

Goals/Governance Board Committee – Meeting Agenda

Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District

Tuesday, March 3 @ 1:00-3:30pm, UYWCD District Office

Purpose of the meeting: Refine Governance Manual, discuss templates/models for GM work plan and annual performance review

Welcome and preliminaries (1:00-1:15)

- Confirm goals for today; review and approve 2/3 meeting minutes

Review/refine current draft of Directors' Manual (1:15-2:15)

- Review current draft, including the following key sections:
 - Background/Legal Authority (note Bob Weiss additions, pp.1-2)
 - Role of the Board (possible missing language on pp.3-4)
 - Director-GM relationship, including interaction between strategic plan, work plan and annual review (p.5) – *see meeting agenda items below*
 - Directors' interactions w/ counsel (note Bob Weiss additions, pp.5-6)
 - Role of Board President (p.6)
 - Board meeting agendas, structure, protocol (pp.7-8)
 - Electronic communications (p.8)
 - On-Boarding (p.8)
 - Representing District outside of Meetings (pp.9-10)
 - Resolution of Issues/Conflict (pp.10-11)
 - Director Liability (pp.11)
- Plan for refining Handbook and sharing with Board at April Board meeting

Clarify Committee recommendations (if any) regarding GM work plan (2:15-2:45)

- Briefly review resources/materials shared by Ryan
- Discuss purpose/expectations (distinguish GM work plan from staff-level work plan) – e.g., to implement strategic plan, track/communicate progress, provide a basis for annual review
- Process/format recommendation(s) for Board consideration

Recommendations for annual performance evaluation (2:45-3:15)

- Briefly review resources/materials shared by Ryan – note varying degree of structure, format and bases for review
- Discuss purpose/expectations (e.g., transparent, objective/written, avoid surprises, importance of on-going feedback, forward-looking, etc)
- Process/format recommendation(s) for Board consideration

Wrap Up and Actions Items (3:15-3:30) – including next steps and action items



Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District Board Manual

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Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District Mission

To lead water resource management within the District’s boundaries by responsibly conserving, protecting, developing, providing and enhancing the water resources of the Upper Yampa River Basin for the benefit of the Basin.

Preamble

The Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District Board of Directors (herein ‘Board’) has developed and adopted, and will maintain, this Board of Directors’ Manual as a resource to support the District’s mission, guide the Board, and encourage public confidence in the integrity of the District and its fair and effective operation. This Manual is shaped by the Board’s commitment to the following:

1. **Leadership** in the Upper Yampa Basin and regionally in the conservation and development of water resources.

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2. **Partnership** with other agencies, stakeholders, and customers to conserve and develop water resources.
3. **Stewardship** of taxpayer dollars and the region's precious water resources.

District Background

The Upper Yampa Water Conservancy District was formed in 1966 under the Water Conservancy Act of the State of Colorado to plan and develop water conservation projects in the Upper Yampa Yampa Basin. The District encompass Routt County and a apportion of Moffatt County and is divided into three divisions: Division 1 (Hayden area), Division 2 (Steamboat Springs area), and Division 3 (Oak Creek/Yampa area). The nine members of the Board of Directors, three representing each Division, are appointed by the Chief Judge to serve staggered four-year terms. Three Directors (one from each Division) are appointed each year, with the exception of every fourth year when no appointments are made. Directors must reside and own real property in the Division they desire to represent.

The District was formed on the basis that properties within the District would benefit through conservation, development, and stabilization of water supplies for domestic irrigation, power, manufacturing, and other beneficial uses. This led to the construction of Yamcolo Reservoir, located in the Flattops near the headwaters of the Yampa River, in 1980 and Stagecoach Reservoir, located southeast of Steamboat, in 1989. Yamcolo offers 9,621 acre feet of storage, which primarily provides water to agricultural operations in South Routt County; some of which is delivered via the Stillwater Ditch, a District-owned and operated irrigation ditch that crosses the Five Pines Mesa. With up to 36,439 acre feet of storage, Stagecoach serves a multitude of water users, including municipalities, industrial use such as energy production, agricultural operations, and recreation including snowmaking. The District also owns and operates an 800 kW hydroelectric power plant at Stagecoach Dam. In addition to safely maintaining and operating District-owned facilities, the District promotes healthy reservoirs, streams, and watersheds within the District. In 2012, the District partnered with the Colorado Water Trust to coordinate the first environmental water release out of Stagecoach Reservoir. As part of its maintenance and operation, the District also closely adjusts and monitors the temperature and oxygen content of its releases to ensure a healthy habitat for trout and other aquatic life downstream, a contribution to both the environment and recreational opportunities on the Yampa River. In collaboration with various agencies, the District supports water quality efforts and participates in working groups to address issues that may affect water quantity in the future. The District monitors issues throughout the Colorado River Basin in an effort to protect the water resources of the Upper Yampa Basin and plan for potential water shortages.

The District is committed to an Upper Yampa River Basin with safe, secure water storage and supply that benefits all uses in the Basin. The mission of the District is "To lead water resource management within the District's boundaries by responsibly conserving, protecting, developing, providing and enhancing the water resources of the Upper Yampa River Basin for the benefit of the Basin."

Relevant Legal Authority

The District is a governmental entity organized under the Colorado Water Conservancy Act found in Title 37, Article 45 of the Colorado Revised statutes. The Act contains the State law governing the creation, powers and authority, governance, operation, and financing of the District. The 1966 Decree forming the District describes the Boundaries and Divisions within the District, the Board structure, and the certain projects then expected to be undertaken by the District. The District is also subject to other legal requirements of state and federal law including the Colorado Open Meetings law, the Open Records Act, the Local Government Budget Law, the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act, and the Code of Ethics. The District has adopted Bylaws, policy resolutions, an Employee Handbook, and this Board Manual.

Chapter 1 – Role and Authority

Board Values

District constituents, and persons and entities who contract for allotments of water from the District, are entitled to Directors (herein ‘Directors’) who are fair, ethical, and accountable. Directors strive to constantly seek to reflect the following qualities in discharging their duties:

- Strive to be independent, impartial, and fair in their judgment and actions;
- Use their public office for the public good, not for personal gain; and
- Conduct public deliberations and processes openly, where not legally confidential, in an atmosphere of respect, civility and transparency.

Role of the Board

The primary role of the Board is to establish policies and strategic direction that guide the District to meet its mission. The Board exercises this authority only collectively as a Board, rather than as individuals. Directors should not attempt to establish or influence policy outside of Board meetings. Directors recognize and respect the distinction between their policy-setting and oversight role, and the day-to-day implementation of policy by staff. The Board’s role is to be ‘nose in, fingers out,’ meaning the Board is kept regularly informed of major District activities, pursuant to the Board’s overall strategic plan and policy priorities, with the opportunity to provide feedback or raise questions at any time, and to discuss issues at Board meetings. The Board does not direct the day-to-day activities of the staff.

The Board has four major responsibilities:

- 1) Promote the best interests of the District’s constituents and stakeholders by establishing policies that support the vision and mission of the District and ensuring implementation of those policies. Policies include the governing principles, strategic plans, and course of action for the organization.
- 2) Establish policies that ensure fiscal stability and the effective use of funds. Each fiscal year the Board adopts a budget covering the anticipated revenues and expenditures of the District and reviews budget reports throughout the year. Additionally, from time to time,

Commented [B1]: Something is missing here. For example, the Board approves contacts and projects and appropriates water rights.

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the Board reviews and/or adopts amendments to the District's cash reserve, investment, and other policies as necessary. The Board also hires an independent auditor to ensure the District finances comply with standard governmental accounting rules.

- 3) Hire and oversee a General Manager to manage the day-to-day operations of the District. The Board holds the General Manager accountable for the effective operational management of the District and evaluates the General Manager at least annually.
- 4) Engage legal counsel as needed to effectively represent the needs and interests of the District.

For the Board of Directors to function in an effective manner, it is important that each member understand his/her respective role and the relationship they have to other members of the Board and to the General Manager.

Chapter 2 – Board Interactions with General Manager, Counsel and Staff

The Board is committed to supporting a healthy, responsive and well-functioning organization. This requires collaborative, open and well-defined relationships with the Board's General Manager, counsel, and staff.

The Board's Relationship with the General Manager

A strong collaborative relationship between the District Board and the General Manager is essentially to a highly functioning Board and District. The General Manager is the primary agent of the Board and is the one to whom the Board delegates authority to manage and administer the District's daily operations in accordance with approved policies, budget, and governing documents of the District. The General Manager has two roles: chief executive officer and top advisor to the Board. As the most visible employee, the General Manager represents the District to its stakeholders and constituents.

While the Board may not agree with the General Manager on every issue, Directors will focus on maintaining a shared sense of purpose, open communication, honesty, trust and mutual support. The Board must be able to support the decisions of the General Manager and grant him/her the authority to manage and lead the District. Both parties should endeavor to publicly support and be responsive to one other. They are expected to raise questions or concerns with one another in a direct, timely manner through open, honest and respectful communications, with regard to both the District's internal and external operations.

The General Manager is responsible for ensuring Directors have the information they need to make Board-level decisions and that all Directors are provided the same information. Directors expect the General Manager to make a recommendation on issues before the Board, except those that are strictly reserved to the Board or legal matters within the responsibility of the District's legal counsel.

In addition to the above, the following guidelines are intended to help define the relationship between the Board and the General Manager:

- 1) Individual Directors are encouraged to discuss District-related matters with the General Manager at any time, including to provide feedback, input, and/or suggestions concerning District policy and operations. If at any time the General Manager or a Director believes an issue may require broader policy clarification and/or decision making by the Board, he or she should bring the issue to the full Board for input or guidance.
- 2) The General Manager should prepare an annual budget and work plan for approval by the Board of Directors. The General Manager's annual work plan should directly reference and advance the District's strategic plan.
- 3) The Board should periodically review and, as needed, update the District's strategic plan on an annual basis. This should be completed prior to the General Manager's development of the budget and workplan for the following year.
- 4) The Board of Directors should provide the General Manager with an annual written evaluation that is standardized, transparent, and tied to his/her job description and work plan.
- 5) In addition to his/her annual review, the General Manager should update the Board bimonthly on the implementation of his/her work plan, to foster open communication regarding District activities, accomplishments, and any areas of concern.
- 6) If a Director has a concern involving the General Manager, the issue should be raised in a timely and transparent manner, rather than being delayed until his/her annual review.
- 7) Where practical Directors should notify and/or include the General Manager when meeting with officials from agencies or jurisdictions regarding District business, and should brief the General Manager on key issues or outcomes from such discussions.
- 8) The General Manager should provide Directors with the same information regarding the District, including staff reports.
- 9) When a Director is going to be out of town or unavailable for a Board meeting or other function involving the Board, he/she should notify District staff in a timely manner.
- 10) The General Manager should advise the Board of Directors when he/she is out of the office for an extended period of time and designates the individual who shall be acting General Manager during that time.
- 11) If a Director or General Manager has concerns that these guidelines are not being properly followed, he or she should raise the issue with the full Board and/or in accordance with the conflict resolution procedure in Chapter 5, as appropriate.

Commented [RG2]: Need to make sure folks are generally on same page about what's meant by the GM's 'workplan' and see if any clarification necessary, in order for the Board to know what to expect from the GM and how to evaluate his/her annual performance

The Board's Relationship with Counsel

- 1) **General counsel.** In general, any Director may contact the District's General Counsel with District-related inquiries. If the matter involves a request for significant legal work, it should be approved by the Board as a whole. Exceptions include Directors collaborating with Counsel on longer-term District projects, in which cases approval by the Board is presumed, provided the Board initially authorized the project and is kept up to date. The Board President may also communicate with Counsel for purposes of Board

Commented [RG3]: Drafted this language with Bob Weiss based on Committee input

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meetings as needed; the General Manager should generally be kept abreast of these communications.

