

The Effective Board Member's Orientation Manual

Ginsler & Associates Inc.

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About Ginsler and Associates Inc.

Ginsler and Associates Inc. is a full service consulting firm addressing the needs of charitable organizations, their donors, and funders.

For charitable organizations we provide a range of services including Website donations planning, community capacity building processes, organizational excellence projects, collaborative community planning, donor prospecting, grant writing, and more.

For donors and funders we provide assistance with donations policies and processes, planning, and community needs assessments, as well as program evaluations and operational reviews of funded organizations or potential recipients.

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ISBN:0-9683943-1-0

INTRODUCTION

The following sections form an orientation package on basic skills for effective Board members. In each section we outline the essential skills and information Board members need in order to maximize their benefit to the organization and the people it serves. The organization of the material follows the list of basic skills for Board members which appears on the following page.

It is important to understand that, as a Board member, you have certain responsibilities to funders, consumers, staff, and many other stakeholders. Whether your organization is large or small, you still have a legal responsibility to carry out the affairs of the corporation. It is also important to understand that, as a volunteer, no one expects you to be an expert in all aspects of non-profit operation. All that you are asked to do is to apply the same skills and judgment that you use in your daily activities to the operation of the organization.

Boards are wonderful places to learn new skills and to hone existing ones. All the Board members are trying to achieve the same objective - the best possible service for the population you serve. Each of your fellow Board members brings different skills and you will be able to learn from all of them. At the same time, you will be able to share your skills and knowledge with them.

Yes, you are responsible for the programs and services your organization delivers. And, yes, you are responsible for the money the organization handles. But no, every decision is not a life-and-death decision.

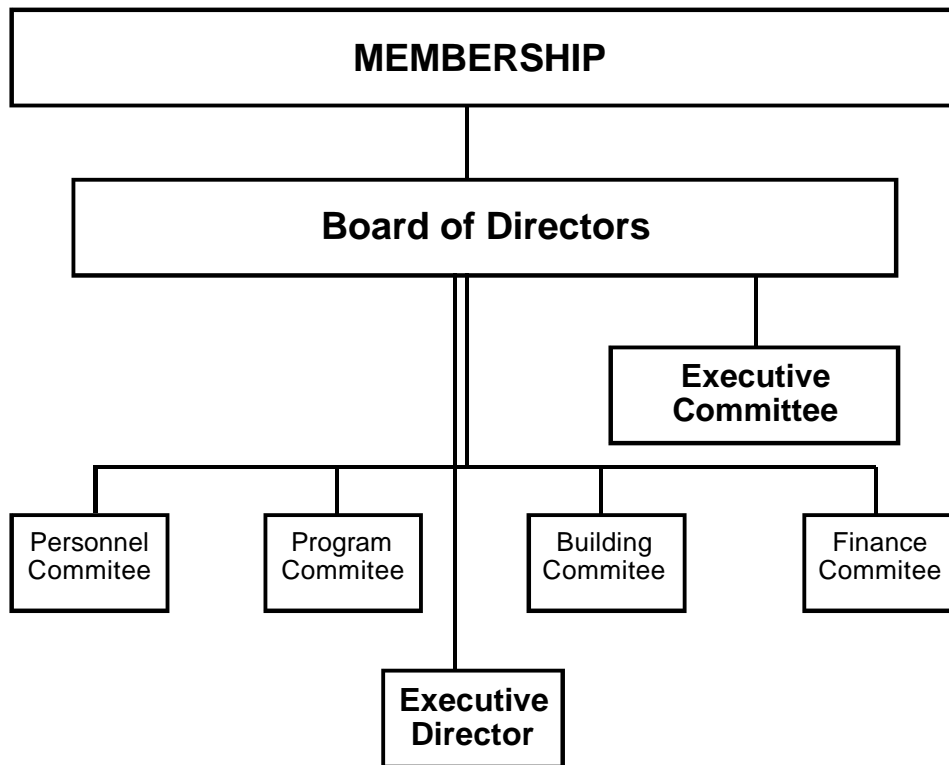
So relax a bit. Be prepared to meet new challenges at the same time as you do a lot of good work. And above all else, **have fun!**

