

# Hello to Great Elections

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CHF Canada  
2017 Member Education Forum  
Workshop C3



## Objectives

**At the end of this workshop you will:**

- Want to raise the profile of board elections at your co-op
- Understand that good elections require planning and hard work
- Understand that good elections helps get your co-op a good board



## Outline

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of board elections
3. Successful elections
4. Role of board and staff in elections
5. Recruiting candidates
6. Wrap up

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## Members' role in co-op governance

What are governance decisions that only the members can make?

- Approving budgets/setting housing charges
- Setting the by-laws
- Appointing the auditor
- Electing the Directors

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## Are your members ready?

- For their role in elections?
  - To fulfill their governance responsibilities
- To cast their vote?
- To stand for election?
- To serve as a director?



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Members will turn out and vote carefully when they understand their role in electing directors.

Plus, they value the role directors play in governing the co-op.

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- Educate all members – an informed membership will set the bar high on election night
- Invest in members who express interest in becoming directors

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## Successful elections – Phase one

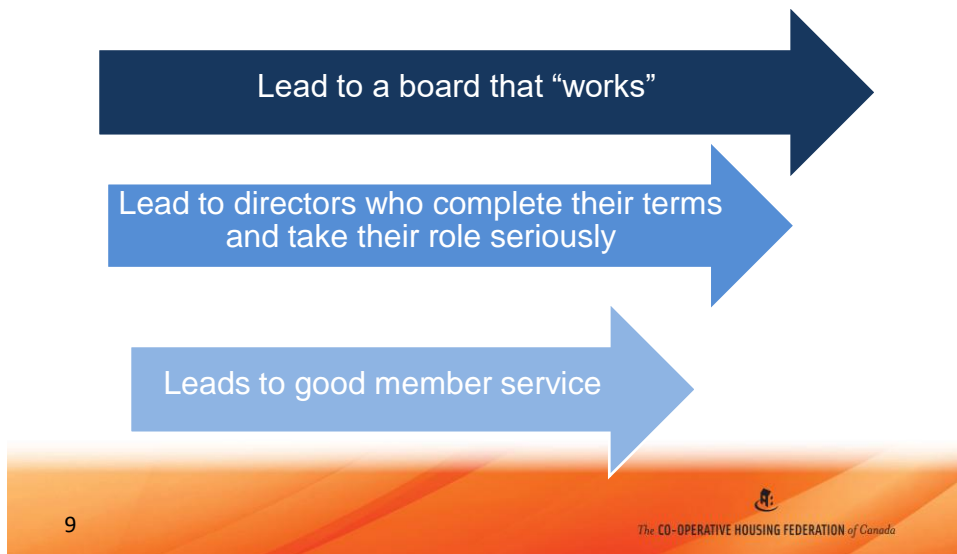
Are determined by a vote for candidates and not acclamations

Have lots of members present to cast votes

Have a transparent process that is shared with all members

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## Successful elections – Phase two



## Role of the board in elections

- Talk to members about your favourite part of being a Board member
- Answer any questions members might have about serving on the board – be positive
- Appoint a Nominations Committee or Election Officer to promote and prepare for a great election
- Encourage all members to be involved – run or nominate



## Role of the staff in elections

- Encourage all members to be involved  
– run or nominate
- Support the Nominations Committee by ensuring they have supplies they need as requested (i.e. flipchart paper, markers that work)

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## Leadership renewal

- A sign of good governance is succession planning
- Look for new leaders and support them to become great leaders
- Don't just recycle your directors



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## Qualifications of directors

- According to the Co-op Act – 18 years of age or older; member of the co-op; may not be mentally incompetent; may not be undischarged from bankruptcy
- Co-op's by-laws may include more qualifications – no arrears; no two members of the same household; no breaches to by-laws
- Any member who meets the qualifications may stand for election

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## What qualities should directors have?

- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Respect for members
- ✓ Ability to collaborate
- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Diligence
- ✓ Discretion



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## Recruiting candidates

- Strategies
- Barriers to running for the board
- Quality and quantity of directors



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## The nomination process should...

- Start several months before the election
- Follow your co-op's by-laws/rules, policy and procedures



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## What is your co-op's message?

- **The message from the board and staff needs to be that**
  - ❑ Leadership renewal
  - ❑ All members are welcome
  - ❑ New leaders are appreciated and encouraged
  - ❑ Education and support provided
  - ❑ Leader = value, respect, beneficial

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## Giving the right message?

- Testimonial from a current director
- Open opportunities for training
- Personal invitations to run
- Nomination forms everywhere
- Acknowledge retiring directors



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## Help members think they can do it

- Qualifications under Act and by-laws/rules
- Information about:
  - Kind of decisions and discussions the board has
  - Insurance
  - Time commitment
  - Training available

*“Are you a candidate?”*

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## What are some things that stop members' from running?

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## Candidates: quality and quantity

- Not one or the other
  - Should you look for candidates with specific skills?
  - Fill gaps on the board?
- Don't cherry pick candidates
  - All members have the right to stand for election
  - Trust the members to make the right vote

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## Creating the election



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## Plan ahead, well ahead

- Before the meeting
  - Recruit candidates
  - Report on candidates progress
  - Post names
  - Thermometer
  - Social
  - Election newsletters

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## Ask candidates to:

- Contribute to a newsletter
  - Special election newsletter
  - Questionnaire
- Attend *Meet the Candidates* social
  - Prepare them to talk about what qualifies them to be a director and why they want to be a director

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## Make the AGM an event

- Set the agenda
- Do something special
- Countdown
- Advertise guests
- Include a social portion
- Have kids perform or display
- Serve refreshments
- Above all, be organized



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## Election procedures

### Elections Officer will explain:

- Nomination Process
- Accept or decline nomination
- Candidates remarks
- Ballots – distribution, voting and collection
- Counting process
- Announce election results



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## Nomination process

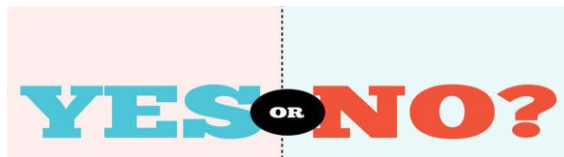
1. List advance nominations received
2. Motion to open nominations
3. Three calls for nominations
4. Motion to close nominations

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## Ask candidates...accept or decline?

- Review qualifications listed in by-laws
- Ask each candidate if they will accept or if they decline their nomination
- If decline, stroke their name off the list of candidates



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## Remarks from candidates

- Allow each candidate to make a brief statement to the members



- Allow members to ask questions of the candidates



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## Ballots & voting

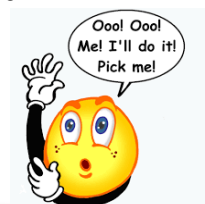
- ✓ Review how many directors are required to be elected
- ✓ Each ballot must contain a number of votes equal to the number of directors to be elected
- ✓ Spoiled ballot – does not contain the correct number of votes (not counted)

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## Ballot counters

- Two volunteers appointed by the members
  - Cannot be candidates for election
  - Should not be related to a candidate
  - Should not be from the same household as a candidate



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## Distribution of ballots

- One ballot per member in attendance
- No proxy voting



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## Casting ballots

- Elections officer shows ballot box is empty
- Each member places their completed ballot into box
- Ensure all ballots are received before going to count



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## Counting ballots



- Tally sheets should be used to record the votes for each candidate
- Separate spoiled ballots from the good ballots
- Goal is to ensure the counters each have the same number of votes for each of the candidates

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## Announce election results

- Election Officer announces the names of the newly elected directors in no particular order
- Co-op's by-laws will tell you whether you are to announce the vote count or not



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## What does your board need to succeed?

- Support from the members
- Clear and concise by-laws
- Workable budgets – operating & capital
- Support from Management
- Plan with identifiable goals



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## Who would you vote for?

- Did you think about?
  - Qualifications of the candidates?
  - Their speech?
  - How they would work together as a team?
  - How they would fit together with the existing directors?



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## Remaining directors

- **Helen Reddy**

Helen is very conscientious about her role as a director. She prepares for each meeting, takes training when it is offered, and contributes her ideas at the meetings. She is respected by the membership and her fellow directors. Helen is the currently the treasurer.

- **Stephen Leacock**

Stephen makes people laugh. He shares his ideas easily and often.

His creativity is obvious but sometimes he forgets about the co-op's rules when making decisions.

- **Serena Williams**

Serena gives her opinions a lot and repeats them when she thinks people aren't agreeing. Outside of board meetings, she sometimes speaks for the board when she shouldn't. She is a stickler about following the co-op's processes. It is obvious that Stephen gets under her skin.

  
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## What will you take back?

- Note one or two things that you will share with your home co-op.

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## Wrap-Up

Any final questions?



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Time for Evaluation
Evaluations on Conference App
https://eventmobi.com/2017agm/

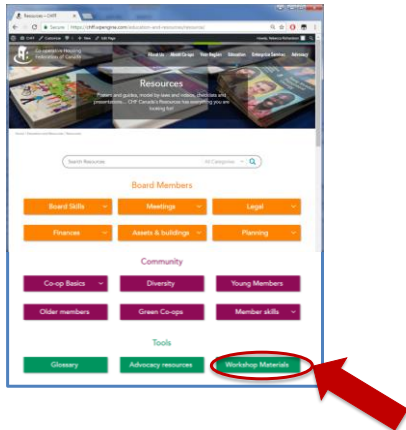


Paper copies also available in the workshop room!

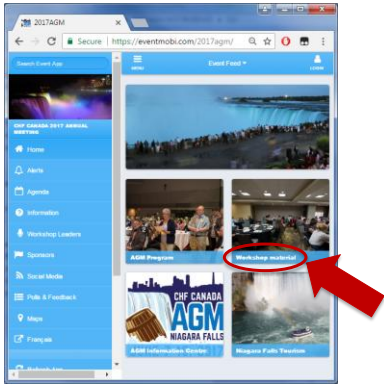
Multiple screenshots of the Eventmobi app interface showing navigation menus, event lists, and survey forms. Red circles and arrows highlight specific features like 'Workshops', 'Feedback', and 'Surveys'.

# Getting workshop materials

CHF Canada Website  
[www.chfcanada.coop/workshopmaterials](http://www.chfcanada.coop/workshopmaterials)



AGM Conference App  
<https://eventmobi.com/2017agm/>



# Great Elections

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[www.chfcanada.coop](http://www.chfcanada.coop)



## Tip #1

### Help members prepare for their role in elections...

Members are responsible for making 4 governance decisions in their co-op. Electing directors is by far the most important. Members play an important role in elections – they cast their votes, they stand for election and they serve as directors.

## Tip #2

### What makes elections successful?

- ✓ All members are involved: they run for the Board or they nominate a member they believe would be a good director
- ✓ An actual vote and not an acclamation
- ✓ Lots of voters casting “good” ballots
- ✓ Election procedures that the members understand and trust
- ✓ Getting a board that “**works**”
  - ✓ Makes good decisions
  - ✓ Is accountable
  - ✓ Puts the co-op first
  - ✓ Plans
  - ✓ Has no resignations or removals
  - ✓ Gives good member service

## Tip #3

### When recruiting candidates, think about:

- Starting well before the election
- What the members think about the Board and running for the Board
- Making running for the Board something that is valued by the membership
- Helping members feel they can run
- What stops members from running
- Looking for new leaders and supporting them to become great
- The qualification to run – any member that is qualified can run

## Tip #4

### Create an election “buzz” with:

- Election newsletters
- Countdown calendar
- Thermometer showing the number of candidates
- Advertise the AGM as an event
- Plan something special for the AGM



#### What does your Board need to succeed?

- Support from the members
- Support from management
- Clear, concise and up-to-date by-laws
- A plan with identifiable goals

#### What qualities should directors have?

- Strong ethical values
- Respect for the members and the decisions they make
- A willingness to be transparent and keep the members informed
- A commitment to their duty as a director



## A Sample Election Process

1. **Appoint an Elections Officer:** Check your co-op's by-laws to see who is responsible for making this appointment. Look for the Organizational By-law under the Article for Board Elections. The person appointed should not be running for election, should not be related to someone running for election and should not be from the same household as someone running for election.
2. **Review the Process for the Election:** The elections officer will explain to the members how the election will run. Start by stating the number of positions up for election at this meeting. There will be a call to open nominations from the floor. Once nominations are open the elections officer will make 3 calls for nominations. After the third call for nominations the elections officer will ask for a motion to close nominations. At this time each candidate will be asked if they wish to accept or decline their nomination. Once the slate of candidates has been established each candidate will be given the opportunity to address the members and the members can ask questions of the candidates. Ballots will then be distributed. Once all of the ballots have been cast the election officer and 2 volunteers will count the ballots. The elections officer will then announce the results of the election. Ask the members if they have any questions about the process before you move on.
3. **Review the qualifications to serve on the Board:** The Co-operative Corporations Act states that in order to serve on the Board of Directors you must be a member of the co-op, must be 18 years of age or older, may not be mentally incompetent or undischarged from bankruptcy. Please also review your co-op's by-laws for any additional qualifications the members may have set for the Board members. You will find this in your

Organizational By-law under the Article for Board of Directors. Remind the members that any member who currently does not meet the qualifications to serve on the Board can decline their nomination at the appropriate time when asked with no questions asked. Ask the members if they have any questions about the qualifications before you move on.

4. **Motion to Open Nominations:** The elections officer will ask the members for a motion to open nominations and ask for someone to second the motion. Once the motion has been moved and seconded call for the vote by asking for all in favour, any opposed, any abstentions.
  
5. **Three Calls for Nominations:** If the co-op has received any nominations in advance of the meeting those nominations should be read aloud and the candidate's names listed on a flip chart or somehow displayed for all members to see. Advise the members that you are making the first call for nominations. Any member may nominate themselves or another member. Once you receive a nomination ask for a seconder and then add the candidate's name to the list. Receive as many nominations as the members want to offer. When there seems to be a lull in the nominations tell the members you are making the second call for nominations. Receive as many nominations as the members want to offer. When there is a lull in the nominations remind the members how many positions they need to fill that evening and that they should be sure to nominate more candidates than there are positions for so that the members can be sure to exercise their democratic voice in these elections. Remind the members that if the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of positions to be filled then those candidates will be elected by acclamation and the members will not get the opportunity to vote. Then tell the members you are making your third and final call for nominations.

6. **Motion to Close Nominations:** Once there are no further nominations forthcoming from the members ask for a motion to close nominations and ask for someone to second the motion. The persons who make the motion to close nominations should not be running in the election. Once the motion has been moved and seconded call for the vote by asking for all in favour, any opposed, any abstentions.
  
7. **Ask Candidates to Accept or Decline their Nominations:** At this time you should once again review the qualifications for serving on the board of directors. Starting with the last candidate nominated go up through the list and ask each candidate if they wish to accept or decline their nomination. If they decline stroke their name off the list of candidates. Once all of the candidates have had an opportunity to accept or decline their nomination ask the Manager to confirm that all of the candidates are eligible to run in this election. The Manager will answer “Yes” or “No”. If “yes” move on to the next step. If “No” review the qualifications once more and ask each of the remaining candidates once again if they accept or decline their nomination. If there are more candidates running in the election than there are seats available to fill at this meeting continue on through the process. **If the number of candidates running for election is less than or equal to the number of seats to be filled then declare the candidates elected by acclamation and the election process is complete.**
  
8. **Remarks from Candidates & Questions from Members:** Allow each of the candidates to make a brief statement to the members outlining why they want to serve on the Board of Directors and what they see as an important contribution they can make to the governance of the co-op. Ask the members if they have any questions they would like to pose to the candidates.

9. **Appointing Volunteers to assist with counting the ballots:** Ask the members to appoint 2 volunteers to assist in counting the ballots. These volunteers cannot be candidates for election and should not be related to someone running in the election or be from the same household as someone running in the election.
  
10. **Balloting:** Before the ballots are distributed explain that the members are being asked to elect xnumber of directors to the board at this election. Each ballot must contain a number of votes equal to the number of directors to be elected. For example if there are 4 positions to be elected then each ballot must contain 4 different names. Any more or less than 4 names will result in a spoiled ballot and will not be counted in the election. Make sure the members are very clear on this before you hand out the ballots. Show the members the ballot box and show them that there are no ballots already in the box. Each member will be given one ballot. After every member has received their ballot and had time to mark it, members will be asked to place their ballots in the ballot box. Once all of the ballots have been received into the ballot box the elections officer and the 2 volunteers will take the ballot box to a quiet spot to count the ballots.
  
11. **Counting the Ballots:** Each of the volunteers should write each of the candidates names on a sheet of paper. They can use the simple tally method to track the votes. (4 marks and a line through it makes 5) This makes it very simple to add up the votes at the end. The elections officer will remove one ballot at a time from the ballot box. Quickly review the ballot to ensure that it contains the correct number of votes and that each vote is for a different valid candidate. If the ballot does not have the correct number of votes, or if they have voted for one candidate more than once, or if they voted for someone who was not listed on the list of candidates then declare the ballot spoiled and set it aside. None of the votes on that ballot will count. If the quick review shows that it is a good ballot read out each of the names on the ballot so the volunteers can tally

the votes. Keep an eye on the volunteers to make sure that you are not reading the names too fast. We want to make sure the volunteers have time to make sure their tallies are accurate. Set the good ballots in one pile and the spoiled ballots in a separate pile. Once all of the ballots have been read aloud and tallied ask the volunteers to total the votes cast for each candidate. Both volunteers should get the same number for each of the candidates. If they do not you will have to go back through the pile of good ballots and re-read the votes cast for **only the candidates that they had differing votes for** . Once both of the volunteers have exactly the same number of votes for each candidate you will determine the candidates who are elected to the board. The volunteers should each sign and date their tally sheet. If there were spoiled ballots the volunteers should list the number of spoiled ballots on the tally sheet as well. The tally sheets and the ballots (both good and spoiled) will be placed in a large envelope and sealed.

