Serving on your building’s co-op or condo board isn’t rocket science — but for first-timers, it can be full of surprises.

● It’s a much bigger job than you think. “There’s a huge flow of information to absorb and attention required,” says co-op and condo attorney Dean M. Roberts of Norris, McLaughlin & Marcus, whose firm routinely conducts training sessions for new board members.

● You need to recognize a conflict of interest when you see it — and the appearance of one, too. As a board member, you can’t be loyal to or receive benefits from someone doing business with the building — unless you disclose it to the rest of the board and abstain from negotiations and decision-making.

● It’s not your job to supervise the staff. “Boards set policy — they don’t implement it,” Roberts says. It’s your property manager’s job to make sure the porter sweeps the lobby five times a day.

● You will need to learn to read a financial report. “Even if you haven’t opened a math book since grade school, rest assured it can be done,” Roberts says.

● There are politics. “New board members are routinely surprised about how personal things can get and how resistant to change longtime members can be,” Roberts says. Boards should be a little like families, “fighting intensely among themselves but showing a uniform front to the world.”

Personal politics come into play on a co-op board.