THE TEN BASIC BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES¹

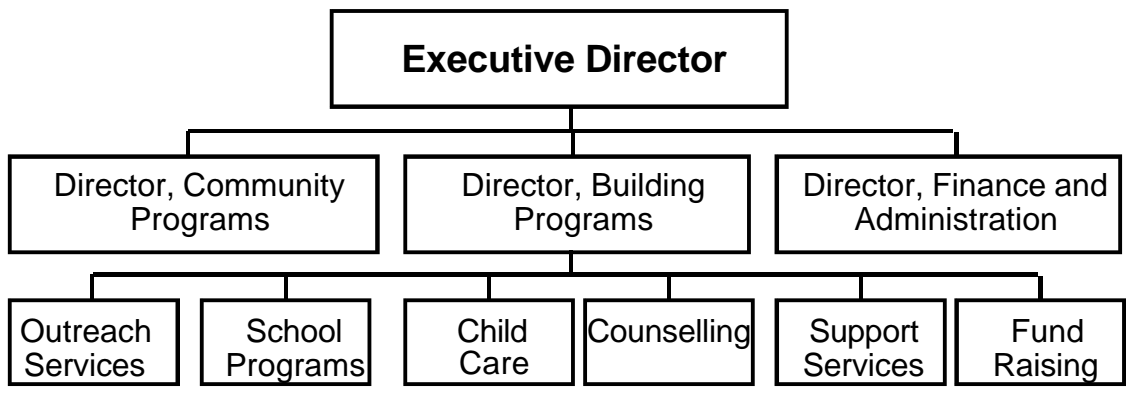
1. Determine the organization's mission and purpose and review these on an annual basis.
2. Ensure effective organizational planning.
3. Determine and monitor the organization's programs and services.
4. Select the Executive Director.
5. Support the Executive Director and review her/his performance.
6. Ensure adequate resources.
7. Manage resources effectively.
8. Enhance the organization's public image.
9. Serve as a court of appeal.
10. Assess the Board's performance.

As you have likely already been appointed to the Board of Directors, you may know the relationship between the organization's membership, Board and Executive Committee (the latter is usually made up of the Board's Chair or President, the Vice-Chair or Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary). In addition to the Executive Committee, many other committees report to the Board with respect to the various specific functions they have been assigned to fulfil. These committees are usually chaired by Board members, but membership on these committees is often not limited to the Board. The people on the committees, however, often must be approved by the Board, either directly, or through delegation. Throughout this manual we will be using the fictitious organization **Evergreen Community Services Centre (E.C.S.C.)** in our examples. The diagram below shows the structure of the organization and the flow of responsibilities. The Executive Director reports directly to the Board of Directors.

¹ Adapted from Your Basic Responsibilities by Richard T. Ingram in "Leadership" 1990



As was noted above under "The Ten Basic Board Member Responsibilities", the Board is responsible for effective organizational planning and for the support of the Executive Director. That means that the Board determines the overall structure of the organization which the Executive Director then administers. The following chart provides an overview of the programmatic structure of **Evergreen Community Services Centre**. Note that programs are organized into those provided inside the building and those in the community. Also, note that all staff report to the Executive Director.



Now that the basic structures within the Board and the organization have been established, specific areas of Board skills and responsibilities will be outlined in the following sections.

Responsibility #1. Determine and review the Mission and Purpose

It is impossible to ensure the effective operation of an organization whose mission is unclear, since the only way to know whether you are progressing towards your goal is to have a clear idea of what that goal is. Many organizations assume that everyone knows what the mission is, but often, asking each Board member to write it out produces startling results. So, it is important to spend some time reviewing your mission. This is especially important for new Board members who have not had the benefit of years of experience in understanding what the organization is all about.

The form below is useful in setting out your mission. It asks who you serve - from the broadest category, such as the geographical area, to the most specific, such as single parents, children at risk, etc. The second section asks what needs you serve. The third asks you to list your organization's strengths. Put these together and you should have a clear and concise statement of your organization's mission.

MISSION STATEMENT DEVELOPMENT FORM

A. TARGET POPULATION

1. Broadest
2. Next level
3. Most Specific
4. Others

B. THIS ORGANIZATION SATISFIES CONSUMERS' NEEDS FOR:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

C. OUR MAJOR STRENGTHS ARE:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

D. IN SUMMARY, OUR MISSION IS:

MISSION

Responsibilities #2 and #3 Ensure effective organizational planning. Determine and monitor the organization's programs and services.

Ensuring effective organizational planning includes under it a number of possible functions and these will vary according to the organizational model which you are using. All models, however, start with the mission of the organization.

