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| THE WACO BOARD TEAM HANDBOOK |
| *The Board Member’s Guide to Visionary Leadership* |
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elcome to your new job as a member of The Wisconsin Association of Campground owners nonprofit Board of Directors.

It is distinctly an ***honor*** to be elected to this position. You’ll set the direction for your industry. By electing you, your peers have said they believe you have the skills to do that.

It is a very heavy ***responsibility*** to be given this position on the board. You’ll

Govern the expenditure of thousands of dollars and be responsible for many more thousands of dollars of assets. Those who elected you have trusted you with their property.

What a ***privilege*** it is to sit in a seat so powerful that you make decisions that affect the lives of so many people now and many more that will benefit far into the future.

But being a board member is not all honor, privilege, and fun times. It’s ***hard work*** and sometimes you’ll have to look hard to find the rewards for your efforts. A major factor that makes the job so tough is that board members rarely come to the job well prepared to do it.

Board members come to the job with the best intentions, but good intentions are not enough. Humans are not born with the knowledge and ability to be good board members.

Board skills are acquired and must be learned. Honed to a sharp edge and regularly updated.

You have two major challenges facing you as a board member. The first is to do the task of governing this organization. You’ll plan, monitor issues like finance and services, evaluate the progress of the organization and a hundred other things to keep this organization viable and moving.

But the second major task is equally important. You have to become a part of the board team and keep that team functioning at optimum level. If you and the other board members don’t do a good job of building and maintaining your skills of teamwork and good boardsmanship, you’ll not be able to accomplish the first task—governing the organization well.

The intent of this handbook is to help you with that important boardsmanship maintenance part of your job.

**WACO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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| **Bud** | **BUD STYER**  ***President – Finance Committee - Planning & Development Committee***  *Smokey Hollow Campground || 608-635-4806 || mrbud@budstyerassociates.com*  Bud Styer, Smokey Hollow Campground, is a member of both State and National professional associations, not only attends National and State conventions, but has spoken numerous times for the National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds (ARVC), Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners (WACO), University of Illinois, Lewis University, IL, St. Mary's College, MN, and numerous state wide training courses. Bud is a committee member for the State of Wisconsin DNR, Governor's Small Business Committee, NFIB's Small Business Committee and Wisconsin's Business Voice Small Business Committee. At the local level, he actively participates in the Chamber of Commerce in five different communities in towns/cities near the Madison area. |
| **Scott** | **SCOTT D. KOLLOCK**  ***Past President - Finance Committee***  *Vista Royalle Campground || 715-498-8204 || skollock@uniontel.net*  Scott is a second generation owner of Vista Royalle Campground in Bancroft, Wi. The park was built by his family 45 years ago and has been ran by them since day one. Scott has valuable long term experience with all aspects of the camping business. Scott loves camping and looks forward to promoting it and WACO into the future. Scott is now serving as President of the WACO Board of Directors. |
| **C:\Users\LoriS\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Outlook\0P4Y0HK8\IMG952017030495185648928.jpg** | **JIM BUTTON, CPO, OHE**  ***Planning & Development Committee***  *Evergreen Campsites & Resort || 920-622-3498 || evergreencampsites@gmail.com*  Jim Button has fulfilled his childhood dream of operating and owning Evergreen Campsites & Resort. Jim has been in the industry for 40+ years and has owned Evergreen Campsites & Resort for 22 years. Jim is very passionate about the industry and is an advocate for his state association (WACO) where he currently serves on the BOD. He attends and teaches at conferences, and participates in fall tours and workshops.  Jim is also an advocate for his national association (ARVC) where he has participated in advocacy day on the hill, attends and teaches at national conferences, graduate from the OHEP program, OHE certifications, 2017-2018 ARVC Large/Mega Park of the Year, and 2017-2018 ARVC Campground Partner Award. He is also active on the National Group 20 #4 for the past 10 years. This group is devised of campgrounds throughout the USA striving to be the best they can be. Jim does not do this alone he is married to Dawn Button and has four children: Emily, Joey, Ricky, and Rebecca who have started to join the family business. Jim also is an active volunteer firefighter for Saxeville. |
| **U:\WACO 2016\2016 Convention\Conference Program 2016\Presenter Information\Joyce Stenklyft\IMG_4492-e1448059214389.jpg** | **JOYCE STENKLYFT**  ***Membership Committee***  *Stoney Creek RV Resort || 715-597-2102 || joyce@stoneycreekrvresort.com*  Joyce worked at Jellystone Park in Warrens from 1990 to 2007, serving as General Manager from 2001-2007. She was elected to the WACO Board in 2002 and served as President from 2006-2008.  Joyce retired in 2008 and spent 6 years catching up with family and friends. In 2014 she partnered with her daughter Deneen and Son-In-Law Brian Pedersen to purchase Stoney Creek RV Resort in Osseo, Wi. Joyce is excited to be serving on the WACO Board and being back in the camping business.  To her, it feels like she's back home fulfilling her dream and reaching her destination. |
|  | **PATRICIA (TRICIA) LOMBARDO**  ***Advertising Committee***  *Works with multiple ELS Campgrounds || patricia\_lombardo@equitylifestyle.com*  Special skills: Coaching, mentoring, construction management, financial planning & analysis, marketing, park operations. Tricia has extensive experience constructing and operating commercial real estate assets ranging from elementary schools through high rise buildings. For the past four years she has been a member of WACO and Senior Regional Manager at Equity Lifestyle Properties, overseeing a portfolio of 16 manufactured housing communities and 15 campgrounds – 9 of which are located throughout Wisconsin. |
|  | **JULIE MICHAELS**  ***Treasurer – Finance Committee***  *Scenic Ridge Campground || 608-883-2920 || jmmsrc@gmail.com*    Julie Michaels currently owns and operates Scenic Ridge Campground in Whitewater, WI with her siblings, husband and two children. In addition to the campground, she oversees the overall operations of their three other family businesses, one small fishing resort and two manufactured housing communities. When Julie isn’t glued to her computer or running around tending to her camping guests, she enjoys crafting, painting and interior decorating. In her free time, she uses these talents to create a visual atmosphere throughout the campground. Julie is no stranger to the campground industry as she has been operating Scenic Ridge for over 21 years. She has been a member of the Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners since the purchase of her campground in 1996 and was elected to the board in March of 2014. Julie is a firm believer in this organization. She feels that the knowledge and support she has received from WACO has most certainly aided her in the growth of her own business and is honored to be able to pay forward what she has learned over the years. |
| **Adam Malsack Head Shot** | **ADAM MALSACK**  ***Member Services Committee***  *Lake Arrowhead Campground || 920-295-3000 || adam@lakearrowheadcampground.com*  Adam has been in the camping industry all his life, starting with weekend garbage collection at the age of 9 and advancing to full time Manager at 17. In 2009 he became co-owner of the Lake Arrowhead and Lakeside Campgrounds in Montello, marking the third generation of family ownership.  Adam has undergraduate degrees form Ripon College in Computer Science and Mathematics, and received a Master of Science in Electrical engineering from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. In his free time Adam enjoys being involved in theatre, photography and most of all, he loves to camp. Adam has become a key player in the science of expressing our legislative ideas to people who matter. |
| **image003** | **MIKE DRICKEN**  ***Financial Committee***  *Lake Lenwood Beach and Campground || 262-334-1335 || mmdricken@gmail.com*  Mike and his wife Mary own and operate Lake Lenwood Beach and Campground with 130 sites in West Bend. Mike's parents Len and Rhea started the campground in the early 60's and were charter members of WACO. Mike, Mary and their three children started operating in 1983 and are purchasing it from the family. Mike believes strongly in WACO and is willing to share what he has learned from operating a small campground with limited staff to other members. |
| **Bert Davis** | **BERT DAVIS**  ***Planning & Development Committee***  *Dells Camping Resort || 608-305-8404 || bert@campthedells.com*  Bert Davis has been your ARVC Area 3 directors for 5 years now. He has also served on the ARVC Excom holding the seats of Secretary, Treasurer, Second Vice Chair, and currently the seat of Chair Elect. He also has been involved with the WACO Board of Directors for more than 10 Years. His proud membership with Waco started while being employed at Pride of America Camping Resort. After a 8 seasons as the Grounds Manager for Pride of America, Bert branched out with Business partners Mike and Pete Hagen to acquire Badgerland Campground. After 7 seasons managing Badgerland, Bert and his business partners once again decided to branch out by selling Badgerland and acquiring Dells Camping Resort where he is the current general manager. Please do not hesitate to contact him with any questions or concerns about your ARVC benefits and reasons to belong to the National Organization. |
| **U:\RuthJ\My Documents\My Pictures\2008 CONVENTION\Scott Grennon.jpg** | **SCOTT GRENON**  ***Planning & Development Committee***  *Tunnel Trail Campground || 608-435-6829 || scott@tunneltrail.com*  Scott & his wife Julie are owners of Tunnel Trail Campground and have volunteered with WACO for 20 plus years. Scott served on the WACO Board of Directors for 2 years and his family has been in the camping business for 50 years. He has been very involved in WACO events from Fall workshops to legislative issues. Scott brings a wealth of history in both the association and the camping industry. He is excited to work for WACO to see our industry continue to thrive. |
| **C:\Users\LoriS\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Outlook\0P4Y0HK8\20181101_104125.jpg** | **LAURIE ADAMS**  ***Membership Committee***  *Baraboo Hills Campground || 608-356-8505 || camp@baraboohillscampground.com*  Laurie currently owns and operates Baraboo Hills Campground with her husband Greg and two boys, Trent and Trevor. Laurie began working in campgrounds in 2004 as a reservationist and 10 years later she and Greg purchased the campground. She left her job with Baraboo School District as a school nurse and Greg ended his 27-year career with Sysco Foods to take this life-changing leap. Laurie was elected to the WACO Board in 2018 and serves on the Membership Committee. Baraboo Hills has 50 seasonal sites, 42 rental units and 68 overnight sites for a total of 160 sites. Baraboo Hills has been a WACO member for 20+ years. Laurie enjoys working with the WACO members and helping organize the WACO Fall Tours with the Membership Committee. |
|  | **ASHLEY A. WEISS-WEGNER**  ***Advertising Committee***  *Wilderness Campground || 608-297-2002 || Awegner@wildernesscampground.com*  I am a proud third generation, future campground owner, of Wilderness Campground in Montello. We have around 390 sites and are in the Central Wisconsin Rver Country Region. I have been involved in day to day operations of the campground ever since I can remember. My very first memories involve the campground, and the WACO convention as a child.  I graduated from U.W. Whitewater with my B.B.A. in Marketing in 2008. In 2010 I moved to Appleton, Wisconsin with my husband and took a position at Kimberly-Clark in the Consumer Services Department. We moved back to Montello in 2013 and I accepted a position in the Marketing Department for Brakebush Bros. In 2014, I decided I had enough experience outside the family business and went back to work at the campground full-time.  I feel that my time away from the campground has helped me to realize that my passion and my skillset alike are really for the campground industry. It is a highly demanding, yet extremely rewarding career in which one must wear multiple hats. I truly am looking forward to helping continue the growth of our family campground. |
| **U:\WACO 2018\Board of Directors 2018\Board of Dirctors Photos\Mark Stefan.jpg** | **MARK STEFAN**  ***Membership Committee***  *Grand Valley Campground || 920-394-3643 || mark@grandvalleycampground.com*  Mark owns and operates Grand Valley Campground with his family Joan, Brad, Ben and Jackie. Grand Valley Campground has 221 sites and is located in Kingston WI. Mark grew up in a family business with his parents owning Stefan Auto Body. He worked at Stefan Auto Body until he was 18. He then went into manufacturing for 24 years. In 2005 Mark and Joan purchased Grand Valley Campground. Mark enjoys hunting, fishing, cars, and working at the campground. Mark grew up camping with his family and enjoys camping with his family to this day. |
|  | **JIM TRACY**  ***Advertising Committee***  *Al’s Fox Hill RV Park & Campground || 1-847-672-3098 ||* jim@foxhillrvpark.com  15+ years of campground experience including ownership of Baraboo Hills Campground and Al’s Fox Hill RV Park & Campground  EVP, Worldwide Account Director, Leo Burnett Advertising Agency 1982 – 2005  Experiences included Management positions on CPG clients Keebler, Kraft, and Kellogg from 1982–1995 before spending 10 years managing and growing the Walt Disney account  Responsible for team that produced award winning marketing and advertising campaigns that help drive seven years of record attendance at Walt Disney World. Signature campaigns included WDW’ 25th Anniversary and Millennium celebrations, the launch of Disney’s Animal Kingdom, and WDW’s first Post-Family, Hispanic and direct marketing campaigns. |
|  | **PETE HAGEN**  *Pride of America Camping Resort || 800-236-6395 || petehagen@camppoa.com*  Our family has owned Pride of America Camping resort since 1974. As a second generation owner I have the unique experience of 46 years of growing up with the RV industry. At age 8 I started my career as a “Trash Picker Upper” and moved on to grounds and maintenance to help finance my way through the University of Wisconsin where I earned a BS in Mechanical Engineering. After 8 years of designing custom machinery, I changed careers and began working for the UW-Madison in Information Technology. In 2001, after we bought out our final partners, I started managing the IT department at the campground as my second full time job. I brought my knowledge of Information Technology to the business just as the industry was moving towards an embrace of technology. I am retiring from the UW in the near future and looking to become much more involved in growing and improving our industry. I feel my variety of skills and experience can be of great benefit to our organization as we all need to adapt to the ever changing world of technology and the move towards digital marketing. |
|  | **ROB BRINKMEIER**  *Merry Mac’s Campground || 815-541-4934 || camp@merrymacscampground.com*  My wife and I are entering our 4th season owning Merry Mac’s. We were avid “weekend” campers for numerous years and were then seasonals at Merry Mac’s for 5 years before purchasing the campground. For the prior 10 years, I was a propane manager for a local cooperative in northern Illinois and oversaw all aspects of the LP side of the business for their 7 locations. While in that position I was also on the Illinois Propane Gas Association board. During my 7 years on the IPGA board, 5 of them I served in all positions on the Executive Board. Over the past 3 years, I’ve found that WACO is a fantastic association to a part of and I would love to help them achieve their mission. Even though I am still newer to the campground industry, I feel that my time served on the IPGA board would make me a good candidate for this position bringing in new ideas from one association to this association. |
| **C:\Users\LoriS\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Outlook\0P4Y0HK8\IMG_2501.JPG** | **BRIAN HUTH**  *Camping in the Clouds/Mine Shaft Bar and Grill || 920-422-4315 || brianhuth22@yahoo.com*  Prior Town Board of Goodman Supervisor, Certified Restaurant Manager, Certified Pool and Spa Operator, 10 years Food and Beverage Director. Campground is 73 acres in size, 50 sites and 2 cabins currently, 8000 Sq. ft. Bar, Restaurant and Heated indoor pool. Northeast region of Wisconsin. Married to wife Tracy and 4 daughters, Nicole, Maison, Alexis and Mieka. Previous owner of Lake Hilbert Campground in Marinette County. Member of WACO for a total of 7 years. Looking for the opportunity to help and assist new owners of campgrounds to get started and the continued networking with existing campground owners to expand and learn as much as possible about the industry. |

