

MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

2027 Officer Application

First Vice President — 1-Year Term

Applicant Information

Full Name: Sharon M Virgin

NRDS / M1 Number: 542000306

Company Name: Dustin Young and Company

Position / Title: Broker / REALTOR®

Cell Phone: (406) 868-2014

Office Phone: (406) 868-2014

Years Licensed: 29

Years as State Director: 10

Local Association / Board: Great Falls Association of REALTORS® (GFAR)

Type of Business: Residential, Commercial, Investment, Relocation

Mailing Address: 1100 9th St So, Suite B, Great Falls, MT 59405

Position Sought: First Vice President 2027 (1-year term)

Position Held at State Level: Committee Member: Professional Development, GRI, Finance and Forms Sub-Committee. Currently serves as Board of Realty Regulation Board Chair and Screening Panel Chair.

REALTOR® Association History

Local Association / Board

Has held every position on the local Board: President, President-Elect (2x), Treasurer, Secretary, Local and State Director. Chaired all committees at some point except Government Affairs. Instructor for local classes and orientations. RPAC supporter for 29 years — Capital Club and Major Investor (2nd year). Sits on Grievance and Professional Standards and has chaired a Professional Standards hearing.

State Association

Past Chair: Communication and Professional Development Committee; Committee member. Instructor for the Supervising Broker Enhancement Course. Attended REALTOR® Day at the Capitol. Attends state meetings and assists where needed.

National Association

Committee member in 2020. Attended NAR Convention multiple times over the years. Attended Leadership Training in Chicago (2 times).

Leadership Essay Questions

What qualities, experiences, and leadership attributes have best prepared you to serve as an MAR officer, and how would those strengths benefit the association?

My leadership has been shaped by service, education, and showing up when the work needs to be done.

I am a proud Veteran and spouse of a Veteran of the United States Air Force and have been a REALTOR® for 29 years — a Broker, an instructor, a local association leader, and a current member of the Montana Board of Realty Regulation. I have served on local, state, national and community boards, and those experiences have taught me how to listen, ask good questions, work through hard issues, and stay focused on what is best for the members and the public we serve.

One of my strongest qualities is that I am practical. I understand what it is like to be a working REALTOR® in Montana today. I know the pressures our members face with contracts/forms, education, professionalism, technology, legal risk, and changing consumer expectations. I also understand that

leadership is not about having the loudest voice in the room. It is about being prepared, respectful, steady, and willing to do the work.

My background has helped me see how important clear communication is. Members need information they can understand and use in their daily business. As an MAR officer, I would bring a strong commitment to member education, good governance, transparency, and practical decision-making.

I believe my experience, work ethic, and heart for service have prepared me to serve MAR well. My goal would be to help strengthen the association, support our local boards, protect the REALTOR® brand, and make sure Montana REALTORS® feel informed, represented, and valued.

What do you believe is the role of an MAR officer, and how does that role differ from the responsibilities of committees and staff?

I believe the role of an MAR officer is to provide leadership, vision, and stewardship for the association while always keeping the needs of Montana REALTORS® at the center of decision-making. Officers have a responsibility to help set strategic priorities, support the mission of the association, represent members professionally, and ensure that the organization remains financially strong, relevant, and forward-thinking.

An effective officer also serves as a bridge between the membership, committees, local associations, and staff. Listening is a critical part of the role. Officers should seek input from members across the state, encourage collaboration, and help build consensus around important issues facing the association and the real estate industry.

I see committees and staff as essential partners, but with different responsibilities. Committees provide expertise, recommendations, and member-driven perspectives in their areas of focus. They do much of the detailed work, research, and discussion that helps inform decisions. MAR staff keeps it going by bringing knowledge, continuity, operational expertise, and day-to-day execution of the association's programs, services, and strategic objectives.

The role of an officer is not to manage staff or replace the work of committees. Instead, officers should provide leadership, support good governance, help establish priorities, and empower both committees and staff to be successful. When each group understands and respects its role, the association operates more effectively and delivers greater value to its members.