The major differences in Board governance centre on the extent to which the Board directs its energies to **ensuring** or the extent to which it concentrates on **planning**.

Most Boards of organizations which have significant numbers of staff, see themselves as policy Boards. That is, the Board sets policy, and the staff carry it out. However, two significantly different ways of carrying out the Board's policy-setting responsibilities can be found in different organizations.

In the more traditional Board governance model the Board, in addition to setting and reviewing the mission of the organization, is actively involved in determining policy on an ongoing basis. The Board, often with the assistance of staff, develops and approves personnel policies, operating policies, financial policies, program policies, and a myriad of other policies. These Boards traditionally approve the initiation of new programs or activities, or the cancellation of programs or activities. They approve contracts with insurance carriers, grant applications, and many other policies which are fundamental to the ongoing operation of the organization.

In the last decade, an alternate model has begun to receive acceptance among some non-profits and funders. In this model, developed by John Carver, the Board, instead of approving each policy about what should be done, approves general policies about what shouldn't be done (such as incurring a deficit, or violating labour laws). The rest of the policy development and implementation is left to the Executive Director while the Board uses its time to plan for the future.

Both models, however, agree on some fundamentals:

- ! The organization must know where it is going.
- ! The Board is in charge of ensuring it gets there.
- ! The Board has a responsibility to regularly check on the direction the organization is taking to make sure it is, in fact, proceeding towards its objective.

What is important is not which model of governance your organization chooses, but knowing what model you are using, being clear about how it operates in your organization, and ensuring that it is being followed.

The only way to make sure the organization achieves its mission is to evaluate its progress and, although the staff often carry out the evaluation, it is the responsibility of the Board to set out the parameters and make sure it is done.

In order to evaluate, you have to find something that is measurable, and the "thing" that most organizations choose is output. The output of an organization generally represents activities or situations that can be easily counted. Output evaluations often involve such indicators as:

- ! the number of clients served
- ! the number of meetings held
- ! the number of group sessions
- ! the number of people at meetings

Evaluations that focus on unit cost apply a budget figure to each unit such as:

- ! It cost the organization \$15.00 per client in 1992
- ! It costs \$22,000 per therapy group per year
- ! We saw 36,000 clients at an average cost of \$15.00 per client in 1992

Not only are these figures relatively easy to produce, but they are also comparable to the figures in other organizations (such as "...as compared to \$16.50 per client at Deciduous Community Services Centre). Funders also use output indicators to compare grant levels for different organizations.

The problem with output indicators is that they tell you very little about whether the organization is succeeding in its mission. Unit cost tells you how much it costs to deal with a client, it doesn't tell you whether the client (or community, or whatever you work with) was any better off after spending time with your organization or being served by you in some way. In other words, outputs do not measure effectiveness.

Outcome indicators, on the other hand, can be more directly related to your mission and to the purpose for each of your programs. If you have a job training program, for example, you could measure course time per person as an indicator, but you could also measure jobs obtained by attendees. A literacy program can measure reading levels as well as time spent in learning. A community development program can measure self-esteem as well as the number of people involved in programs.

Using outcome indicators forces an organization to identify just what it wants to accomplish from each activity, and to decide how it will know if that end has been met. It also opens up the discussion to alternate ways of accomplishing the same ends. A simple table like the one below, repeated for each service and activity, can help to organize your program evaluation.

Program/Service	Activity	Success Indicator	Accomplishment

Responsibilities #4 and #5 Select the Executive Director. Support the Executive Director and review his/her performance.

The regular and effective appraisal of the Executive Director of a non-profit organization is one of the most often talked about, but least often accomplished, responsibilities of the Board of Directors. Many, if not most, small to medium size non-profits have not put into place a standardized procedure for the appraisal of their Executive Director. Appraisal occurs if and when a particular Board chair has the time and interest to see that it happens. Or, it happens when members of the Board are dissatisfied with the performance of their Executive Director and decide they had better evaluate his/her performance.

Boards, and managers themselves, often resist entering into a process of evaluating their employees. Some of the reasons for this resistance include:

- ! Our inherent dislike of having to criticize anyone, and especially of the possibility of having to argue about the validity of the criticism,
- ! Our general lack of skill in interviewing,
- ! Our discomfort in using a new evaluation tool, and
- ! Our uncertainty about whether the tool paints a true picture.