**THE BOARD WORKS AS A TEAM**

Board members are nearly always industry leaders. If you were not seen as a leader, you probably would not have been elected. The other members of your board team were elected for their leadership skills as well.

As you gain experience on this board, you will continue to learn facts, statistics, history, procedures and a thousand other things.

But first things first:

Get to know the other people who serve on this board with you—not just their names, but who they really are.

* Where do they live?
* What are their occupations?
* Do they have families?
* What are their real interests and concerns?
* What motivates them to serve on this board?

Team-building begins by knowing you teammates. Governance cannot happen without team effort.

Get to know the executive, the other part of the board team. There must be a very high level of trust between those who govern and the person they have chosen to manage. Board members and executives form the board team.

**RESOURCES**

Learn where to go for answers to your questions. Your best defense against being totally lost at this early stage of your term as a board member is to know the people and resources to give you answers to the tough questions quickly.

Learn to learn. Learning this job of boardsmanship is a never-ending task. Don’t get hung up by your years of knowledge and experience. Both are home advantages.

Ongoing development activities should be part of the plan for every board and every board member. Attend state and national conferences; take part in board workshops and read pertinent literature.

There is no such thing as knowing all you need to know about this complex job of governing this complex corporation.

Learn that this job deserves your very best effort. You must do the job in the most professional manner possible. You have volunteered for the job, and the reward is only personal satisfaction of a job well done, and knowing you have made a difference.

But the governance of the organization demands the best job you can do. If you can’t offer that, you should let someone else have your seat at the table.

**HOW NOT TO BEGIN YOUR BOARD CAREER**

If you’re looking for ways to freeze yourself out of the board team, here are a few suggestions that will guarantee that:

* Talk too much and listen too little
* Publicly criticize a board decision you did not support
* Ignore advice from fellow board members
* Show that you have all the answers for every issue
* Refuse to change your mind on any issue, no matter what the evidence
* Refuse to compromise
* Leak information from a closed board session
* Fail to prepare for board meetings
* Ridicule board decisions made before you came on the board

**OPERATING IN THE BEST INTEREST**

The organization you serve is not the typical type of business. It belongs to the “third sector,” a nonprofit corporation that provides a service to the industry.

As a tax-exempt nonprofit, your organization must operate in the public interest just as other nonprofits. Any profit your corporation makes must be used for additional service. Your corporation does not pay dividends or interest to shareholders.

The mission of a for-profit organization is to make a profit. The mission of the nonprofit corporation is to serve people. In fact, the nonprofit frequently undertakes projects and programs that are not strictly economically viable, but are important and necessary to those you serve. The decision to undertake those projects and programs is based on the bottom line of service, not a bottom line of profit.

**AS A BOARD MEMBER, YOU HOLD A TRUST**

By law, a nonprofit organization must be governed by a board of directors of trustees. Each board member has a legal and moral obligation to ensure that the organization operates in the best interest of those you serve.

The board must:

* Govern the organization’s resources
* Maintain, develop and expand programs/services for those you serve.
* Ensure the perpetuation of the organization
* As a board member you have been given a fiduciary responsibility to act in good faith and in the best interests of the organization. You have an obligation of loyalty and duty to uphold the integrity of the nonprofit organization.

As a board member you must exercise a high degree of diligence to make sure the organization is operating in the best interest of those you serve. You have a duty to be informed about the state of the business and affairs of the organization. You have the responsibility to make sure that the organization is properly managed and that its assets are being cared for.

As a board member you must not make decisions based on personal interests or other special interests, but must always make decisions based on what is best for those you serve.

In a for-profit corporation, the product has importance only as fair as it makes a profit. In a nonprofit the product is the mission and, as a board member, you have a moral responsibility to be committed to that mission.

As a board member you have a moral responsibility to go beyond a personal interest in solving a problem. As a board member you must believe strongly in the value of the service your organization provides—to want to see the organization grow for the good of those you serve.

As a board member you will learn this is never enough money to do all that the organization could or would like to do. You will be faced with hard choices about which program or service to fund. You’ll have to choose between keeping one vital service over another when the income falls short of the expenses.

Service on a nonprofit board is frustrating and rewarding, frightening and fun, confusing and enlightening. It is rarely dull. If you do the job of the board member as you should, you’ll work hard and give many hours you probably didn’t expect to give when you agreed to serve on this board. You’ll find yourself investing much of yourself and loving every minute of it. That’s the nature of the nonprofit organization.

**CONTINUOUS EVOLUTION IS PART OF THE NATURE OF THE WACO ORGANIZATION**

The coming together of concerned individuals interested in growing the industry, which target a problem to solve or a need to fill, virtually becomes the mission of the organization. No matter how old your organization, you should be able to look at the mission statement and see the problem or need that brought the concerned campground owners together in the first place.

Even though the mission may be old, the methods the board uses to accomplish the mission must be constantly changing and new. As the organization evolves into a larger and more complex operation, the systems the board uses to govern must change.

