



Manitoba Housing Tenant Group Manual

Tenant Support Services
Community Development

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Winnipeg, Manitoba
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Introduction

The Tenant Groups in buildings such as yours can play a vital part in tenant life. You can play an important role in helping your Tenant Group to grow and thrive in the community.

A Tenant Group is definitely not encouraged to become involved in individual tenant issues, as they occur between each other or with Manitoba Housing. Individual tenant issues should be directed to the Property Manager or the Tenant Services Coordinator for your building.

Manitoba Housing Staff are available to support and guide your tenant group. Depending on your region, this may be your Property Manager or your Tenant Services Coordinator.

In some regions a Tenant Services Coordinator who works specifically with tenant groups will also be available to your tenant group. In these cases the tenant group Tenant Services Coordinator will be your main staff resource when it comes to any questions or issues specific to the group. Individual tenant issues will still be directed to your Property Manager or building Tenant Services Coordinator.

This manual has been prepared to assist you in helping your group operate as simply and efficiently as possible.

The Tenant Group Manual is meant to be a guide only. It is not expected that every Tenant Group will follow these guidelines exactly. Please feel free to adapt the material to suit the particular needs of your building and tenants.

Tenant Associations

Purpose of a Tenant Association

The Tenant Associations within Manitoba Housing Complexes are designed to give the tenants independence and a stronger voice in the operation of their buildings. The Tenant Associations fulfill a number of functions such as:

1. Plan and implement recreational activities, i.e. bingo, card/board game tournaments, day trips, special event/holiday dinners, coffee clubs, movie nights, etc.
2. Plan and facilitate fund raising activities, i.e. teas, raffles, barbecues, craft sales, bake sales, etc.
3. Represent the tenants of the building as an organized body to Manitoba Housing and various other community agencies and services.
4. Direct and monitor the Tenant Association activities of the main lounge.
5. Administrate funds given to the association by Manitoba Housing which are only given to those buildings with an active association.

Guiding Principles for Tenant Association Members

There are principles that are considered essential for individuals participating as board members:

- ❑ Believe in, support and talk about the Organization
- ❑ Attend and take part in meetings
- ❑ Be able to get along and work with other Members as a team
- ❑ Respect others' ideas and opinions – even if you don't always agree
- ❑ Maintain confidentiality where required
- ❑ Suggest new ideas that will help the Association reach its goals
- ❑ Develop leadership abilities – talk to people and help the Tenant Association make plans to meet members' needs.
- ❑ HAVE FUN!

Offices of the Executive

The Executive Members should consist of the following positions. These positions need to be elected in order to be eligible to apply for the Manitoba Housing grant.

President

- ❑ Shall be official liaison for other organizations or, if unable to attend, may delegate someone in their place
- ❑ Shall be an ex-officio member of all Executive Committees
- ❑ Shall be official spokesperson for the Tenant Association
- ❑ Shall preside at all meetings, executive and general
- ❑ Shall generally supervise the affairs of the Tenant Association
- ❑ Shall prepare the agenda for meetings
- ❑ Shall receive and deal with, common concerns
- ❑ Shall be a signing officer with the bank

Vice President

- ❑ Shall assist the President and take over the functions of the President in their absence

Treasurer

- ❑ Shall receive all monies and hold same, subject to the order of the Executive
- ❑ Shall pay all bills in the name of the Tenant Association along with another signing officer as ordered by the Executive
- ❑ Shall be a signing officer with the bank
- ❑ Shall record all incomes and expenditures of the Tenant Association and be responsible for preparing monthly reports to be given at every meeting

Secretary

- ❑ Shall keep a correct record of all the proceedings of all meetings, executive and general
- ❑ Shall be a signing officer with the bank

Members at Large

At least three Members at Large; you may need more but there should be an uneven number of executive members.

Optional Committees

Sub-Committees or Ad hoc Committees may be established as required. Upon appointment by the Executive, sub-committee Chairs shall carry out the specific duties or project(s) entrusted to it and report its progress to the Executive on a regular or special basis as necessary.

Activities Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible for arranging for all activities such as darts, pool, shuffleboard, carpet bowling, ping pong, etc.
- ❑ Shall be responsible for ensuring that adequate equipment is available for participation in the above activities.

Bingo Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be in charge of setting up and running the bingo and recording all income and expenditure of the bingo

Break-open Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be in charge of selling the break-open tickets and the recording and reporting of all income and expenditure of break-open tickets

Church Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible to establish and maintain contact with the church(s) and to plan and implement regular services as designated by the Tenant Association

Coffee Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible for preparing and serving coffee at all special functions

Drink Machine Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible for the ordering and stocking of the drink machine
- ❑ Shall be responsible for keeping records of all monies involved with the drink machine accounts

Entertainment Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible for planning and arranging entertainment for the Tenants Association, such as live shows, trips and dinners subject to the discussion and approval of the Executive

Fundraising Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible for planning and arranging fundraising programs subject to prior discussion with the Executive, possibly in conjunction with a planning committee.

House Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible for the setting up of any necessary equipment for special events
- ❑ Shall be responsible for the decoration of the lounge for special occasions

Information Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible for planning and arranging informational programs subject to prior discussion with the Executive, possibly in conjunction with a planning committee

Kitchen Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible for the kitchen and catering for the Tenant Association with the help of volunteers, as required. There may be two people in this position or there may be an assistant Kitchen Chairperson as the building may deem appropriate.

Library Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be the contact person to the Public Library
- ❑ Shall arrange for the most appropriate service to be utilized in the building

Newsletter Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible for the collection of fun, interesting and important news items to be put in the building newsletter
- ❑ Shall be responsible for the typing of the news items, or to arrange for this to be typed
- ❑ Shall arrange for the copying and distribution of the letter

Plants Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible for the purchase and maintenance of all the plants in public areas

Sick and Visiting Chairperson

- ❑ Shall be responsible for sending cards to and/or visiting those who are sick or in hospital

Welcome Committee

- ❑ Shall be responsible for the Chairperson welcoming of new tenants in conjunction with a committee according to agreed on format

Establishing a Tenant Association

Buildings which do not have a Tenant Association, or are re-establishing one after a long period of inactivity, or are preparing for their upcoming elections, should follow a number of steps as outlined below:

1. Informally talk to a number of tenants in order to establish interest and determine if a Tenant Association is possible, and identify key individuals who may be suitable to hold Executive positions.