Research into performance appraisal² has uncovered a number of interesting observations. Among them:

- ! Criticism has a negative effect on achievement of goals.
- ! Praise has little effect one way or the other.
- ! Performance improves most when specific goals are established.
- ! Defensiveness resulting from critical appraisal produces inferior performance.
- ! Coaching should be ongoing, not a once-a-year activity.
- ! Mutual goal setting, not criticism, improves performance.
- ! Interviews designed to improve performance should not be held at the same time as the salary review.

These observations lead to some conclusions about effective performance appraisal practices between the Executive Director and the Board. First, the appraisal should not be used as a report card on the Executive Director. Second, the appraisal is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a tool to help the Board to identify, with the Executive Director, future goals. Third, an annual performance appraisal should not take the place of ongoing discussions between the Executive Director and key Board members about personal goals.

² see [Split Roles in Performance Appraisal](#), Harvard Business Review Reprint #65108, for example.

Remembering that performance appraisals may be used at a later date in any dispute over performance, the following principles apply to their use.

- ! Performance appraisals should be carried out on an annual basis, but should not be the only forum for the discussion of personal growth.
- ! All parties involved in the appraisal, including the Executive Director, should fill out copies of the appraisal tool, and should discuss their views where there is a difference of opinion.
- ! All parties to the appraisal should sign it indicating that they agree with its contents. If they do not agree, the areas of disagreement should be noted.
- ! A copy of the signed appraisal should be kept in the employee's personnel file.
- ! Performance appraisals are learning tools - they are not report cards. They should be used to identify strengths and weaknesses and to develop a learning plan for the employee for the upcoming year.
- ! Employees should only be evaluated in areas over which they can exercise some control. If your Executive Director is allowed no involvement in recruiting and training the Board, he/she should not be evaluated on the Board's effectiveness.

At some point in your tenure with the Board, it may become necessary to recruit an Executive Director. Before you begin to recruit, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the job you are recruiting to fill. If your organization is typical, the Executive Director's job description is out of date. Your first task, therefore, is to develop a new one. The following areas of information are important indicators of what strengths you need from potential candidates.³

- ! What are the most important responsibilities?
- ! What are the key areas of involvement with others in the organization?
- ! What are the potential sources of satisfaction in working in this organization?
- ! What are the potential sources of dissatisfaction?
- ! What specific knowledge, experiences, and skills does this person need?
- ! What specific kinds of behaviour are you looking for?
- ! What kinds of attitudes should your Executive Director have?

³ A more complete description of what to do in hiring an Executive Director can be found in our publication [Hiring and Evaluating Your Executive Director](#).

Responsibilities #6 and #7 Ensure adequate resources. Monitor resources effectively.

The responsibility to ensure adequate resources is one of the most conflict-producing aspects of the Board/staff relationship. The lack of clarity about the Board's role in fundraising, and the role of the staff, can lead to serious dysfunction in an organization. There is no absolute right or wrong in this area. But there needs to be clarity.

It is safe to say that the smaller the organization, the more likely that Board members will be directly involved in fundraising activities. Larger organizations are more likely to have staff dedicated to this function. This, of course, does not excuse the Board members of larger organizations from their responsibility to be donors.

It is always useful to set these relationships out in an easy format so all can agree on who is responsible for what. The following is how E.C.S.C. has done it. How you do it is entirely up to your organization; but it is your responsibility as a Board member to make sure that the Board and staff agree on how it is to be done.

Fundraising Activity	Board	Staff	Both
Vacation Raffle			
! Organization	X		
! Ticket Sales			X
! Evaluation			X
Fancy Homes Tour			
! Organization	X		
! Operation	X		
! Evaluation	X		
Jump-A-Thon			
! Organization		X	
! Operation		X	
! Evaluation		X	

It is important to note here that every fundraising effort is evaluated. It is important that the Board ensure that the organization know whether its efforts have been successful. As the Jump-A-Thon shows, however, it is not necessary for the Board to evaluate each task itself.

On the next few pages we will review the financial state of E.C.S.C. After fundraising, dealing with the financial reports is probably the least liked activity for many Board members. This is simply because the format and the language are unfamiliar. Our first example deals with the balance sheet for June 30, 1999. This is half-way through the organization's fiscal year, and for many new Board members, who are elected in the Spring, it is the first look at the organization's finances.

A quick look shows that there is an operating deficit in the first six months of \$28,563. This should start all Board members asking questions - not blaming the staff, but asking about the causes of the deficit, and the steps that will be taken to deal with it.

