



Board of Directors Handbook: A Guide to the Responsibilities of SFMA Leadership

Part I: An Overview of Board Service

Introduction

Board service can be a most gratifying volunteer activity. The satisfaction that comes with knowing that you made a difference in an organization is immeasurable. As an SFMA board member you give confidence and accountability to the membership. Volunteering for board service is one way to validate your leadership abilities and enhance your credibility with your peers, your employer, your community and the industry. SFMA strives to be effective and efficient with your time and resources and has dedicated a headquarters staff to help make your board volunteer experience a rewarding one.

With leadership comes responsibility. This guide provides prospective board candidates with information to help you understand the responsibilities of being an SFMA board member. Whether you are considering running for election to the board now or sometime in the future or have been newly elected or appointed to fill a board position, this handbook has been developed to provide to you an overview of your obligations.

SFMA – The Organization

Mission:

SFMA enhances professionalism in sports field management and safety through education, awareness programs, and industry development.

SFMA is a 501 (c) 6 not-for-profit organization incorporated in the state of Colorado. As a not-for-profit association, SFMA does not pay income taxes and has responsibilities to file an annual report with the State of Colorado and file a Form 990 annually with the IRS. It provides information on the filing organization's mission, programs, and finances. SFMA is also required to have Bylaws that outline its governance system and membership requirements.

Key Statistics

Headquarters Location: P O Box 1673, Lawrence, KS 66044

Headquarters Telephone: 800-323-3875

Headquarters Fax: 785-843-2977

Staff: CEO (pending), 4 staff

Annual Conference & Exhibition: January

Monthly Magazine: Sports Field Management magazine

Membership: Approximately 2,700

Budget: Approximately \$1.3 million

Committee/Subcommittees/Task Groups:

Advocacy: Editorial, Environmental, International, Technical Standards

Education: Education, Information Outreach, Student Challenge, Conference Tours

Membership: Certification/Review, Historical, Membership

Awards/Scholarship: Awards, Innovative, Scholarship

Organizational Capacity: Chapter Relations, Ethics, Finance/Audit, Technology

Board of Directors Responsibility

The SFMA Board of Directors is the governing body for the association. It sets policy and strategic direction for the programs and services it provides to its membership and is accountable to its membership. The Board of Directors is responsible for the financial oversight of the association and for putting in place the appropriate management system for day-to-day operations. They have the authority as a collective group to approve contracts, employ persons, engage in legal action, and hold title to property. Individual board members do not have any legal authority to determine policy, employ persons, engage in legal actions, etc. unless specifically authorized do so by official board action. The SFMA board is covered by Directors and Officers liability insurance.

Composition

Board members are elected by the membership. Board volunteers receive no compensation for board service.

The SFMA board is comprised of 13 board members, which includes five Officers and eight Directors. The term of office for the Officers is one year, except the Commercial Vice President, who has a two-year term.

The outcome of the Secretary/Treasurer election determines who is on the path to the Presidency. The Commercial Vice President is not eligible to be slated in this race; and thus, cannot serve as President. Once elected, the Secretary/Treasurer ascends to the President-Elect office unopposed at the next election, and the President-Elect moves to the President unopposed. The President automatically ascends to the Immediate Past President office. The Nominating Committee places on the ballot for election the other candidates for Officer and Director positions (except for one Director position that is appointed by the President) and may ask specific questions of board candidates to determine eligibility and qualifications.

Officers

The specific duties of each Officer are defined in the SFMA Bylaws. The Officers make up the SFMA Executive Committee. The Officers are:

- President
- President-Elect
- Immediate Past President
- Vice-President Commercial
- Secretary/Treasurer

Directors

The Directors are elected to represent specific segments of membership. They each serve a two-year term, with the exception of the two At-Large Directors who each serve a one-year term. Three directors are elected in even numbered years offset by three directors elected in odd-numbered years. One Sports Turf Manager from each of the following membership segments is elected to a Director position:

- **Director** – Who manages sports fields used by professional athletes
- **Director** – Who manages sports fields for institutions of higher education
- **Director** – Who manages sports fields for institutions that provide education to students in grades K-12
- **Director** – Who manages sports fields for a parks and recreational facility, municipality, city or other non-profit entity
- **Director** – Commercial (company engaged in a commercial enterprise providing services and/or products to the sports field profession)
- **Director** – Academic (person engaged in research, education or in extension outreach programs related to sports fields)
- **Director** – At Large – Elected from any segment of membership
- **Director** – At Large – Appointed by the President. Usually, the President will appoint the candidate who does not win the Secretary/Treasurer election to this At-Large position

The balloting is conducted prior to the annual conference using mail and electronic methods as defined in the Bylaws. Newly elected board members take office during the annual meeting, which is held during the annual conference.

