

**East Hills
Council of
Neighbors
Board
Manual**

2006/07

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Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards

Determine the Organization's Mission and Purpose

A statement of mission and purposes should articulate the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served. It is the board of directors' responsibility to create the mission statement and review it periodically for accuracy and validity. Each individual board member should fully understand and support it.

Ensure Effective Organizational Planning

As stewards of an organization, boards must actively participate with the staff in an overall planning process and assist in implementing the plan's goals.

Ensure Adequate Resources

One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to provide adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission. The board should work to raise funds from the community.

Manage Resources Effectively

The board, in order to remain accountable to its donors, the public, and to safeguard its tax-exempt status, must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.

Determine and Monitor the Organization's Programs and Services

The board's role in this area is to determine which programs are the most consistent with an organization's mission, and to monitor their effectiveness.

Enhance the Organization's Public Image

An organization's primary link to the community, including constituents, the public, and the media, is the board. Clearly articulating the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public, as well as garnering support from important members of the community, are important elements of a comprehensive public relations strategy.

Assess Its Own Performance

By evaluating its performance in fulfilling its responsibilities, the board can recognize its achievements and reach consensus on which areas need to be improved. Discussing the results of a self-assessment at a retreat can assist in developing a long-range plan.

Responsibilities of Board Members

Individual Board Member Responsibilities

- Attend all board and committee meetings and functions, such as special events.
- Be informed about the organization's mission, services, policies, and programs.
- Review agenda and supporting materials prior to board and committee meetings.
- Serve on committees or task forces and offer to take on special assignments.
- Make a personal financial contribution to the organization.
- Inform others about the organization.
- Suggest possible nominees to the board who can make significant contributions to the work of the board and the organization
- Keep up-to-date on developments in the organization's field.
- Follow conflict of interest and confidentiality policies.
- Assist the board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities, such as reviewing the organization's annual financial statements.

Personal characteristics to consider

Ability to: listen, analyze, think clearly and creatively, work well with people individually and in a group.

- Willing to: prepare for and attend board and committee meetings, ask questions, take responsibility and follow through on a given assignment, contribute personal and financial resources in a generous way according to circumstances, open doors in the community, evaluate oneself.
- Develop certain skills if you do not already possess them, such as to: cultivate and solicit funds, cultivate and recruit board members and other volunteers, read and understand financial statements, learn more about the substantive program area of the organization.
- Possess: honesty, sensitivity to and tolerance of differing views, a friendly, responsive, and patient approach, community-building skills, personal integrity, a developed sense of values, concern for your nonprofit's development, a sense of humor.

Responsibilities of the Board Chair? 8 hours per month

- **Provide leadership and direction to the Board**
 - In conjunction with the Executive Committee provide guidance and leadership
 - Oversee board and executive committee meetings
 - Prepare monthly Board meeting agenda with Executive Committee
 - Ensure Board members receive agenda and minutes in a timely manner
 - Arrange for Vice to Chair meetings in the absence of the Chair
 - Work to make sure board resolutions are carried out
 - Appoint committee chairs and recommend who will serve on committees
 - Consult with board members on their roles and help them assess their performance
 - Conduct new board member orientation
 - Work with the nominating committee to recruit new board members
 - Maintain knowledge of the organization and personal commitment to its goals and objectives
- **Act as spokesperson for the organization**
 - A signing authority on behalf of the Board for financial and legal purposes
 - Represent the organization to Government and Municipal officials
 - Represent the Organization at community functions
 - Enhance relationships with other community groups and agencies
 - Lead all fund raising and membership efforts

Responsibilities of the Board Co-Chair? 5 hours per month

- Attend all board meetings
- Serve on the executive committee
- Carry out special assignments as requested by the board chair
- Understand the responsibilities of the board chair and be able to perform these duties in the chair's absence
- Participate as a vital part of the board leadership
- Assist in all fund raising and membership efforts
- Maintain knowledge of the organization and personal commitment to its goals and objectives

Responsibilities of the Board Secretary? 5 hours per month

- Attend all board meetings
- Serve on the executive committee
- Maintain all board records and ensure their accuracy and safety
- Take, review and keep record of all board & committee meeting minutes
- Assume responsibilities of the chair in the absence of the board chair, chair-elect, and vice chair
- Provide notice of meetings of the board and/or of a committee when such notice is required
- Assist in all fund raising and membership efforts
- Maintain knowledge of the organization and personal commitment to its goals and objectives

Responsibilities of the Board Treasurer? 5 hours per month

- Understand financial accounting for nonprofit organizations
- Serve as financial officer of the organization and as chairperson of the finance committee.
- Manage, with the finance committee, the board's review of and action related to the board's financial responsibilities.