EVERGREEN COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTRE
Balance Sheet, June 30, 1999

ASSETS

Current Assets:	
Cash	84,879 ⁴
Accounts receivable	71,184 ⁵
GST recoverable	8,122
Prepaid expenses	563

Total current assets	164,748

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Current Liabilities:	
Accounts payable	10,357
Deferred revenue	108,298 ⁶

Total current liabilities	118,665
Centre equity:	
Beginning of year	74,656
Surplus (deficit) for 6 months ended June 30, 1992	(28,563)

Total Centre equity	46,093

	164,748

⁴ This is the amount currently in the Centre's bank account. The Centre has an accumulated surplus which it uses to pay bills while it awaits its grants (often paid in mid-year).

⁵ Grants have been smoothed over the 12 month period to avoid peaks of income.

⁶ This is income received in the previous year to be spent in the current year.

EVERGREEN COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTRE
June 30, 1999 Budget and Actual

ITEM	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Revenue		
Local Government	87,300	86,273
Provincial Grants	28,212	27,493
United Way	28,195	29,053
Job Creation Grants	4,909	4,909
Donations and Memberships	13,354	8,623
Public Service Fees	106,894	82,382
Interest	15,135	11,500
Miscellaneous	10,379	9,495
Total	294,378	259,728
Expenses		
Salaries and Benefits	150,432	155,419
Purchased Services	31,143	31,262
Printing and Supplies	23,144	21,566
Telephone and Delivery	7,672	8,588
Advertising	7,250	4,600
Rent and Utilities	23,045	23,303
Equipment	12,175	12,355
Maintenance	2,800	3,875
Membership, Meetings, Travel	8,410	5,835
Accounting, Audit, and Bank Charges	16,146	14,628
Special Projects	11,000	5,600
Miscellaneous	1,160	1,260
Total	294,377	288,291
Surplus (Deficit)	0	(28,563)
Equity, beginning of year	74,656	74,656
Equity, end of period	74,656	51,235

EVERGREEN COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTRE
December 31, 1992 Budget and Actual

ITEM	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Revenue		
Local Government	174,600	172,545
Provincial Grants	56,423	54,986
United Way	56,390	58,106
Job Creation Grants	9,819	9,819
Donations and Memberships	26,707	17,245
Public Service Fees	213,788	164,764
Interest	30,271	23,001
Miscellaneous	20,757	18,989
Total	588,755	519,455
Expenses		
Salaries and Benefits	300,863	287,437
Purchased Services	62,287	62,524
Printing and Supplies	46,288	34,532
Telephone and Delivery	15,345	17,177
Advertising	14,501	7,499
Rent and Utilities	46,091	46,606
Equipment	24,347	24,710
Maintenance	5,601	7,751
Membership, Meetings, Travel	16,820	11,671
Accounting, Audit, and Bank Charges	32,294	29,256
Special Projects	22,000	11,193
Miscellaneous	2,318	2,520
Total	588,755	542,876
Surplus (Deficit)	0	(23,421)
Equity, beginning of year	74,656	74,656
Equity, end of period	74,656	51,235

The report on page 15 represents the consolidated statement for the period ending June 30, 1999 and fits with the balance sheet (notice that the deficit on the third line from the bottom is the same as on the balance sheet). It compares the budget for the first six months with the actual experience for that period. In many organizations, the budget for the month and the variance between the budget and the actual are also shown. The information has been simplified here to make it less confusing.

In the first six months income from government and the United Way are similar to the budget that was set. Three areas of income are of particular concern, however: donations and memberships, public service fees, and interest. In the latter case, E.C.S.C. has been caught by a decrease in interest rates in 1999, and not much can be done. Questions need to be asked, however, about what happened in the other two income categories.

In the expenses section, salaries and benefits are above what was projected. Most other areas are in line or a bit below budget. Combined, however, the decreased income and the increase in salary and benefit costs have produced a significant deficit for the first six months.

The two essential questions now are: "What has caused our problem?" and "How are we going to correct it?"

The report on page 16 shows the result of the organization's intervention into the deficit situation. Left unattended, the organization could have shown a deficit of close to \$60,000. Quick action reduced it to a more manageable \$23,421.

The lowered income was found to be related to increased competition for donations. The usual fundraising programs were stale and people were being attracted by new, more aggressive organizations. Little could be done about this by the end of the year, but planning for next year needed to be initiated immediately.