12. **Announce the Election Results:** The elections officer and the volunteers will return to the meeting. The elections officer will thank the volunteers for their assistance and then announce the names of the newly elected directors in no particular order. The co-op's by-laws will tell you whether you are to announce the vote count or not. You will find this in the Organizational By-law in the Article about Board of Directors Election Procedures.

13. **Motion to Destroy Ballots:** The elections officer will then ask that the members make a motion to destroy the ballots after the period of time that is outlined in the co-op's By-laws. You will find this in the Organizational By-law in the Article about Board of Directors Election Procedures. Once a member has made the motion and another has seconded it call for the vote by asking for all in favour, any opposed, any abstentions.

## **Election Procedures for Members**

The Annual Board of Directors Election is fast approaching and will be held on a date yet to be determined in **[insert month]**.

### **Number and Term of Directors:**

At this election we will be electing **[insert number of directors to be elected]** of **[insert total number of directors on your board]** directors. **[insert names]** will remain on the Board to fulfill their 2 year term. Directors are normally elected for a two year term, unless they are being elected to fill a vacancy created by a resignation. If that is the case then the new director will be elected for the period of time remaining on the term of the director who resigned. This will allow the Co-op to keep its normal rotation of directors and to maintain continuity of the Board's work. (i.e. there will always be Board members who know the business that the Board was working on before the election so that it can be carried on.)

### **Qualifications of Directors:**

- Must be at least 18 years of age and a Member of the Co-op
- Must be a resident Canadian
- Must not be an undischarged bankrupt
- Must not be mentally incompetent
- Must not be in arrears to the Co-op
- **[insert other qualifications the co-op has included in their Organizational By-law]**

**Nomination of Directors:**

Any Member may nominate him/herself or any other Member of the Co-op who meets the qualifications listed above. Members can nominate as many Members as they wish. Each nomination must also be seconded by another Member of the Co-op. Once a nomination has been made and seconded the Member being nominated can accept or decline the nomination. If they accept it they will need to sign the nomination form certifying that they meet the qualifications to be a director and they agree to run for a position on the Board of Directors. Please use the attached nomination forms to make nominations. If you need more nomination forms or to drop off completed nomination forms please see the Elections Committee which consists of **[insert name]** in Unit # **[insert unit #]** or **[insert name]** in Unit #**[insert unit #]**. Nominations can also be received from the floor at the meeting.

**Voting for Directors:**

Voting will be done by ballot. The ballots will include the names of all declared candidates who accepted their nomination 48 hours in advance of the meeting and will also have blank lines to allow Members to vote for any candidates nominated at the meeting.

Each Member will vote for **[insert # of directors to be elected]** candidates on your ballot. Any ballot with more or less than **[insert # of directors to be elected]** votes will be void and will not count in the election. No candidate can receive more than one vote from any Member. All votes will be cast at the General Members Meeting and quorum shall be maintained throughout the voting period.

Once all votes are cast the Elections Committee will count the votes, announce the results of the election. The co-op's Organizational By-law will state whether or not

the announcement will contain the number of votes for each candidate, of if the number of votes will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. After the meeting, the ballots will be sealed and kept in the office for the period of time specified in the Organizational By-law. If no Member requests a recount then these ballots will be destroyed after the specified period has expired.

### **Meet & Greet the Candidates:**

The Elections Committee will host an informal Meet and Greet where the Members can come to the Common Unit have some refreshments and talk to the declared candidates. The date for this meet and greet will be announced as soon as it is determined.

### **Questions?**

If you have any questions about the election procedures please feel free to contact the Elections Committee which consists of **[insert name]** at Unit # **[insert unit #]** or **[insert name]** at Unit # **[insert unit #]**.



## **Elections Committee Checklist**

- Distribute the Election Procedures for Members including the Nomination Forms
- Determine date of AGM from Board of Directors
- Set date for Candidates Meet and Greet (talk to the declared candidates and try to pick a date when the most of them can attend)
- Organize the Candidates Meet and Greet including refreshments
- Prepare election newsletter (ask candidates to submit a short bio that can be published to help members get to know who they are)
- Prepare Ballots
- Prepare a flip chart/Powerpoint list of all the declared candidates with room to add nominations from the floor so the Members can see the names of all the persons nominated
- Prepare a flip chart/Powerpoint outlining the instructions for voting (i.e. the number of votes that must be included on each ballot for it to be counted and any other logistical directions you want to give the Members to keep the process easy)
- Obtain a complete list of all Members of the Co-op who would be eligible to vote at the election
- Prepare Tally Sheets for counting the votes
- Ensure a Ballot Box is ready for the Election
- Ensure you have a large envelope to seal the ballots and tally sheets inside after the election results are announced.