Note: Tenants on the Executive should be tenants in good standing with Manitoba Housing. They should be people who have shown themselves to be responsible, reliable, enthusiastic, and committed to the position which they will hold.

2. Hold a number of casual gatherings such as a coffee party, to generate interest in forming an organized Tenant Association. This should generate enthusiasm and allow for informal discussion of what a Tenant Association would be able to accomplish at the present time.
3. Present Executive or other concerned persons should meet with key individuals who would be capable of holding executive positions and encourage them to do so. This will result in a list of nominations.
4. Promote the general meeting for the purpose of elections by handing out notices door-to-door and placing posters around the building. Having entertainment, bingo, lunch, coffee, etc. will provide added incentive for tenants to attend the meeting as well as building enthusiasm for a new beginning.
5. Continue to work together, involving as many tenants as possible by getting their thoughts and ideas on things concerning them. Personal contact is not only important, it is essential to making tenants feel like they are a part of things.
6. Access assistance from the staff of Manitoba Housing, the Tenant Service Coordinator of your building as you feel you need to.

Holding a Tenant Association Election

The date of your first election meeting will establish the timing of your Annual Election Meeting.

A Manitoba Housing staff representative will conduct the election as an impartial third party.

Before the Meeting:

1. Prepare a list of nominees in advance (if possible)
2. Bring ballot box, ballots, and pens (in case a vote is required)
3. Bring a flip chart or chalk board, including felt markers or chalk
4. Print on it a list of positions and leave spaces for names
5. Appoint two scrutineers in case there is a vote by ballot
6. If there is no Secretary, appoint someone to take minutes
7. Prepare a sign-up sheet in order to have an accurate count of the people attending
8. Ensure that all who are present and voting are legal tenants

Usual order of Business for an Election Meeting

1. Reading and Approval of the Minutes
2. Annual Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees
3. Special Orders – the Election of Officers
The Chair for this portion of the meeting is always a staff person from Manitoba Housing.

For example the person Chairing the meeting might say:

- “I would like to declare elections now open for the positions of....”
Note: Start with the President and work your way through.
- “We are now calling for nominations for the position of _____. Do I have a nomination for _____?”

- If someone is nominated, the Chair then asks:
“Do you accept the nomination for the position of _____?”
- Note: If the person nominated cannot be present, a written note such as the nomination form can be used to accept should they be elected – as long as the building Constitution permits.
- If the person accepts, their name may be entered. If the person declines, then their name is not entered.
- Then ask, “Do I have a second nomination for the position of _____?”
- Follow the same procedure for remaining positions.
If there are no nominations, ask if there are volunteers from the floor.
- Then state, “If there are no further nominations, nominations are now declared closed.”

If there is more than one nomination, announce that a vote will take place either by show of hands or through secret ballot. If secret ballot is chosen, scrutineers must hand out, collect, and count the ballots. Scrutineers should be reminded that this is a “secret” ballot and, therefore, only the end result is to be made known.

- If secret ballot is used, a motion should then be called to destroy the ballots after they have been counted by scrutineers.
- If there is only one nomination for a position, and the person has accepted, the Chair would ask, “All those in favor of _____ for the position of _____, please raise your hand.”
- Once a person has been elected, then say, “I would like to introduce you to your new _____, Mr. /Mrs. /Ms. /Miss. _____.”
- Move along to the next position until all positions are filled.

Immediately After an Election

Make sure to send in a copy of the minutes from your annual meeting to Manitoba Housing. Included with your minutes, if applicable, should be a completed "Annual Report to Manitoba Housing". (see page 27)
Make sure to change the signatures for the signing authorities on the Tenant Association bank accounts. (see page 26)

Each new member of the Executive should meet with either the person previously holding that position or their Tenant Service Coordinator in order to review the responsibilities of that position.

1. Make sure that all books are audited before a new Treasurer takes over.
2. Make sure that all city licenses are in order i.e. bingo, break-open, raffles, etc.
3. Post a list of the new Executive members on the building's bulletin board.
4. Make sure that all mail is re-directed to the new Executive.
5. Send a letter to Manitoba Housing requesting your annual grant application.

Note: Any changes to any of the above information, i.e. changes in Executive members, bank accounts, city licenses or allocation of grant monies, should be reported immediately to your Tenant Service Coordinator of Manitoba Housing.

Getting Organized

Each Executive member has their own function to fulfill. It is important that each member understands what is involved in their position in order to do their job to their best ability. Immediately after the election, your Tenant Services Coordinator will schedule an orientation meeting.

Organization is important for the secretary, who is responsible for keeping the records of the entire Tenant Association. It is important as well as useful to keep the following items in an organized manner:

1. A copy of the present Constitution and those from years past
2. A list of the present Executive and the Executive for years past
3. Copies of the minutes of all meetings
4. Copies of past grant applications and responses to them
5. Copies of all correspondence, e.g. requests for donations, petitions, etc.
6. Important phone numbers, e.g. insurance company, auditor, travel services, entertainment, caterers, etc.
7. A copy of the Tenant Association's most recent insurance policy
8. An annual inventory of insured items
9. Other building specific items
10. Bank account numbers for all Tenant Association accounts, including a listing of what they are for and who the signing authorities are
11. A listing of all organization addresses of incoming mail

In family buildings where volunteers will be working with children, it is recommended that a Child Abuse Registry Check and Criminal Record Check be completed.

You can apply for the Criminal Record Check through the Winnipeg Police Service. More information, and the forms, can be found online at:
http://www.winnipeg.ca/police/RC/info_request.stm#crim_record_search

Or apply in person at the Public Safety Building, 151 Princess St.