Monitoring the finances of the new organization can be done by looking at lists of bills and having board members sign checks, but the evolved board of the evolved organization with a much larger budget will use a system of careful budgeting, close scrutiny of financial reports and attention to the annual audit.

The board meeting agenda should reflect a board that has evolved to continue to deal with major governance issues, not a board that is mired in traditional issues that should have been delegated to staff.

Meeting frequency, number and type of board members, delegation of authority and dozens of other systems will continue to change as long as the organization exists.

Boards and board members must:

* Seek in-service training and development opportunities to learn new systems of governance.
* Regularly conduct self-evaluations to identify needed changes in the way they operate.
* Plan how the board will evolve as the organization evolves.
* The board that fails to continually examine the way it does business and make changes to meet current needs, risks becoming a dinosaur.

**CONSIDER THIS…**

There’s a great difference between a nonprofit corporation and a for-profit corporation. But realize that not all nonprofits look alike either. Much of that is a result of the board being molded by the people who happen to be on it at the moment.

Not only are the missions of nonprofits different, but so are their methods of doing business, their size, their community connection, their traditions and history. A government board has to do business in the sunshine, but a private nonprofit can close all meetings. A board that’s operated for fifty years has traditions to be honored, whereas the board of a younger organization changes rapidly as it seeks to establish a history.

Even though you may have served on other nonprofit boards, this one is new. New board members should be cautious about pushing to do things on this board according to previous board experience. Yes, this board needs new perspectives, but at least the first few meetings should include more pondering than pontificating for the new board member.

There is potential for great strength and power when influential community leaders come together on the board to govern a nonprofit. But the beauty of bringing leaders with diverse personalities and perspectives together to govern the nonprofit also creates a beast of sorts.

How do you make one team with one voice out of these many diverse voices? You do it by each board member making a special effort to understand and fit into the team effort. No matter what perspective you bring to the board, your first personal goal should be to attempt to fit into the team structure.

Being a part of the team does not mean giving up your personal views and goals, but rather attempting to find a way to mesh your goals with the goals of the other board members. It also means forming new team foals to which all board members subscribe. WACO accomplishes this via conducting Personality Styles training with the Board of Directors upon them having new members.

**ONLY THE TEAM HAS POWER AND AUTHORITY TO ACT**

In a very legal sense, the only way individual board members can exercise authority is by making decisions together. Individually, outside the board meeting, a board member has no legal authority to act for the bard or make any decisions for the board. So it is essential that individual board members be able to act as a team if any decisions are ever to be made.

In addition, your loyalty can no longer be to special interest groups, or any particular segment of the organization, but it must be to the team and to the whole community. Your duty is to be comfortable enough with each board decision that you can support the team’s decisions for the WACO family.

You may have been elected from a particular geographic area or you may have been elected because of your position or support for a particular issue. No matter what reason you were elected to this board, you loyalty must be to the team effort that serves the best interests of those you serve—not to the special interests of those who helped put you on board.

There may be times when decisions you’re asked to make for the organization will come into conflict with decisions you have to make as a member of another board. The solution is the same. Your loyalty is to this board. If you cannot accept that principle, you should seriously consider removing yourself from this board.

**THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS MEMBER OF THE BOARD TEAM. HOW IT WORKS WITH SEVERSON & ASSOCIATES & THE GILBERT BROWN FOUNDATION.**

There is one nonvoting member of your board team—the executive director of your organization. The relationship between the board and the executive is not the typical employer / employee relationship. The executive / board member relationship is one of high trust and cooperation. The executive is such a vital resource to the board’s work that he / she must sit at the board table and take part in all deliberations as a team member. In our case Severson & Associates is hired by the Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners. The management company, Severson & Associates, is directed by the Board President, who collects the direction given by the board to instruct the President of Severson & Associates on what tasks must be accomplished. All direction is given to the President of Severson & Associates and not directly to the staff of Severson. Severson & Associates is responsible for the day to day operation of the WACO organization, along with other duties as assigned by the Board of Directors.

The Gilbert Brown Foundation is a 501C3 that WACO supports as a charity of choice and Gilbert Brown personally is a Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners supporter. Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners does not pay Severson & Associates for any work associated with the Gilbert Brown Foundation.

**YOU CAN BE A BOARD TEAM BUILDER**

Listen to fellow boardmembers. You have to know where they’re coming from to be able to fit your goals with theirs.

Explain our position on issues very clearly so fellow board members understand where you’re coming from.

Listen to understand your fellow board members positions, also. Help clarify team member’s ideas.

Make friends with fellow board members. Get to know them on a level other than the official board meeting level.

Tell fellow board members openly when you agree with them as well as when you disagree with them. Being vocal only when you disagree makes you appear to be just a naysayer rather than someone with a legitimate concern about the issue.

Don’t let disagreement on one issue carry over to the next issue on the agenda. Agreement or disagreement should stand on the merits of the issue, not on a clash of personalities.

Respect what other board members have to say. Disagree, debate, question, but never ridicule what other board members say. Keep in mind that the others around the table have earned their places here by being industry leaders just like you. Their opinions carry the weight of experience just as yours do.

Accept the fact that there will be split votes on this board. No matter how hard you work for consensus, there will be issues decided with a majority and minority vote. If you’re on the minority side of the issue and have advocated well for your side, then accept the majority decision and make up your mind to support the board’s decision. Remember: if you are on the majority side of the issue, give due respect to the minority views.

Leave your disagreements at the board table. When the meeting is over, the debating is over until the next meeting. After the meeting, it’s time to rebuild the team spirit.

**CONSIDER THIS…**

Board meetings are where the action is, and discussion is the action for the board. There is no room for the strong, silent type at the meeting table. Every board member must participate in the discussion of issues, or there is no point for you to be on the board.

You’re on the board because you have experience, insight, and perspective about the issues important to your organization. When you fail to speak on an issue, the board does not have that valuable perspective to use in the final decision.

Of course, you’ll be able to speak on some issues more than others, and that’s not a problem. But to be able to speak on all issues at some level, board members must study the agenda items carefully before the meeting, do some extra research, call the executive or committee proposing an issue, talk to constituents or look at what someone else is doing in regard to your same issue. Then get ready to put in your two cents worth.

The Board Member

Your job as a member of a nonprofit board team can be defined very easily in one sentence: ***You and your fellow board members are responsible for the whole organization and all that happens to it.***

That is both a legal and practical way of looking at your job on this board. Your responsibility encompasses executive, staff, buildings, finance, assets, success and failure of the nonprofit. Even though the board delegates a major portion of the job to professional staff, the board never gives up bottom-line responsibility for the organization.

**THE BOARD SETS POLICY**

A board of directors has neither the time nor ability to manage a business as complex as this. Placing themselves into a governance or policymaking position is the easiest way for board members to handle the heavy responsibility.

A policy is a direction or course of action that a body will take. The board is a policy-making body that sets the direction and course of action the organization will take within the mission.

The board establishes policies that outline the board’s parameters for how the organization will operate to accomplish its mission. Then the board functions as observer, interpreter, and evaluator of those policies. The board also modifies existing policies and creates new policies as they see the need to keep the organization running well.

**THE BOARD HIRES AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO MANAGE THE ORGANIZATION**

The task of hiring an executive is still something about which you will be concerned. Every board has the task of reconfirming the hiring of the executive at contract renewal time. Each year is should be equally as important as the first time the board hired the executive. Whether the Executive Director is a management group or an individual the same things apply.

The board places a tremendous amount of trust and authority with the professional manager and the manager must continue to prove to the board that he/ she is the right person for the job. Board members must formally evaluate the executive and make a decision about rehiring that person, or looking for someone else to fill that position that could do the job better.

**GOOD BOARD PRACTICE IS A DELICATE BALANCE OF LEADING AND DELEGATING**

Some board responsibilities cannot be delegated to others. However, a great deal of the work of the board must be delegated to a professional manager who has the skills and abilities to do the job.

Keeping in mind that the board is responsible for everything in WACO, and looking at this delegation by the board in the purest terms, it can be said that:

***The executive’s only job is to help the board members do the board’s job.***

That sweeping delegation of management authority from board to paid executive to manage the nonprofit and then doing nothing to interfere with that management except to monitor is one of the most difficult things you will do on this board. This confusing issue of how much the board does and how much the board delegates to someone else to do is the greatest cause of conflict on any nonprofit board. The reason for that is the impossibility of clearly defining what the board should do and what they should delegate to the executive.

There are several ways you can deal with this confusion and keep things in perspective: Do not look at this as a turf battle between the board and the executive. The board and staff must always function as a team and each team member has assignments. This is an issue of determining who does what best and then allowing that segment of the board team to do the job without interference from the other parts of the board team.

The board members’ duties can be defined loosely as dealing with issues that affect the whole organization. The board sets parameters of how the system will operate.

The executive’s duties can be defined as developing and carrying out the functions of managing the organization within the parameters set by the board.

There are very few activities of the board team that every segment of the board team isn’t involved in somehow. For example, it is the board’s job to establish an annual budget for the organization.

Communication is the best prevention of confusion and conflict. Board members and executive must feel free to discuss any issue. All parts of the board team must feel free to express concern about who does what job.

The board never gives up ultimate authority for everything and everyone in the nonprofit.

**EXAMPLES OF DEFINING WHO DOES WHAT ON THE BOARD TEAM**

The board delegates staff Management to the executive, but the board controls levels of staffing by approval of the budget. The auditing process is done in this way:

* Data entry is done by Severson & Associates Staff
* The auditing of those entries’, balancing the account and QuickBooks reconciliation is done by CSAW accounting firm who comes to the office on a weekly basis.
* The Board reviews the financial information.
* The books are audited and taxes done by Hawkins Ash Accounting

The board approves bids for major purchases, but the executive recommends the bid be accepted and actually makes the purchase. The board is responsible for making a long range plan for the organization, but the executive will make recommendations and act as a resource through the planning process. WACO works through Severson & Associates to conduct the strategic planning session as they do the strategic planning for most of the other State Organizations.