Individual Board Member's Responsibilities

The following is expected of each board member:

- **Attend and actively participate in quarterly board meetings (4 per year): January, March, July, October**
 - Board meeting locations vary and are often at an upcoming conference site. Each meeting is typically 1 ½ days long, with the exception of the January meeting. It is held just prior to the start of the SFMA conference at the conference site and typically lasts ½ to ¾ of a day. For 2022, the Board has held one virtual meeting, two in person and will hold another in person meeting in the fall. The in-person meeting was two days: a Thursday and

Friday (flying in on Wednesday). In some years, Board members have flown in on Friday (anytime) and the meeting began on Saturday morning and concluded on Sunday at noon.

- Dates for the Board meetings are usually set two meetings in advance.
 - All expenses for board meeting attendance are paid by the SFMA.
 - Board books are sent in advance of each meeting, in an electronic format outlining the actions and discussions needed. Each board member is to fully prepare in advance by reading all provided materials.
 - Board members will also lead discussions on relevant issues, such as those that are generated from their committees. Board members are expected to be open-minded, courteous, and respectful of other's opinions during the meeting and support problem-solving using the democratic process.
 - Board members are expected to keep confidential board meeting discussion, as requested. This also includes disagreeing in private and showing a collaborative front in public. This confidentiality is in place for life.
 - Typically, an email update on the board meeting outcomes is sent on behalf of each Director who represents a category to that category post-board meeting. SFMA Staff helps to develop the email and after it is approved, sends it on behalf of the Director.
- **Set Policy and Strategic Direction.**
 - The Board sets policy, formulates goals, and uses all available information and resources to advance the association in the best interests of its members.
 - A portion of each board meeting is typically set aside to evaluate the Strategic Plan progress. Facilitated strategic planning usually takes place every four years.
 - Staff executes Board decisions.
 - The CEO is responsible for all association operations and staff reports directly to the CEO.
 - **Chair one or more committees.**
 - Committees bring member perspective and insight to the development of programs and services.
 - Each committee meets as often as necessary to accomplish its goals, usually two to four times per year via conference call.
 - The SFMA President appoints all Committee Chairs and members of the Committees (except the Nominating Committee).
 - The Chair is responsible for facilitating the calls, setting the agenda, managing its progress to its goals, and developing the budget for the committee's work. Staff assists in all committee activities.
 - **Attend special events, as needed.**
 - This includes representing SFMA at various industry events, often presenting a technical topic and/or the state of the association on behalf of

- SFMA. Staff will provide association and other non-technical information for the presentation or create the presentation, as requested.
- The President may be asked to speak at international events and should have a current passport.
- **Attend and actively participate in the annual conference.**
 - Board members are expected to volunteer to moderate sessions and participate when asked.
 - Board members may be asked to play in the golf tournament held in conjunction with the conference.
 - All board members may receive complimentary registration, travel, accommodations and meals for their conference attendance.
- **Exhibit a high level of professionalism.**
 - SFMA board members are held to high standards of conduct professionally and personally. Each board member is required to abide by the SFMA's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Standards that it requires of all members.
 - Board members also must be aware of conflict-of-interest issues and anti-trust violations. Those will be discussed in detail at Board Orientation.

Typical Calendar

January – January Board meeting; New board members take office; SFMA Conference and Exhibition.

February – Committee chairs appointed; President, often with the help of the Executive Committee, appoints members to committees;

March – Committee work begins; new Board Member orientation; Spring Board meeting.

April-June – Conference Committees develop conference program and budget.

June-October – Nominations Committee develops recommended slate of candidates for election to Board of Directors.

June/July - Annual Audit or Financial Review conducted

June or July – Summer Board meeting; conference program is finalized, and conference budget is proposed and approved;

October or early November – Fall Board meeting; next year's operating budget is approved; Awards Committee judges applications and makes awards; Scholarship Committee receives applications to begin the judging process; Board votes on Founders' nominees.

November – Balloting information for Board of Directors sent to voting members. Also includes any Bylaws changes or other special votes required of the membership.

December – Candidates notified of election results. December 31 closes the fiscal year for SFMA.