You can access the Child Abuse Registry Check Form online:
http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childfam/child_abuse_registry_form.html

or contact:

Child Protection

201 - 114 Garry Street

Winnipeg, MB R3C 4V5

Phone: (204) 945-6967

Toll-free: 1-800-282-8069

Fax: 948-2222

**Please note that there are fees for completing these record checks. The fees may change from year to year, so please contact the organizations to ask about the cost before submitting the forms.*

If you have further questions or need further assistance regarding the above record checks, please contact your Tenant Services Coordinator.

Establishing Ongoing Tenant Interest

The process of establishing tenant interest may vary depending on the building. In some buildings, one would only need to determine tenant interest by posting a notice and a sign-up sheet. The Executive can then plan based on present tenant interest.

Building tenant interest is another task entirely. If a building is struggling with a lack of interest, there are various steps that can be taken to increase such interest.

1. Find a few tenants who are genuinely interested in people. Having someone take a personal interest in tenants will make a world of difference. Even if you can only locate one or two people who are able to make others feel welcome, use their abilities in doing just this.
2. Know your tenants. This may not be an easy task, but take note or keep a record of those who attend meetings or events. Be aware of people's talents and interests. With this kind of information you can then target the right people. When you put notices under the door, put people's names on the notice. Let people know of things that would be of special interest to them and let them know that you called them on purpose.
3. Talk to other tenants. Spread the word, by word of mouth. A personal invitation goes a long way.
4. Be enthusiastic yourself. People are more likely to get interested in something when they see other people getting excited.
5. Enlist the help of others. There are no jobs that are unimportant. When you allow others to take part and feel useful, they begin to have a vested interest in what is going on.
6. See the list of dos and don'ts

Quorums

A quorum in a group is the minimum number of members entitled to vote who must be present in order for business to be legally transacted.

The number of members constituting a quorum may vary depending on what the group decides. The number required for a quorum must be stated in the Constitution for that building. The quorum should be as large as the number of members that can be reasonably depended on to be present at any meeting. Before the Chair calls a meeting to order, it is their duty to determine that the quorum is present.

Proceeding in the Absence of a Quorum

If the Chair determines that a quorum is not present, the meeting does not need to be terminated immediately. If a quorum cannot be obtained, the Chair calls the meeting to order, announces the absence of a quorum, and may do any one of the following:

- a) Entertain a motion to adjourn
- b) Recess in order to take measures to obtain a quorum
- c) Fix a new time at which to hold a future meeting

In the absence of a quorum, any business transacted is null and void. If a quorum fails to appear, the Tenant Association's requirement to hold a meeting has been fulfilled, even though the meeting must adjourn immediately.

How to Run a Meeting

Before a Meeting

1. The President should be sure to have an agenda already written out. Anyone wishing to speak at a meeting should let the President know at least two days in advance so that they may be given a space on the agenda. Anyone who regularly has issues to raise at meetings should meet with the President regularly to let them know what they would like to discuss.

Note: someone should be assigned to set out the chairs so that the meeting area is ready before the meeting is scheduled to start.

2. Make sure that the microphone is hooked up, if necessary.
3. It should be confirmed that both the President and the Secretary are able to attend in order that the appropriate person may take over if necessary.
4. The meeting should commence at the time stated unless there is a problem with establishing a necessary quorum. (see section on quorums)

Usual Order of Business

The President always calls the meeting to order, the call to order is not part of the agenda.

1. Program

If there is to be a presentation or other program, it usually will come at the beginning of a meeting. The meeting will commence afterwards.

2. Reading and Approval of Minutes

The President says, "The Secretary will read the minutes."

After the minutes are read from the previous meeting the Chair then asks, "Are there any corrections to the minutes?"

Any corrections are handled by unanimous consent.

The Chair then motions that the minutes be approved as read, or as corrected, whichever is applicable.

3. Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees

Such reports are given aloud at all meetings. At other meetings, the Chair calls only on those committees which have something to report. Such reports, except at the annual meetings, need not necessarily be read aloud in detail. Rather, reports may be summarized and a detailed report submitted.

4. Reports of Special Committees

Any special committees which have been appointed may give their report at this time.

5. Unfinished Business and General Orders

Unfinished business refers to business which has been carried over (tabled) from a previous meeting.

6. New Business

After all of the above has been dealt with, the Chair then asks, "Is there any new business?" Members can then introduce new questions and are able to take the floor if they so desire.

7. Announcements

The Chair may call upon other officers or members to make any necessary announcements.

Recording Minutes

Minutes are a record of the discussion of issues and happenings at any given meeting. Minutes should contain a record of what was done at a meeting, not what was said by the members. The minutes should never reflect the Secretary's opinion on anything said or done.

1. Annual Meeting (for elections)

Minutes must be done formally for the annual meeting. A copy must be sent in to the Tenant Service Coordinator of Manitoba Housing for your building. This should be typed if at all possible.

2. Executive Meetings

Minutes must be recorded and kept on file to be read at the next executive meeting and to be used for future reference.

3. General Meetings

Minutes must be recorded and kept on file to be read at the next general meeting and to be used for future reference.

Content of the Minutes

The first paragraph of the minutes should contain the following information:

1. The kind of meeting: annual, executive, general
2. The name of the organization
3. The date, time, and place of the meeting
4. The fact that the regular chairperson (president) and secretary were present, or who substituted for them
5. Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved, as read, or as corrected

The body of the minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each subject matter, giving, in the case for all important motions:

1. The motion
2. The name of the person making the motion
3. The name of the seconder
4. The decision made – including a record of the vote taken if required
5. The specific action decided on – unless a committee has been formed to act independently in which case its action is determined elsewhere

The last paragraph of the minutes should state:

1. The hour of adjournment
2. The date of the next meeting, where applicable

The signature: Minutes should be signed by the Secretary

Definite Do's and Don'ts

DO

- ❑ Thank people who volunteer, both executive and non-executive. You could even have a special appreciation night for all volunteers.
- ❑ Assume your position on the executive to be one of service. Persons on the executive are there to serve the needs of others and should not be using their position to fulfill their own agendas.
- ❑ Have an agenda prepared and follow it at your meetings. People like to know that their time and effort by coming to the meetings is respected and worth their while.
- ❑ Have realistic expectations when planning for your Tenant Association. Having unrealistic expectations only leads to disappointment.
- ❑ Listen to one another. Many people have good and creative ideas and can offer constructive criticism.
- ❑ Build up one another. Speaking poorly of others only brings the same in return.
- ❑ Be generous within reason. Have refreshments at each meeting. You may also wish to spruce up your meetings by having speakers or entertainment at each meeting. Make your meetings enjoyable.
- ❑ Have meetings regularly and predictably, but only as often as your building has significant matters to discuss. Think about your building and be realistic. People get frustrated otherwise and attendance will decrease.
- ❑ Have Fun! Tenant groups are an opportunity to get to know your neighbours and plan fun activities for everyone in the building. Enjoy it!

DO NOT

- ❑ Allow tenants to “name call”, swear or fight during a meeting. Always stay in control of your meeting, and only allow one person at a time to speak.

Tenant Advisory Committees

What is a Tenant Advisory Committee?

A Tenant Advisory Committee (TAC) is a group of tenants that provides direction on the programs and activities they would like to see in the building for the population. The committee will provide information, advice, recommendations and advocacy regarding recreational programs and relevant services that would improve the overall well-being of tenants in their building or housing complex.

Purpose of a Tenant Advisory Committee

- To provide a diverse range of recreational programs and relevant services for tenants.
- To provide volunteer opportunities for tenants in the building/complex.
- To advocate for and provide recommendations to Manitoba Housing on issues affecting tenants which require further action of the landlord.
- To develop ways to distribute information and educate tenants regarding tenant issues, health and recreational programs/services.

Guiding Principles for Tenant Advisory Committee Members

There are principles that are considered essential for individuals participating as TAC members:

- Believe in, support and talk about the TAC
- Attend and take part in meetings
- Be able to get along and work with other Members as a team
- Respect others' ideas and opinions – even if you don't always agree
- Maintain confidentiality where required
- Suggest new ideas that will help the Committee reach its goals
- Develop leadership abilities – talk to people and help the TAC make plans to meet members' needs.
- HAVE FUN!

Who is Involved in a Tenant Advisory Committee?

Every leaseholder in the building is automatically a member of the Tenant Advisory Committee.

A Tenant Advisory Committee requires at least one, and possibly two, tenant representatives.

A minimum of two outside agency representatives are also needed for a Tenant Advisory Committee. One will help facilitate the group and lead discussions, and the second one will act as the group bookkeeper.

The Tenant Services Coordinator will be the Manitoba Housing staff liaison to the Committee, and will participate as an ex-officio member of the committee (non-voting). Other Manitoba Housing staff may be invited to participate on an as-needed basis.

This is the format of the Tenant Advisory Committee:

Facilitator

A facilitator helps guide and encourage discussion during the meeting. The facilitator does not make all the decisions during the meeting.

An outside agency representative will facilitate in the early beginning of the committee. As they become more comfortable, members may decide to rotate the role of facilitating the meeting.

Bookkeeper

The bookkeeper will be an outside agency representative.

The bookkeeper is a signing authority on the bank account, and will be the holder of the cheques. He or she will provide a financial report at every TAC meeting. The bookkeeper does not make the financial decisions, and cannot access any of the TAC money without the signature of a tenant representative and permission from the group.

Tenant Representative

A tenant representative is a tenant who is chosen by the group to be a signing authority on the bank account. A TAC needs at least one, and up to two, signing authorities on the bank account.

The tenant representative does not make the financial decisions and cannot access TAC money without the signature of the bookkeeper and permission from the group.

Agenda

The facilitator will prepare the agenda for the meeting. The agenda will be distributed to members either in advance or at the beginning of the meeting.

Minutes

A volunteer minute-taker may be identified or the role can be rotated among the members.

Minutes will be compiled and then posted prior to the next meeting, or distributed at the beginning of the next meeting.

Minutes from the meeting prior will be reviewed and approved, or corrected, at the beginning of each meeting.

Decision-Making

Decisions are made based a simple majority at regular monthly meetings.

If unable to come to a decision, items are tables for further discussion at the next meeting.

Decisions are never made outside of a meeting. If something was not brought up at the meeting, it has to wait until the next scheduled meeting.

All decisions regarding the expenditure of funds must be recorded in the minutes.

Financial Accountability

The Tenant Advisory Committee is eligible to apply for, and receive, grant funding from Manitoba Housing.

The Tenant Advisory Committee has to maintain a Chequing account.

Three signatories are required to maintain the account. These may be:

- One tenant and two agency representatives. One of the agency representatives must act as bookkeeper.
- Two tenants and one agency representative. The agency representative must act as bookkeeper.

Insurance

The Tenant Advisory Committee will be required to take out insurance for coverage of lounge activities, assets and furnishings, liability matters, group meetings, etc...

Meetings

Meetings should be held approximately once a month. Additional meetings may be held or scheduled as the need arises.

Establishing a Tenant Advisory Committee

If a group of tenants are interested in establishing a Tenant Advisory Committee they can approach their Tenant Services Coordinator.

In a building where no organized tenant group has recently existed, the TSC will distribute a survey to all tenants in the building in order to measure interest. If it's established that there is a general interest in the building, or if there is an existing Tenant Association that is interested in moving over to the Tenant Advisory Committee structure, then they will move forward in establishing a TAC.

The TSC will arrange for a presentation to be made about Tenant Advisory Committees and how they work. If there is a trusted Community Agency representative in the community who is already working with tenants in the building, they may be invited to this initial meeting.

After the presentation, tenants will be given time to process the information and think about whether it is something they can see working in their building.

A follow-up meeting is scheduled to go over the TAC structure again and answer any questions people may have. Depending on the feeling from the group, there may be a vote at this time to decide if the people want to go ahead with it. If people are not quite ready, but are still interested, a future meeting will either be scheduled or it will be left open for the tenants to approach their TSC again when they are ready.

