

Submitting a Board Proposal

Big changes at WMI (a new policy, a new committee, a change to board structure or membership, a significant purchase) go to the Board of Directors as a written **proposal**. A proposal lays out the problem, the specific change, its cost and risks, and the exact motion the board is asked to vote on. Approved proposals so far include Project Continuum (board seats and succession), Project Groundswell (member nominations) and Project Barnraising (the Space Improvement Committee).

To be confirmed: how a member who is not on the board should submit a proposal (for example, through a sponsoring board member or by email to the Secretary).

How a proposal moves

1. **Draft.** The author or a committee writes the proposal and gathers supporting material.
2. **Under review.** The proposal is formally submitted and included in the board packet so directors can read it before the meeting.
3. **Board consideration.** It is presented at a board meeting, discussed, possibly amended, and voted on.
4. **Final status.** Approved, rejected, deferred (stays active for a later meeting) or withdrawn.

Each proposal gets a number in the form **P-YYYY-NNN** (for example, P-2026-001 is the first proposal of 2026) and is tracked in the board's proposal registry. Proposals are also grouped by category: Strategic, Policy, Budget, Personnel, Program or Governance.

What to include

Use these sections. Keep each one as short as it can be while still being clear.

Section	What goes in it
Header	Title, proposal number, category, who is submitting it, date submitted, status
Executive summary	Two or three sentences a director could understand without reading further

Section	What goes in it
Background	Why this is coming up now; what problem or opportunity it addresses
Proposal details	The specific changes or actions, listed as clear components
Financial impact	Costs, funding sources and any ongoing commitment, in a small table. If none, say "This proposal has no direct financial impact."
Implementation plan	Phases, target dates and who owns each phase
Risks and mitigation	Each risk with its likelihood, impact and how you will handle it
Alternatives considered	Other approaches and why this one was chosen
Stakeholder input	Who was consulted and what they said
Board consideration history	Each meeting where it came up and what happened
Approval	Decision date, vote and resolution number (filled in by the board)
Appendices	Supporting materials

Tips for a proposal that gets a clear decision

- **End with the exact motion** you want the board to vote on.
- **State what does not change**, especially if the proposal touches authority or roles.
- **Be honest about money.** WMI is a small nonprofit; a proposal that names its funding source is easier to approve.
- **Name an owner** for implementation. Under the board's committee practice, an initiative without a committed, capable lead waits until one emerges.

Related pages

- **Policy Register** (in the Policies book)
- **Committees** chapter

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