- Ensure that appropriate financial reports are made available to the board on a timely basis.
- Assist in preparing the annual budget and audit and presenting them to the board for approval.
- Assist in all fund raising and membership efforts
- Maintain knowledge of the organization and personal commitment to its goals and objectives

Board Member Needs

An effective Chairperson recognizes and addresses the varied needs of board and committee members. Different factors affect people's willingness and ability to contribute to meetings:

- **The need for recognition:**
Everyone likes to feel appreciated. Offer congratulations on a task completed or thanks for a particular contribution. Acknowledge special skills and strengths.
- **The need for learning and development:**
Some people join organizations for personal growth. Provide opportunities for development and for discussion of new concepts and ideas. Encourage individuals to take on responsibilities that stretch and build on their expertise.
- **The need for social interaction:**
Some members will work more effectively if they are given opportunities to get to know their fellow committee or board members. Provide some time before or after meetings for members to interact informally if they choose.
- **The need for accomplishment:**
Some members will derive satisfaction from completing tasks, both as a group and individually. Assign them individual responsibilities and acknowledge their work.

Board Governance:

Boards of Directors have to be accountable to their membership, funders and stakeholders. As well, they need to learn how to work effectively and efficiently. Boards of voluntary organizations whether new, established or in transition, now have a range of choices about how to work together to fulfill their role. Systems alone do not ensure a good board. The key elements on the human side of board effectiveness are:

- *commitment*
- *competence*
- *diversity*
- *collective decision-making*

As well, the importance of being open and transparent to the public at large, communications between the organization and its members, funders and stakeholders are key to successful stewardship.

The Components of Board Governance

Many boards are dedicated and skilled in their work and provide clear and consistent leadership to their organization. Others, however, are not effective.

Virtually all boards raise concerns at some time that their job is not clear, and their work is difficult and confusing.

In addition, with diminishing resources, Boards are facing the challenge of restructuring and working towards self-sustainability.

Board members are beginning to recognize the need to be efficient and effective in their work. Paramount in ensuring effective and efficient boards are the following criteria:

- *Understanding roles and responsibilities*
- *Proper management of meetings*
- *Strong team building*

To ensure that the internal culture of the board is healthy and productive an effective board must ensure its own renewal and development.

The use of effective committees can assist boards in supporting organizational programs, services, or policies.

Establishing an Organizational Vision and Mission

A non-profit organization operates to achieve their mission or reason for being (why the organization exists) as defined by the board of directors. The organizations activities should be consistent with its stated purpose and effectively and efficiently work towards achieving that mission and be committed to continual quality improvement. Based on the value of quality, openness, integrity, responsibility and accountability, non-profit board members, volunteers and employees should act in the best interest of achieving the organizations mission at all times.

Mission

Before writing or re-writing a values and mission statement, the organization should evaluate :

- whether the mission needs to be modified to reflect current community needs;
- whether the organization's current programs should be revised or discontinued or;
- whether new services need to be developed in light of the existing or newly defined mission.

The organization should have defined procedures in place for evaluating both qualitatively and quantitatively its goals, objectives and outcomes in relation to their mission. These procedures should address the efficiency and cost effectiveness of reaching their goals, objectives and outcomes.

Values

A non-profit organization should act with integrity, openness, respect and honesty in all relationships, dealings and transactions. They should strive to earn and convey trust through these values.

A non-profit organization should keep faith with the public trust through efficient cost effectiveness and stewardship of resources.

A non-profit organization should respect all people's race, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and ability and should not allow differences to affect a person's opportunities.