Getting Organized

Step 1: Community Agency Representatives

One of the first steps to getting organized is ensuring that the group has Community Agency representatives on board.

Generally, at least two Community Agency representatives should be involved. In some cases one of the Agency representatives may be able to take on the role of bookkeeper, while the other one can take on the role of facilitator.

Step 2: Bookkeeper

If there is no Community Agency representative who is able to take on the bookkeeping role, it is possible to hire a bookkeeper to fulfill this function. Once the Community Agency representatives are found, the next step is to find a person to fill the bookkeeping role.

Step 3: Tenant Representatives

Once Community Agency representatives/bookkeeper are in place, a meeting will be held to nominate one or two tenant representatives who will be authorized signatories on the account. This does not require a formal election, although the group members may need to vote if there are many people who are volunteering for this role.

Having two tenant representatives can be a good thing, in the event that one representative is unable to attend a meeting. However, it is important to remember that even if there are two tenant representatives authorized to sign cheques, money still cannot be accessed without the signature of the Community Agency representative/bookkeeper.

Step 4: Bank Account

If there is already a bank account set up, a letter will be addressed to the bank from Manitoba Housing outlining who is going to be listed on the account as authorized signatories. All those who are going to be signatories will need to go to the bank with the letter in order to have their signatures recorded and kept on file. Different banks have different processes for this step, so it is wise to contact the bank to set up an appointment beforehand, and to ask the bank what is needed from the signatories to make sure everyone shows up prepared.

If there is no bank account, decide at a meeting which bank to deal with and then take the necessary steps to open an account. Different banks may have different processes for this as well, so it is good to contact the bank first in order to get all the information needed. Once the bank account is opened, Manitoba Housing staff will address a letter to the bank outlining the people who are going to be listed on the account as authorized signatories. The signatories can then go to the bank with the letter, and anything else the bank requires, to have their signatures put on file with the bank.

Step 5: Grant Application

Once the authorized cheque signatories are in place, and there are Community Agency representatives involved, the Tenant Advisory Committee is formed and eligible to apply for the Manitoba Housing Community & Program Development Grant. Manitoba Housing staff will supply the group with a copy of the grant application, and are also available to answer any questions about filling it out.

If the Tenant Advisory Committee is replacing a previous Tenant Association, the existing bank account can be used so that a new one does not need to be opened.

If there is money in the account that was granted to the previous Tenant Association in the current year, it will be transferred to the new Tenant Advisory Committee and group will be eligible to apply for a new grant the following year.

Step 6: Insurance

Once the Tenant Advisory Committee has access to money, they will be required to take out insurance for things such as coverage of lounge activities, assets and furnishings, liability matters, and group meetings.

Step 7: Meetings, Planning, and Fun!

Once the insurance is paid, it is time to schedule monthly meetings and plan fun activities and events for the tenants in the building!

Recommendation for Family Buildings, or volunteers working with children:

In family buildings where volunteers will be working with children, it is recommended that a Child Abuse Registry Check and Criminal Record Check be completed.

You can apply for the Criminal Record Check through the Winnipeg Police Service. More information, and the forms, can be found online at:

http://www.winnipeg.ca/police/RC/info_request.stm#crim_record_search

Or apply in person at the Public Safety Building at 151 Princess St.

You can access the Child Abuse Registry Check Form online:

http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childfam/child_abuse_registry_form.html

or contact Child Protection at 201 – 114 Garry Street, phone: 945-6967.

**Please note that there are fees for completing these record checks. The fees may change from year to year, so please contact the organizations to ask about the cost before submitting the forms.*

If you have further questions or need further assistance regarding the above record checks, please contact your Tenant Services Coordinator.

How to Run a Meeting

In the early beginnings of the Tenant Advisory Committee you may have an outside agency representative facilitating the meetings. However, as times goes on and everyone gets used to the group structure, members of the TAC may feel that they would like to try facilitating the meetings themselves. Members are encouraged to take steps towards facilitating their own meetings, and ongoing support with this task will always be available from the outside agency reps and Manitoba Housing staff.

The role of facilitator can be rotated among members. Below is a guide to help new facilitators run a meeting:

Before a Meeting

1. The Chair should be sure to have an agenda already written out. Anyone wishing to speak at a meeting should let the Chair know at least two days in advance so that they may be given a space on the agenda. Anyone who regularly has issues to raise at meetings should meet with the Chair regularly to let them know what they would like to discuss.

Note: someone should be assigned to set out the chairs so that the meeting area is ready before the meeting is scheduled to start.

2. Make sure that the microphone is hooked up, if one is available and if it is necessary.
3. The meeting should commence at the time stated.

Usual Order of Business

The Chair always calls the meeting to order, and welcomes all members to the meeting.

1. Program

If there is to be a presentation or other program, it usually will come at the beginning of a meeting. The meeting will commence afterwards.

2. Reading and Approval of Minutes

The Chair says, "The minute-taker will read the minutes."

After the minutes are read from the previous meeting the Chair then asks, "Are there any corrections to the minutes?"

Any corrections are handled by unanimous consent.

The Chair then motions that the minutes be approved as read, or as corrected, whichever is applicable.

3. Reports of Event Volunteers

Such reports are given aloud at all meetings. The Chair calls only on those volunteers who have something to report. Such reports need not necessarily be given in detail; rather, reports may be summarized.

4. Unfinished Business

Unfinished business and general orders refer to business which has been carried over (tabled) from a previous meeting.

5. New Business

After all of the above has been dealt with, the Chair then asks, "Is there any new business?" Members can then introduce new questions and are able to take the floor if they so desire.

6. Announcements

The Chair may call upon other officers or members to make any necessary announcements.

Recording Minutes

Minutes are a record of the discussion of issues and happenings at any given meeting. Minutes should contain a record of what was done at a meeting, not what was said by the members. The minutes should never reflect the minute-taker's opinion on anything said or done. Minutes must be recorded and kept on file to be read at the next meeting, and to be used for future reference.