The board approves a budget amount for staffing, but the executive determines the level of staffing necessary and what the staff will actually do through Severson & Associates in the case of WACO.

**CONSIDER THIS…**

Are you wearing the right hat?

Board members always have two hats they can wear, and it’s important to wear the right hat at the right time.

The first hat is the official board member hat. It indicates your authority to act as a governor of the organization. You wear this one when working in official session with the rest of the board, or when the full board delegates authority to you to speak for them, sign documents or take other action on behalf of the board outside the meeting.

The second hat is your volunteer hat worn on occasions outside the board meetings when you volunteer time and expertise to the organization. When wearing your volunteer hat, you are still a board member, but have no authority to speak or act for the board unless the board has normally delegated that to you, and you have no authority to issue orders to executive or staff

**THE BOARD PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE NONPROFIT**

By delegating management responsibility to the paid staff, the board leaves itself time for the important task of planning for the future of the organization.

Planning is not a frill, but one of the most important trusts given to the board. If there’s one thing boards don’t do enough of, it’s planning for the future of the organization.

 Planning, in an age when dramatic change comes almost faster than we can comprehend seems like an exercise in futility. But the very fact that change is so rapid is even more reason that every organization must have a plan to cope with that rapid change and the effects that change could have on the organization.

Failure to plan is planning to fail. Board members must be the visionaries for the organization. They must plan as far ahead as five to ten years at least.

The board is generally responsible for long-range planning and the executive is responsible to develop a short-range (1 year) plan to carry out the board’s long-range goals. But all planning for the nonprofit is a board team effort that should include board members, management, staff, and any others who can be a good resource for developing the plan.

**GOOD PLANNING TAKES TIME**

The annual long-range planning session will probably include the board, executive, staff, and other resource people, and last as long as one or two days. In that special planning meeting you should be ready to set aside the limitations that you struggle with monthly in your board meetings. You will be asked to dream about the future of the organization and then plan you will make those dreams reality over the next several years. Planning is an exciting and vital board responsibility. Planning makes dreams reality for your organization and creates an annual calendar of board activities. The short-range plan is a simple document that will include such things as plans for board meeting times for the whole year, committee activity, the annual meeting, election of officers and board development activities.

**MONITORING AND EVALUATING- ANOTHER MAJOR BOARD RESPONSIBILITY**

As a board member, you are really a “Trustee” of the organization you serve. The organization trusts you to make sure the organization is operating the way it

The basic elements of a good long-range plan are:

* ***Do-ability****—*actions can be taken to accomplish the plan.
* ***Flexibility****—*the plan can be modified over the years.
* ***Measurability****—*there are ways to identify accomplishment of the plan.
* ***Accountability****—*completion dates and responsible parties are identified as part of the plan.
* ***Vision****—*the board has stretched their imagination and considered every option for making this mission work.

**THE MISSION STATEMENT- FIRST STEP IN LONG-RANGE PLANNING**

Your nonprofit has a mission that should be in writing, stating the reason the organization exists and the vision the board holds for the future of the nonprofit. The mission statement is not a fuzzy piece of philosophy, but a clear statement of where this organization wants to go. It states what difference this organization will make by its existence. The mission statement is the cornerstone around which all other planning for the organization takes place.

**A LONG-RANGE PLAN IS NOT WRITTEN IN STONE**

It is a common misconception that a long-range plan once written is locked into place and not changed for the life of the plan. You should consider your long-range plan a flexible and changeable document. Your written plan should be reviewed at least once a year and modified where necessary. For example, if a program is to be expanded in three years, but you suddenly find revenue to do the expansion in two, the plan will be modified.

**A PLAN FOR PLANNING**

Long-range planning must be much more than an informal discussion among board members about what the organization ought to be doing in the years ahead. Good planning that will set definite goals has to follow a very orderly and formal process. You should expect to be involved in at least one significant long-range planning meeting per year. During this meeting you will help write a long-range plan or modify a previously established plan.

You should be ready to merge your personal goals for the organization with the personal goals of the rest of the board team. You should also be ready to work for a consensus with the rest of the planning team about the goals you will set. An organization must have one set of long-range goals to shoot for.

**THE BOARD ALSO DOES SHORT-RANGE PLANNING**

The executive is generally responsible to write a short-range plan that explains how executive and staff will work on the board’s long-range plan this year.

The board also writes a short-range plan that outlines what the board’s work will be this year. In other words, the board should—the ways they want it to run. It’s you job to keep an eye on the progress of the organization for WACO.

Of course, you can’t watch every detail and every activity that takes place in the organization because that would be a full-time job. The board member’s responsibility is to monitor and evaluate “bottom-line” results.

For example, you cannot and should not be in the office every day monitoring the work of the staff. But you can measure the effectiveness of the staff by looking at the progress made on the long-range plan and the executive’s annual goals. That’s bottom-line evidence of what the work staff is doing.

You will monitor and evaluate many things as a member of the board, but there are a few major ones—finance, executive effectiveness, progress towards the mission and the long-range plan.

**THE BOARD MONITORS FINANCE**

Finance is one of the most difficult items you will have to monitor and evaluate, but it doesn’t have to be an overwhelming task. You do not have to be an expert in corporate finance to do a good job. Begin your monitoring with careful attention to the budget. The budget is the board’s financial plan for the organization and deserves plenty of your attention.

Board members must ask questions necessary for them to gain a reasonable understanding of the financial plan—basically, where is the money coming from, where will the money be spent, and does the spending make the board’s priorities. Monthly financial reports to the board are the windows you use to monitor how well executive and staff are following the financial plan the board approved when they voted on the budget. If you don’t understand the reports, ask the executive for explanation.

You don’t have to know everything about finances; just enough to assure yourself that the money is coming and going out according to your budget plan. Financial reports will cover both the revenue side of the budget and the expense side of the budget. WACO has a 4 tier process in the audit process, unlike any other State Association in the Campground Industry. On the expense side, you should understand what was budgeted, what has been expended to this point, the variance between the spending plan in the budget and what is actually being spent, and the reasons for the variances. Same goes for the revenue side. How much money did you anticipate at this point in the budget year? What has actually come in? What’s the variance? What’s the explanation for the variance?

**SOME INEFFECTIVE WAYS TO MONITOR FINANCES:**

Reviewing a list of the bills paid.

This is time consuming for the board and fails to look at the big financial picture which is really the board’s job.

A finance committee.

The full board is responsible for the financial integrity of the organization and a committee should be used only to help the full board understand the financial picture. A committee cannot do the job for the board.

Board members signing checks.

This may be a good check and balance system, but it is not adequate as a financial monitoring system because it does not provide a view of the big picture of the organization’s finances.

**THE BOARD MONITORS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Executive effectiveness is another important area for board members to monitor and evaluate. Remember, you re responsible for everything in the organization and you only delegate management to the executive. You don’t give up your responsibility when you delegate, so you must make sure management is handled properly

You can’t follow the executive around all day to see how the job is being done, so the best way to evaluate and monitor executive effectiveness is through a formal and annual evaluation.

The format and procedure for that evaluation must be worked out by each board, but it is important for each board member to understand what is appropriate and what is inappropriate for the executive evaluation.

Remember that you’re measuring executive effectiveness on bottom-line results. Is the board getting a good flow of information and recommendations for the executive? Are the finances of the organization reasonably stable? Is the organization making progress towards the mission and long-range goals? Is the executive working within the job description dictated by the board? Has the board received many complaints from those you serve? How about compliments?

**A FEW GOOD RULES FOR EXECUTIVE EVALUATION**

* Do not ask staff to evaluate the executive for the board. Line staff does not know what the board expects of the executive. Staff members cannot be unbiased when evaluating their boss. The responses from staff will be without value.
* Consider formal evaluation a positive effort to communicate better with the executive, not a fault-finding mission to document errors. The evaluation gives the board and executive a system to communicate about how to make the organization run better. You should search as much for what the executive does well as for what the executive is doing wrong.
* Be ready to reward good performance and demand correction for poor performance.
* Follow up on evaluation. Ask the executive to demonstrate change where the board asks for change.

**THE BOARD MONITORS THE LONG-RANGE PLAN**

The long-range plan is like a mark in the sand layed there as a point of reference to determine if the organization is standing still, moving ahead or moving backwards. You must always be personally aware of the mission and long-range goals of the organization so that you can accurately measure its progress.

That progress or lack of progress will determine the decisions you make as a part of the board team. You can’t set direction for the organization if you don’t know where it is supposed to go.

**BOARD MEMBERS ARE ADVOCATES FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

Because you serve as a volunteer leader of this nonprofit, you qualify as the best advocate for the organization. Paid staff has a built-in self-interest no matter how committed they are to the mission of the organization. But volunteer board members have the purest of motives—service. Board members are also community leaders and hold a good deal of influence in the community, prime qualities for being advocates. Your advocacy for the organization will take several different forms—lobbying lawmakers and funding sources, communicating with the organization and those you serve about the needs and plans of the organization, and carrying out public relations activities for the organization.

Your advocacy efforts will generally be part of a planned board effort. Remember, you cannot speak for the full board, but you can speak about the board’s position on issues. You can also promote the interests of the organization.

**BOARD MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE EXPERTISE TO THE ORGANIZATION**

In addition to industry influence, board members often bring personal expertise to the board. Generally, nonprofit organizations never have enough money to hire all the expertise they need, so it’s natural for board members to offer theirs. Financial specialists offer to work on finances. Computer experts volunteer to help with designing new computer specs. All board members offer to help with fundraising or wherever the organization needs you.

Keep in mind, however, that you are not elected to be a specialist for the organization, but rather to apply your general experience and leadership to its governance. Exercising your special skills must be done in a cautious manner.

When you offer your expertise to the board or the executive, don’t be offended if your advice is not accepted. Both the board and the executive must work in the context of the whole organization, not just this one area of need.

When using your expertise, be cautious not to misuse your power as a board member to pressure the executive to staff to accept your help. The bottom line—A real expert knows the answers, but also knows when to offer those answers.