Unfortunately, staff took the brunt of the cost-saving measures. All staff received a 5% salary reduction. Travel and attendance at conferences were severely curtailed. Although it had the potential to hurt revenue even further, the Board decided to slash the advertising budget for the organization, decrease printing, and to hold back on ordering new supplies.

Glossary of Financial Terms

Appropriation	A transfer of net income or equity to a special account or fund, generally to restrict its availability for distribution.
Assets	Monetary or non-monetary items that represent probable future economic benefits controlled by the organization.
Balance Sheet	A statement of financial position showing the assets, liabilities, and equity of an organization at a point in time.
Budget	A detailed estimate of the organization's fiscal plan of action for the next year.
Capital Assets	This term refers to buildings, equipment, etc. which are not consumed or used up in the normal operating process.
Capital Budget	A fiscal plan for the proposed additions to capital assets and their financing.
Cash Accounting	A method of accounting for transactions whereby the transaction is recorded when cash is received or spent.
Chart of Accounts	A list of all accounts in the General Ledger with their assigned account number.
Depreciation	An accounting concept which allocates the cost of a fixed asset as an expense over the expected useful life of the asset.
Donations-in-Kind	Gifts in the form of donated goods or services to a non-profit organization.
Endowment Fund	Restricted funds from which only the income (e.g. interest) from investing the principal may be spent.
Expenses	Outflows of resources arising from the operation of the organization during a period.
Financial Statements	Normally comprising a balance sheet, a statement of revenue and expenses, a statement of changes in financial position, and accompanying notes.
Fixed Costs	Costs which do not fluctuate with volume (i.e. rent).

General Ledger	A record of the summarized transactions from all other accounting journals. The balances in this ledger are summarized and grouped to prepare the financial statements. This ledger contains the complete financial history of the organization.
Non-Current Assets	Assets which are held for a term greater than a year. Examples include land, buildings, and equipment.
Operating Fund	Consists of unrestricted contributions and day-to-day operating revenues and expenses of the organization.
Operating Budget	The fiscal plan of operating activities for the coming year.
Pledges	Promises to donate funds at a future date(s) to a non-profit organization.
Reconcile	To reconcile is to account for the difference between two related records (e.g. account for the difference between the month-end balance on the bank statement and the month-end balance in the accounting records or books of account).
Revenues	Revenues include: income from the sale of goods and services (after deduction of returns, allowances and discounts); gains from sale or exchange of assets; interest and dividends earned on investments; and donations and grants.

Responsibilities #8 and #9 Enhance the organization's public image. Serve as a court of appeal.

As a Board member you represent the community, or a segment of the community, at the Board table. But your role has a dual aspect. You also represent the organization in the community. This brings with it certain responsibilities. These include:

- ! Being informed about what the organization is doing. When someone in the community learns that you are on the Board and asks what the organization does, or asks about a particular service you provide, you should be able to talk credibly on the subject. This does not mean that you have to know every detail; but you should be aware of the general thrust of each service you deliver.
- ! Being positive about the organization. Talk about the organization's strengths in public, and save discussion of its weaknesses for the Board table. All organizations have weaknesses, but discussing them in public undermines the organization's ability to raise funds, recruit volunteers, and perform its services in the community.
- ! Being prepared to speak in public. Since the Board is responsible for overseeing the operation of the organization, there are certain times when the public expects to see the Board representing its interests. Funding time is usually one of those occasions. Whether you are appearing before municipal or community funders, there is often an expectation that the Board volunteers will represent the organization. Especially at funding time, it is important for someone who can not be seen as defending his or her job, to be explaining the services your organization provides and the reason why it deserves funding.
- ! Being ready to raise funds personally. There are times in each organization's life when it is necessary to reach out to specific individuals in the community to solicit funds for the organization. As a trustee of the organization, and a committed Board member, you should be prepared to meet with individuals in the community to request donations. It is the organization's responsibility to make sure you receive appropriate training so you can solicit funds effectively.

As members of the Board, you all, collectively, hold responsibility for how your organization is run. This means that in an internal dispute, the Board becomes the court of last appeal. The "last" part is important here. Before any internal dispute comes to the Board it should have passed through an internal process directed at dealing with such disputes. These processes are usually found in the personnel policies.

