

YWCHSB Board of Directors Relationship with Administration

Introduction

In a governance model, the Board of Directors of an organization has one employee – the President/CEO to whom all instructions are given and with whom the Board of Directors has signed an accountability agreement.

Such is the case at the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board (YWCHSB). However, the Board of Directors has others with whom it has a regular relationship: the Board Manager and General Counsel/Corporate Secretary, the roles of which are outlined in the Governance Guide, as well as on occasion, others in the President's Office such as the Executive Assistant to the President.

The Board Manager is a unionized employee who reports to the President/CEO; however, the position does take direction regarding the logistical and administrative matters of the Board of Directors from the Chair. The General Counsel is under contract to the Board of Directors and to the YWCHSB through a contract with the President/CEO but may be asked directly by the Board of Directors to provide a legal opinion or give legal advice on a particular issue. All three attend Board of Directors meetings; the Board Manager and General Counsel to provide support and the President/CEO as a member of the Board of Directors. The position of Internal Auditor also has a dotted line reporting relationship to the Board of Directors in order to review audit plans and results. Other members of administration attend Board of Directors meetings at the request of the President/CEO.

When discussing "administration", this paper is referencing all YWCHSB employees and contractors with the exception of the President/CEO, Board Manager and General Counsel. The purpose of this document is to clarify expectations regarding the interactions between the Board of Directors and administration. In order to achieve the strategic goals and vision that the Board of Directors has set for the organization, the Board of Directors must have confidence in administration and administration must have confidence in the Board of Directors. Therefore, it is important that the relationship between the governance role of the Board of Directors and the administrative role of staff is strong and healthy.

Relationship Opportunities

Board of Directors Meetings

Administration will be invited to Board of Directors meetings by the President/CEO when he/she feels it would be appropriate to do so. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is a regular attendee to discuss the monthly financial reports and during the annual budget, auditing and financial statement development process. Other members of administration may be called upon by the President/CEO to provide information or to discuss a particular item.

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Social Functions

In a small organization and small community, there are often expectations of significant social interaction of the Board of Directors by administration. Being a YWCHSB Board member is usually only one part of a Board member's responsibilities and therefore, they cannot attend all staff social functions to which they are invited. In the past, staff has invited the Board of Directors to almost everything (there may be something going on every week) and are discouraged when Board members cannot attend. Further, such frequent, casual interaction can change the status of the Board of Directors in the eyes of administration. A balance must be made between the Board of Directors keeping its status as governors of the system and providing a friendly, non-intimidating presence amongst staff.

Board members are not required to attend any staff social functions to which they are invited. Invitations will be issued to Board members through the Board Manager and will be limited to:

- The annual staff Christmas potluck lunch and talent auction (those attending will be expected to bring something for the potluck but would not be expected to contribute to the talent auction – although voluntary donations would be appreciated);
- The annual staff Christmas dinner and dance; and
- Other events are determined by the President/CEO in consultation with the Chair.

Additionally, the Board of Directors will sponsor a staff recognition event once per year, the timing and format of which shall be determined by the Chair in consultation with the President/CEO. Board members are required to attend this event.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of the President/CEO and Directors of the organization. This group takes the strategic direction provided by the Board of Directors and puts it into action. They are the senior leaders of the YWCHSB and have interaction with the Board of Directors through Board meeting attendance at the request of the President/CEO.

The Executive Committee works with the Board of Directors through an annual planning day to develop the strategic plan, bringing staff concerns, logistical considerations and subject matter expertise to the table.

In addition to the annual planning day, the Board of Directors and Executive Committee interact through one informal social event per year to foster a good working relationship and understanding of each other.

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Tailgates

Tailgates are regular update meetings that occur weekly between the President/CEO and all staff. In addition, bi-weekly professional development tailgates are held to address information or training issues relevant to all staff.

While the President/CEO gives direct updates to administration via tailgates regarding relevant Board of Directors activities and decisions, it is important for staff to hear directly from the Board of Directors on occasion. The Chair, as the voice of the Board of Directors, has an invitation to attend tailgates on a quarterly basis (or more frequently, if required) to provide direct communication to administration on strategic achievements, decisions or emerging issues.

Direction

All direction to administration from the Board of Directors must come through the President/CEO so that the Board of Directors' governance role does not get confused. In the eyes of administration, Board members have a particular status; therefore, a question or comment from a Board member to a staff person could have unintended results. For example, a Board member commenting to a staff person "we sure haven't levied many OHS fines this year" would likely be interpreted by the staff person to mean "start levying more fines".

All Board member requests for information must be made through the Chair who will discuss the need for the information with the Board member and then discuss it with the President/CEO who will determine whether resources can be re-allocated from corporate work plans and customer service activities to address the request.

Board Member Issues as an Injured Worker or Registered Employer

Board members may have claims (present or past) with the YWCHSB or may be registered employers and have individual issues with decision-makers. In that capacity, the Board member will interact directly via mail or by telephone with staff since their claim or account should not be treated differently than anyone else's. However, if a Board member is dealing in person with a staff member, the Board member should advise the President/CEO (either directly or via the Board Manager) so that the purpose of the Board member's visit to the building is clear to those who need to know. Further, if the Board member is having a dispute or disagreement regarding their claim or account which an injured worker or employer would normally refer to a staff member's supervisor, the Board member must refer the issue to the President/CEO (either directly or indirectly).

These guidelines are not meant to give Board members "special" status or treatment regarding their claim or employer account – they are meant to preserve the distinction and relationship between the Board of Directors and administration and to maintain the status of Board members with staff.