**“THE BOARD’S JOB IS TO SET POLICY”**

Ask any board member to define the board’s job and you’ll likely hears, “The board’s job is to set policy.” Ask for a definition of a policy, and you’ll probably get no more than a confused look.

To do your board member job well, you must understand policy because that’s where you’ll be spending your time—making policies, wrestling with policy issues, interpreting policies, monitoring policy effectiveness, enforcing policy, setting direction for the organization through policies, and protecting yourself and the organization through a good set of policies.

**A good set of written board policies…**

* Informs every one of the board intent, goals, and aspirations.
* Prevents confusions among board members, staff, and the public.
* Promotes consistency of board action.
* Eliminates the need for instant (crisis) policy-making.
* Reduces criticism of the board and management.
* Improves public relations.
* Clarifies board member, executive, and staff roles.
* Gives the executive a clear direction from the board.

Policy is a written statement of the process and procedures for handling a specifically defined issue.

Just entering a motion into the meeting minutes that says the board will follow a particular direction *is not* policy. Relying on board tradition to be board policy *is not* enough. Determination of how the board handled an issue the last three times *is not* policy.

***Board policy is a carefully designed, written general statement of direction for the organization, formally adopted by a majority vote of the board at a legally constituted board meeting.***

**BOARD POLICY IS NOT…**

Your bylaws are not your board policies. Bylaws are a higher and more permanent set of guidelines for how the board will operate. They are usually harder to change than board policies and do not cover the broad scope of how the organization will operate. Board policies are not laws. There is little need to repeat in board policy those statutes that already have the force of state or federal low unless the board policy spells out some special manner in which the board will implement or comply with a law. For example, if state law prescribes when your fiscal year will begin, there is no need to repeat that law in a board policy. A board should “develop” policy and not just “write policy. Good policy grows out of a lengthy process of studying the issues and needs, gathering facts, deliberating the issues, writing the policy, and reviewing it annually.

**DEVELOP POLICY STEP BY STEP**

 Let’s look at policy development step by step.

1) **Identify the need.** Unfortunately, many board policies are a result of a problem or even a crisis rather than a result of careful planning and foresight. A good way to identify need for particular policies is to anticipate problems and write policies before the problems occur. Study the policy manuals of other organizations. Watch what’s happening with other similar organizations in the state and nationwide. If an organization similar to yours ends up in litigation, your organization should review your own related policies. Learn from the mistakes of others.

2) **Gather the facts.** Most policies will grow out of recommendations from management. Your executive knows the trends, problems, and issues that demand policy statements from the board. Depending on the nature of the policy, you may want to ask for public / member input, seek legal counsel or even hire a consultant to help you develop a policy.

3) **Deliberate the issue.** This is where your perspective as a representative of your community / membership comes into play. You know industry standards and industry needs.

Careful deliberation of a proposed board policy should include several considerations:

**Is the proposed policy…?**

* Really necessary?
* Consistent with our mission statement?
* Within the scope of our authority as a board?
* Consistent with local, state, and federal law?
* Compatible with our other policies?
* Practical?
* Broad enough to cover the subject completely?
* Enforceable?
* Affordable?

5) **Write the policy.** The actual wording of the policy is best left to the executive or a task force of board members and executive rather than the full board struggling with wording. The actual policy may come to the board and back to committee several times before it’s finalized. Making good policy takes time.

Final approval of the written policy is a board responsibility and should be done at a formal board meeting.

 6) **Review your policies annually.** Although you write policies to be durable, policies do go out of date, and an out-of-date policy can be as bad as having no policy at all. Annual review of your board policies can help you keep you policies current and at the same time keep board members current about board policies.

To make your board policies usable, they should be collected and codified in one manual. The manual makes the process of learning board policy simple for new board members and it makes application and interpretation of policies easier.

A manual also makes the process of review and update of board policies much easier. An all-at-once approach to revision is much too cumbersome for any board. An easier way is to give every policy a date and then make sure the board or a committee of the board examines each policy on or before that date each year. That makes it an ongoing process and much less overwhelming.

**CONSIDER THIS…**

You have policies somewhere, even if you don’t have a nicely bound policy book. The problem is those policies are probably hidden in the minutes of past board meetings or simply the traditions under which the board has always operated. That’s not good enough. Informal policy is inconsistent, known only to board members, and won’t protect the board. It’s tough to convince an angry constituent or jury that you have a policy when it’s not in writing.

Once your policies are in writing, put the month adopted on each. When that month comes up each year, give it a quick review. You’ll keep the policies current without the drudgery of reviewing everything at once.

**THE EXECUTIVE’S ROLE ON THE TEAM**

Just as there is much confusion about the role of the board member of the nonprofit organization, there is also much confusion about exactly what the executive does in the organization. The executive is first an employee of the board, but the relationship between the board and the executive is not the typical employer / employee relationship. In most businesses, the employer is the expert in the businesses and probably knows more about running the business than the employee. The delegating / monitoring relationship the board has with the executive is very difficult to master because it is so unusual. But a citizen board governing a professional manager is a good system. It has the best elements of both worlds—a board of governors who represent the best interests of the constituents, and a professional manager who can make the organization run efficiently within the parameters set by the board.

The nonprofit board is selected to make sure the organization operates well and in the best interest of the customers. Board members are not selected for their expertise in managing a nonprofit organization. Thus the board must hire a operates well and in the best interest of the customers. Board members are not selected for their expertise in managing a nonprofit organization. The role of the executive can be defined as helping board members do their job, a very natural and efficient way for a board to fulfill its mandate. After the board carefully hires a professional who they can trust to do their job, the board delegates all management responsibility to the executive. The board’s job then becomes one of carefully monitoring the executive’s work to make sure that what they want to happen is really happening.

**CONSIDER THIS…**

Sorting out who does what on the management / governance team is about as tough as it gets for board members and management. There is built-in potential for conflict that needs constant attention.

From the board’s point of view, delegating is hard because you’re giving up some things you know are your responsibility and liability. Delegating is hard.

You should know that the executive also chafes under the delegation process. The executive is into the operation day after day, and knows all the ins and outs of the business. But the executive does not have free reign. Once a month the board comes in and needs to know all that’s gone on. The professional must ask the amateurs for direction and permission about a whole variety of issues that affect the management of the organization. Working under delegated authority is hard.

The only way it can all work is for the board to hire an executive who is in sync with board philosophy, who accepts the management / governance division, who can be trusted and who respects the board’s responsibility. Then you must have a system that allows board and management to freely discuss and sort out the who-does-what questions.

**THE BOARD DELEGATES DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT TO THE EXECUTIVE**

The executive is charged with virtually all of the day-to-day management and must be clearly understood by both staff and board to be the authority in matters of routine management.

**The executive is responsible to:**

* Implement the policies of the board.
* Represent the organization in negotiations, public relations and other public events.
* Hire, direct, supervise, educate, evaluate, and discipline all line staff.
* Prepare the annual budget for approval by the board.
* Manage the finances of the organization.
* Oversee the organization’s assets.
* Plan the annual operations of the organization to fit into the long-range plan.
* Report to the board the results of the board’s actions.
* Remain current in management techniques and what’s going on in the organization.
* Prepare an annual report of the progress of the organization and submit it to the board.
* Market for the Industry and the organization
* Educate members on the industry and the organization

**THE BOARD PRESIDENT**

Someone as to be the board’s leader and that is the board president. The job description for the president is relatively simple, but the job can be complex. First of all, the board president must be understood to have no power beyond that of any other board member unless the full board has granted that power to the president, such as managing board meetings, speaking to the public on behalf of the board or signing contracts and checks on behalf of the board.

Any power exercised by the board president must first be granted by the full board in policy or in commonly accepted and understood practice of the board.

Traditionally, the board president has several duties:

**Planner—**the president works with the executive to plan the meeting agenda as well as the manner in which the meeting will be conducted. The president keeps an overall view of the board year and ensures that the board is completing duties mandated by board policy or by law.

**Facilitator—**the president’s job must be viewed as more of a facilitator than a controller of meetings. The president begins the meetings on time, directs the board through the agenda, and attempts to adjourn the meeting on time.

**Delegator**—the president traditionally has the power to appoint board members and others to committees with board consent. To do that, the president must have a clear understanding of each board member’s skills, strengths, and interests so that appropriate assignments can be made.

**Liaison—**the president must be able to interpret board needs and concerns to the executive and executive needs and concerns to the board. In addition, the president offers personal support and counsel to the executive and serves as a sounding board for the executive.

**Team builder—**the board must always function as a team and it is the duty of the president to foster the team concept among board members. When there is danger of damage to the team structure, the president must mediate, counsel, and discipline fellow board members to keep the team intact.

**THE BOARD VICE-PRESIDENT**

The vice-president of the board traditionally serves as the backup for the board president. However, the vice-president is usually assigned additional specific duties such as chairing a committee, taking charge of board development activities or preparing the annual membership meeting. The vice-president works with the president to stay current on issues and methods of board operation to be able to assume presidential duties if the president can’t perform the required function.

**THE BOARD SECRETARY**

The size and business nature of most nonprofits these days dictates that the traditional job of the secretary of the board should be significantly changed. For example, the minutes of meetings should be taken by a staff member and not the board secretary. All members of the board need to be able to participate in board meeting deliberations and contribute their expertise. But the board secretary cannot do that well while taking the minutes of the meeting. The secretary’s job is really that of overseer to be sure the job is done correctly and that the minutes of all meetings are safeguarded for the future. Correspondence on behalf of the board can also be done by the clerical staff with the secretary acting as overseer. Safe care and maintenance of historical documents of the nonprofit are also the responsibility of the board secretary.

**THE BOARD TREASURER**

The treasurer’s job is also one of overseer. Although the paid staff usually manage the finances of the organization, the board treasurer is responsible to ensure that adequate financial reports are delivered to the board. The treasurer may also be asked by the executive to assist in preparation of the budget to be submitted to the full board and to help interpret financial reports to the full board.

**ELECTING BOARD OFFICERS**

Actual processes for electing board officers vary widely, but whatever system your board uses, it must be a serious effort to place the best leaders of the board into the position of leading the board. It cannot be a popularity contest, a struggle between factions for a power position of just a “whoever will say yes.” Consider using a secret ballot system to avoid the “herd” mentality.