Ultimately, I view the role of an MAR officer as one of service — leading with integrity, building relationships, supporting our volunteers and staff, and helping ensure that MAR remains a strong and trusted voice for Montana REALTORS® and private property rights.

How would you promote timely, transparent, and effective communication among MAR Officers, directors, committees, MAR team, local associations, and members?

I believe effective communication begins with consistency, transparency, and a willingness to listen. Members are more engaged when they understand not only what decisions are being made, but also why they are being made.

As an MAR officer, I would encourage clear expectations, timely updates, and open dialogue among officers, directors, committees, staff, local associations, and members. Communication should be a two-way process where members feel comfortable sharing ideas, concerns, and feedback, and leadership actively listens.

Local associations play a critical role because they are closest to the challenges members face every day. Strengthening communication between MAR and local associations helps ensure information is shared consistently and concerns are identified early.

My experience as an instructor, broker, and volunteer leader has taught me that communication is most effective when it is clear, respectful, and practical. Using a variety of communication channels helps ensure members stay informed, connected, and engaged.

Ultimately, my goal is to foster an environment where members feel heard, informed, and represented. Strong communication builds trust, strengthens relationships, and helps MAR better serve REALTORS® across Montana.

What do you believe are the most significant challenges and opportunities currently facing MAR, and why?

I believe MAR faces several significant challenges, but each presents an opportunity to strengthen our association and increase its value to members.

One of the biggest challenges is helping REALTORS® navigate a rapidly changing industry. Technology, AI, evolving consumer expectations, regulatory requirements, affordability concerns, and inventory challenges require members to adapt quickly. MAR plays an important role in providing education, resources, and advocacy that help members remain successful and relevant.

Member engagement is another challenge and opportunity. Many members are focused on running their businesses and may not fully understand the value of the REALTOR® organization or the work being done on their behalf. MAR must continue to communicate its impact, develop future leaders, and strengthen connections between the state association, local associations, and members.

Advocacy remains one of MAR's most important responsibilities. Protecting private property rights and ensuring REALTORS® have a strong voice in legislative and regulatory discussions is critical to our profession and the consumers we serve.

I also see tremendous opportunity in professional development. By providing practical education, leadership training, and resources, MAR can help members adapt to industry changes and better serve their clients.

Most importantly, MAR's greatest strength is its people. Through strong leadership, effective communication, and collaboration among members, volunteers, local associations, and staff, we can continue to strengthen the value and relevance of the REALTOR® organization across Montana.

If elected, what specific contributions or leadership priorities would you bring to help MAR address these challenges and advance its mission?

If elected, I would focus on three priorities: strengthening member engagement, advancing professional development, and fostering strong communication throughout the association.

First, I believe MAR must continue demonstrating its value to members. Clear communication about advocacy efforts, professional standards, education, and member resources helps REALTORS® understand the impact of their association and encourages greater engagement.

Second, I would continue to champion professional development. As our industry evolves, MAR can help members adapt to changes in technology, AI, regulatory requirements, and consumer expectations through practical and relevant education.

Third, I would prioritize leadership development and volunteer engagement. Strong associations depend on a pipeline of leaders who are prepared to serve at both the local and state levels.

I would bring a collaborative leadership style focused on listening, relationship-building, and respect for the contributions of members, volunteers, local associations, and staff.

Above all, I would remain focused on MAR's mission of supporting REALTORS®, protecting private property rights, promoting professionalism, and delivering meaningful value to members across Montana.

Describe a time you worked through disagreement or conflict in a leadership setting. What was your approach, and what did you learn from the experience?

Throughout my years in association leadership, board service, and committee work, I have learned that disagreement is inevitable and can often lead to better decisions.

One situation involved a committee working through differing opinions on a policy matter. Members had strong viewpoints and concerns about the impact of the decision. My approach was to focus on listening first — encouraging open discussion, asking questions, and ensuring everyone felt heard and respected. Once we identified the key concerns, we shifted the conversation from individual positions to our shared goals and responsibilities.