Advocacy

The board has a major responsibility to advocate on its behalf and on behalf of the values and beliefs underlying the organization. A board is always an advocate for the organization but sometimes organizations will go beyond that role and become advocates for individual clients or members. Advocacy is a complex matter. The following four steps will help to clarify the role of an organization when it comes to matters of advocacy:

Determine pertinence. Decide if the issue is pertinent to the mission and objectives of the organization.

Redefine a problem as an issue. A problem, once seen as personal, but shared by others, can be redefined as an issue.

Research the issue. Gather the facts together, state them in a coherent manner and only then, draw conclusions.

Set goals. Meet short-term goals with specific solutions to problems that have been identified. With each solution, identify a strategy for reaching it.

Work with others. Join others who are working on the issue and actively looking for allies.

Boards must make sure that the issues for which they publicly choose to advocate are consistent with their mission and values.

Meeting Management

Implementing effective meeting procedures is the responsibility of the Chair. However, it is the board's responsibility to establish them. Roberts Rules of Order are a good guide to running effective meetings.

Regular Meetings

Volunteers have many demands on their time.

If an organization persists in a pattern of unproductive, listless, unclear or dreary meetings, it will soon begin to lose its volunteers.

It is important that meetings *be as effective as possible* and at the same time *validate* the needs of participants.

Allow time for informal discussion and opportunities to get to know one another will ensure that meetings are fun as well as efficient and effective.

Successful, effective meeting results are determined not only by what happens during a meeting but by events before and after the meeting as well.

Each of these three phases - before, during and after is comprised of important components.

- 1. Before - Advance Preparation**
- 2. During - Meeting Procedures and Processes**
- 3. After - Evaluation & Follow Up**

Does your organization have all the necessary components in place to ensure productive meetings?

1. Before - Advance Preparation for Meetings

What?

- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- What are the desired outcomes of the meeting?

Why?

- Is the meeting necessary or is there another way to achieve the purpose?
- Could the meeting be replaced by memos, letters or E-mail?
- Does the meeting involve:
 - Decision Making?
 - Problem Solving?
 - Organizational Planning?
 - Evaluation?

Other purposes (idea generation, data-gathering, sharing, planning for specific events and projects, etc.) are best done by committees or in other ways.

Who?

- Who are the right people responsible for each item?
- Who are the decision-makers?
- Who is knowledgeable on the agenda items?

When?

- When is the most appropriate time for the meeting?

Where?

- Where is the best place to hold the meeting?
- What type of support services or equipment will be required?

How?

- The Chair of the meeting needs to prepare a written agenda will guide the discussions and decisions of the meeting.
- The agenda should be distributed prior to the meeting with the minutes from the previous meeting; this is a critical factor in ensuring that participants arrive prepared and ready to contribute in a meaningful way.

Preparing an Agenda

- Review past minutes and consider items to come forward
- Confer with Executive Director, committee Chairs or staff liaison, and consult members about any other agenda items
- Allocate a period of time to each item
- Ensure person responsible for each item will attend meeting
- Circulate agenda

A good agenda meets four requirements:

1. All items should relate to the mandate of the board – make sure the board is not spending time on what is really the work of staff, or committees, or volunteers, or other organizations.
2. Items should focus on an action, a decision or providing information.
3. The purpose of each item should be clearly indicated on the agenda.
4. A realistic time period should be set for each item.

2. During – Meeting Procedures and Processes

Everyone at a meeting has a contribution to make to the success of the meeting. Meeting procedures and the way in which decisions are made are determined by the board or committee, communicated to all involved, clarified as needed and consistently applied.

There are four important components to effective meetings.

- **Role of the Chair**

The Chair has two main responsibilities:

- run the meeting
- to ensure that the job gets done
- to nurture individual group members & committees

- **Decision Making**

Decisions can be made by majority rule or consensus. Which method is used will depend on the traditions and agreements of the group as well as the type of decision to be made.

- **Minutes**

Minutes provide a legal record of decisions made, how they were made, any resulting action needed and who will be responsible for ensuring the action is taken. Minutes are critical for maintaining the legitimacy of an organization.