Not all board members are suited to be, or have the skills to be, a board officer. Poor selection of leadership can result in a poorly functioning board.

Board officers, particularly the board president, must be well respected by the rest of the board, must be willing to give the extra time necessary to carry out the extra duties of the office, and must have strong leadership skills. Officers should also be board members with some experience on this board.

If you are asked by a candidate for an office, consider carefully if you have the extra time it will take as well as the leadership skills to lead this board

**SELF-STUDY QUIZ**

***Discuss your responses to these questions with your executive or board president.***

1. Day-to-day management is the responsibility of…
2. The one nonvoting member of the board team is…
3. A “rubber stamp” board is defined as…
4. The executive’s only boss is…
5. The four major levels of the organization’s chain of command are…
6. Line staff are hired, evaluated, disciplined, and supervised by…
7. A “short circuit” in the chain of command occurs when…
8. Board members only have power and authority when…
9. The board president’s powers include…
10. The five responsibilities of the board president include…
11. The three most important qualifications for serving as a board officer are…

**BOARD COMMITTEES—MAKE THEM WORK**

The many and complex issues with which your board will be working cannot always be handled efficiently by the full board. Many of those issues may be handed to board committees for study and recommendations to the full board.

As some time in your service on this board you probably will be asked to serve on at least one committee and need to understand the nature and purpose of committees.

Committee work is a good place for you to offer any special expertise you may have, but service on committees is not limited to experts in the committee subject. Committee service is a good way for you to learn more about the organization by focusing on special issues.

Often some of the committee members are selected for people outside the board so that additional expertise can be utilized by the board through the committee. Involving non-board members also builds ownership for the nonprofit’s mission and opens a new avenue of communication with the community.

**COMMITTEES HAVE NO POWER OR AUTHORITY**

Whatever the name or type of committee, the only purpose of that committee is to extend the work of the board. Committees are not autonomous groups with loose connections to the board, but are simply extensions of the board and always responsible to the full board.

Committees have to power or authority beyond what is granted to them by the full board. The only action committees can traditionally take is to study an issue assigned by the full board and make recommendations to the full board about the assigned issues.

**COMMITTEES ARE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE FULL BOARD**

If your committee system is well defined and controlled, and the committees are being held properly accountable, you will receive regular reports from each committee. The committee reports will explain what the committee has been doing for the board and make recommendations for board action.

Board members not on the committee should feel free to ask questions and get clarifications from the committee members, but avoid repeating the work the committee has already done. The purpose of the committee is to save time for the full board. If the full board repeats the committee discussions after the committee reports to the board, the board has not saved time, but rather doubled the time spent on the issue.

**TYPES OF COMMITTEES-WACO COMMITTEE INFO INSERT. HERE SEE ??**

Your board may already have standing or permanent committees that are described in the bylaws of the organization and function year-round. As certain important issues arise, the board may also appoint temporary or “ad hoc” committees to study those issues for the board.

At times, the board may meet as a committee of the whole. The difference between meetings of the board as a committee of the whole adds a regular board meeting is that the board is focusing on one subject in the committee mode.

Regular board meetings do not allow time for extensive discussion of one issue, so the board meets as a committee of the whole to give itself that time for in-depth discussion. Formal action on the issue will usually be delayed until the regular board meeting.

Your board may also have an executive committee, which is a committee in a class all its own. The executive committee if usually composed of officers of the board and the executive. This committee often has limited powers to act for the board in emergencies, but must have all actions ratified by the board at the next regular meeting.

**YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A COMMITTEE MEMBER**

You should approach committee meetings as seriously as you do regular board meetings. Prepare for the meetings, attend the meetings, and take part in the discussions. If you have an assignment from the committee, complete it in a timely manner. Remember, committees are an extension of the board.

When you are appointed to a committee, it is your responsibility to understand the mission of the committee, when and where the committee meets, and the names of other members of the committee. You should also examine the history of the committee and the minutes of their meetings for at least the past year so that you are up and running with the committee as soon as possible.

Help you committee stay on its responsibility and accountability to the full board. Although committee meetings are usually not as formal as a full board meeting, they should have a distinct structure, agenda and goals. When the committee completes its meeting, there should be a clear result of the meeting that can be reported to the full board. Committees are a valuable extension of the board, but only if they work in an orderly, timely, and accountable fashion.

**WACO COMMITTEES**

**FINANCIAL:** Budget & Dues ….Audit process….Insurance ….Executive Director

Responsible for the preparation & recommendation of the budget and dues structure, coordinating the preparation of all necessary tax and corporate documents, the audit process, maintaining of adequate association insurance protection, and the annual review of the Executive Director’s performance & compensation plan.

* On or before the last board meeting of the fiscal year, the Treasurer shall prepare and file with the Board a tentative budget which shall set forth the revenues and expenditures of the preceding fiscal year: the estimated revenues and expenditures for the current year; and estimated revenues and expenditures for the next fiscal year.
* The dues structure for the following year should be announced at the annual meeting or as soon after as possible. The Chairperson for this committee shall be charged with the responsibility of the study of WACO dues structure and provide all of the facts for the Board of Directors to make a decision whether dues should be, increased or restructured.
* Historically, WACO has endeavored to keep its dues at a minimum in order to encompass both large and small campgrounds.

Adoption of the Budget at the Annual meetings (March) of each year, the membership shall adopt the budget for the new fiscal year. The budget adopted must be balanced.

**ADVERTISING**: Directory…Shows …Website…Publicity

The advertising committee is responsible for review and recommendation of all association advertising and publicity including the WACO Directory, RV trade shows, the WACO website, and the member newsletter format & content. The advertising committee is responsible for review and maintenance of the WACO advertising and media policy,

Directory:

* Cost of advertising
* Number of directories produced
* Distribution of directories
* How ads are being sold
* Advertising rates

**PLANNING & DEVELOPING:** Bylaws….Strategic planning ….Legislative ….Membership Development

The planning and developing committee is responsible for the update and maintenance of the association member handbook, which includes the association constitution, bylaws, policies and procedures manual. The planning & developing committee is also responsible for strategic planning, legislative issues facing the association and membership development.

**BYLAWS**

The bylaws of WACO may need changing, as the organization changes. Consequently, the Bylaws subcommittee must keep abreast of any inconsistencies between the bylaws and the operations of the organization so that changes that are needed can be incorporated into the bylaws. The bylaws should be able to answer any questions of governance that the membership may have.

Copies of the Constitution, Bylaws and a Policies and Procedure Manual should be given to new members. Copies should be made available to any member at his/her request.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The purpose of the Strategic Planning subcommittee shall be to develop and maintain a plan for the orderly growth and development of WACO. The plan shall state the objectives of WACO, it primary program focuses and description of how the association will reach the goals set forth in the plan. The subcommittee shall review the plan at the least on an annual basis and modifications shall be subject to approval by the Board of Directors.

**LEGISLATIVE**

The legislative subcommittee along with the WACO lobbyist (if one) shall assure that members views on relevant issues are communicated to and acted upon by various federal, state and local legislative, regulatory and executive agencies.

The Legislative subcommittee along with the WACO lobbyist (if one) will work for the adoption of sound federal, state, and local recreation policies. To represent the private campground industry, to regulatory bodies, and to provide assistance to state associations, individual campgrounds and others dealing with federal, state and local government issues and actions.

The Legislative subcommittee along with the WACO lobbyist (if one) will be responsible to recommend necessary policies, programs and actions to the Board of Directors. The subcommittee and lobbyist will help in monitoring emerging issues for possible impact on the camping industry and to communicate to the general membership its policies, programs and activities.

The Legislative chairperson is responsible for assisting in obtaining a WXCO lobbyist and involved in lobbyist contract negotiation.

The Legislative chairperson is responsible for interfacing with the WACO lobbyist and communication of lobbyist activity to the board and membership.

The Legislative chairperson is responsible for involvement in important legislative hearing and meetings on behalf of the association.

The Legislative chairperson shall file quarterly reports with the Wisconsin Ethics Board to report WACO lobbyist time and association member time on state legislative bills of interest to the association.

The Legislative chairperson shall give a verbal report at the annual meeting.

**POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE**

The WACO-Pac (Political Action Committee) treasurer receives and deposits all PAC donations. The WACO\_PAC treasurer must file reports with the Wisconsin Ethics Board to report all PAC donations



Bob and his wife Melanie are the second generation owners and operators of Wilderness Campground in Montello. Bob has been involved with campground operations since 1969, when his parents first purchased it. In which time, Bob has had a hand in its growth from 100 basic sites to 360 water and electric sites.

Bob's family has been members of WACO since 1969. Bob considers WACO to be the most beneficial association his family has ever belonged to.

He is very thankful to be able to give back to the organization that has meant so much to success of his family's business by serving on the board.

Bob is currently in charge of the PAC Fund on the Board as the RV representative

BOB WEISS

Wilderness

Campgrounds

608-297-2002

**MEMBERSHIP SERVICE:** Education….Nominating….Convention…Awards & Scholarship….ARVC

The Membership Development subcommittee is principally responsible for devising methods for recruiting new members and retaining existing members of the organization.

The subcommittee should review existing WACO services and elicit input on potential new member services. This subcommittee should review the present methods of the organization used to promote membership recruitment and retention for the purpose of modifying, enhancing or creating new methods as deemed useful to the organization.

The Membership Service Committee is responsible for servicing the WACO membership through education programs, by providing for the nominating and election process, the annual convention, all awards & scholarship of members and to keep the membership apprised of the actions and events of ARVC (National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds.

The purpose of the Education subcommittee is to provide for the WACO membership courses of education related to the camping industry.

The Education subcommittee was established in order to provide on a consistent and organized basis, education programs which all members could participate. It is imperative that this committee establish a curriculum germane to industry and is able to provide those courses to all its members regardless of their geographical location.

It is the desire of WACO to provide innovativeness in this program and to make every effort to justify the existence of this program by providing a topnotch, well-organized, well-chosen program. It shall include seminars at the annual convention and fall workshops.

