Working with Nonprofit Organizations in Community Settings: Governance, Board Officer Descriptions

Elizabeth B. Bolton, Muthusami Kumaran, and Anna Guest-Jelley

Description of Board Officers

Board Chair

- Provides leadership to the board, helps to develop policy for the board’s operations
- Sets the agendas and chairs the meetings of the board
- Appoints committee chair persons in consultation with other board members
- Serves as ex-officio member of committees and attends meetings when appropriate
- Works with the chief executive on any issues of concern to the board
- Monitors financial planning and financial reports
- Plays a leading role in fundraising plan and activities
- Sets agenda for committee meetings, presides at meetings, and assigns work to committee members

Vice Chair

- Performs chair responsibilities when the board chair is not available
- Reports to the board chair
- Works closely with the board chair and the chief executive
- Works with the board chair to implement officer transitions

Committee Chair

- Ensures committee members have the information needed to do their jobs
- Handles the logistics of the committee’s work
- Reports to the board chair
- Reports on the work of the committee to the board
- Works closely with the chief executive and other staff as agreed to by the board chair and CEO
- Sets agenda for committee meetings, presides at meetings, and assigns work to committee members

Board Member

- Attends all regularly-scheduled board meetings
- Makes serious commitment to participate actively in committee work
- Volunteers for and accepts assignments and completes them thoroughly and on time
- Prepares for meetings, stays informed about committee matters, and reviews minutes and reports
- Builds a collegial working relationship with other board members
- Participates in fundraising campaigns and activities for the organization


2. Elizabeth B. Bolton, professor emerita; Muthusami Kumaran, assistant professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences; and Anna Guest-Jelley, former Director of Violence Prevention Program, Peaceful Paths Domestic Abuse Network; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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Secretary

- Maintains records of the board and ensures effective management of organization’s records
- Manages minutes of board meetings
- Ensures minutes are distributed to members shortly after each meeting
- Is knowledgeable of legal documents (articles, bylaws, IRS letters, etc.)

Treasurer

- Manages finances of the organization
- Administers fiscal matters of the organization
- Works with audit committee as appropriate
- Provides annual budget to the board for members’ approval
- Ensures board review of financial policies and procedures

Chief Executive—Expectations of Board of Directors

The nonprofit organization must decide whether or not to make the chief executive a member of the board. Some organizations do because they think it strengthens ties within the organization. Others do not because they feel the board should have a more distinct role in the organization. It is best for the nonprofit to examine its mission, vision, and board policies to decide the role of the chief executive in board deliberations. The description of the chief executive’s responsibilities will vary by organization although most nonprofits have some standard expectations for this position. The following description is adapted from (Wilbur, 2000, p. 45):

- Provides leadership and policy guidance for the organization
- Manages and directs all operations, programs, and activities
- Implements the policy decisions and directives of the board
- Reports to the Board of Directors and keeps the board fully informed of all organizational activities
- Approves all financial disbursements and otherwise monitors all financial and accounting activities
- Prepares annual budgets with assistance of treasurer and finance committee
- Hires, supervises, and evaluates all staff
- Maintains organizational records, files, documents, and archives
- Represents the organization to other organizations, the media, and the public at large
- Maintains confidentiality of sensitive information

References