- **Role of Participants**

Adequate preparation, objective participation and commitment to follow through are required by each individual present to ensure the best results for the group.

Chairing a Meeting

The responsibilities of the Chairperson normally include the following but may also be delegated to other board members.

- **Develop the agenda** usually in conjunction with the Executive Director, or ensure it is prepared and circulated.
- **Ensure appropriate preparation.** Prepare and circulate agenda with written background information in advance. Ensure the people responsible for agenda items know their role.
- **Chair the meeting**
- **Evaluate the meeting:** get the input of board members on what went well and what needs improvement, and use this to alter procedures, change the method of Chairing and plan future board meetings.
- **Follow-up** with people assigned to do tasks

Eight key skills for chairing effective meetings

- I. Encouraging and Equalizing Participation
- II. Clarifying and Rephrasing
- III. Summarizing and Testing for Agreement
- IV. Keeping on Topic & on Schedule
- V. Managing Conflict
- VI. Making Decisions

I. Encourage and Equalize Participation

To encourage participation:

- create a warm and open atmosphere;
- respond positively to debate and creative thinking;
- draw out a range of views, and encourage diversity of opinion;
- challenge members to think innovatively, to go beyond the usual questions and approach;
- provide opportunities for all members to contribute;
- view conflict as positive and manage it effectively;
- clarify and recap discussion to help move toward consensus;
- summarize decisions of the group.

To equalize participation:

- Be aware of who is speaking repeatedly and who is not speaking at all.
- Ask silent members if they have anything to say
- Politely ask dominating members to refrain from speaking at times.
- Observe the pace of proceedings, those who are not participating may simply need some breathing space to formulate their idea.
- Ask each person at the meeting to comment on the issue.

II. Clarify and Rephrase

At certain times in the discussion, board members may not understand each other, or talk past each other. Feelings usually rise as the miscommunication continues. The Chair will need to intervene to help clarify what is being said, essentially acting as an interpreter.

In many cases, all that is required is to rephrase or paraphrase what one or two board members have said so that everyone understands their point. Always be sure to check your interpretation with the speaker for accuracy.

Example: "If I understand you, Eleanor, your point is that, although these programs are necessary, they are inappropriate for our organization and should be delivered by another agency. Is that right?"

At other times, the board discussion has moved along from its original starting point to a new stage, but is still within the parameters of the established agenda. Just to ensure everyone in the group is clear, it might be helpful to articulate the topic currently being discussed and check it with the group.

Example: "We seem to have finished questions of clarification to Beth, and are now moving into debate about the pro's and con's of her proposal. Have we answered all the questions of clarification?"

III. Summarize and Test for Agreement

There is a step beyond paraphrasing, in which the Chair does more than articulate what is currently being said, and summarizes or reformulates the discussion.

This is done when, in your view, the board is ready to move to the next stage on this topic – the discussion is starting to drag, people are repeating points already made, there seems to be confusion, or participants are moving in different directions.

Try to anticipate at which point this intervention is needed and move quickly, before it becomes overdue and the group gets restless.

Summaries help the group see how close they are to agreement, refocus the discussion, and move the pace along.

Good summaries can often help board members realize they have actually reached agreement in a discussion that seemed complicated and unsolvable.

Summaries can also identify the areas of disagreement, which sharpens the focus of group discussion.

It helps participants know the real issues that have to be resolved.

As with paraphrasing, it is important to check the accuracy of your summary with the group.

Sometimes it is helpful to use the summarizing or testing of consensus to give participants a last chance to offer their views before moving to the next stage or topic.

When testing for agreement be sure to fully state the proposal that you are testing. Don't assume everyone knows it by a short-hand title.

IV. Keep on Topic & on Schedule

It is common for a group to get side-tracked or to go into unnecessary detail on an issue. At these points, the Chair has the responsibility of interrupting the discussion, and even an individual if needed, to bring the board back to its primary purpose.

You can do this by -

- reminding participants of the agreed upon agenda and purpose
- making your comment in a way that acknowledges the usefulness of the views being contributed, but suggests that this is not the best forum to express them.
- suggest ways this view could be channeled to the appropriate person or body (e.g., letter, committee discussion)
- be gentle but firm, and use eye contact to make a friendly connection with the person you cut off.
- once reminded, board members will often keep themselves on track. Other times, you will have to be persistent.
- Developing a good agenda can also assist a Chair in keeping on topic.

V. Conflict Management

- Accept conflict as natural. Don't be afraid of it
- Bring hidden conflicts into the open at an appropriate time
- Disagree with ideas, not people
- Always define a problem as shared by the group and solvable by the group
- When a problem is apparent between two people, get the viewpoints from others and move away from the two antagonists
- Try to involve the two parties in finding common ground
- Try to reach consensus, but if it isn't possible, summarize points of disagreement, check them with the group and move forward
- Encourage the entire group to participate in the discussion

VI. Making Decisions: Basic Steps in Decision-Making

Whatever decision-making style a board chooses, it should:

- *draw on the expertise of all board members;*
- *make clear, well-thought out decisions;*
- *formally record decisions for future reference, and for legal purposes;*
- *communicate the decisions to the appropriate parties.*

Following are some of the basic steps in decision-making.

- *Recognize and define the problem.*
Everyone must understand the problem. This sometimes takes time to articulate and define. Background preparation is especially helpful.

- *Examine the problem.*
Most groups make better decisions if they have choices in front them, rather than being forced to select or reject one idea. Ideas and options can be generated beforehand, by staff or a committee, or can be developed during a board meeting.

- *Make the decision*

- *Implement the decision.*
Plans for implementation need to consider what resources are required as well as who will need to do what and by when.

- *Evaluate the decision.*
Specifying what worked well and what could be done even better another time will improve the capacity of the organization to make decisions and the quality of the decisions made.

Styles of Decision Making

Avoiding or abdicating

The board may delegate many of its responsibilities this way, and not always deliberately. Failure to reach agreement can lead to the board passing the problem to the Executive Director or a committee.

Majority Rule

Following a thorough discussion of the problem and options, a formal motion is presented. A vote is taken on the motion.

Consensus

This is less formal than voting procedures and allows a decision to encompass the views of all board members. The essential ingredient is openness – the ability to listen to each other, the willingness to offer honest opinions and new ideas, and the ability to change one's opinion based on what is said by other board members.

Pure consensus: In this approach, the decision is not finalized until all members of the board agree to it. Active opposition will block a decision. To pass a decision, board members merely agree to let it stand. The danger is that this process does not engender the kind of strong support that might be required to implement the decision.

General consensus: If a majority of board members support the decision, it carries. Concerns and reservations of non-supporting board members may be noted.

3. After the Meeting - Evaluation & Follow Up

All is not over when the meeting is over. The end of one meeting is really the beginning of the next.

- **Evaluation**

Opportunities for constructive feedback:

- reduces the likelihood of repeating ineffective procedures
- increase the likelihood of skill development
- provides an occasion to celebrate success.

- **Follow-up**

Before the meeting adjourns, the Chair must ensure items for action are clearly stated and delegated.

Between meetings the Chair monitors progress on the action items with the individuals to whom they were designated.

- **Minutes**

Timely circulation of the minutes acts as a valuable reminder, especially to individuals who are responsible for action items.

Circulation of the minutes can be timed to occur at the most helpful point in the organization's meeting cycle.

- **Process Monitoring**

Some boards are very serious about ensuring the process is participatory and open. They designate one person to monitor how well people are participating. This person often reviews the evaluations of each meeting and offers suggestions for improving the process.

Effective Committees

Before establishing a committee, a board should consider the following points:

- The Board should define a clear description of the committees purpose
- The Board identifies the committees needed to support the work which is required
- The Board determines the authority and major areas of responsibility of the committee

Selecting the committee chair:

The chair/president of the board can invite someone to become a committee chair or the chair can be chosen by committee members. The committee chair is the key to an effective committee. She/he sets the tone, pace and strategies...

Selecting the committee members:

Specific committee members may be appointed by either the board or the committee Chair. It is very important that members have a clear view of the committee's goals and have an awareness of the skills brought by each committee member to assist in the achievement of those goals.

Reporting:

The board receives and responds to reports forwarded to it by the committees. Reports are either prepared regularly for the board, indicating progress, or may be a final report at the completion of the committee's tasks. The content should include findings and recommendations. A verbal report that is recorded in the minutes may be all that is necessary depending on the scope of the committee activities.

Purpose of Committees

Why Have a Committee At All?

Sometimes we establish a committee to do a job that could be performed more efficiently by:

- *the board as a whole*
- *the staff*
- *an individual board member*
- *another volunteer*

Committees perform three main functions.

- Preparatory work leading up to board decisions - such as developing policy options, recommendations, and preparation for projects.
- Carry out tasks on behalf of the board in certain areas such as fundraising or community relations.
- Work with the staff to implement certain operations, activities or projects.

Note: Boards sometimes start advisory committees, often at the request of a funding body. These committees are usually composed of individuals from outside the organization who provide advice and expertise in specific areas or on particular issues.

The board should annually review the list of standing committees, and re-consider whether each of them is necessary. Simply because the topic of the committee is important does not mean that a standing committee is the best way to do the work.

Types of Committees

Standing

A standing committee is the most common and most criticized. The members study problems within an assigned area and provide specialized assistance and advice to the board of directors on a continuing basis.

Ad hoc

An ad hoc committee is formed to handle a specific situation or issue that does not fall with the assigned function of an existing standing committee. It is dissolved when the job is completed.

Advisory

A third type of committee, used occasionally, is advisory. In this capacity, the committee advises the board on any issues the board requests data; e.g. policy, plans, public relations. This type of committee may be standing or ad hoc. Advisory committees are often at the request of or on the condition of a funding body.

Tips for Effective Use of Committees

Use ad hoc committees where possible:

This allows people to do useful work and be recognized for a valuable contribution, then move on in other directions.

Have other people besides board members on a committee:

The chairman should be a member of the board, but staff, clients, professionals, interested local citizens, members, and other organization members can provide valuable input into decision-making and the carrying out of programs through work with committees.

Develop a committee only for a specific reason:

Design a committee to fill your needs and to help your organization realize its goals in an exciting and dynamic way. If you don't need the committee, get rid of it!

Be sure that a committee has a clear description of its purpose, time frame, authority and responsibilities. Require regular reports to the board so you are up to date on the committee's work

Planning

Planning, monitoring and evaluation are part of an integrated process.

Boards must plan for the future of their organization and take steps to implement the vision.

The fundamental role of the board in planning and monitoring is:

- Create and continually reshape the mission of the organization.
- Develop goals that will move the organization towards its mission, as part of a strategic plan.
- Monitor how effectively the organization is achieving its strategic plan.

Boards may choose to do more work on planning than the steps listed above, particularly if they are working boards or collectives.

Why Plan?

Planning means that your organization will:

- ensure the organization's services meet the community's needs
- anticipate financial or funding changes
- establish a process for ongoing operations
- enable proactive rather than reactive decisions
- help the board, committees and staff to develop a consistent understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- establish a framework for relationships with other agencies
- communicate the work of the organization to the community
- create a basis for future evaluations

Principles for Planning

In order for the planning process to be effective, the following principles must be acknowledged:

- Participation in the planning process significantly increases commitment to the final product.
- The leadership of the organization must demonstrate its ongoing commitment to the plan in a consistent and visible manner.
- If an activity is to be acted upon, it must have a “champion”, someone who is committed to seeing the activity implemented.
- The plan must be consistent with the values of the organization and the individuals of the organization.
- The plan must provide challenging, responsible assignments delegated with sufficient authority to permit independent work and accomplishment.
- Some action to achieve the mission, vision and strategic goals should begin before planning is formally completed, to generate momentum for implementation.

Organizational Planning Process

The focus of Organizational Planning is on planning for change.

As a process, it needs to be fluid.

Preparing to Plan

- who will be involved and at what stages
- who will be involved and at what stages
- assessing organizational readiness and openness to planning process

Defining Current Conditions:

- evaluate how well the organization is working now
- consider views and feedback from clients, other agencies, and the community about what the organization should be doing
- consider factors in the organization's environment that may be critical in the future

Vision and Mission

The vision statement should reflect the values of the organization and what the board would like it to be doing in the future, including the intended impact on the community.

A mission statement should define the basic purpose of the organization - its reason for being. It should explain in one or two sentences, what the organization does, and for whom.

Deciding on the vision and mission of the organization is a fundamental role of the board, but it can be developed jointly by the board and staff, for ultimate approval by the board.

Organizational Goals

Organizational Goals: identify a limited number of priorities where the organization will focus its energy during the period covered by the plan;

- describe the desired directions or outcomes for each of these areas;
- define how success will be evaluated for each area;
- can span up to 5 years, but will be reviewed annually.

Make sure that Organizational Goals are:

- consistent with the mission statement and vision
- more specific than the mission statement
- based on community data
- focused on what the organization wants to achieve in five years

Operational Objectives

Operational objectives describe how the organization will implement an Organizational Goal. Each goal can have a number of objectives.

An objective:

- describes how the goal will be met
- states specific, concrete results
- is short-range, usually covering a one-year time frame
- is measurable
- is developed annually

Monitor, Evaluate and Re-Assess

The Board is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the plan. The information the board asks for as part of its monitoring function must relate directly and clearly to the board's role.

Questions to ask:

- What decisions are needed?
- Are these decisions properly within the role of the board?
- Is all the information needed to make these decisions available?
- When activities are completed, a different set of questions needs to be considered by the board in order to evaluate the activities. These include:
 - What impact did the activities have on the community?
 - What has been learned about how our business is conducted?
 - What could happen differently another time?

The Annual Work Plan

The Annual Work Plan is an outline of specific goals, programs or projects that the Board would like to achieve over a one year period.

Each Strategic Goal set by the Board during the planning process will require a certain set of Objectives to achieve the goal.

Each Objective in turn will require a certain set of Tasks to reach it.

- the set of Tasks required to achieve the Objective
- the timeline for all these Tasks
- who is responsible for each Task
- other people involved in carrying out the Task
- resources required (materials, money, information, etc.)
- outcomes

For Example:

Strategic Goal: Organizational Fiscal Sustainability

Objective #1: Annual Bake Sale

Task A: Determine Date, Time & Place

Task B: Determine Marketing Efforts

Task C: Secure Donations for Sale

Task D: Organize Sale Day

Task E: Report Outcome of Sale

Objective # 2: Secure Public Funding

Task A: Research Opportunities

Task B:

Evaluation

Evaluation is one of the constant fundamental roles of the Board. Board members do not have to be experts in evaluation, or carry out each step of the evaluation process. Rather, the board's role is to set up the evaluation process, make sure it takes place, and ensure the results of the evaluation are used. Periodically evaluate - in depth - how effectively the organization is achieving its mission and plans. This is usually done as part of the annual planning cycle.

Evaluate and adjust the way the board functions.

Annually review the performance of the senior staff directly accountable to the board.

Evaluation is closely linked to planning.

Evaluation results:

- are an important source of information in the board's planning decisions;
- help to assess the achievement of the board's previous plans.

Why Evaluate?

All too often, organizations perceive evaluation as a luxury to be undertaken when there is time and money, if a problem arises or as an imposition forced on them by funders. It is important for the organization to embark on evaluation regularly and to do it for positive and constructive reasons. Even if the initial impetus for an evaluation comes from a funder, the board should take charge by establishing the objectives it wants to achieve through the evaluation.

Regular evaluation should be done for a number of reasons:

- to continuously improve the organization's work
- to ensure programs and services meet the expectations and objectives set for them, and to make changes if needed
- to be accountable to the community and the people served by the organization
- to meet the requirements of funders
- to provide feedback to the staff and volunteers doing the work of the organizations

Steps in the Evaluation Process

- Decide on the purpose of the evaluation
 - What is the purpose of the evaluation?
 - What do we want to know? Why? How will we use the results of the evaluation?

- Set up an evaluation structure
 - Committee, outside evaluator, self-evaluation, combination etc.
 - Prepare the evaluation design
 - What will be the focus of the evaluation?
 - What constitutes success (and degrees of success) in the program or organization that is being evaluated?
 - What external factors may affect the success of the program or organization?
 - What information is needed to carry out the evaluation?
 - What are the appropriate tools to gather the information needed?

- Gather information
 - Common techniques for information-gathering include: interviews, questionnaires, reviewing documents/databases, public surveys, media scans, focus groups etc.
 - Sources of information frequently include: clients, staff, volunteers, board and the community.

- Analyze information
 - It is often helpful to review and analyze information during the evaluation process, and not simply at the end - this can correct gaps or problems, as well as begin to identify trends and possible conclusions.
 - No final conclusions should be drawn until all information is gathered and analyzed.
 - After concluding the analysis, decisions should be made about action steps in light of the evaluation.

- Action and implementation
 - The ultimate purpose of the evaluation is to have an impact on the work of the organization. This will include the areas originally identified in the purpose of the evaluation, but there may also be other constructive uses of the information.

Sources:

- www.nonprofitexpert.com
- www.boarddevelopment.org
- National School Board Association, www.nsba.org
- Management Assistance Program for Non Profits, www.mapnp.org
- Free Management Library, www.managementhelp.org

Community Development Terminology

BID - Business Improvement District: A self imposed tax covering a specific geographic area governed by a board representative of the area.

Brownfield: Contaminated or obsolete sites that qualify for re-development incentives.

CDC – Community Development Corporation: A non-profit developer, i.e. Dwelling Place, ICCF

CDBG – Community Development Block Grant: Federal money which is administered through the City to help pay for everything from streets to community organizing.

CIA – Corridor Improvement Authority: Newly created by State legislation, a new brand of Tax Increment Finance Authority.

CLT – Community Land Trust: A limited equity home ownership model that maintains permanent affordability by holding the land in trust.

Community Development Department: The city department that administers and monitors CDBG funds.

Community Officer, Community Policing: A program within the GRPD that places officers in target neighborhoods in the city. These officers work closely with the NA and other community groups.

CO, CPO – Community Organizer, Crime Prevention Organizer

COG – Community Oriented Government: A city program to garner community participation in local government. They hold monthly in three geographically defined areas and quarterly meetings for the entire city.

CRT – Community Resource Team: A component of COG consisting of a group of city employees dedicated servicing a geographically defined area.

DEQ: Department of Environmental Quality

Dyer-Ives: A local foundation which provides small grants as seed money for neighborhood based projects.

Enterprise Zone: A state designated residential area where tax abatements are available for housing rehabilitation.

GRPD or PD – Grand Rapids Police Department

GRCF – Grand Rapids Community Foundation: A large foundation that manages funds for several smaller charitable trusts and redistributes some state funds.

Historic Preservation: The protection of historically significant areas and buildings to safeguard an areas heritage.

HPC – Historic Preservation Commission: Local, State and Federal boards that govern historic areas and structures.

LISC – Local Initiatives Support Corporation: A national group that provides technical and financing assistance primarily to CDCs.

Main Street: A national neighborhood based economic redevelopment model.

MEDC – Michigan Economic Development Corporation: A state agency that provides assistance for development initiatives.

MSHDA – Michigan State Housing Development Authority: A state agency that provides programming and assistance to ensure affordable housing options.

NA – Neighborhood Association

NBA – Neighborhood Business Alliance: A city board that is made up of representatives from each business association in the city.

Neighborhood Improvement: City department that handles Housing and Building Inspections.

NRSA – Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Areas: Specially designated areas within a city that qualify to use CDBG funds with fewer regulations to promote greater development.

Neighborhood Ventures: An organization that formed out of the dissolution of Neighborhood Business Specialist Program in partnership with the NBA.

NEZ – Neighborhood Enterprise Zone: A tax designation for a geographic area that rewards owner occupants for improving their property.

NID – Neighborhood Improvement District: A proposed special assessment district to support specific neighborhood projects.

Renaissance Zone: A state designated tax abatement zone.

Sustainable Development: Development that is socially responsible, environmentally accountable and financially viable.

TIFA – Tax Increment Finance Authority: A special tax recapture formula for a specific geographic area governed by a board representative of the area. The area is able to capture a small percentage of taxes levied on the increase of property values in the area.