- 2) **Special counsel.** The District will from time to time employ special counsel. Unless otherwise determined by the Board, the protocol for Board member interaction with Special counsel is the same as with General Counsel.

Interactions with Staff (Apart from General Manager)

District staff serves the District as a whole. The Board should adhere to the following guidelines in interacting with staff serving under the supervision of the General Manger:

- 1) A Director should not direct staff to initiate any action, change a course of action, or prepare any report without the approval of the General Manager and, if necessary, Board action.
- 2) Directors may make reasonable inquiries to staff about District operations and other matters. Requests for staff research should be directed to the General Manager. Responses should generally be shared with the full Board.
- 3) Directors should not attempt to pressure or influence staff discussions, recommendations, workloads, schedules, or priorities.
- 4) If Directors have questions or information they would like addressed by staff at Board meetings, they should share them well in advance with the General Manager, and with staff as useful, so staff can provide the desired information in the Board meeting packet and verbally at the meeting as requested.
- 5) Soliciting political support from staff (e.g., financial contributions, display of posters or lawn signs, name on support list, etc.) is prohibited. District staff may, as private citizens, support political candidates, but all such activities must be done away from the workplace and may not be conducted while on the job.
- 6) Any issues or conflicts should be addressed in accordance with the issue or conflict resolution procedure in Chapter 5.

Chapter 3 – Board Governance

The District Bylaws establish the orderly conduct of District business where not otherwise provided by State law. The provisions below are non-binding guidelines, except where explicitly stated in the Bylaws.

The officers of the Board of Directors include the President and Vice-President. The General Manager serves ex officio as Secretary/Treasurer of the District. Officers of the District are elected annually by the Board.

Role of Board President

A collaborative relationship between the President and General Manager is essential to a highly functioning Board. The primary role of the Board President is to preside over meetings, consult with the General Manager regarding Board meetings, and sign certain District documents and

Commented [RG4]: any relevant language about term limits?

checks. The President is expected to meet with the General Manager before Board meetings, to frame and clarify topics, and after Board meetings, to ensure clear and timely follow up.

Commented [RG5]: This needs Board clarification. At least one Director advocates for a stronger leadership role of Board President.

Board Meeting Schedule and Location

The regular monthly meeting schedule is approved by the Board at the November Board meeting for the upcoming year. In general, every other Board meeting will include topics, materials, and/or policy issues with a need for more lengthy, informal, and participatory discussions, which will often inform future decision-making. These ‘work session’ style meetings are still considered Board meetings with accompanying agendas, minutes and relevant action items.

Commented [RG6]: This is what I understand from Bob Weiss

Currently, most (but not all) regular Board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month commencing at 1:30 pm in the upstairs conference room known as the Mountain Valley Bank Community Meeting Room, 2220 Curve Plaza, Suite 201, Steamboat Springs, Routt County, Colorado. Lunch is normally served before the meeting starting at 1PM. The Board may hold a day long Board retreat in October in lieu of the October Board meeting. Special meetings may be called from time to time in accordance with the Bylaws.

Board Meeting Agenda Development

Board meeting agendas are generally set at the end of each meeting for the next Board meeting. Once set, they may be subsequently modified by the General Manager and Board President, or at the request of two Directors, provided any changes are made well before Board packets are distributed and posted, except in the case of urgent matters. Where possible, the General Manager and Board President should come to agreement on the agenda topics and briefing materials required, in order to help ensure Board meetings are organized and productive.

Board Meeting Structure

As specified in the Bylaws, the ‘Board of Directors Reports’ section of each meeting agenda shall be utilized for members of the Board to provide brief reports on matters of interest to the Board, including meetings attended in their capacity as Directors. Bimonthly meeting agendas should include an opportunity for the Board to hear an update from the General Manager on the implementation of his/her work plan and any issues that may have arisen.

Commented [RG7]: Is this for all Board meetings or just the every-other-month ‘regular’ decision-making meetings (as opposed to work sessions)? Need to specify?

Board Meeting Protocol

- 1) Directors should treat members of the public with courtesy and respect.
- 2) The minutes of the Board meetings should be distributed to Directors in advance of the next meeting and normally approved with corrections, if any, at the next regular Board meeting.
- 3) Information relevant to the Board’s decision-making and oversight should be shared efficiently without unnecessary bureaucracy. The Board should be kept apprised of issues relevant to Board policy or decision-making, and on the progress of District activities. Relevant updates, information, and policy options should be provided in written form, prior to Board meetings. Board Communication Forms may be supplemented with discussion and questions as needed.

Commented [RG8]: Need to further flesh this out? E.g., do folks want to list the following agenda structure as it appears in the bylaws?
→ (1) Establishment of Quorum and Call to Order;
→ (2) Approval of Agenda for Meeting;
→ (3) Public Input and Comment;
(4) Consent Agenda, including minutes, financial report, disbursements, and other consent items;
→ (5) Report of General Manager;
→ (6) Committee Reports;
→ (7) Report of General Counsel;
→ (8) District Engineer Report;
→ (9) Consideration/Action on District Projects;
→ (10) Board Member Reports;
→ (11) Determination of next meeting Agenda; and
→ (12) Adjournment

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- 4) The General Manager should meet with the President and/or Vice President prior to Board meetings to review and prepare for the upcoming meeting.
- 5) At the direction of the General Manager, department heads or appropriate departmental managers will generally be present at Board meetings.
- 6) Committees should be used where beneficial to discuss, vet and frame complex issues for broader Board consideration.
- 7)

Commented [RG9]: Do you want to include in this list a methodology for tracking Board policy resolutions (other than just in meeting minutes)?

Electronic Communications

Colorado law states that meetings involving more than two members of the Board where public business is discussed must be open to the public. Telephone meetings and emailed messages discussing pending actions constitute this definition of ‘meetings’ and are subject to the law.

On-Boarding and Orientation of Directors

New Directors should receive copies of the Board Handbook, along with the current strategic plan, annual budget and work plan.

Further, to effectively oversee the functions of the District, new Directors shall receive a tour of District’s facilities and infrastructure within their first six months. (All Directors should participate in this tour every 2-3 years?)

Commented [RG10]: Committee: Ok as is, or needs edits?

Chapter 4 – Board Interactions with the Public

As a public body, it is important for the District Board to establish a working environment that encourages public participation and trust. During their service, Directors may have a range of interactions with the public including written communication (i.e., letters, email, etc.), social media, phone calls, face-to-face, social functions, and regular and special Board meetings.

Engaging the Public in General

The Board respects the role of constituents in the governance of the District and encourages their participation. The Board values public comments, both in writing and during Board meetings, and will seek input from stakeholders where appropriate in District decision making. Directors will encourage constituents to attend Board meetings where they have input, comments or concerns to share, whether in person or writing.

The Board is aware that all written and electronic documentation and communication regarding District business or operations is legally considered in the public domain. This excludes information protected by attorney-client or other privilege.

Public Input During Board Meetings

The Board President maintains an orderly progression of the business before the Board, and to the extent possible regulates the amount and type of input from the public and from members of the Board and staff. To engage the public, public comment is generally accepted on all agenda items, with time set aside for general public comment on items not on the agenda. This should be

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clearly indicated on meeting agendas. In addition, the Board will often invite a stakeholder group to attend lunch before Board meetings.

Generally, Directors will not respond to public comments during the public input portion of the agenda except to refer matters to the General Manager for follow-up. Directors may ask clarifying questions to ensure that staff provides an appropriate response. Occasionally, a prompt response may be offered by the President or the General Manager when an obvious answer or resolution is available. The Board will not enter into a debate or make decisions in response to public comments that are not on the agenda for consideration.

Representing the District Outside of Board Meetings

Directors are always encouraged to attend meetings and events related to relevant water matters in an informal capacity. Primarily this helps create a more informed Board and enables Directors to share relevant issues and information with the rest of the District Board and staff at District Board meetings. Additionally, Directors' participation in other Basin water efforts can be helpful in raising the visibility and public understanding of the mission and activities of the District.

To ensure that they are representing the position of the District in an accurate and coordinated manner on policy matters, Directors should adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1) When Directors attend other meetings or functions as Directors of the District, Directors are encouraged to be collaborative and participatory, with the primary goal of listening, asking questions and contributing ideas, and reporting back to the District about relevant efforts and topics.
- 2) Directors attending another meeting or function should clearly delineate between their personal views and opinions and formal Board positions that have been officially adopted as Board policy.
- 3) Directors should not represent District policy positions unless they have been adopted by the Board.
- 4) Directors shall communicate and coordinate closely with District staff prior to communicating District policy positions, to ensure messaging is clear and consistent.
- 5) When a Director accompanies the General Manager and/or staff to external meetings, there should be a clear mutual understanding regarding the respective roles of each.
- 6) The General Manager may invite Directors to accompany him/her to external meetings where useful in discussing official District business. (In some cases the General Manager may decide it would be useful to have two Directors attend such meetings.)
- 7) Directors may be called upon by the full Board and/or General Manager to represent the District in a formal capacity or otherwise.
- 8) To the extent a Director may communicate with constituents or stakeholders regarding Board perspectives on non-confidential matters, he/she shall strive to offer a balanced perspective with adequate disclaimers about his/her own role. Likewise, personal opinions and comments that may be contrary to adopted District policy should be expressed only if the Director clarifies that these statements do not reflect the official position of the Board or the District.

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- 9) Directors should exercise caution when utilizing the news media, social media or other forms of communications to express views that are in opposition to adopted Board policy.
- 10) When three or more Directors are authorized by the Board to attend a meeting, the meeting should be properly noticed as a public meeting of the District.
- 11) Once the Board of Directors has taken a position on an issue, all official District correspondence regarding that issue will reflect the Board's adopted position.

Chapter 5 – Resolution of Issues or Concerns

The Board recognizes that concerns, misunderstandings, and differences of opinion are inevitable for any organization, and that addressing them productively can lead to important, positive change. The Board is committed to addressing concerns directly, respectfully, and as transparently as possible – whether they concern Board members, the General Manager, or the District as a whole. Issues should be addressed in a timely and open manner, so issues are not left to fester and Board members are able to ensure such issues are addressed appropriately.

Issues or Concerns Involving Board Members and the General Manager

It is not uncommon for miscommunication, misunderstandings or conflicts to surface among Board members or between a Board member and the General Manager. Board members will address such issues in a timely and direct manner, taking the following steps as appropriate (generally but not always in the following order):

1. Attempt to address any personal conflicts or concerns in a direct and timely manner with the other party or parties, striving for mutual understanding, curiosity, and appreciation for the different viewpoints involved.
2. Bring the issue or dispute to the entire Board as appropriate, with the Board Chair ensuring the topic is framed and handed properly. This is particularly important when direct communication has not resolved the issue and/or the conflict implicates broader Board policy. Concerns should always be brought to the attention of the other party before raising it with the Board.
3. With the authorization of the Board, which may be granted, conditioned or denied at the Board's discretion, work with District Counsel to engage a neutral third party to facilitate direct discussions between the parties to resolve the issue. The third party may be another Board member or an impartial individual outside the District whose aim is to help the parties resolve the issue. While the parties may agree to keep discussions confidential to the extent authorized by law, the end result should be shared with the full Board in whatever level of detail the parties agree is appropriate, in order to keep the Board apprised, avert surprises, and promote transparency.

Issues Involving Operations, Staff Actions, or the District in General

The Board recognizes there will be occasions in which members of the public or stakeholder of the District have concerns about District operations, behavior, or policy and raise concerns with the General Manager and/or members of the Board. The District is committed to handling these

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inquiries or complaints responsively and openly. When such issues are raised with a Board member, the Director will promptly raise the issue directly with the General Manager.

When such concerns or complaints are raised with the General Manager, he/she will provide the Board with a written or verbal report of the concerns and the District's response, if any. The Board should also be informed of significant or, politically sensitive, urgent and/ or repetitive telephone or electronic communication inquiries.

Any concerns by a Director regarding the behavior or work of a District employee other than the General Manager should be directed to the General Manager privately to ensure the concern is addressed. Directors shall not reprimand employees directly nor should they communicate their concerns about individual staff members to anyone other than the General Manager or as otherwise permitted by law or the governing documents of the District.

In all cases the General Manager will address and try to resolve the issue, consistent, where relevant, with the District's Personnel Policy. The General Manager will keep the Board apprised on the resolution of such issues in an appropriate and timely manner and in accordance with the Bylaws and other policies.

Liability Concerns

Information that may expose the District to liability will be shared with the Board at a noticed, executive session meeting of the Board of Directors as allowed by applicable law

Chapter 6 – District Liability and Insurance Issues

As a Colorado governmental entity, the District, its Board and officers and employees enjoy limited protection from liability under the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act. In addition, the District maintains insurance, which includes coverage for general and automobile liability and public official liability coverage. As of the date of this Handbook the amount of such coverage is: _____. Immunity and/or insurance coverage does not extend to actions or damages such as willful and wanton conduct, sexual harassment, punitive or exemplary damages, breach of contract, condemnation/inverse condemnation, or liability based on or arising out of the issuance of bonds, securities, or other financial obligations, or taxes, fees, or assessments, or the collection, retention, or expenditure of funds.

Commented [RG11]: What about coverage for catastrophic dam failure? Bob Weiss didn't know what the District specifically has for that.

Commented [RG12]: Bob Weiss wasn't sure; needs to check with Karina or insurance carrier

Commented [RG13]: May need final editing from Bob

Executive Director Performance Evaluation Form

Overview

As with any other employee evaluation, Executive Director evaluations should focus on both what the ED has achieved as well as how the ED operates. This sample evaluation form will help you do that.

The Executive Director Performance Evaluation Form consists of three parts:

1. **The “what”:** To what extent is the ED leading the organization to accomplish what it should be accomplishing? Is the ED leading the organization to deliver results in the short- and longer-term?
2. **The “how”:** To what extent is how the ED is leading consistent with our values, and our beliefs about what skills the ED needs in order to be effective?
3. **The “what next”:** Moving forward, what are the implications of this review in terms of ED tenure, areas in which the ED should continue performing well, and areas in which the ED should improve?

Part I: What was achieved?

The board and ED should agree at the start of the year on the most important goals for the organization. The first section of the review focuses on the extent to which the organization achieved those goals. (In cases where unforeseen opportunities or challenges arose during the year that were not captured in the initial goals, they should be added here as well.)

Part II: How was it achieved?

This section focuses on values that all employees are expected to demonstrate, which the ED should model, as well as competencies and behaviors that are key to the ED position in particular.

Part III: Summary and Next Steps

This section summarizes performance for the year and identifies overall areas of strength, areas for improvement, and next steps.

The ED should fill this form out as a self-assessment, and then the board will use this form to complete the final evaluation, taking into account relevant data on the organization's progress toward goals, as well as input from the staff¹, fellow board members, and the ED's self-evaluation.

Ratings

The following scale is used for all ratings in the review:

- **Exceeds expectations:** Consistently delivers exceptional results; is a model for others to follow.
- **Meets expectations:** Consistently meets expectations in all areas.
- **Partially meets expectations:** Meets expectations in some areas and needs improvement in others.
- **Does not meet expectations:** Needs significant improvement quickly.

¹ Often boards conduct surveys of staff, board members, and/or external constituents as part of the evaluation process. If you choose to do a survey, use that data as important input to inform the evaluation, but do not substitute a survey for the evaluation itself.

Timeline

Activity	Date	Notes
ED drafts and submits self-evaluation, using attached form		
Evaluation Committee solicits input from relevant stakeholders, via survey, confidential conversations, or other means		
Evaluation Committee ² considers inputs, reviews goals and results achieved, and drafts evaluation		
Evaluation Committee sends draft evaluation to ED		
ED and Evaluation Committee meet to discuss evaluation		
Evaluation Committee makes any changes and submits evaluation to full board		
Evaluation Committee discusses conclusions with board, which votes to approve (or, in rare cases, modify) and discusses any relevant next steps		

² Rather than using a separate Evaluation Committee, the board may instead wish to have the board chair and vice chair, or board Executive Committee, serve this role.

Executive Director Performance Evaluation Form

Executive Director Name			
Review Period		Review Date	
Reviewed by	<input type="checkbox"/> Self <input type="checkbox"/> Board		

1. Organizational Goals

Goal³ <i>Note: Put each goal in a separate row, adding more rows as needed. If you'd like, you can mark the most important goals in bold.</i>	Result	Rating E: exceeds expectations M: meets expectations P: partially meets expectations D: Does not meet expectations

Comments (optional): To what extent did you/the Executive Director achieve the goals for the position this past period?

2. Demonstrating Performance Factors

To what degree did you / the Executive Director demonstrate the following core values and competencies?

Core Values <i>Add more rows as needed</i>	Description of Value	Rating (E, M, P, D, N/A)

Core Competencies <i>Add more rows as needed</i>	Description of Competency	Rating

³ List the most important objectives for the organization for the period covered by the evaluation, and assess the extent to which the ED led the organization to meet those objectives.

		(E, M, P, D, N/A)

Comments *(optional)*: In what priority areas of performance (values and competencies) did you / the Executive Director excel? In what areas is improvement needed?

3. Summary Assessment, Next Steps, and Trajectory at Organization

Overall performance rating:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds Expectations | <input type="checkbox"/> Meets Expectations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Meets Expectations | <input type="checkbox"/> Does Not Meet Expectations |

Comments *(Note: if you—the board—conducted 360 feedback or solicited input from others, use this section to summarize themes and highlights in addition to your own assessment.)*

1. What are 1-3 notable areas of strength?
 - a.
 - b.
2. What are 1-3 areas of growth or improvement?
 - a.
 - b.
3. What do you see as your / the Executive Director's trajectory in the organization? What are the next steps?

4. Feedback for Board / Board Self-Reflection

What has the board done well or effectively to provide support to the Executive Director?
 What might the board have done differently?
 What support is needed from the board moving forward?

10
THINGS
EVERY
BOARD MEMBER
NEEDS
TO KNOW

Evaluating the
Executive
Director

Your Role As a
Board Member

Second Edition, 2011

by Vincent Hyman

Mission

Our mission is to foster effective risk management practices and the overall development and advancement of nonprofits through unique, creative initiatives.

Ten Things Series for Nonprofit Boards

Welcome to this series of short briefing papers for nonprofit board members. Whether a seasoned leader or first-time trustee, there is a continual need to revisit the expectations and demands of the critical board member roles in steering, supporting and safeguarding nonprofit organizations. In this series, First Nonprofit Foundation has identified topics of particular interest to board members and will provide digests of time-tested wisdom, emerging thought, and the insights of highly experienced practitioners. We trust these papers will succeed in helping nonprofits to develop and advance. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

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Sustaining Great Leadership: Succession Planning for Nonprofit Organizations

*Organizational performance is synonymous with chief executive performance.*¹

—John Carver

John Carver, noted governance expert, put it succinctly more than twenty years ago: the organization's performance is synonymous with the chief executive's.

So it would seem simple, really: If the organization is doing well, the executive must be perfect. Problems in the organization? Must be an imperfect executive.

Life is never so simple. Organizations exist in complex environments that include the board itself, the staff, its customers, clients, donors, and other stakeholders; the organization's traditions, values, and history; its economic, social, competitive and regulatory environment; and on and on. The organization's executive serves a key role of carrying out the board's directives while balancing these numerous—and often conflicting—interests and pressures.

Still, the heart of Carver's pronouncement holds: the executive's job is to manage the board's abstract policies into concrete reality. If the board has directed astutely and the executive has managed shrewdly, the organization should perform well, given its challenges. Your job, as a board member, is to monitor that organization in such a way as to be sure the executive is delivering the goods. Moreover, your executive needs this monitoring. The executive can't do what you direct absent of feedback and direction.



Some boards neglect their duty of evaluating the director. They may fear conflict, be at a loss for the tools, or lack the tradition. All are poor, if common, reasons to avoid evaluation. That's too bad, because evaluation offers numerous benefits, including:

- Ensuring that the board is meeting its duty to actively lead the organization
- Monitoring whether organizational goals are being achieved
- Providing an opportunity to set new annual goals
- Maintaining a formal, documented, fair, and pragmatic process for providing feedback to the executive
- Helping the executive understand the board's perspective on his or her strengths and limitations
- Providing direction for specific improvements in skills and performance
- Providing documented processes that help the board retain, improve, or retire the executive, as well as justify changes in compensation and other matters of record
- Maintaining a process and documentation that can help protect the board if they let a chief executive go and the chief executive decides to sue the organization
- Helping board members examine the executive's accomplishments rather than personality
- Laying the foundation for an improved working relationship between board and executive
- Identifying opportunities, strengths, challenges, and strategic questions before they become troubling issues²

2

If your board is not currently evaluating the executive, you should know that across the sector, three-quarters of executives receive a formal, written evaluation from the board.³

The benefits are many, and, any discomfort aside, the board must evaluate its executive or it simply is not doing its job. The following steps will facilitate this task:

1. Set an executive evaluation policy
2. Set objectives and criteria
3. Choose monitoring sources
4. Choose an approach
5. Conduct an executive performance survey (Option A)
6. Monitor performance-to-plan (Option B)
7. Prepare a strengths and weaknesses evaluation (Option C)
8. Meet with the executive and document the review
9. Consider compensation
10. Avoid common problems

You will find specific advice about each of these steps below. However, the most important thing you should take away from this booklet is that the board should evaluate the executive at least annually—and it should be monitoring organizational performance (which is a reflection of executive performance) at every meeting. The specifics are less important than being sure that the evaluation is done in a timely and respectful manner.

1.

Set an Executive Evaluation Policy

As with any employee, the provision of performance feedback should be ongoing. Nothing is more damaging than stockpiling mistakes to be flung at the director during a single session. Big surprises or “gotchas” delivered at a performance evaluation are sure sign that the board is doing a poor job of communicating with the director.

Your organization should have both a tradition and a policy of annual review of the executive, often connected to an annual review of the organization. For example, one organization’s policy reads:

A formal in-person assessment of executive performance shall be carried out by the board of directors annually. The plan for the assessment will be developed in conjunction with the chief executive officer and submitted to the board for review and approval [at the] end of the fiscal year. Assessment criteria and standards will be specified prior to the appraisal. Findings will be given to the board and the chief executive prior to the evaluation session. The executive will have the opportunity to comment, respond, include other assessment information and suggest developmental ideas prior to and during the evaluation session.⁴

In general, the goal of performance reviews is to recognize how well the individual is doing his or her job and to identify ways to improve. For the executive, the board should clearly identify performance expectations and standards relevant to the organization’s performance, the executive job description, the annual work plan, the development plan set in the previous evaluation, and ongoing performance feedback given during previous board meetings.

Because the executive’s performance is so closely associated with the performance of the organization, many boards choose to make the executive evaluation part of an annual cycle of broader organizational evaluation. This is very helpful, as the information on organizational performance likely includes very useful measurements. Further, most such evaluations lead to the establishment of next year’s goals—which goals should be built into the plan for the coming year’s executive evaluation.



2.

Set Objectives

If your organization has never evaluated its director, you have some work ahead of you. It is unfair to judge an employee when you have not set objectives for the employee. Ensure that the board, as a group, has stated the organization's short- and long-term objectives with enough clarity that the executive—the board's employee—can reasonably be held accountable for accomplishing those objectives.

This booklet can't give a full account of a process for setting organizational objectives. However, there are several documents you should review when setting objectives (or determining what objectives may have been set) to which the executive will be held accountable:

- Last year's executive evaluation, including any developmental expectations
- The executive job description
- Board policies that set expectations and limitations for the executive
- The organization's annual plan (or, if no annual plan, then the strategic plan)

Previous evaluation

Providing the board conducted one, the previous year's executive performance evaluation most likely includes an action plan for the current year, with developmental goals for the executive. Include these in the evaluation; if not attended to, an excellent reason needs to be provided.

Job description

The executive job description should list major areas for which the executive is responsible. It's essential that the board review this in preparation for the job evaluation, especially if your board has never evaluated its director. These categories of responsibilities will also be helpful should the board choose to use a survey to gather information about the executive.

Board policies

Look to your policy documents for useful objectives upon which to evaluate the executive. These should specify, in some form, the major ends which the executive can be reasonably expected to accomplish. (Some of these ends are also reflected in the executive job description.) For example, some boards have adopted policies that express the mission, with subsections discussing the major priorities related to the mission. Or, boards may specify certain programmatic strategies, supported by short-term or annual goals that are core to the accomplishment of the mission. The board should hold the executive accountable for making reasonable progress towards these priorities.

Similarly, policy documents may set certain limitations on the executive. For example, the board may have a policy regarding finances that states the executive will not unreasonably risk organizational assets, including property, unnecessary liability, insufficient fund controls, or investing organizational surplus in insecure instruments. Or the board may have a policy limiting the executive from imprudent business practices, such as treating employees unfairly or choosing violating ethical standards relative to the organization's field of practice. With such policies in place, the board can hold accountable the executive who has failed to observe these limitations.

Annual plan

The final area to examine for objectives is the organization's annual work plan, or, if one does not exist, its strategic plan. These should clearly spell out goals for the organization relative to its practices. Examples might include establishment of a development office, generation of a surplus, reduction of a deficit, closing a certain program, establishing a beneficial new strategic alliance—whatever the board, executive, and staff have seen fit to establish. The executive is accountable for reasonable performance to achieve these goals within the timeframe established.

3.

Choose Monitoring Sources



While the board is ultimately responsible for the executive evaluation, it may choose to consult with others to collect information. Some boards rely only on their own interactions with the executive when assessing performance. Others feel that relying on board perceptions is too narrow, and collect information from multiple sources. Since in most organizations board members interact primarily with the executive and rarely with staff, a failing executive has an easier time hiding problems from the board than from staff.

The choice of which information sources really varies with the board and its goals. Typical sources include:

- The executive's own written evaluation of his or her performance, outlining his or her accomplishments and concerns for the year.
- A compilation of the reports submitted to the board, either specifically in preparation for evaluation or throughout the year. (You may wish to use the "nonprofit dashboard" described in another *Ten Things* booklet, *Strong Partners: Building an Excellent Working Relationship between the Nonprofit Board and Its Chief Executive*.⁵)

- Information collected from those staff who report directly to the executive (in larger organizations) or from the entire staff (in smaller organizations).
- Information from others with whom the executive interacts and whose perceptions impact organizational performance: clients or customers, funders, collaborating or partner organizations, volunteers, and even key members of the community.

Which of these sources you choose is also determined by the particular assessment approach you pick (see “Choose an Approach”). However, it is helpful if the executive is involved in selecting the sources.

The second aspect of this question is choosing who should conduct the annual review. This depends on the size and nature of the board. Most usual is for the board officers or a committee of the board to lead the evaluation process.⁶ This group reports on the evaluation data to the entire board. The in-person performance evaluation, again, depends on the board size and the nature of the evaluation. (See “Meet with the executive and document the review.”) In general, it is better to use seasoned board members with a deep knowledge of the organization.

Some organizations may use outside consultants to collect information or review executive performance. Keep in mind that evaluating the executive is like running an EKG on the heart of the organization: you will not get any closer to the pulse of the organization. If you use an external service, it should be as a contributing part of the overall effort. And, whether the in-person evaluation is presented by a committee, a board officer, or the entire board, the final evaluation must be the voice of the entire board. It is only as a single entity that the board has any power at all.

4.

Choose an Approach

To some extent, you are always evaluating the executive director, via observation at formal and informal meetings, in conversations you have with other volunteers, donors, and stakeholders—basically, any time you hear something about the executive or the organization, you are making an assessment that reflects on the executive. However, such judgments are quite personal, subject to interpersonal chemistry, and resistant to hard data about organizational performance.⁷

Personal judgments should always be questioned and compared to data when possible, both by the individual who holds the opinion and by others on the board. Unaired and unexamined judgments—whether rosy or negative—readily morph into strong

positions that can't be swayed by facts. Such positions prevent the board from guiding the executive objectively. Countless good executives have been fired and bad executives retained based solely on well-defended but woefully inaccurate personal perceptions. And that is bad for the organization.

By adopting a systematic approach to evaluation, your board can reduce the subjectivity of the information collected.

Boards usually choose from among three options when evaluating the executive.

- **Option A:** Assessment of performance via survey
- **Option B:** Assessment of “performance-to-plan” or organizational performance
- **Option C:** Assessment of executive's strengths and weaknesses

For clarity, we've separated these into three approaches. In reality, organizations often combine these options. In some cases, they will cast a very broad net, (sometimes called a “360-degree assessment”). They may review only the organization and interpret the results as a reflection of the director, or they may use the combined approach to review the executive director. At the conclusion of this booklet, we'll describe how one organization actually reviews its director—not as a model for you to follow, but as an illustration of what works in one organization.

Let's explore each of the options above with attention to their benefits and drawbacks. Points five, six, and seven below will explain how to conduct each approach.



Option A: Assessment of performance via survey

Surveys can help you gather performance information from a variety of sources. Typically, survey questions are geared to the categories established by in the executive job description, though they could also be tied to goals specified in an annual plan. Such areas might include finance, fundraising, community relations, human resources, program performance, planning, and governance. Surveys should be delivered only to the individuals and groups best able to provide feedback on executive performance—board members, staff, community members, other stakeholders—as noted in “Choose Monitoring Sources,” above. Generally, respondents are asked to rank various categories on a five-point scale. Open-ended questions may also be included.

Surveys have several advantages. They can be automated via online survey tools such as Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com). They can be sent via email to a broader range of respondents, often using the same software, which may also provide systems for compiling and analyzing the responses. They can assure anonymity for those responding to the survey—ensuring the executive's staff can respond more honestly.

Surveys can also be tailored for different groups. For example, community members might receive only questions about the CEO's representation of the organization to

the community, while staff might receive a separate set of questions regarding internal communications.

The process of survey development forces the board to think through and specify criteria for evaluation, which the executive director can also see. Surveys can repeat certain long-term questions annually, enabling the board and executive to monitor changes over time. The survey assessment approach can also be helpful when an organization has not previously conducted an assessment and the board feels it needs the perceptions of others beyond the board.

But there are serious downsides. Unless questions are tested with a few people first and carefully worded, they may be easily misinterpreted. Hence, a poorly worded question can deliver useless or misleading results.⁸ Surveys tend to weight all performance aspects similarly, so if the director does a great job on community relations and finances but has failed at an area the board thinks is very minor, the less important category can “drag down” the overall score. Surveys rely on perceptions, so that if objective data show that the executive director has met all the new business generation goals set by the board, but the individuals surveyed believe that the executive has not generated new business, the survey will show poor performance. Surveys are impersonal, as well. As the group delivering the survey, you have no opportunity to probe an individual’s response. Similarly, the respondent can’t ask you to clarify the question. Additionally, due to anonymity, open-ended feedback can sometimes be critical in a way that is vindictive instead of constructive.

Finally, survey data can make highly subjective responses appear as iron-clad judgments. Surveys usually report numeric ratings for performance. We are conditioned to think that numbers are more reliable and “scientific” than words. For physics and math and extremely scrupulous studies, that is the case. For any survey used to gather perceptions about an executive director, the numbers are simply helpful guidance. They are not facts.

Option B: Assessment of performance-to-plan

Performance-to-plan assessments realize the implications of John Carver’s opening quote: Organizational performance is synonymous with chief executive performance. The approach in this case is that the board, with information from the executive and staff, sets organization-wide goals annually, consistent with the strategic plan and the policies it has developed. These are broad goals, achievable through a variety of means and through a coordination of the organization’s activities. To the degree possible, measurable but realistic results are specified. For example, the goal might be to generate a three percent surplus at fiscal year end. Usually, the manner in which the measurable result is achieved is not specified (except as limited by policies—for example, achieving the surplus through risky investments or buying lottery tickets would be prohibited by most board policies). The executive is then evaluated based

on the degree to which the objectives were actually met, bounded by situations outside the executive's control (for example, a surprise—a facility failure, natural disaster, or legislative change—that requires consuming the surplus the executive was so scrupulously building).

This approach has several advantages. It keeps the board in its all-important policy-setting role, and the executive in the policy-realization role. It keeps the board out of the micromanaging details, and frees the executive to focus on results delivery. In other words, the focus is on making the organization succeed, per the board's direction. The approach also concentrates on measurable outcomes, which lessens the impact of subjective personal opinion, and potentially reduces conflict over strongly held positions.

This approach works well with a strong board and a confident, proven executive director; in such cases the measurable outcomes can yield dramatic growth and change. It works well with boards that are almost exclusively focused on governing (policy-setting).

There are disadvantages to this approach. It does not readily take into account broad environmental changes that may require a shift in priorities, particularly when the board does not recognize the changed situation and will not adjust policy measures accordingly. It does not lend itself to assessing less tangible aspects of management that lead to organizational success. Its focus on means (getting results) could also result in executive behavior that contradicts other important organizational values, if those values have not been expressly stated in board policies.

This approach, theoretically appealing, has real limits for many nonprofit organizations—small organizations with budgets less than \$500,000.

First, resource restrictions limit the organization's capacity to collect and organize the data required for the "objective" monitoring described above.

Second, board members in these small organizations often do double duty. One moment they are directors who set policy and supervise the executive. The next moment, they are volunteer staff who greet new clients, stuff envelopes, or run the phone tree for the annual fundraiser. This is an inherent and unavoidable conflict of interest (though it is manageable). The board members are supervising the executive in their policy role, and doing the executive's bidding in their staff volunteer role. Holding the executive fully responsible for the delivery of service is acceptable when the executive can fire the employee or volunteer at will. But when that service is actually being provided by a board member who is one of the executive's supervisors, there's an obvious problem. How does the executive reprimand a board member who influences the rest of the board—who is one of his bosses? No matter how scrupulous board members are about this dual role, the conflict exists.



This situation—resource restrictions and inherent conflict of interest—is less than ideal, but it is a fact of life for many nonprofits. Such organizations can benefit from the discipline of the performance-to-plan model, but they must be aware of their reporting (monitoring) restraints and the situation wherein board members double as service volunteers. With regards to the reporting restraints, boards have to take care not to demand reports the organization doesn't have the resources (financial or time) to deliver. And with regards to their dual roles, wise boards and executive directors simply need to do their best to manage the complex situation.

Option C: Assessment of executive's strengths and weaknesses

In the strengths and weaknesses approach, the executive and board list and discuss the executive's strengths and weaknesses. They then focus on action plans for building on the strengths and addressing the weaknesses. In a typical strength and weakness review, the board will look at the job description, annual plan, and previous year's professional development goals. It may provide a rating for activities within each of these categories.

Option C is the most subjective and the least formulaic of the three approaches described in this briefing booklet. It is advantageous when the board has a more intimate relationship with the executive, and when the board prefers the comfort of a somewhat informal, qualitative discussion with the director. In general, there is a "gentle" feel to the approach; the board takes on a role similar to that of a supervisor who provides coaching to help the employee reach top performance. Boards can talk with the executive in the broad context of how the organization is doing and how the executive should tweak his management style to serve the needs of the organization.

Organizations with longtime executive directors known for some essential and difficult-to-replace strengths can use the "weaknesses" portion of the review to seek, with the director, ways to compensate for those weaknesses that don't ask the director to "fix" performance areas that are unfixable or not worth the executive's time. In this way, the strength/weaknesses approach facilitates discussion about what the organization needs, what the executive director can do best, and how to match needs with strengths. Personal though it is, the strengths/weaknesses model helps board and executive discuss performance in the context of the organization, its environment, the board, and the executive's specific skill set.⁹

The highly subjective nature of this approach can be considered one of its drawbacks. It also may be more difficult to connect this approach to organizational performance, as it tends to look more at skills and professional performance than at the degree to which the executive is managing the organization to produce the results the board desires. It can be very easy explain away performance problems that are genuinely hindering the organization. In organizations with a charismatic, powerful leader and a weak board, years of poor performance can be ignored until the problems threaten the

entire organization. Even when the board and executive are honest about weaknesses, it can be difficult to decide when too many changes are required to account for natural weaknesses.

Ultimately, the board is not the executive's coach. Its job is to set policy and direction for the organization, and to hold the executive accountable for accomplishing its directions. While an attractive and comfortable approach, the strength/weakness approach should be used carefully.

Some boards of directors combine performance reviews with a review of the entire organization, using a "360-degree assessment" which takes in the perceptions from multiple stakeholders and may also include reports such as those provided by the nonprofit dashboard. This format has been borrowed from the for-profit world. It often uses survey tools, such as in Option A, with a goal to gather data from all stakeholders on the organization's performance. The 360-degree assessment holds the executive directly accountable for the organization's performance, as in Option B.

The benefit of this type of assessment is that it properly builds context for the chief executive's performance: the board sees how the executive is doing as a part of how the organization is doing as whole. It is especially helpful for board members who don't fully understand the challenges facing their executive.

However, boards need to be careful not to overweight the perceptions of other stakeholders. External stakeholders are in the position of the proverbial blind men and the elephant. They see only the very small part of the organization that they interact with—and hence may give unfairly glowing or negative reviews as a result. A client who sat too long on one isolated, bad day in a waiting room is going to give an angry review, while one whose family was rescued from disaster will be unflinchingly loyal to the organization, and perhaps the executive, for life. Since one can never know the mood of a respondent in an anonymous survey, attend to comments but don't take them as gospel.

None of these approaches are ideal, and governance experts disagree about their use. Some governance experts (notably Carver) advocate for monitoring the organization only, and evaluating the executive according to the organization's performance. Others advocate for the replacement of all of these approaches with year-round communications that focuses on the entire system, of which the executive director's actions is just one part.¹⁰

However, all experts would agree that boards are failing in their duty if they do not regularly assess the executive director's performance. If your board has not yet established a regular system to evaluate the director, begin immediately; pick the approach that's most likely to get you started rather than the one you think is "best." If your



4. Choose an Approach

board has long experience with evaluations, compare the approach you currently use with the three described above and consider whether changes would be in order.

Regardless of whether you choose one or a combination of these approaches or some alternate approach, your board must focus on being sure to evaluate at least annually, on setting careful objectives for the executive, and on providing continuous honest feedback.

5.

Option A: Conduct an Executive Performance Survey

Surveys typically look at the aspects of executive performance most important to the board. Survey questions could be derived from the items in the executive director's job description, from goals set in the previous year, or both. The decision of what to survey should involve both the board and the executive, who will most likely have specific issues he or she wants to probe for deeper feedback.

Organizations that gather responses from a variety of audiences may tailor questions for each audience. For example, board members receive one version—perhaps the most thorough—that focuses on all the areas that the board needs to assess. Meanwhile, if community relations is important to the organization, a separate brief survey goes to community members, focusing on the executive's interaction with the community. If the work of the organization involves participation in advocacy coalitions, another survey might collect opinions from coalition members about the executive's work in the coalition, testimony at the legislature, and so forth.

When monitoring performance relative to the job description, collect information related to the categories expressed in that description. Typical performance areas include:

- Administrative management (including staff management)
- Professional skills, problem solving, and decision-making
- Business development
- General leadership
- Community and public relations
- Board relations
- Planning, finance, budgeting
- Fundraising
- Compliance with policies
- Risk management

Questions relative to these areas might include:

- (For board relations) How satisfied are you with the executive director's provision of timely information to the board?
- (For policy compliance) How satisfied are you with the director's performance in ensuring that the organization complies with new HIPPA regulations?
- (For business development) How satisfied are you with the new early childhood reading program acquired by the executive director?

If the board intends to use the same questionnaire over time, with an executive who likely will have long-term tenure or with a job description that is stable even as executives change, the repetition of certain questions over several years carries the added benefit of providing a longitudinal look at executive performance.

When monitoring performance relative to annual objectives, the survey should include those subjective areas that can't be demonstrated via internal reports. For example, if the annual plan includes an objective such as "improved community outreach," the survey should collect perceptions of those who witnessed the outreach. When the annual plan includes an objective visible via report, such as generating surplus revenue of three percent or better, than there's no need to waste valuable survey space (and respondent time) by asking such a question.

With such surveys, a six-point scale is effective. Typically, these scales are some variation on:

5. Outstanding
4. Significantly exceeds expectations
3. Meets expectations
2. Needs improvement
1. Unsatisfactory
- N/A Not applicable/Don't know

Surveys can also include open-ended questions. For example, you might ask:

- What were the executive director's most compelling, significant, or beneficial accomplishments in the past year?
- In what specific ways might the executive improve her performance?
- Any other comments?

Keep in mind that audiences have limited interest and time to fill out surveys. Board members may want to collect information on thirty items, but a community member may not respond to more than five questions, and a busy staff member may have time for fifteen. And remember, someone (likely someone on the board) is going to have to compile and analyze the responses for the board. Don't ask for more information than you have time to compile, analyze, and use.



Surveys tend to assign the same level of importance to every question. The board may need to know that the executive is performing adequately relative to risk management, but their concern about the executive's planning and decision-making responsibilities is much greater. To deal with this, some boards attach a "weighting" factor as it computes the relative value of each answer. If a particular item accounts for only five percent of the executive's time and the board's priority, while another area gets 30 percent, weight them accordingly.

A related issue is that people interpret scales differently. Some are tough graders, some are easy graders, and some will vary their application of the scale as they proceed through the questions. The discrepancies in "grading" can be reduced by increasing the number of people surveyed.

Another issue is that wordy survey questions are easy to misconstrue. For example, one survey available online asks the respondent to respond "remarkable, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or unknown" to the following question:

"[The executive] serves as an effective spokesperson for the agency; represents the programs and points of view of the organization to agencies, organizations, and the general public."¹¹

This survey question really combines two questions into one: a) a question about whether the executive was an "effective spokesperson"; and b) a question about whether the executive represented the organization to "agencies, organizations, and the general public." Some respondents will interpret the question as a general inquiry about the executive's qualities as a spokesperson. Others will break the questions into its components, which renders it all but unanswerable. For example, how do you respond if the executive was effective with the general public but ineffective with agencies? For this reason, structure your survey to ensure that you ask only one question in each survey item. Use fewer words, not more, to ask your question. If an example is necessary, add an example—after the question—as a point of clarification. With this in mind, the above question might have been better worded, "How effective is the executive as a public spokesperson for the organization?"

Since you won't be there to explain what you mean by a question, check your questions with a few people to be sure your question are clear and elicit useful responses.

There are links below to some helpful online survey templates. None are perfect—and some contain good examples of questions that combine too many elements—but they can help you see how a survey can be structured. Use the online template samples to develop your own surveys that incorporate areas your board is most concerned about.

This survey, from the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, is perhaps one of the most thorough: http://www.mncn.org/info/template_hr.htm#Sample%20Executive%20Director%20Evaluation%20Form.

5. Option A: Conduct an Executive Performance Survey

Carter McNamara's well known nonprofit site, ManagementHelp.Org, provides a basic but helpful starting template. It can be viewed at: www.managementhelp.org/boards/edvalfrm.htm

The Board Café, a free online newsletter for boards at www.boardcafe.org, offers a third template: <http://www.compasspoint.org/boardcafe/details.php?id=74>

There are many other sample surveys available; a simple search of the Internet will get you there.

6.

Option B: Monitor Performance-to-Plan

As noted, the board must have a plan, with specific, hopefully quantifiable results if it is to use the performance-to-plan approach. The details of every plan change year to year. Unlike the categories addressed in surveys, plan categories tend to be about specifics such as performance to budget, development of new programs, increases in revenue, number of public speaking events, and so forth. Annual plans are about the organization rather than the executive. And when written with care, the plans are about results, not activity. So, a plan may specify that 1,000 school children will receive training in the organization's area of expertise. The executive is measured on the degree to which the organization actually accomplishes or exceeds that result.

An evaluation on performance-to-plan may use a simple form such as in the following partial example, which also rates the performance.¹²



Results Specified	Performance Result	Rating	Notes
Generate a three percent surplus at fiscal year end	No surplus generated, but see notes.	Acceptable	Court-ordered change in regulation required immediate hire of two new staff, as approved by board. Board informed that the choice would result in negative-to-break even budget for the fiscal year.
Raise \$50,000 in unrestricted funds	\$77,800 raised	Exceeds goal	New e-advocacy system expanded donor base
Train 1,000 school children in local school district	1,222 children trained	Exceeds goal	Initial follow-up with teachers shows improved organizational skills.
Lobby executive branch for regulatory changes to early education eligibility	No action taken	Failed goal	Executive states that she re-directed staff activity given other priorities and time constraints. Board regrets shift and expects action.
Formalize HR processes; hire HR director per budget	HR director hired; Policy manual rewritten; Continuous improvement program instituted	Exceeds goal	Salary approved by board proved too low. Variance approved. New HR director is aggressively moving goals forward.

As with the survey option, various components in the plan may be weighted differently. In the example above, the executive did not cause the organization to perform one of the tasks. The executive director may have been negligent, or may have made a calculated assessment that other priorities were more valuable. In discussion, the board expressed the importance of this priority and notes that it expects action.

7.

Option C: Prepare a Strengths and Weaknesses Evaluation

A strengths and weaknesses evaluation can begin with the job description for the executive, but isn't limited to that. The partial example below, for a younger organization with an entrepreneurial leader shows how a chart can be used that shows the responsibilities, strengths, weaknesses, and responsibilities for each, and additional categories may be added.¹³

Responsibility	Strength	Weakness	Action Plan
External relations: Communicates organizational mission, vision, and programs to constituents, other publics as needed	A real strength. Excellent presenter. Quickly develops rapport with constituents, regardless of background; seen as "friend" in the community.	Could be better at remembering factual and statistical details related to programs and clients.	Develop method to capture annual stats on our programs and include in presentations. Combine numbers with moving anecdotes.
Resource development: Develops fundraising strategies; ensures that adequate funds are available for programs and goals	Excellent at talking with donors and prospects. Fundraising goals have been met.	Follow up on foundation grants is inconsistent. Keeps donor and prospect data "in his head."	Develop plan to systematize development; develop budget to hire development director and submit to board.
Board relationships: Models effective working relationships with board members; delivers reports as required by board	Warm, easy working relationship with all board members.	Requested reports delayed or incomplete.	Executive notes that there is not enough time or staff to develop the reports the board requires. Work with board member Amy W. to develop a plan for improved reporting.
(Other categories as needed)			

Additional objectives

- Improve follow through on board requests for information
- Develop organization policies manual
- Systematize staff supervision—ensure that performance reports are provided for all employees on time
- Develop regular e-news communications

Board role in achieving objectives

- Board member Niki B. will work with accountant to develop reporting template
- Board member Charles S. will assist on the formalization of personnel policies and the creation of a manual and the development of an annual performance review mechanism
- Board member Darnell W. will create a template and schedule for an e-newsletter

8.

Meet with the Executive and Document the Review

An effective evaluation focuses the board members' individual perceptions and expectations. If the evaluation also includes perceptions from staff, the community, or other stakeholders, these also must be compiled. The board only has power as a body, and it must come to agreement on the overall thrust of the evaluation before the performance appraisal meeting. The evaluation is not a time for board members to air personal differences. The board should plan on a discussion prior to meeting with the executive, during which members agree to a common set of performance criteria and bring forth any unspoken expectations, concerns, and praise for the executive. The individual or group charged with compiling and summarizing the results of external data collection and organizational reports should have these documents fully prepared before the meeting, so that all can see the actual data.

The review meeting

Once the board has prepared its overall expectations and review, it's time to meet with the executive. Some boards have the board chair alone conduct the actual review. Others use the executive committee, the personnel committee, or the full board. Larger boards can have difficulty reaching consensus, and, if not managed well, can appear to "gang up" on the executive director. At the same time, the board has to decide if it is comfortable leaving the actual evaluation to a sole member or a representative committee.

Evaluation meetings can be uncomfortable. The data collection, the executive's own participation in the development of the review process and questionnaires, and the board's pre-review meeting should help to diminish the discomfort. Set the meeting at a time (and place) that eliminates outside distractions; you want every participant's full attention. So, this is not a dinner meeting, and if it is held during work hours, other staff must not be able to interrupt. Arrange the room to encourage discussion and opinions. If at all possible, don't put the executive on one side of the table and the review group on the other. And, when a group is conducting the in-person evaluation, have a point person who is responsible for keeping communications on track and healthy. Charge this person with ensuring that everyone, including the executive director, speaks.

Start the meeting by emphasizing accomplishments and strengths, using specific examples from the reports and information you've collected. Build on the strengths and then move to the areas of concern. Discuss these with diplomacy, but be specific about what needs improvement and which goals were not met. Allow ample room for discussion of whether goals or responsibilities were unrealistic, not specific enough, were inadequately funded as a result of board action, and when the executive director did not have the requisite knowledge or skill to deliver the result.

For unmet goals, the board will need to decide whether to move them to the next plan, or whether circumstances have changed so that the goal is no longer relevant. New goals for the next performance period can also be discussed during this meeting. Speak in terms of the results required, and ask the executive director to develop a plan and budget to meet the goal. Be sure that all goals are actually items the executive director can be expected to deliver, given the resources available and current environment. Don't demand more than can be reasonably expected.

Documenting the review

After the evaluation is complete, a board member should write it up as a formal report. This report should include:

- The accomplishments during the period and the documentation for those
- Ratings (if a survey or rated approach was used)
- A list of unmet goals (if any) and explanations
- Next year's goals (noting if they are from the organization's annual plan, discussions during the performance review, or both)
- Dates for any required follow-up with the executive director
- A list of professional development needs and opportunities, along with how the board will support the development through budget and other resources

The executive should sign and date the report, noting that he or she has read and understood the contents. The written report also needs room for the executive director to respond in writing. Those who participated in the in-person assessment need to sign the review. A summary should be delivered to the full board (if all were not present), and the report should be filed in the executive director's personnel file.

9.

Consider Compensation

There is no easy way to assign monetary value to a person's performance—especially in the nonprofit world, where mission is so critical and people are often afraid to talk about money.

Experts are divided on whether to connect compensation discussions to the performance review. Some argue that parties won't talk openly about strengths and weaknesses when the discussion influences salary. Thus, compensation negotiations and performance assessment should be separate. This argument is nice in theory, but it dismisses the reality that compensation is an expression of value delivered; separating the discussions may be artificial.

Some argue that compensation drives behavior, and so performance should be directly linked to it. In this view, people should be paid for the value they deliver, and should be rewarded more handsomely for delivering greater value. However, that argument also has weaknesses. People derive rewards from a variety of sources, of which money is only one. The “value exchange” between employer (board) and employee (executive) is complex. Executives work for a compe of emotional rewards, altruism, relationships, prestige, challenge, money, and much more. Skew one of the ingredients too much, and the flavor no longer pleases. (A poorly conducted evaluation, or badly framed critiques can certainly upset the recipe.)

Whether or not performance evaluation and compensation are linked, the amount the board pays the executive does ultimately make a statement about the value it places on his or her performance. Chief executive salary also announces the competitive position the board wants the organization to hold in the nonprofit marketplace.

This booklet offers no recommendation on which approach is better—we only point out the advantages and disadvantages of each. That said, compensation is likely to come up some time near the performance review. The following tips will help you consider an appropriate value.

- Research the compensation of executive directors for similar organizations in your region. You can look to comparisons based on size, budget, field of practice, and background expectations of the CEO. You can make direct calls to your peers on the boards of other organizations; review their form 990s (using Guide-star.org), use reports provided by your state nonprofit association, and reports provided by professional salary review groups. If yours is a small organization with limited funds, a larger peer in the community may be willing to share their data.

- Consider the position of your organization in the marketplace. Who do you compete with? What do they pay their executives? How do you want to appear relative to those organizations?
- Consider the performance of your executive director relative to those of his or her peers.
- Consider the cost of retaining your current executive and of hiring a replacement. What would you need to pay to get the executive you want?
- Consider internal equity. How does the executive's salary, and the means by which it is set, compare to other salaries in the organization?
- Avoid undue persuasion by the chief executive—and avoid the perception of such persuasion. In salary negotiations, the board needs to have done its research separate from that of the executive. The board or its designee should research and supply comparative figures. If a firm is hired to do the research, that firm should report to the board, not the executive director.
- Remember, it's not just salary—it's a compensation package. Sabbaticals, time off, retirement planning, paid education, and so forth are all part of the picture.
- It's about the budget, too. No matter how much you feel your executive is worth, compensation has to be justifiable within a sound financial policy.
- Public perception is important. Donors who sense that a CEO is exorbitantly paid may choose to move their loyalties elsewhere. Underpayment also sends messages (true or not) about the financial state of the organization, its quality, and its concern for employee wellbeing.
- If you tie compensation incentives directly to performance, identify both the incentives and the criteria for measuring successful attainment of goals many months ahead of the evaluation. Take care that the total compensation (including incentives) does not grow beyond the marketplace.
- Remember that the IRS is watching. Excessive compensation can result in the loss of tax-exempt status.
- Be sure that the entire board has discussed and approved the compensation package.¹⁴



10.

Avoid Common Problems¹⁵

Boards run into predictable problems related to evaluation. Check the following list to prepare for and avoid these.

- **Procrastination.** The board delays the evaluation for a meeting, then another, and then another...
- **Accentuating only the negative.** The board focuses only on problems, neglecting the executive's accomplishments.

- **Accentuating only the positive.** Fearing conflict, board members sugarcoat their concerns, and add a creamy nougat filling of vague praise for good measure. The executive never hears board concerns directly. Thus, he or she can't modify performance—or correct members' misperceptions.
- **Banking concerns for the big date.** The board stores its concerns for months, then vents them all on the executive during the review.
- **Reviewing personality, not performance.** Both matter, but personality matters when it influences the organization's accomplishments. You don't have to like the executive—you have to value the results he or she achieves through careful management of the organization.
- **Failing to debrief.** After each evaluation, the board should consider what worked and what didn't, including the executive director's frank appraisal of the process. Plan immediately for changes that will have an impact on the next evaluation cycle.
- **Forgetting the executive director's context.** The board may set plans and priorities, but absent input from staff, these plans and priorities can quickly overwhelm the executive director with demands. Remember, the executive director is also serving staff, volunteers, and other constituents.
- **Emphasizing the wrong outcomes.** The board focuses on performance-to-plan, but it has picked the wrong measures of success. Or, it attaches too much weight to performance measures that bring little benefit to the organization. The executive, closer to the work, chooses other outcomes more likely to bring success, and is judged a poor performer—for “failing” to do the wrong things!
- **Choosing the wrong assessment approach.** The board adopts someone else's evaluation system, chooses a boilerplate form off the Internet, doesn't get input on what to evaluate from the executive, follows outside guidance uncritically, or otherwise doesn't diligently prepare to assess its executive.
- **Ignoring situational changes during the year.** The board may have carefully set measurement criteria in the previous year. But a lot can change in a year—and the executive has to make adjustments, sometimes on the fly. While the executive director should be informing the board of such adjustments, the board's rigid adherence to criteria that no longer fit only sends the message that the executive should focus on the board's directives at the expense of organizational effectiveness. It's also a cue that the board's directives may be too narrow and inflexible.
- **Delaying feedback.** The executive director needs to hear board feedback when the board has it. The formal evaluation should be a place to sum and enrich the feedback that has gone on throughout the year.
- **Neglecting to evaluate itself.** The board comes down hard on the director but ignores its own problems and the role those may play in hindering the executive. Since it doesn't take time to evaluate its own performance, its judgment of the executive can be fairly questioned.

Wrapping it up

Here is how the process played out in one organization; we've changed the name of the organization to protect confidentiality. The organization, FZT, is an environmental advocacy group with a staff of thirteen and an annual budget just under two million dollars. The executive has been with the organization for many years and is well-respected as an effective manager and a community leader. As you read the brief description, note how it actually combines the methods we've described in this booklet.

At FZT, the board chair conducts the evaluation of the executive director. The executive director fills out a self-evaluation form that contains goals from the previous year's evaluation. The goals are a combination of organizational performance and individual improvement goals. The chair then contacts a range of other board members and some staff to discuss the executive's performance. At their option they may also contact organizational partners, colleagues, or stakeholders who may have some special experience or perspective on the executive director's performance that year. The entire board is encouraged to contact the chair if they have anything they'd like to add.

The chair then fills out the supervisor's portion of the evaluation and meets with the executive to review it. During that meeting goals and objectives are identified for the following year and salary is negotiated on a preliminary basis.

The evaluation is then presented to the full board in closed session and the salary negotiation is ratified or amended.

This booklet has covered a lot of ground. You've learned what to consider when planning to assess the director, the pros and cons of various approaches, how to conduct three different types of evaluation, how to hold and document the evaluation meeting, what to think about when compensating the executive, and typical problems to avoid.

If there is only one thing you take away, it is that your board must systematically provide formal feedback of some sort to the executive. To a large degree, the performance of your executive director and the performance of the organization are one in the same. The executive needs your input to deliver the policies, priorities, and plans you have set.

Done well, the performance evaluation is a powerful dialog that helps executive and board move closer to their shared goal—turning the organization's vision into reality.

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Endnotes

¹ Carver, John. "Monitoring: Relaxing about the Present...So We Can Get on with the Future!" Carmel, Indiana: Carver Governance Design, Inc., monograph, 1989. p.5.

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⁴ Adapted from *The Nonprofit Board Book: Strategies for Organizational Success*. Anthes, Earl, et al. West Memphis, AK: Independent Community Consultants, 1983. page 113.

⁵ See page 11 of *Strong Partners* for a sample "dashboard."

⁶ Occasionally, the chief executive is also a member of the board. Clearly, in these cases the executive director needs to recuse himself or herself from the evaluation process (and compensation, if it is part of the discussion).

⁷ It should be noted that some board consultants advise basing the evaluation of the executive only on data collected through monitoring activities that are reported according to the policy demands of the board. Others recommend collecting a broad base of opinions.

⁸ A typical problem—one that shows up in numerous survey questionnaires – is the inclusion of more than one item in a question. Consider, for example, the question on "How satisfied are you that the executive director has developed appropriate goals and strategies to advance the vision and mission?" The question contains four evaluative items that could exist in 24 combinations: goals, strategies vision, and mission. A thoughtful respondent cannot answer this question honestly. And a thoughtful board can't really use the information. Better would be to ask one question about each item, or to ask a single, more general question, "How satisfied are you that the executive director has advanced the cause of the organization?"

⁹ Writers on leadership—notably Peter Drucker—have advised that it is better to spend time playing to strengths than to focus on repairing weaknesses.

¹⁰ Temkin, Terrie, "Evaluating the Executive Director: Part 2 – Making Executive Director Evaluations Effective," <http://www.uwkc.org/nonprofit/governance/edeval/Evaluating%20the%20Executive%20Director%20Part%202.pdf>

¹¹ "Annual Evaluation of the Executive Director" by Board Café referenced at <http://www.uwkc.org/non-profit/governance/edeval/Annual%20Evaluation%20of%20the%20Executive%20Director.pdf>

¹² Adapted from Masaoka, Jan. *The Best of the Board Café: Hands-on Solutions for Nonprofit Boards*. St. Paul, MN: Fieldstone Alliance Inc., 2003, p 61.

¹³ *Ibid*, p 62.

¹⁴ Portions of this list adapted from Vogel, Brian, and Charles Quatt. "Determining Executive Compensation," Washington, DC: National Center for Nonprofit Boards, 1995. <http://www.tgci.com/magazine/Determining%20Executive%20Compensation.pdf>.

¹⁵ Some tips are adapted from Temkin, Terrie, "Evaluating The Executive Director: Part 1—Why Evaluations of the Executive Director Don't Work," October, 2002. Available at <http://www.uwkc.org/non-profit/governance/edeval/Evaluating%20the%20Executive%20Director%20Part%201.pdf>

About the Author

VINCENT HYMAN, series editor, is an award-winning writer, editor, and publisher. After leading the development of the nonprofit publishing center at Amherst H. Wilder Foundation and the publishing program of Fieldstone Alliance, Inc., he founded Vincent Hyman Editorial Services, with expertise in nonprofit management, foundation effectiveness, policy, marketing, and related issues. He is editor of scores of books, coauthor of *Coping with Cutbacks: The Non-profit Guide to Success When Times Are Tight*, author of numerous web and print articles, and has three decades of experience in writing, editing, and organizational communications.



1 South Wacker Drive Suite 2380
Chicago, IL 60606
800.526.4352
Fax: Fax: 312.930.0375
www.firstnonprofit.org

2020 JANUARY – JULY WORKPLAN

__ Executive Director

A= administrative

B=board

S=stakeholder

MONTH	KIND*	ACTIONS	DETAILS
January	A	Retain OD Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify scope of activities for OD consultant for Jan-March to assist
	A	Secure administrative functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure payroll, benefits packages, computer, software, printing, home office, bookkeeping, and other employee needs with the Board
	A	Detail other ROSA job positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop job descriptions or Research Director and Administrator, Board review, and disseminate
	A	Secure 2020 final funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize any funding arrangements with developers based on their 2019 commitments for 2020 and beyond
	B	Hold Board meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Board agenda, 2020 budget, other agenda items, convene, run, prepare summary
	S	Prepare for State of Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with other organizations preparing similar meetings to reduce redundancy and improve utility. Participate with __ and others on Planning Committee for planning agenda, logistics, invitees, and program for 2020 Fisheries State of the Science
February	A	Hire other job positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and interview candidates, at least for administrator to start
	A	Develop communications plan and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance the website and consider hiring a comms consultant to advance communications
	A	Maintain administrative needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tend to administrative needs (signing checks, reviewing budget and bank, credit cards, etc.)
	B	Engage recreational fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to engage recreational fishermen Identify appropriate level to integrate recreational fishing membership (Board, Council, etc.)

	S	Understand current funding and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend significant time each with ____, developers, and others to understand current “lay of land” of research
	S	Prepare State of Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support agenda, logistics, invitees, and program for 2020 Fisheries State of the Science, including Save the Date, <i>as appropriate given ____ roles</i>
	S	Meet and greet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with developers, states, Federal agencies, fishery councils, and commercial industry to introduce self, describe work, introduce organization and field questions through calls and meetings, as appropriate •
	S	Populate Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare approach to populating Council base consistent with framework and Board input • Reach out to entities to secure representation • Outline detailed roles and responsibilities for Council participants
March	A	Hire other job positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make offers and finalize contracts for staff, including establishing 6 month work plans for each (maybe not all at once) and work with OD consultant as needed
	A	Maintain administrative needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to administrative needs (signing checks, reviewing budget and bank, credit cards, etc.)
	S	Understand current funding and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend significant time each with __ developers, and others to understand current “lay of land” of research
	S	Continue meet and greet	Hold joint calls with developers, states, Federal agencies, fishery councils, commercial industry to introduce self, describe work, introduce organization, and field questions through calls and meetings, as appropriate
	S	Prepare State of Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to advance agenda, logistics, invitees, and program for 2020 Fisheries State of the Science, including Save the Date with the Planning Committee <i>as appropriate given ____ roles</i>
	S	Prepare for Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize Council membership • Prepare draft Council ground rules • Retain facilitator for Council meeting
	B	Further recreational fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement plan for engagement/role of recreational fishermen
	R	Populate Research Advisory Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In consultation with Board and others, prepare membership approach, conflict of interest statement, and criteria for RAB

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and launch process to select RAB by the Council
April	A	Launch new hires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-board new hires, finalize contracts and monthly work plans
	A	Maintain administrative needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to administrative needs (signing checks, reviewing budget and bank, credit cards, etc.)
	B	Hold Board meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Board agenda, convene, run, prepare summary
	S	Continue meet and greet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with various data portals, researchers, and others as needed and if time allows • Attend meetings, as appropriate, to introduce themselves and __
	S	Prepare State of Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize agenda, logistics, invitees, and program for 2020 Fisheries State of the Science, and logistical details with Planning Committee <i>as appropriate given __ roles</i>
	S	Prepare for Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare agenda for first Council meeting • “On-boarding calls with each Council member” • Identify key decisions needed by Council in first meeting
	R	Populate Research Advisory Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In consultation with Board and others, prepare membership approach, conflict of interest statement, and criteria for RAB • Create and launch process to select RAB by the Council
May	A	Oversee new hires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch work plans and actions by hires
	A	Maintain administrative needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to administrative needs (signing checks, reviewing budget and bank, credit cards, etc.)
	S	Engage in State of Science Workshop in early May <i>(will fishermen participate during May)?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final preparations and participation in State of Science Workshop
	S	Prepare for Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize agenda and process and materials for first Council meeting • Participate in first Council meeting
	R	Populate Research Advisory Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Council in finalize roles, charge, and members of the RAB
June	A	Oversee new hires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee work plans and actions by hires
	S	Follow up from State of Science Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up on action items, next steps from State of Science • Work with Planning Group to ensure proceedings and close out occur
	S	Follow up from Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up on action items, next steps from Council meeting • Ensure proceedings and close out occur

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize any work groups coming out of the Council
	S	Continue meet and greet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach to states with existing or new groups such as ___ and many others
	R	Advance research priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop listing of priorities emerging from State of Science and Council meeting Reach out to individual RAB members to obtain advice and input on priorities, potential details of research proposals Prepare Board packet for review
	R	Research Advisory Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with RAB as needed around emerging research priorities
	B	Hold Board meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold Board meeting (likely in person) to finalize priorities, identify potential sources of funding, RAB members to help with RFP drafting, and develop process for RFP letting, review, and selection
July	R	Advance research priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using Board direction, work with appropriate funders and RAB members to develop RFPs for research priorities Engage with Council members to clarify and keep up to date on individual lead research done by individual Council members (states or feds)
	R	Research Advisory Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with RAB as needed around launching one or more RFPs for research
	S	Advance Council workgroups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene any work groups coming out of Council meeting on specific topics (say data aggregation, or trawl survey, etc.)
	A	Explore future funding from additional sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways to expand funding base to reduce reliance on wind developers and move toward more diverse external funding sources

Water Quality Program Strategic Plan: Key Tasks and Milestones

BMP Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
Manage CEAP	TBD	Trevor/New Engineer (?)	March 2017
BMP cost-share policy document	Done but Jeff POC		
BMP outreach materials	Jess	Ryan, Rob, Jeff	13 January
Written guidance and training for joint DEC/VAAFAM authority on permitting	Maria	Jim	June 2017
Training partners	Rob	Jess, Ryan, Maria (if includes TSPs)	On-going
A&E training via LCBP (Dairy One)	Rob	Jess, Ryan	On-Going
Application processing procedures	Jess	Rob, Jeff	May 2017
Develop the Field Challenge Program	Ben	Maria	February 2018
Manure pit/expansions and VAAFAM policy development (ranking system)	Rob	Jeff, Jess	February 2017 (draft)
Development and Roll-Out of VAAFAM Critical Area Seeding and Filter Strip Program	Mike (develop) Ben roll out)	Trevor, Maria, Ryan, Mike M.	August 2017
BMP checklist for other permits needed	Jess	Rob, Colin	April 2017

Contractor Management

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
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Training for North Lake Contractors	Trevor	Engineering	On-Going
Creation of templates and guidance docs for assessment, data mgt and farm plan dev.	Abbi	Maria	April 2017
Training for Assessment Protocols	Abbi	Maria	April 2017
Training for Data Management of Grants (incl GIS, Partner DB)	Caroline (GIS) Mike (PDB)		April 2017
Development of streamlined contractor reporting and assessment protocol to deliver coherent and streamlined TA & FA.	Sylvia	Ryan, Jeff Cook	April 2017
Overall contractor/case management	GAP		On-Going

NMP Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
NMP policies/expectations and NMP grant to districts	Maria	Abbi, Mary, Ryan (outreach)	2019
Soil testing pilot soil and slope (2017) and protocols for inspection-training/chain of custody (2018)	Maria, Dave, Carolyn	Dave, Mary, Tyler, Lab personnel	2017 2018
Begin the process of creating a TSP certification program at VAAFMM with legislative language	Dave	Ryan, Maria	February 2018
Funding data logger devices for custom manure applicators and MFOs/LFOs	Jeff Cook	Maria, Clark	Completed!
NMP Grants to UVM to develop Veggie NMP + Streamlined SFO	Laura	Maria	February 2017

Development template and online UI			
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Planning Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
Tactical Basin Planning	Mike M	GAP (must be engaged)	Dec 2017
Ag TMDLs	Maria	Tyler, DEC	Start April 2017 with DEC
Staffing coordination geography for things as strategic watershed leads and regional/watershed sampling	Mike M	Caroline, Jen	March 2017

SFO/MFO/LFO Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
LFO and MFO annual reports, requests for information and follow up (response and/or enf if needed)	Maria	Tyler, Steve, Abbi, and Mary, Caroline	Feb-May 2017
MFO/LFO permit fees-(WQ BO)	Jeff Cook	Dave (as needed Nate)	Feb-May (intense), June through October (follow-up/enforcement actions)
Record mgt (enf & permit files) - drafting the policies and making sure they are consistently upheld for file/database management	Dave/Nate (lead)	Clark/Tyler (team support)	September
Create a risk based permitting system-simplify easy permit amendments (LEAN process for LFO permit amendments)	Maria	Nate, Laura, Abbi, Tyler, Mary, Dave, Steve	Go when DB done. Target start 10/2017
Updating MFO NOICs and Annual	Tyler	Maria/Nate	Completed!

Report forms, and LFO permit appendix forms and annual report forms (Tyler is nearly done with this LFO portion of the task).			
Revise Public Informational Meeting policy to include construction of new pits	Maria	Maria/Dave (review)	PIM policy revision is completed. Complete by March 1
Stormwater management plan direction and process to review/regulate them	Steve	Laura/Nate	January, 2018
Plans for Traffic, Odor, Noise, etc. and how to review/regulate them	Steve	Laura/Nate	January 2018

VHCB/RCPP Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
RCPP	John	Laura/Ryan	ongoing
VHCB meetings	John	Laura	Ongoing
Farm Viability	Colin	John	2 year term (for now)

IT Support Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
Complete Food Safety Database	Nate	Laura, Abbi, Maria, Trevor, Clark, John, Mary, Steve, (Wendy, Comstock, Dave, Jenn)	9/2017 complete. 2 years ago (really 10 years ago when we started AQUAL)
FOIA/export request	Wendy		
Future Wants/desires IT (include APP for record management workbook)	Maria (office/field), Mike (PDB), Caroline (GIS/mapping), Tyler	Nate/Rob	ongoing

	(eng.)		
NMP data imports	Maria	Caroline/Mary	All MFO/LFO data mapped and processed 12/2017
Grants Mgt Sys DB (sub task-we need a plan for this timeline program specific for roll in)	New Hire	Jeff Cook (sub group-Hunter and Laura)	Pilot Fall 2017 FAP, Spring 2018 CWF

Farm Management Plan Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
ALE plan review	John	Sylvia	On-going
CLF Set Up	Nate/Trevor/Maria	Laura/Ryan/Caroline	March 15 materials well drafted, April 1 farmer mtg
Plan reviews for CLF	Trevor/Maria	Tyler, Mary, SFO Team	Start July 2017
FAP program lead	Clark (POC)/Ben	Cook	On-going (press release & Agriview March 15). Not putting in GMS in 2017 calendar year. Pilot a few farms in GMS in Fall 2017.
Connection to Farm Viability & Partner Follow-up	Colin (grant tracker as well)	Trevor	Ongoing, good for 2017 (2 year grant).

Buffer Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
Create GWW and FS program including Smart Buffer' Process and Review	Mike (POC & developer) (maybe new E&O staff)	Ben (field)/Caroline (GIS)/Jeff (money)	April 1-complete
CREP rules/MOU revision	Mike (need communication with	Jeff/Ben	Re-enrollments in MOU (ASAP), then work on

	FSA/NRCS offices)		legal issues on our contract end (complete 9/2017)
Statewide CREP planning/program mgmt	Ben	Jeff (money) GAP	Laura-3/2017 meeting with feds & VAAFM leadership
Ditch vs. Surface Water (Striches)	Ben	Nate	March 15

Inspection/Complaint Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
Write down process for Inspection and Investigation processes (CAPS project helped organize)	Dave		Complete 5/2017
Review all forms/reports associated with inspections and revise as necessary	Tyler	Maria/Trevor/Nate	Completed! Now waiting for Database to go live
Conducting analysis on inspections in relation to facilities in compliance/out of compliance, and what type of compliance issues are more occurring	Nate	Maria/Trevor	ongoing
Training staff on DB-data conversion	Nate	Jenn	Fall/Winter 2017
Inspection/Photography Documentation/Report Writing/Dealing with the Regulated Community Training	Dave	Nate	Complete - 05/11/17
Inspection/Compliance Policies	Dave	Nate/Trevor/Maria	ongoing

Watershed Assessment & Public Mgt Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
Lake Carmi assessment	John	Ben/Caroline/Maria	Need a plan 3/15
Tile drain research/report	Laura	Ryan	1/31/2017

Education and Outreach Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
NLFS data update for future watersheds	Ryan	Mike, Maria	Revise 3/15 Train 4/15 Roll out 5/1
Education and Outreach Grants	Ryan	Mike/Jeff/Ryan/new Grants position	Complete 3/15
Farm education courses	New "Louise"	Ryan	Timeline plan 3/15
Annual report for ARMS WQ	Ryan/Intern	Dave (legal review of statutory requirements)	7/1/17

Partner Committee Management

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
NRCC	New "Louise"	Mike/Jeff	On going
STC committee meetings	Jeff, Nate	Mike/Laura/Ryan	monthly

Policy/Partner Projects

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
Nutrient Trading	Mike	Laura	
Partner Database	Mike	New Engineer (maybe Jess)	Fall 2017
TMDL Accountability	Mike	Nate	

VESP	New "Louise" (partners)	Mike (tools)/Tyler (field)/Ryan (outreach)	Spring 2017
AGO Edge of Field	Mike		

Program Development Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
SFO certification program development	Trevor	Trevor's Team/Nate/Laura	May 1, 2017 complete
Manure Applicator Training	Ryan/Laura	Nina, Kaitlin	Current, annual task
Training new staff and developing a set training program	Abbi	Dave/Maria/Trevor	Ongoing
Assessment and TA Referral Program including integration of assessment and follow-up with partner agencies and organizations	Jess	Ryan	Plan 3/15 Roll out 6/1
IDDP, Solid Waste, and Biosolids Program alignment with LFO and MFO Program	Maria	Rob, "the new" Jim, Alex DePillis	Started July, 2017 - ongoing

Other Bucket (laura)

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
Memphremagog Steering Committee	Mary/Katie	Maria	Ongoing
Data Analyst (ex: NASS data to figure out the average age of farmers by watershed)	Mike	Ryan	Ongoing
Farm First	Nina?		
Create Results Based Accountability metrics for all programs and funding	Mike	Ryan	Ongoing
Financial Audits	Jeff	New Grants staff	? hopefully never

Rule Bucket

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
Revise the LFO rule	Nate	Maria/Ryan	Oct 2017-May 2018
Revise the MFO general permit	Kaitlin	Dave/Ryan/Maria/Nate/Laura/Mary/Abbi/Wendy	March - December 2017
Revise the RAPs (again!)	Dave/Ryan	Laura	2022
Participate in the Wetland Rule process	Laura	Dave/Caroline?	Now-June 2018?
Manage where Forest Management (sugaring) goes in rule (RAP or FPR)	Dave (policy)	Trevor (technical)	May 2017-May 2018
Create RAP Development Committee to Secretary for RAP variance process and guidance (maybe determinations)	Laura	Ryan	Now-1 st mtg March 1
Create and maintain guidance where case-by-case determinations are made	Dave	Nate/Jenn	Ongoing-big push 2017

Communications (ryan)

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
RAP education/outreach strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Internal (ARM + Other Divisions (ensure accurate understanding of RAPS for milk inspectors, for example) ○ External 	Kaitlin	Ryan	July 2017
Website management	Nina	Ryan	July 2017
Conference/venue management for WQ	Nina	Ryan	On going

Agriview-consistent column on WQ (and make the paper free again so that all farmers who are certified and permitted get them)	Kaitlin	Ryan	April 2017
Smattering of reports annually	Kaitlin	Ryan	On going
Develop and maintain single RAP Guidance Document providing clear, coherent guidance on intent and implementation requirements for RAPs, including portal for ease of access and UI	Nina/Kaitlin	Ryan/Laura	April 2017
Collaborate, implement and facilitate appropriate communication activities for previous buckets (Ex: VESP Launch, Enforcement and TA Communication; CLF Process)	Nina/Kaitlin	Ryan/Laura	On-going
Standard WQ communications work such as PR, Reporters, newsletters, Interviews	Kaitlin	Ryan	On-going
Respond to Legislative requests for information surrounding ARMS WQ Program	Laura	Ryan	On-Going

GIS (nate)

TASK	LEAD	SUPPORT	WHEN
Merge shapefile layers of NMP fields that MFOs and LFOs sent in 2016 and 2017	Caroline	Mary	October 2017
Joining MFO and LFO P-Index files with field shapefiles that were submitted in 2016 and 2017 and conducting analysis on this data	Americorp Member	Maria, Caroline	October-November 2017
Merge shapefile layers of LFO and LFO additional facilities	Caroline	Jenn, Maria	October 2017

Merge shapefile layers of MFO and MFO additional facilities	Caroline	Jenn, Maria	October 2017
Creating shapefiles for storm drains, dirty water collection drains, underground pipes (for both clean and dirty water), wells, and potential water quality risks (both point and directions area for runoff direction).	Caroline	Mary	October 2017
Creating a SFO facilities layer	Caroline	Trevor/Jenn	October 2017
Cleaning up WQ shapefiles for structures, waste management, buffers and NMP field check for database and for FarmEditor	Maria	Caroline, Mary, Tyler, Clark	October 2017
Being able to download data logger data from manure spreading devices	Maria	Caroline/Mary	2017-2018 CEAP
Develop new map template and improve mapping speed/connection issues	Caroline	Maria/Trevor	Completed! – September 2017
Floodplain mapping assistance	Caroline	Floodplain farmer group	Ongoing, develop and outreach through September 2017
LiDAR > LTP efficiencies	Caroline	Laura/Nate	Ongoing, by end of 2017
Photo geotagging	Caroline	Nate	April 2017
GIS equipment for field work, photos, etc	Caroline	Nate	April 2017
Using LiDAR to map structures and create polygons which can be increase efficiency of PA mapping	Caroline	Nate/Maria/Trevor	April 2017
E911 data improvement: sharing barn polygons to improve statewide E911 data	Caroline	Nate	Ongoing development through calendar yr 2017
Watershed assessment and data processing: Lake Carmi as test case	Caroline	Laura/Nate	Ongoing, continue through calendar yr 2017

Drone technology: buffer evaluation, animal number assessment	Caroline	UVM/Nate/Laura	Ongoing, potential pilot in 2017
GIS software (updates; making sure things run smoothly), SDE coordination with WQ data to SDE	Caroline	IT	ongoing