It is important to note here that no individual Board member has any power in the organization other than the power that the Board delegates to him or her. This means that Board members do not have a right to intercede with staff, to request that staff perform particular tasks for them, to go through files, or to do anything else that any member of the community cannot do.

Responsibility #10 Assess the Board's performance.

Just as with program evaluation, the Board has a responsibility to evaluate its own performance. The following is a sample of a tool that a Board can use to evaluate how well it is doing.

HOW WELL DOES YOUR BOARD PLAN AND EVALUATE PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES?	DOING THIS				
	Very Well 5	Well 4	O.K. 3	Poorly 2	Not 1
Periodically, staff and Board review their objectives, accomplishments and methods.					
Staff and Board keep each other fully informed.					
Staff and Board spend adequate time evaluating what they are doing.					
Key decisions and how they are made are reviewed to identify needed changes in decision-making practices.					
Periodically, staff and Board review the strengths and weaknesses in the way that they are working together.					
Staff and Board accept responsibility of evaluating programs and methods.					
Every year, the Board reviews the previous year's objectives, accomplishments and methods to identify needed change.					
Each year, the Board reviews what each Board member and each key staff person did in the previous 12 months to assess strengths and weaknesses in what was done and how it was done.					
Each sub-group of the organization (committee, program groups, etc.) evaluated past activities.					
The strength and weaknesses of are meetings are regularly evaluated.					

Staff and Board provide time to learn from past experiences.	
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Although this form is somewhat subjective, when each person fills it out, since a number of individuals complete the form, a more objective measure of the Board's performance is achieved.

Compare the forms filled out by staff with those filled out by Board members. Do Board members indicate that they are doing certain things "well", but the staff members say that the Board is doing these things "poorly"? If this is the case, there may be serious problems and the areas of discrepancy should be examined closely.

To determine an overall measure of the Board's performance, add the total number of scores per question (each number is worth its indicated value) and divide by the number of people that participated. If the average score for any one question is "2" or "3", then this is an area that requires work.

In addition to the above form, other sources of information that can be used for Board evaluation purposes are:

- " the organization's by-laws (are you adhering to them?);
- " minutes from Board meetings (did you, as the Board, do what you said you would?);
- " minutes from Executive meetings (did the Executive do what they said they would?);
- " minutes from committee meetings (did the committee members do what they said they would?);
- " policies and procedures (are you adhering to them?);
- " staff reports (are certain issues persistently being raised which indicates that they have not been addressed?).

MEETINGS

Every Board member is expected to attend the Board meetings and meetings of the committees to which they have been assigned (e.g. personnel committee, finance committee). Executive officers, in addition, must attend Executive meetings. With all this time in meetings, it is important to ensure that the time is well spent.

Agendas

A meeting can only be productive if people know why they are meeting. "Because we are the Board", or "Because it is the second Tuesday of the month" are not sufficient reasons to meet. As Board members, you need to consider what issues you want to address when you meet. These issues should make up the meeting's agenda. The preparation of the agenda for the Board meeting is the responsibility of the Board Chair, in consultation with the Executive Director.

What is an effective agenda? Many organizations have agendas that look like this.

1. Welcome
2. Minutes of last meeting
3. Business arising from the minutes
4. Building committee report
5. Program committee report
6. Finance committee report
7. Treasurer's report
8. Executive Director's report
9. Other business

This agenda looks more or less the same from meeting to meeting. Even an experienced Board member would not know how to prepare for the meeting. A more useful agenda, leading to a more useful meeting, might look like the following.

1. Welcome

Our newest Board member, Betty Lacosta, who replaces Donna Fletcher, will be at her first meeting. Please introduce yourselves to Betty as you arrive.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

3. Business arising in the past month

- i. A new lease has been drawn up with our landlord (a copy is attached to the agenda). Please review it before the meeting.
- ii. Item 9 in the minutes from the last meeting mentions the report of the fire department, which had just arrived. Please be prepared to discuss recommendations 1-4. The report was distributed at the last meeting.

4. Building committee report

- i. A copy of the cleaning schedule for the next year is included with the agenda. Please note the changes in hours and costs. This will have an impact on the budget.

5. Program committee report

- i. We have received the evaluation forms from almost all families. Please take a look at the enclosed summary and be prepared to make recommendations to the committee.

6. Finance committee report

- i. The financial statement on our vacation raffle is enclosed. Are we going to do this again?

7. Treasurer's report

- i. The quarterly financial statements are included.