This subcommittee shall ascertain the directorship to be filled at the annual meeting. The committee shall compile a list of candidates to fill said vacancies. The duties of the subcommittee shall outline to correspond with the procedures of election as detailed in the bylaws.

This committee shall prepare election ballots and supervise the election; process, including the computing of votes.

The WACO convention chairperson is charged with responsibility of obtaining a hotel and speakers at the annual convention and trade show. The convention chairperson must work hand in hand with the Executive Director of WACO for the purpose of conducting a convention and trade show to be held on or near the 3rd week of March of each year. The tentative convention program must be announced to general membership no less Than thirty (30) days and not more than sixty (60) days in advance of the convention date. The convention must include an annual meeting to discuss the business of WACO and to elect the officers and directors for the ensuing year.

Other facets of the convention should include but not be limited to the following:

* Education sessions
* Keynote speaker
* Awards presentation
* Annual banquet
* Social get-together
* Recreation programs (i.e. dances, auctions, etc.)
* Trade show
* The WACO convention and trade show should be highlight of the WACO year and should be promoted during the entire year. It is imperative that the annual convention and trade show be a financial success. The chairperson of the convention should select a committee consisting of those who have experience in conducting meetings, seminars and trade show and should be in constant touch with the Executive Director.

The Awards & Scholarship subcommittee is charged with the selection and awarding of awards at our annual convention. It must be remembered that awards are significant part of any association and that those recipients are always grateful for the awards that are presented to them. Awards should be presented at the annual convention at a time when the full delegation is in session. The major awards should always be given at the annual banquet. Awards of recognition can be given at a full session breakfast or other place of choosing as long as it is at a session that is well attended and is advertised in advance in the convention program. The recipient receives awards presentations better if the recipient is not notified in advance.

Considerations should be given for awards in the following categories:

* Outgoing members of the Board
* Any member who has done an outstanding job for the year.
* Any politician who has favored WACO
* A committee chairperson who has done an outstanding job.

The awards ceremony should be precise, interesting and well thought out.

As an affiliated state with the National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds (ARVC), WACO members are voting members of ARVC. An ARVC member shall represent WACO from the ARVC Region 3. If the representative is from Wisconsin, the representative should attend regular WACO board meetings and the annual convention. The representative will report ARVC accomplishments at the WACO annual meeting. WACO should receive continued correspondence from the National ARVC office.

**BOARD MEETINGS – WHERE THE ACTION IS**

Board meetings are the place most of the board’s work is done. What you do in your board meetings reflects the attitude of the board about the organization and shows how well the board team operates.

What you do in meetings usually make a difference between an effective or an ineffective organization. Poor meetings can alienate staff, damage the board team, waste everyone’s time, cause turmoil, and actually hamper the effective operation of the organization.

**EVERY BOARD MEMBER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR GOOD MEETINGS**

A primary function of the board president is to run the meetings and keep the board moving toward good decisions.

However, it is no less each board member’s responsibility to:

* Attend all meetings
* Prepare well for meetings
* Take part in all discussions
* Do whatever possible to cooperate with fellow board members to make meetings work
* Understand the basics of parliamentary law as well as state open meetings laws if they apply to your organization
* Know traditional meeting practices of this board and follow them
* Learn the art of compromise with other members of the team
* Learn the art of listening and merging your comments with those of other board members
* Work towards team consensus on issues before the board

* Focus all deliberations on the ultimate mission of the organization and the best interests of those you serve

**GOOD MEETINGS BEGIN BEFORE THE MEETING CONVENES**

You have a strong obligation to prepare well before any meeting. If each board member prepares well ahead of time, board meetings will be shorter and almost always more productive.

The agenda packet will be sent to you several days before the meeting. Read carefully the agenda and all related materials. If you have questions, call the executive for answers prior to the meeting. Holding you questions until the meeting will delay the progress of the meeting.

You should also understand what is expected of you at the meeting and prepare to meet those expectations. Which agenda items will require a vote? Which will require input from the board members even though a vote is not taken?

To make good decisions about some issues, you will often need to seek input from some of your constituents or others in the community. It is rarely safe to assume you know the community attitude about an important issue. Remember, you are the connection between the community and organization and you are elected to govern the organization for the community. You need to seek community views regularly.

**EVALUATE YOUR PERFORMANCE AT MEETINGS**

Even though you research issues and prepare to discuss those issues, it is unethical to decide how you will vote on any issue before the board meeting or to promise constituents you will vote either for or against an issue before the meeting. Your decision should only be made after deliberation in the meeting with other members of the board team when all sides of the issue have been explored.

Carefully scheduling your own calendar so board meetings are a priority and planning to get to meetings on time is also important. When the team is short one or more board members, there is danger that all sides of the issues will not be explored and all interests will not be represented. The board’s effectiveness and productivity suffer.

**BOARD MEETINGS FOLLOW ESTABLISHED RULES**

Board meetings are much more than a gathering of the board team to chat about the organization. Board meetings require careful planning and will be conducted according to the plan outlined on the prepared agenda.

This meeting will be conducted according to established parliamentary rules that should be respected by all board members. Whether your bylaws specify that the meeting be run by Robert’s Rules of Order or some other parliamentary procedure guide, that set of rules is intended to set a tone that is businesslike and courteous, allows for ample discussion of the issues, but does not allow discussion to get out of control.

When you have a disagreement among board members about the way to proceed, you consult the parliamentary guide specified by you bylaws. You should have a basic understanding of parliamentary rules so that you can be a part of the process of moving efficiently through a good meeting agenda. There is a guide at the end of this chapter that charts the basics of parliamentary procedure.

**CAUTION:** Parliamentary rules are not meant to impede the meeting process, but to ensure that the rights of all board members are protected and meetings move towards action. Your parliamentary procedures guide is simply a resource to consult when the meeting gets stalled.

Using parliamentary rules for the purpose of impeding the meeting process in unethical and detrimental to the team atmosphere.

**THE BOARD MEETING BEGINS**

Do your part to make sure that board meetings begin on time. A meeting that begins on time sets a businesslike tone. A meeting that begins late sets a tone of sloppiness that can be carried through the remainder of the meeting.

If too many board members are late of absent, a quorum may not be present and the board cannot conduct business. A quorum is the number of board members—usually one over half the elected board members—that must be present to conduct official business.

Any action taken by a board (that does not have a quorum present) can be legally invalid and certainly not in the best interest of the organization.

Arriving on time for meetings also demonstrates respect for board members who have made the effort to get to the meeting on time.

Most board members like to socialize with fellow board members. That’s one reason board members take the job in the first place, to be able to socialize with other community leaders. That socialization helps to build the team spirit.

But the socialization needs to be done before and after the meeting and kept to a minimum during the meeting. The meeting should have a friendly businesslike tone always focused on the agenda item at hand.

**STICK TO THE AGENDA**

Your board meeting will run according to an agenda plan prepared by the executive and board president. The purpose of the agenda is to lock onto a clear direction for the meeting.

The board resident will ask the board to formally vote to approve the plan at the beginning of the meeting. When the board approves a written meeting agenda, board members are agreeing to discuss only those issues on the approved agenda.

Even though the board presidents and the executive prepare the agenda, it is the board’s plan and all board members have a right to place issues onto the agenda by bringing those issues to the attention of the executive or president.

However, anything you want on the agenda should be requested well in advance of the board meeting. Placing issues on the agenda at the last minute is not appropriate because the rest of the board has not had time to consider the issues and will not be ready for an informed discussion.

Many issues that get on the agenda at the last minute could be handled more efficiently outside the meeting. There are issues that come up at the last minute that need to go on the agenda for discussion, but they should be rare.

Last minute attempts to get something on the agenda are usually an indication that a board member has a complaint and wants a soapbox.

**MAKING MOTIONS**

You can bring business before the board by making a motion. A motion is a formal request or proposal for the board to take action.

To make a motion, you simply address the chairperson and state “I move that…” and state the action you wish the board to take. Most motions require that another board member support the request by seconding the motion.

Once the motion is seconded and restated by the chairperson, the board begins discussion of the motion. Some motions do not require discussion.

By requiring a motion on an issue prior to discussion, the board discusses only those items on the agenda and stays focused and on track. When the discussion is preceded by a motion, the chairperson can insist that board members limit discussion to the motion on the table.

Motions usually come for two major sources, committee reports and executive recommendation, but board members may make motions at any time n accordance with you parliamentary guide.

After a motion is made and seconded, there should be plenty of time to discuss the pros and cons. But when discussion jumps from subject to subject and fails to focus on the issue at hand, the result will be disappointing to everyone.

The board chairperson should make sure all the issues that need to be discussed get on the agenda and board members should take all the time they need to discuss those issues. But the chairperson and all board members must work to keep discussion moving towards a decision—that’s the reason the issue is on the agenda.

**VOTING**

Once the motion has been discussed, the chairperson will call for the board members to vote on it. You may be asked to vote by saying “aye” (yes) or “nay” (no) in a voice vote, by a show of hands, or in a roll call vote. Your yes or no vote will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

Abstaining rather than voting “yes” or “no” on a motion before the board should be very rare and is usually appropriate only when you have a conflict of interest in the issue before the board. You are elected to express an opinion of the issues, and abstaining expresses no opinion.

Once the vote is taken, the chairperson will declare that the motion passes or fails and move onto the next item on the agenda.

**EVALUATE YOUR PERFORMANCE AT MEETINGS**

Use the meeting evaluation form at the end of this chapter to check yourself out on meeting performance. Then set a personal goal to improve those weaknesses at future meetings.