By focusing on the facts, potential impacts, and what was best for the organization, we reached a decision that the group could support, even if it was not everyone's preferred outcome.

What I learned is that leadership during conflict is not about winning an argument. It is about creating an environment where people can have honest conversations, feel respected, and work toward a common solution. Those experiences have reinforced my belief that strong decisions come from thoughtful discussion, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to the organization's mission.

What do you believe MAR must do to remain relevant and valuable to members across the state?

To remain relevant and valuable, MAR must continue to focus on the things individual REALTORS® cannot effectively do on their own: advocacy, professional standards, education, leadership development, and protecting the REALTOR® brand.

Advocacy remains one of our most important responsibilities. Members need a strong voice protecting private property rights and representing the interests of REALTORS® and their clients in legislative and regulatory matters.

MAR must also provide practical, timely resources that help members navigate changes in technology, AI, risk management, regulatory requirements, and consumer expectations. Ongoing professional development is essential to helping REALTORS® remain competitive and successful.

Clear communication is equally important. Members are more likely to see value in the association when they understand how MAR is working on their behalf and how they can become involved.

Finally, MAR must continue investing in leadership development and member engagement while recognizing the diverse needs of REALTORS® across Montana. By listening to members, supporting local associations, and staying focused on member value, MAR can continue to strengthen both the profession and the association for years to come.

How would you balance listening to members' input with making a timely and sometimes difficult decision in the best interest of the association?

I believe listening and decision-making are both essential leadership responsibilities, and neither should come at the expense of the other.

Member input is critical because it helps leaders understand the real-world challenges, concerns, and opportunities facing REALTORS® across Montana. Before making significant decisions, I believe leaders should actively seek feedback, ask questions, review available information, and consider the perspectives of members, local associations, committees, directors, and staff. People are more likely to support decisions when they know their voices have been heard and considered.

At the same time, leaders have a responsibility to make decisions in the best interest of the association, even when there is not complete agreement. There are times when decisions must be made within a specific timeframe, and waiting for unanimous consensus is neither practical nor possible. In those situations, I believe it is important to evaluate the facts, consider the long-term impact on the organization, and remain focused on MAR's mission and strategic goals.

My approach is to listen carefully, gather information, encourage thoughtful discussion, and then make the best decision possible based on the information available. Once a decision is made, I believe leaders should communicate openly about the reasoning behind it, even when members may disagree with the outcome. Transparency helps build trust and demonstrates respect for those who took the time to provide input.

Throughout my experiences, I have learned that effective leadership is not about making everyone happy. It is about making thoughtful, informed decisions that serve the whole organization well while ensuring people feel heard, respected, and valued throughout the process.

Ultimately, I believe the best leaders are those who listen with an open mind, decide with courage, and lead with integrity. Those principles would guide my approach as an MAR officer.

What is your understanding of the time commitment and expectations of this office, and how will you meet them?

I understand that serving as an MAR officer requires a significant commitment of time, preparation, travel, and engagement. The role extends beyond meetings and includes leadership, strategic planning, member engagement, advocacy, and representing the association throughout Montana.

Having served as Chair of the Montana Board of Realty Regulation, Chair of MAR Professional Development, and in numerous local, state, national and community leadership roles, I have developed a realistic understanding of the commitment required. These experiences have strengthened my ability to balance leadership responsibilities while maintaining a successful real estate business.

If elected, I will meet the expectations of the office by being intentional with my schedule, staying prepared and engaged, and treating my MAR responsibilities as a priority. I believe leadership is about service, accountability, and follow-through.

Most importantly, I am seeking this office because I believe in the mission of MAR and the value of the REALTOR® organization. I am prepared to dedicate the time, energy, and attention necessary to represent our members and help advance the association's goals.

Signature & Nomination

Applicant Signature: Sharon M Virgin

Date: June 19, 2026

Nominated By: Kerry Alber-Lynch

Nominator Title / Office: REALTOR®

Nominator Email: alberlynch@gmail.com

Nomination Date: June 19, 2026