8. Executive Director's report

- i. A brief report is attached. Please note the comments on staff retention problems.

9. Other business

This agenda lets people know why they are coming to the meeting. Further, it lets them know what they need to read and what they need to think about before they arrive. Then, once the meeting starts, rather than spending large amounts of time bringing everyone "up to speed" on a number of issues, staff and volunteers can summarize the issue and informed discussion can begin.

Being a Capable Leader

A capable leader is critical for meetings to be effective. You don't need years of experience to be a capable leader. All you need is an understanding of why you are there and how you can help your Board or committee.

People become Board or committee Chairs for many reasons. Some are the immediate and obvious choice of the group because of their history with the organization. Some have a particular area of knowledge which makes them a natural choice. Others become Chair because they failed to run fast enough to avoid it. Whatever the reason for being the Chair, there is really no mystery to being effective. These simple guidelines will help any committee or Board Chair to make sure that his/her committee/Board is as effective as it can be.

1. Be Prepared

Just as the need for committee members to prepare for meetings was described in the above section, the Chair needs to prepare, too. When you prepare the agenda, don't put the most important item last. People will be tired and you may run out of time before the discussion ends. Think about what needs to be done and set out the agenda to facilitate that goal. If you have a few "heavy" items, put some lighter ones between them.

Also, just prior to the meeting, familiarize yourself with the agenda, particularly if you developed it well in advance of the meeting. Try to figure out what the major issues will be and make sure that there is sufficient time set aside to discuss them.

2. Facilitate, Don't Dominate

As committee Chair, your role is more facilitator than commander. To get the best out of the committee, you have to make sure that everyone has a chance to speak. Your own views are less important than the combined views of your committee members. Encourage the quiet members to speak and make sure the vocal ones don't dominate the meetings.

These two simple guidelines will help your meetings flow and will help to ensure that everyone feels that they have a part to play in the organization.

Know What You Decided

How many times have you come to a meeting and spent time debating what was decided at an earlier meeting? "Are you sure we decided to buy furniture from Black's? I thought we were going to get three quotes first and then decide whether we had enough money."

It is easy to avoid repetitive debates by making sure that all decisions are recorded. The following form is an easy way to make sure that all motions are recorded in the minutes. The Secretary should have a pile of them at every meeting. Then the mover can write the motion down for the Secretary so that it is recorded accurately.

Mover:
Secunder:
Motion:
Result: # in favour___ # against___ Carried___ Defeated

Know What the Tasks Are

As the motion is developed, it is important to be as specific as possible. "Moved that we get quotes on the cost of new furniture and review these before deciding whether to purchase" is a relatively clear motion, but it leaves a number of questions unanswered.

∅ How many quotes?

∅ Specifically what furniture?

In order to avoid more discussion at the next meeting about the number of quotes and upon specifically what furniture is being quoted, these details should be specified either in the motion or in an appended document (i.e. "The furniture to be quoted on is everything on list "A" with the exception of the steno chair").

Know Who is Going to do Them

How many times have you come to a meeting expecting that something will have been done since the last meeting only to find that everyone thought someone else would do it? This kind of time waster is easy to avoid if a person is assigned to every task.

Consequently, in the motion cited above, the "we" should be replaced by a person's name. If it is stated as, "Move that Bernadette get...", lets everyone know who is expected to do the task.

Procedures for Meetings

It is quite evident that there are certain special procedures used during meetings (e.g. making a motion, amending the motion, and voting). Sometimes these procedures can be confusing.

Familiarize yourself with the following chart on parliamentary procedure. The procedures outlined can be used to facilitate meetings in that every Board or committee member has a well-known reference point from which to proceed with respect to discussions during a Board or committee meeting.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

To Do This:	You Say This:	Interrupt Speaker?	Need a Second?	Debate?	Amend?	Vote to Carry	Reconsider?
Adjourn meeting	I move that we adjourn.	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Call for a recess	I move that we recess for...	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
Temporarily suspend discussion	I move to table the motion	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
End debate and amendments	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
Give something closer study	I move to refer the matter to committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Amend a motion	I move to amend the motion by...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Introduce business	I move that	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Vote on a ruling of the Chair	I appeal from the chair's decision	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Yes
Avoid considering an improper matter	I object to considering this motion	Yes	No	No	No	2/3	No
Request information	Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
Reconsider a hasty action	I move to reconsider the vote on	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No