City Clerk shall be the secretary ex-officio for the Civil Service Commission” (City of Madeira Beach, 2023).

The ex officio secretary is a board member but not counted for quorum purposes. The City Clerk is meant to serve until no longer working for the organization, no term limits. This provides a historical perspective as well as parliamentary procedure understanding.

The Civil Service Commission does not appoint the City Clerk to serve as the ex officio secretary; this is provided as part of the City Charter (the bylaws). The need for historical representation and perspective is the reason why a City Clerk is not a contracted position in the City Charter. Note, this is the same reasoning that the City Treasurer is not contracted. These two Charter positions are meant to be non-contracted employees, to serve for a long time, provide consistency in the City, and to hold a historical perspective of the City and its needs.

References

Robert III, H. M. (2023). *The Newly Revised 3rd Edition in Brief*. Retrieved from Robert’s Rules of Order: <https://robertsrules.com/>

Skinner, K. (2023, May 2). *Board Best Practices*. Retrieved from Ex Officio Role and Responsibilities: [https://aprioboardportal.com/news/ex-officio-board-member-role-and-responsibilities/#:~:text=Robert's%20Rules%20of%20Order%20defines,board%2C%20committee%2C%20or%](https://aprioboardportal.com/news/ex-officio-board-member-role-and-responsibilities/#:~:text=Robert's%20Rules%20of%20Order%20defines,board%2C%20committee%2C%20or%20)