Manitoba Housing staff or Community Agency Representatives are available to assist new minute-takers with any questions or support they may need.

Content of the Minutes

The first paragraph of the minutes should contain the following information:

1. The name of the group
2. The date, time, and place of the meeting
3. Who chaired the meeting
4. Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved, as read, or as corrected

The body of the minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each subject matter, giving, in the case for all important motions:

5. The motion
6. The name of the person making the motion
7. The name of the seconder
8. The decision made – including a record of the vote taken if required
9. The specific action decided on – unless a committee has been formed to act independently in which case its action is determined elsewhere

The last paragraph of the minutes should state:

10. The time of adjournment
11. The date and time of the next meeting

The signature: Minutes should be signed by the minute-taker

Establishing Ongoing Tenant Interest

The process of establishing tenant interest may vary depending on the building. In some buildings, one would only need to determine tenant interest by posting a notice and a sign-up sheet. The Tenant Advisory Committee can then plan based on present tenant interest.

Building tenant interest is another task entirely. If a building is struggling with a lack of interest, there are various steps that can be taken to increase such interest.

1. Find a few tenants who are genuinely interested in people. Having someone take a personal interest in tenants will make a world of difference. Even if you can only locate one or two people who are able to make others feel welcome, use their abilities in doing just this.
2. Know your tenants. This may not be an easy task, but take note or keep a record of those who attend meetings or events. Be aware of people's talents and interests. With this kind of information you can then target the right people. When you put notices under the door, put people's names on the notice. Let people know of things that would be of special interest to them and let them know that you called them on purpose.
3. Talk to other tenants. Spread the word, by word of mouth. A personal invitation goes a long way.
4. Be enthusiastic yourself. People are more likely to get interested in something when they see other people getting excited.
5. Enlist the help of others. There are no jobs that are unimportant. When you allow others to take part and feel useful, they begin to have a vested interest in what is going on.
6. See the list of do's and don'ts

Definite Do's & Don'ts

DO

- ❑ Thank people who volunteer. You could even have a special appreciation night for all volunteers.
- ❑ Assume your position as a volunteer to be one of service. Persons who decide to volunteer are there to serve the needs of others and should not be using their position to fulfill their own agendas.
- ❑ Have realistic expectations when planning for your Tenant Advisory Committee. Having unrealistic expectations only leads to disappointment.
- ❑ Listen to one another. Many people have good and creative ideas and can offer constructive criticism.
- ❑ Build up one another. Speaking poorly of others only brings the same in return.
- ❑ Be generous within reason. Have refreshments at each meeting. You may also wish to spruce up your meetings by having speakers or entertainment at each meeting. Make your meetings enjoyable.
- ❑ Have meetings regularly and predictably, but only as often as your building has significant matters to discuss. Think about your building and be realistic. People get frustrated otherwise and attendance will decrease.
- ❑ Have Fun! Tenant groups are an opportunity to get to know your neighbours and plan fun activities for everyone in the building. Enjoy it!

DO NOT

- ❑ Allow tenants to “name call”, swear or fight during a meeting. Always stay in control of your meeting, only allow one person at a time to speak.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is a member?

All lease-holders in the building over the age of 18 are automatically members of the Tenant Advisory Committee.

2. What is an “Outside/Community Agency representative”?

A Community Agency representative is a trusted person who represents an organization working with people in the community. For example, many Community Facilitators who work for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority participate in existing Tenant Advisory Committees in their community. There are many other agencies working in the communities that may be called on as well.

The tenants in a building are always consulted when trying to find Community Agency representatives to work with the tenant groups. It is important that the agency representatives are known and trusted by people in the community.

3. Why do we need Community Agency representatives?

Community Agency representatives have a lot to offer a Tenant Advisory Committee. They can help facilitate the meetings to run smoothly, guide the flow of conversation and ideas and help lessen conflicts that may arise. When they are able to on take the role of bookkeeper, they provide a second set of eyes on the finances and ensure financial accountability. They may also be able to bring valuable resources that benefit the group.

4. Are Manitoba Housing/Community Agencies taking over the group?

No, all decisions are still made by the tenants. Community Agency representatives are there to help meetings go smoothly, get ideas and conversation flowing, and bring resources they may have to help benefit the group. Manitoba Housing representatives and Community Agency representatives are not allowed to vote or make decisions for the group.

5. Are we losing control over our finances?

No, the group ultimately decides how to spend the group funds. Agency representatives may bring ideas or suggestions, however, as long as the money is being spent within the parameters of the grant funding, the group decides what to do with their money.

The Community Agency representative who has signing authority on the account is not able to access any funds without the signature of the tenant representative. The tenant representative can only sign cheques for expenditures voted on and approved by the majority at a scheduled group meeting.

6. Is the tenant representative our new President/Are the tenant representatives responsible for running the group?

No, the tenant representative is not the new President.

There are no executive members in this structure because the expectation is that everyone will share responsibilities as much as possible.

The tenant representative is someone who is nominated to sign cheques on behalf of the whole group and is not expected to take on the majority of other group responsibilities.

7. Do we need a quorum?

No, there is no quorum needed at a Tenant Advisory Committee meeting.

Those who show up at a regularly scheduled meeting are the ones who make the decisions at that meeting.

8. Do we have a constitution?

No, there is no constitution needed for a Tenant Advisory Committee.

9. Do we have to follow Robert's Rules of Order?

No, Tenant Advisory Committee meetings do not have to follow Robert's Rules of Order.

The Tenant Advisory Committee meetings use a more relaxed, group discussion kind of structure. People are still expected to respect others, take turns speaking, and vote to make decisions, however, all this can be done in a less formal way.

10. Who plans the activities/events?

The tenants who show up to the meetings plan the activities and events. Community Agency Representatives are not activity workers and are not expected to plan events for the group, although they may offer to help when they are able.

11. Who records the minutes?

It is important to make sure minutes are taken at every meeting to record decisions. Volunteers from the group will be called on to take the minutes. Minute-taking can be rotated at every meeting, or if someone enjoys taking minutes they can volunteer to do so whenever they are present at the meetings. It is important to remember that if someone volunteers to take minutes this does not mean it becomes their responsibility all the time.

12. Do I have to be at every meeting?

Everyone is encouraged to attend the Tenant Meetings as they are usually held once a month. By attending the meetings, you have the opportunity to have your voice heard, provide input in what goes on in your building and make decisions about the activities for the group.

However, there is no penalty if you are unable to attend a meeting...but remember, if someone does not attend a meeting they should not complain about what happened at the meeting!

13. Can a Tenant Association and a Tenant Advisory Committee exist in the same building at the same time?

No, only one model of a tenant group is approved by Manitoba Housing. Manitoba Housing will only provide grant money to one tenant group that meets the requirement for grant funding in a building.

Tenant Advisory Committee Survey Sample

To all residents of _____,

Several tenants have expressed interest in re-establishing a Tenant Advisory at _____. Manitoba Housing is committed to working together with a potential Tenant Advisory to help make _____ a great place to live.

Tenant Advisory seeks to improve the quality of life and living conditions for all building residents. They perform such tasks as developing services and programs specifically tailored to meet the needs and interests of tenants. They also frequently represent tenants' concerns in MH decision-making.

Manitoba Housing would like to hear from you to see if there is a strong enough interest to form and maintain a Tenant Advisory, and to see what you would like a new Tenant Advisory to do for you.

We therefore ask that you please fill out this short survey, once completed please place it under the Building Superintendent Office door on the 2nd floor by **Friday, March 11, 2011.**

If you require any assistance or would like to speak with someone about the survey, please call _____, Tenant Service Coordinator, at _____.

You do not need to put your name on the survey. **All your responses will remain strictly confidential.** The information that you and all other tenants provide will be put together and analyzed as a whole by Manitoba Housing. The information you provide will be very helpful in guiding the development of a future Tenant Advisory and their activities.

Thank you for your input and assistance.

Yours truly,

Tenant Services Coordinator

Tenant Advisory Committee Survey

1) How long have you been a resident of_____?

2) Which of the following age categories are you in?

- 29 or younger
- 30 to 39
- 40 to 49
- 50 to 59
- 60 to 69
- 70 to 79
- 80 or older

3) A Tenant Advisory Committee is a group of tenants that provide direction on the programs and activities they would like to see in the building for the population.
How important is it to you that there is a Tenant Advisory Committee in your building?

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not too important
- Not at all important

4) If there were regularly tenant advisory meetings, would you attend?

5) What types of programs or activities would *you* most like to see offered by a new Tenant Advisory Committee?

6) How interested are you in attending future Tenant Advisory Committee meetings?

- Extremely interested
- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not too interested
- Not at all interested

7) If you are interested in attending future Tenant Advisory Committee meetings, which of the following times would generally be most convenient for you to have meetings scheduled? (Please check all that apply)

- On a weekday morning
- On a weekday afternoon
- On a weekday evening
- Other (please specify _____)

8) Do you have any final comments or suggestions regarding the establishment of a new Tenant Advisory Committee?

321 Blank Street Tenant Association Meeting Agenda

(date)

1. **Welcome-** president
 - thank everyone for coming.

2. **Reading and Adoption of Minutes-** secretary
 - minutes from previous meeting are read.
 - a motion is made to accept the minutes as read or as corrected.

3. **Matters Arising from Minutes**

4. **Financial Report –** treasurer
 - the opening balance and closing balance on the most current bank statement should be given first
 - a summary of purchases/bills paid should be given next

5. **Activity Reports**
 - reports from volunteers (eg: Bingo chairperson, Computer chair, etc)
 - pending activities

6. **Old Business**
 - follow up on any items that were tabled from previous meeting

7. **TA Activities/Planning**
 - new activities to be planned for the next month
 - new ideas for things to be planned in the future

8. **Adjournment and Date of Next Meeting**

123 Fake Street Tenant Advisory Committee

Meeting Agenda

(date)

1. Welcome- facilitator
 - thank everyone for coming.
2. Reading and Adoption of Minutes- minute-taker
 - minutes from previous meeting are read.
 - a motion is made to accept the minutes as read or as corrected.
3. Matters Arising from Minutes
4. Financial Report – bookkeeper
 - the opening balance and closing balance on the most current bank statement should be given first
 - a summary of purchases/bills paid should be given next
5. Activity Reports
 - reports from volunteers (eg: Bingo volunteers, event volunteers, etc)
 - pending activities
6. Old Business
 - follow up on any items that were tabled from previous meeting
7. TA Activities/Planning
 - new activities to be planned for the next month
 - new ideas for things to be planned in the future
8. Adjournment and Date of Next Meeting

Sample Minutes 1

The Regular meeting of the 123 Main Street Tenant Association was held on Thursday, January 16, 2005, at 10:00 a.m., in the Tenants' lounge, the President being in the chair and Secretary being present. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved as corrected.

Executive present were: _____

Manitoba Housing Staff present were (if applicable): _____

_____ members of the Tenant Association were present
(number)

Note: a list of signatures and suite numbers should be on a separate piece of paper attached to the back of the minutes.

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees

The Treasurer reported the receipt of a bill from the A&B Insurance Company in the amount of \$212 for the annual insurance coverage. The question put to the chair "that the bill be paid" was adopted. The report of the Bingo Committee was received and placed on file.

Reports of Special Committees

The special committee that was appointed to investigate and report on donations toward the upcoming spring tea reported through its chairman, Mrs. Smith, that...

Unfinished Business

The resolution relating to the use of the building's library by non-members, which was postponed from the last meeting, was then taken up. After some debate, the resolution was adopted as follows: "Resolved that"

New Business

Mr. Gordon moved "that the Tenant Association support the upcoming trip to Grand Forks by paying 50% of the cost for tenants." The motion was put to a vote and was adopted.

Mrs. Stevens asked if the sundeck would be open to the tenants this summer. The Chair stated that Manitoba Housing would have to be contacted regarding this and appointed Mrs. Dorsy to seek out further information. Instructions were given to report at the next meeting.

Note: for each of the above items, it may be helpful to outline each item in the minutes step by step, as shown in the example below. This formal outline is not necessary, however, as long as all the important information is present.

Example:

1. Bake Sale

Motion:

Mary Jones proposed “that a bake sale be held Monday, March 6, 2005.”

Seconded

Bill Smith seconded this motion.

Decision

A vote was made that the bake sale would be held as:

Proposed

26 in favor 0 against 0 abstained Motion Carried

Action

Steve Evans will post a sign-up sheet in order to anticipate the number of participants. Barb Stevens will be downstairs a half hour early to prepare coffee, Bill Smith will accept ticket money at the door starting a half hour early etc.

2. Announcements

The Chair announced that.....

3. Program

The Chair introduced the guest speaker, Mr. James Mitchell, from the Arthritis Society, who spoke on Osteoarthritis.

4. The next meeting to be held Thursday, April 10, 2005 at 10:00 a.m.

5. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Sample Minutes 2

The _____ meeting of the _____ Tenant Association was held on _____, _____, at _____, with _____ being in the chair. The minutes of the last meeting were read and _____.

Executives present were:

MH Staff present were:

_____ members of the Tenant Association present (Attach list)

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committees

Reports of Special Committees

Special Orders

Unfinished Business and General Orders

New Business

Announcements

Program

Next meeting is to be held _____, _____ at _____.

The meeting adjourned at: _____.

Sample Constitution

123 Main Street Tenant Association

Article 1. Name
The group will be known as the 123 Main Street Tenant Association

Article 2. Purpose
The purposes of the Tenant Association shall be as follows:

1. To develop program opportunities for the involvement of all the tenants
2. To ensure that there are adequate facilities and equipment for these programs
3. To help assess and deal with the concerns the tenants may have about living at 123 Main Street with the intention of maintaining a "happy home"
4. To give the tenants a voice in the administration of 123 Main Street, which is their home
5. To allocate use of public areas in the building according to availability of that space
6. To work together with other tenant groups

Article 3. Membership
All tenants of 123 Main Street are automatically members of the 123 Main Street Tenant Association

Article 4. The Executive
The Executive shall consist of:

1. a President
2. a Vice President
3. a Secretary
4. a Treasurer
5. Other Executive positions deemed appropriate for a given year

The Executive shall draw up the agenda for all meetings and shall act upon matters of the Tenant Association that require immediate action or attention. They are permitted to spend any sum under \$50 necessary to fulfill these functions. Any expenditure over \$50 requires the consent of a general meeting.

All decisions of the Executive shall be subject to review by the general membership at general meetings.

Article 5. Duties of Officers

President

- ❑ Shall be official liaison for other organizations or, if unable to attend, may delegate someone in their place
- ❑ Shall be an ex-officio member of all Executive Committees
- ❑ Shall be official spokesperson for the Tenant Association
- ❑ Shall preside at all meetings, executive and general
- ❑ Shall generally supervise the affairs of the Tenant Association
- ❑ Shall prepare the agenda for meetings
- ❑ Shall receive and deal with, common concerns
- ❑ Shall be a signing officer with the bank

Vice President

- ❑ Shall assist the President and take over the functions of the President in their absence

Treasurer

- ❑ Shall receive all monies and hold same, subject to the order of the Executive
- ❑ Shall pay all bills in the name of the Tenant Association along with another signing office as ordered by the Executive
- ❑ Shall be a signing officer with the bank
- ❑ Shall record all incomes and expenditures of the Tenant Association and be responsible for preparing reports

Article 6. Election of Offices
Election of officers to be held the second Tuesday of January annually. Those elected shall take office immediately. Vacancies shall be filled by nominations and elections held during a general meeting within a three-month period of the receipt of the resignation.

Article 7. General Meetings
There shall be a general membership meeting at least three times a year and otherwise at the discretion of the Executive, or on the petition of a quorum. Public notice of three days will be necessary prior to the holding of a general meeting.

Executive meetings will be called once each month or when necessary.

Article 8. Quorums
The quorum at a general meetings shall consist of 20 members. The quorum at an executive meeting shall consist of one half of the members of the Executive.

Article 9. Amendments to the Constitution
Amendments to the constitution may be passed at any general meeting, if carried by a majority.

Article 10. Agenda of the Annual Meetings

The agenda of the annual meeting shall include:

- a) an annual report
- b) a financial report
- c) the introduction of the new Executive

Public notice must be given one week prior to the holding of the annual meeting and must be posted on the bulletin board.

Article 11. Signing Authorities

Cheques issued by the Tenant Association must be signed by two of the three designated signing members of the Executive. Whenever possible, one of the two signatures should be that of the Treasurer.

Article 12. Financial Audits

The Tenant Association's financial records must be audited at the end of every year and whenever there is a change of Treasurer.

Sample Letter for Requesting Donations

Your Name
Your Address
Your City, Province
Your Postal Code

Date: January 1, 2005

Their Name
Their Address
Their City, Province
Their Postal Code

Dear _____,

On behalf of the _____ Tenant Association, I am writing to you to request the donation of an item which could be raffled off or given as a door prize at our upcoming _____ event.

As you may know, the Tenant Association in buildings such as ours raise funds in a variety of ways in order to subsidize the cost of various events throughout the year which we have for our tenants.

Your contribution through a donated item would assist us in our endeavors to accomplish our goals.

We thank you for your consideration of this request and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(your name and position)

Sample Letter for Changing Bank Signatures

Your Name
Your Address
Your City, Province
Your Postal Code

Date: January 1, 2005

Their Name
Their Address
Their City, Province
Their Postal Code

Dear _____;

This letter is to confirm that the signing authorities on account number _____ of the _____ Tenant Association hereby relinquish their authority with regards to the above-mentioned account, as indicated below.

The new executive, _____, _____, and _____, will be in to sign the appropriate documents in the next short while.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

(signing authority #1)

(signing authority #2)

(signing authority #3)