**MEETING BLOCKERS**

Meetings ***don’t*** need these board members:

* The **grandstanding board member** who uses the board meeting as a soapbox.
* The **silent board member** who fails to represent anyone or anything by his/her silence.
* The **NO!!! board member** who is against anything any other board member is for.
* The **purse-watching board member** whose only concern is that the board spends less money, regardless of the overall effect.
* The **single-minded board member** who burdens the board with the same issue at every meeting.

|  |
| --- |
| To Do This: (1) You Say This: May You Interrupt Must You Be Is This Motion Is the Motion What Vote is  Speaker? Seconded? Debatable? Amendable? Required? |
| Adjourn the “I move that we May not interrupt Must be Not debatable Not amendable Majority vote required  Meeting adjourn? Speaker seconded |
| Recess the “I move that we May not interrupt Must be Not debatable Amendable Majority vote required  Meeting recess until. . . speaker seconded |
| Complain about “Point of May interrupt No seconded Not debatable (2) Not amendable No vote required (3)  Noise, room privilege.” speaker needed  Temperature, etc. |
| Suspend further “I move we table May not interrupt Must be seconded Not debatable Not amendable Majority vote required  Consideration of it”  Something |
| End debate “I move the May not interrupt Must be seconded Debatable Amendable Two-thirds  previous speaker vote required  question.” |
| Postpone “I move we May not interrupt Must be seconded Debatable Amendable Two-Thirds  Consideration of postpone this speaker vote required  Something matter until..” |
| Have something “I move we refer May not interrupt Must be seconded Debatable Amendable Majority vote  Studied further this matter to a speaker required  Committee.” |
| Amend a motion “I move that this May not interrupt Must be seconded Debatable Amendable Majority vote required  motion be speaker  amended by…” |
| Introduce “I move that..” May not interrupt Must be seconded Debatable Amenable Majority vote required  Business (a speaker  Primary motion) |

|  |
| --- |
| Object to “Point of Order.” May interrupt No seconded Not debatable Not amendable No vote required, chair  Procedure or to a Speaker needed decides  Personal affront |
| Request “Point of If urgent may No second Not debatable Not Amendable No vote required  Information information.” Interrupt speaker needed |
| Ask for vote by “I call for a May not interrupt No second Not debatable Not amendable No vote required unless  Actual count to division of the Speaker (5) needed someone objects (6)  Verify voice vote house.” |
| Object to “I object to May interrupt No second Not debatable Not amendable Two-thirds vote consideration of speaker needed required  Considering some this question.”  Undiplomatic or  Improper matter |
| Take up a matter “I move we take May not interrupt Must be seconded Not Debatable Not Amendable Majority vote required  Previously tabled from the table speaker |
| Reconsider “I move we now May interrupt Must be seconded Debatable if Not Amendable Majority vote required (or later) recon-  something sider our action original motion  already is debatable  disposed of relative to..” |
| Consider some- “I move we May not interrupt Must be seconded Debatable Amendable Majority vote required  Thing out of its suspend the rules speaker  Scheduled order and consider…” |
| Vote on a ruling “I appeal the May interrupt Must be seconded Debatable Not Amendable Majority in negative required  By the chair chair’s decision speaker to reverse chair’s decision |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. The motions or points above are listed in established order or precedence. When any one of them is pending, you may not introduce another that’s listed below it, but you may introduce another that’s listed above it.  2. In this case, any resulting motion is debatable.  3. Chair decides | 4. The motions, points and proposals listed above have no established order or precedence. Any of them may be introduced at any time except when the meeting is considering one of the top three matters listed in top chart (motion to adjourn, motion to recess, point of privilege).  5. But division must be called for before another motion is started.  6. Then majority vote is required. |

**THE BOARD FACES ITSELF SELF-EVALUATION**

You were elected or appointed to the board and, theoretically, those people who elected or appointed you will hold you responsible for your performance. If you perform badly, you won’t be reelected or re-appointed to serve another term.

But the reality is that board members are rarely held to account by anyone other than themselves for their performance.

There has to be a very serious offense before the board is taken to task or board members are pushed off the board by constituents. Sad, but true, most boards are on their own once elected or appointed.

Is it wrong to blow through a stop sign if nobody sees you do it? Of course it is! Is it wrong to miss half the board meetings if nobody says anything? Of course!

If only because no one else will do it, the board must hold itself accountable for good performance. Board members must maintain a strong sense of ethics. – doing what is right because you know it’s the right thing to do.

To know if you are doing the right things right, you have to measure the board’s

• Do all board members participate actively in board meetings?

• Does the board have a long-range plan developed by board and staff?

• Are all committees functioning adequately?

• Do board members get regular in service opportunities

Your constituents, even if they don’t pay careful attention to the work of the board, expect those chosen to serve as trustees to perform at the optimum level. Your constituency expects each board member to use good judgment, maintain high standards of ethics, be self-disciplined, and in all ways do a good job of governing – even when the public isn’t watching.

If legal action is ever brought against your board, it will likely accuse the board of not paying careful attention to the job or failing to perform duties that are a normal and accepted part of governing. Simply failing to perform duties that are a normal and accepted part of governing. Simply failing to attend meetings in a prudent manner.

Here’s a small sample of other areas of poor performance that will get your board into trouble…

* You have no board policies or fail to follow your own policies.
* You fail to learn to read financial reports well, thus neglecting the board’s responsibility to monitor finance carefully.
* You fail to recognize and stop board member conflict of interests.
* You take action without a quorum.
* You neglect to evaluate the performance of the executive annually.

To identify how accountable the board is really being in all areas, your board needs to formally self-evaluate board performance at least once a year. Many boards devote a portion of their long-range planning retreat to discussion of how to improve board operations and set goals for improvement. Other boards set aside a portion of at least one meeting per year to do a self-evaluation of board operations. Others evaluate a portion of their operations – committees, meetings, etc. – at regular intervals.

**EVALUATION SHOULD BE POSITIVE**

The goal of the board’s self-evaluation is not to find fault or be critical of board members or the full board. The purpose of the evaluation is to examine both strengths and weaknesses. The self-evaluation should result in a plan for improvement where necessary.

Then the board must hold itself accountable for change and improvement by putting the results of the evaluation in writing and then reviewing the evaluation results as part of next year’s board self-evaluation.

**WHAT DOES THE BOARD EVALUATE ABOUT ITSELF?**

Certainly the board should consider complaints and criticisms of the board in the evaluation process, but there are more concrete indicators of board strengths and weaknesses. Goals the board sets for itself each year should be measured for results.

Examine meeting minutes from the last year. Examine the board’s relationship with the executive and board member to board member relationships. How well does the board plan for the organization? How much time does the board spend building its skills and learning how to do a better job?

**THE BOARD SHOULD ESTABLISH NEW BOARD GOALS EVERY YEAR**

When the board completes the self-evaluation process each year, the next step should be to write new board goals to be achieved over the next year. Board goals should not be confused with the organization goals. Board goals might include improvement of the meeting process, better meeting attendance or development of a better long range planning process. Organizational goals are those included in the long range plan.

In addition, individual board members should establish some personal goals for the next year such as better meeting attendance, better participation in lobbying or public relations for the organization.

Individual board members evaluate their own performance

A board self-evaluation does not single out individual board members, but each board member should regularly evaluate his/her own performance as a board member.

No matter when your term expires, ask at least once a year, “Am I still doing the best job possible for this board or could someone else do it better? How has my performance over the last year compared with that of the other board members?”

Priorities change, jobs change, families change, and a board member who does a good job one year may not have the time to do the job well the next year. When that happens, the board member owes it to the organization to give up the seat and allow someone else who does have the time to serve.

If you conclude that you are still right for this board, then ask how you can do the job better. Do you display a high level of commitment to board activities as well as the mission of the organization? Are you filling the board member job description? Do you have personal goals for your service on this board and are you meeting those goals? Do you participate well in the meetings? Do you still fit in well with the rest of the team?

Those are tough questions to have to ask yourself, but you’re doing the organization a terrible disservice to stay on the board when you aren’t doing the job as well as you could.

At the same time you’re looking for problems, look for strengths. You can build a better board by capitalizing on your strengths as much as solving your problems.

It shouldn’t be threatening to a board or to board members to evaluate performance. If you’re really in this business for the good of those you serve, you’ll want to do everything you can to do the job better.

Run through the self-evaluation checklist on the following pages. There are many items on that checklist that will help you as an individual board member.

**THE BOARD EVALUATED ITSELF**

Successful board teams pay attention to the process of how they operate. Just as they evaluate the progress of their organization, they must also assess the operation of the board team and determine how they can do the job better.

The following simple questions can be answered in less than 15 minutes. I recommend you use this form at least once a year, at a special board meeting or a board retreat. Discuss responses with team members and set goals to improve your board team operations.

Our board prepares to do its job by:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| YES NO | Conducting a thorough orientation for all board members. |
| YES NO | Integrating new members into the team as quickly as possible. |
| YES NO | Attending board development conferences. |
| YES NO | Providing monthly board development activities for all board members |
| YES NO | Performing an annual self-evaluation of board operations. |
| YES NO | Providing all board members with copies of the mission statement, bylaws, constitution, long-range plan, and all other documents of the organization. |
| YES NO | Touring all facilities at least once a year. |

Our board ensures good meetings by:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| YES NO | Limiting most meetings to two hours or less. |
| YES NO | Providing a comfortable meeting room conducive to business. |
| YES NO | Convening and adjourning on time. |
| YES NO | Sticking to the prepared agenda |
| YES NO | Working for consensus rather than fighting for a majority. |
| YES NO | Following a businesslike system of parliamentary rules. |
| YES NO | Including the executive as a resource for all deliberations. |
| YES NO | Confining all discussion to policy issues and avoiding management issues. |
| YES NO | Allowing/encouraging all board members to participate in discussion |

Individual board members:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| YES NO | Attend at least 90% of all board meetings and committee meetings to which they’re assigned. |
| YES NO | Come to meetings prepared to discuss agenda issues. |
| YES NO | See themselves as a part of a team effort. |
| YES NO | Act as advocates for the organization. |
| YES NO | Know their responsibility as trustees of the organization. |
| YES NO | Attempt to exercise authority only during official meetings of the board. |
| YES NO | Represent the broad interest of the organization and all constituents, not special interests. |
| YES NO | Understand the most efficient way to govern is to delegate management to the executive. |

 Our board plans for the future of the organization by:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| YES NO | Annually reviewing and approving the mission statement. |
| YES NO | Annually reviewing progress toward the long-range plan and modifying the pong-range plan. |

Reinforcements and solutions:

In which of the major categories above does our board show real strength?

NOTES:

