

CITY OF ALPENA  
COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT

GENERAL SUBJECT: Administration	Policy No.	<u>14</u>
SPECIFIC SUBJECT: Advisory Board Policy Statement	Date Issued	<u>5/06/91</u>
	Effective Date	<u>5/31/91</u>
	Amended Date	<u>1/18/99</u>
	Amended Date	<u>1/17/05</u>

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Copies to: City Council, City Manager, City Attorney, Department Heads, File

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**PURPOSE:**

To provide a written policy on the process or steps to be taken for standardizing appointments to Advisory Boards.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY:**

Volunteer citizen boards serve an important role in democratic local government. Boards are an excellent mechanism for eliciting constructive citizen input, for putting to use the talents of individual citizens as volunteers, and for bringing to local government the perspective of the citizen removed from day-to-day administration. Service on a board familiarizes citizens with their community and develops potential community leaders, and it gives them a chance to implement their beliefs about which community needs should be addressed and how they should be met. Finally, boards provide citizens a way to practice the spirit of given and philanthropy, a way to serve their fellow citizens.

Local government board members can help make important decisions about government policies, about the distribution of community resources, and about the provision of services to residents. The quality and effectiveness of their input can affect the whole community. Most local governments have numerous volunteer boards and commissions that oversee and advise in a number of service areas such as housing, land use, civil service, historic preservation, planning and zoning, and recreation. Our advisory boards are appointed. Some serve mainly to study issues and recommend policy; others have the authority to put policy into action. This report addresses the challenge that local government administrators in all communities face - to help these citizen boards operate effectively and constructively.

## THE ROLE OF BOARDS: UNDERSTANDING THEIR MISSION

When members of local government citizen advisory boards have a poor understanding of their duties, they cannot contribute positively to the democratic process; and a very effective mechanism for securing citizen input may break down. Ineffective boards may cause citizens to become disillusioned with the democratic process - to feel that the government is rigid, does not accomplish its goals, or does not respond to citizens' voices. Citizens initially motivated by a spirit of giving may become disenchanted and may decline to participate further in civic activities. For these reasons it is essential that board members be properly oriented so that they understand their duties and carry them out effectively. An example of subjects to be covered during board orientation is shown in Figure 1.

A citizen board should understand its community's long-term goals. Goals are normally defined by the local elected policy-making body through the community's general plan, comprehensive plan, or long-term plan, which is periodically revised. Since a plan articulates a community's goals and provides direction for the community's leaders, the plan also provides guidance for citizen boards.

Effective board work depends on the board's understanding of the general direction in which the community is headed. The issues about which a board advises the local elected officials may be inextricably tied to the future of the community. For example, in its rulings, a zoning board must consider whether the community wants to develop into a major commercial area. Boards can help a community meet the objectives of its long-range plan, if the plan is allowed to guide not only the board's case-by-case decisions, but also its long-range goals, standards, and procedures.

Some of the organizational issues of relevance to citizen advisory boards must be clarified for the board; others must be clarified by the board. Examination of the organizational issues can strengthen board members' sense of purpose, sharpen their leadership skills, and improve their effectiveness.

ICMA, MIS Report. "Citizen Advisory Boards: Making Them Effective, October 1987, page 1.

### I. Citizen involvement in government.

- A. The people of the City of Alpena have placed the basic responsibility for the management of this City in their elected officials. The Charter recognizes the important role that individual citizens play in reviewing and evaluating the needs of the City through the structure of boards and commissions. For this reason, boards, commissions, and advisory committees shall be encouraged by the City of Alpena.

### II. Type of boards.

- A. Advisory Boards include boards, commissions, and committees established by ordinance or this Charter and composed of citizens sharing the common goals of improving the general welfare through their advice and assistance to the elected and appointed full-time City officials.

There are three types of boards created by:

- a. Charter
- b. Ordinance
- c. Resolution (ad hoc committee)
  - (1) Short-term for a specific project, and
  - (2) Continuing.

