



Business & Government Affairs Committee

Policy & Procedures Manual

Mission Statement

The mission of the Metro North Chamber of Commerce Business and Government Affairs Committee (BGAC) is to proactively engage in local, state, and federal government related issues and to cultivate positive and proactive working relationships with elected officials, thus creating a favorable and profitable business climate for our Metro North communities.

Purpose of this Manual

- To define the purpose, policies, and process of the BGAC to its members and the local communities; and
- To provide proper guidance to the BGAC and Chamber Board of Directors in order to facilitate appropriate action on issues that directly impact the local business communities in a clear and timely manner.

Policy Statement (Guidelines)

The BGAC can review any proposed legislation or issue, which might have ramifications for local businesses. The evaluation shall also take into account prior Chamber positions adopted by its Board of Directors. The BGAC and the BGA Executive Committee makes recommendations, where appropriate, to the Board of Directors for purposes of establishing official Chamber positions.

The BGAC is open to all Chamber members in good standing. During legislative session, the BGAC meets twice monthly to review bills that are being considered at the Capitol. BGAC members attending the twice monthly meetings may vote on whether to support, oppose or remain neutral on a particular bill.

The BGA Executive Committee will vote to approve or deny (with further action needed) any decision made by the BGAC at its twice monthly meetings at the end of each meeting. A quorum of the BGA Executive Committee must be present in order for an official vote to take place.

BGA Executive Committee Role/Composition

The BGA Executive Committee has the authority on behalf of the Board of Directors, to approve any legislation positions that align with the approved policy platform consistent with the Chamber's and BGAC's mission statement.

The BGA Executive Committee shall consist of up to 11 voting members representing different areas of expertise and it will include at least two (2) board member(s). It should strive to be representative of the general MNCC membership, varying in size and type of business represented. The Chamber CEO shall also sit on the Committee at an advisory level, but shall have no voting rights. The BGA Executive Committee will include one (1) Chair and one (1) Vice-Chair, who will be appointed by the incoming Metro North Chamber of Commerce Chair of the Board of Directors each year.

BGA Executive Committee meetings are open to all other members of the Chamber for informational purposes only (no voting rights). Along with voting members, the committee will consist of additional non-voting members to serve in the capacity of advisors and informational resources.

Consideration for Membership

Prospective BGA Executive Committee members can apply for openings by notifying the Chamber office or the BGA Executive Committee Chair. All applicants must fill out a "Prospective Member Questionnaire". The Chamber Board will select a BGA Executive Committee Membership Committee who in turn will recommend to the Board prospective candidates to fill specific openings on the BGA Executive Committee. New committee members must be approved by the Metro North Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

The BGA Membership Committee will accept nominations and/or application forms for BGA Executive Committee membership with a start date of September 1 and a deadline to submit of October 15 of each year. Appointment to the BGA Executive Committee will be reviewed and drawn from that applicant pool and approved by the Metro North Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors no later than December 1 of each calendar year.

Responsibilities of Committee Members

BGA Executive Committee members may be expected and/or requested to correspond and/or bring forth potential business sensitive issues to government officials and/or appropriate persons, in response to legislation and/or legislative activities that the BGAC has taken a position on. Their activities may include writing letters, public speaking, and/or making phone calls. The BGA Executive Committee will regularly report its activities to the Board of Directors and the Chamber membership via email newsletter, email blasts, website content, and print.

Terms of Office

BGA Executive Committee members will serve a 2-year term beginning January 1 and ending December 31 of each calendar year not to exceed four years in concurrent terms. After four years of service a voting member will become a non-voting member and must stay in that capacity for one year before applying for an opening as a voting member. (Exception is the first appointed committee which, at board discretion, will be staggered to avoid a lack of continuity.)

Dismissal of any BGAC or BGA Executive Committee member may be made by the BGA Executive Committee Chair and reported to the Board of Directors at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors.

Policy/Position Statements

The BGAC will create annually policy/position statements that are broad, show the Chamber's position of support or opposition on issues, and that allow the Chamber to react quickly as the issue changes. These statements are not specific to a single piece of legislation, but they are positional to reinforce the Chamber's position on business issues.

Positions/Reporting

The Board of Directors shall be updated each month of all activities and/or legislative positions approved by the BGAC at the regularly scheduled Board meeting. The BGA Executive Committee shall have the authority on behalf of the Board of Directors, as needed, to approve any legislative positions of "support," "oppose," or "no position" and to engage in other necessary action that aligns with the approved policy platform of the Board of Directors.

If the BGA Executive Committee is asked to take a position or speak to a project, policy issue, or other matter that does not clearly align with the current policy platform, the BGA Executive Committee may either 1) decline to take action or engage further with regards to the matter, or 2) choose to forward the issue/matter and any recommendations to the Board for further review and discussion. If a project, policy issue, or other matter is time sensitive and the Board is not meeting within a reasonable timeframe, the issue(s) may be communicated via e-mail to the entire Board for consideration and approval in a manner consistent with the Chamber's Bylaws and policy on written ballot action without a meeting.

Issue Selection

The BGAC utilizes the following criteria when selecting positional issues.

The criteria includes:

- The issue directly affects the economic climate for business.
- The issue is of concern across the entire business community (not industry specific, or of a special interest group).
- The Chamber and the business community have the opportunity to have significant impact on the issue and/or its resolution.

Process for Review of Requests

When the Metro North Chamber, or BGA Executive Committee, is approached by any person and/or organization with a request to take some action on an item/issue, the following process must be followed.

Individuals and/or organizations shall submit written requests to the Chamber CEO, Board Chair, or BGA Executive Committee Chair that includes the following information:

1. A brief summary and description of the issue/item and how this item/issue directly impacts/affects business (*any additional information, website, written collateral, etc., may be included/attached with the written request);
2. The specific action being requested (write letter, speak on behalf of issue, send out email blast, informational only, etc.);
3. The timing being requested for such action, including whether any specific dates/deadlines are applicable;
4. A list of any current supporters, endorsements, etc.;
5. Whether the person or organization would like to make a brief presentation/Q&A at the next BGAC or BGA Executive Committee meeting; and
6. Specific contact name, email address, and phone number for further questions and/or information

If the person/organization making the request wishes to make a brief presentation at a Committee meeting, they must limit their presentation to the time limit given to them by the BGA Executive Committee Chair. The BGA Executive Committee reserves the right not to have a presentation if agenda does not permit.

Once the issue has been reviewed and a decision on action has been voted upon, then the proper contact person(s)/group will be notified by either the BGA Executive Committee Chair or Chamber President/CEO at the earliest opportunity. The BGA Executive Committee meets on the first Wednesday of each month so requests will be placed on the Agenda and reviewed in the order in which they are received.

The BGA Executive Committee will not review any issue/item requested by an outside party (individual or group) that is not in writing as detailed above and cannot guarantee that requests made too close to or on the day of the next committee meeting can be reviewed. If the BGA Executive Committee receives a request and it is clear that the issue/item does not fall within the scope or does not have a significant impact on business within our communities, then either the BGA Executive Committee Chair or Chamber President/CEO will do her best to contact that individual/organization immediately and inform them that the Committee will take a "no position" on the proposed request.

Attendance

The BGA Executive Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 a.m. in the Metro North Chamber of Commerce Conference Room. If a council member accumulates more than 4 absences a year, the member will be asked to leave the committee.

Minutes

Minutes shall be kept of all BGA Executive Committee and BGAC meetings by an assigned staff person and all recommendations shall be in writing. Agendas and topics for the meetings will be set by the BGA Executive Committee Chair and may be amended or expanded as needed by other committee members and/or the Chamber's President/CEO.

Quorum

A quorum will consist of those voting members in attendance at any regularly scheduled meeting.

Amendments

The authority to approve the BGAC operating procedures shall be vested in the Metro North Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has the authority to modify any position of the BGAC and the BGA Executive Committee.

Endorsements

The Metro North Chamber of Commerce can endorse political candidates at the state, local and federal level. A Chamber-created Political Action Committee does not exist at this time and therefore the Chamber cannot offer financial support to candidates.