### III. Appointment of board members.

- A. Every member of a board, commission, or committee established by the City shall be a resident of the City of Alpena, if required by City Charter or ordinance, or by state law. If no such residency requirement exists, citizens residing outside the corporate limits of the City of Alpena, but within Alpena County, will be eligible for appointment. Members must meet all qualifications required by the Charter and the by-laws of the board, commission, or committee to which they are to be appointed. Non-resident members of the Wildlife Sanctuary Advisory Committee shall reside within an area whose farthest point from the City shall be equal to the distance from the City corporate limits to the farthest point on the County line measured in a straight line.

No less than 67% of the membership of any board, commission, or committee shall be residents of the City of Alpena, except for the Wildlife Sanctuary Advisory Committee, which shall be no less than 51%.

- B. Except as otherwise specifically provided in the Charter, state law, ordinance, or resolution, the Mayor and/or Council, where applicable, shall appoint persons to all such boards, commissions, and committees. No such appointment shall be effective until it has been confirmed by the Council.
- C. The City Manager's Secretary shall report to the Mayor and Council, prior to the first meeting in March, a list of the terms on City boards which shall end on June 30.
- D. The City Council shall establish and make public a procedure, which will provide for receiving either application or recommendations of individuals for membership on City boards, commissions, or committees.
- E. The appropriate appointing authority shall file a list of appointments to the several boards prior to the first Council meeting in May of each year, and Council shall act on each appointment at or prior to its first meeting in June.
- F. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be made upon the occurrence of the vacancy, and each person so appointed shall take office immediately upon the confirmation of the Council to serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

- G. Appointments to each board shall be made with regard to the diversity of Alpena citizens, their variety of interests, and the experience and expertise that each can contribute to the common good of the City. The term of appointment shall depend on the type of appointment made.
- IV. Ineligibility for boards.  
No person holding another City office or actively employed by the City shall be eligible to be a voting member on any board.
- V. Procedure.
- A. Each board shall organize itself for the conduct of its business and select its own officers, including a secretary who shall take the minutes of the board meetings.
  - B. Each board shall adopt its own rules of procedure consistent with this Charter.
  - C. The rules shall state the schedule of the regular board meetings. The schedule shall not conflict with regular meetings of the City Council.
  - D. The rules shall require that the public have a reasonable opportunity to be heard at all regular meetings of the board.
  - E. The rules shall define the extent to which non-attendance at meetings may be grounds for removal from office.
  - F. All rules of procedure shall be submitted to the City Attorney for approval as to form. The rules shall then be submitted to the City Clerk for transmission to the City Council. The rules shall be effective at the conclusion of the Council meeting at which they are received, unless the Council directs otherwise.
  - G. The Council may object to the rules in whole or in part and may return them to the board, proposing their adoption with a statement of its objections and recommendations.
  - H. The minutes of all board meetings shall be filed in the office of the Clerk as a public record. No official action taken by any board at any meeting shall be valid or effective until a copy of the minutes at which the action was taken is filed with the Clerk. All votes shall be recorded by Yeas and Nays by name.
  - I. Members of advisory boards shall serve without compensation, but the City Council may authorize the payment of the actual and necessary expenses of board members.
- VI. Vacancies.
- A. When a vacancy occurs on a board, the Mayor and Council shall first review written application requests from Alpena residents to be placed on a board.

- B. If no such list exists, the City Council may direct the City Clerk to immediately place a notice in the local newspaper seeking Alpena residents who have an interest in serving on a City board.
- C. Applicants for boards must complete a "Resume For Appointment to Boards and Commissions" form before being eligible for consideration on a board.
- D. Alpena residents shall be eligible to serve on only one advisory board in the fiscal year of the City.
- E. If no acceptable applicants for boards are received, the Mayor shall then either make a recommendation to the City Council of a possible applicant or the City Council individual members can recommend such an appointment with concurrence of the Council.