Non-Profit Governance Essentials

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Table of Contents

Board Report Template

Date:					
Agenda Item/ Prepared For:					
Purpose: *(indicate with X)*	*Information*		*Discussion*	
	Seeking Direction		*Decision*	
Prepared by:					
Reviewed by:					

Purpose

Why is the matter being tabled? Why does the matter require board attention?

Motion or Recommendation (delete if not applicable)

...that the [insert name of organization] Board of Directors approve X.

Background

Provide relevant background information for board/committee to understand the issue at hand and what has happened to date.

Analysis / Consultation

What analysis and/or consultation have been done? What are the results?

Questions for the Board to Consider

What are the key issues the board should consider regarding this matter or when making this decision?

Link to Strategic Plan

Motions must be presented in the context of the mission and vision of the organization and its strategic plan to ensure that Board decisions are made at a strategic level.

Financial Impact

If there is a financial impact, it should be noted.

Risk Assessment

Provide a risk assessment on applicable risks including business risk, resources risk, compliance risk and reputational risk.

Ethical Consideration

Provide a description of the ethical considerations identified in the following areas: relevance, community engagement, revision, communication, and accountability.

Next Steps (if applicable)

Provide list of action steps to be completed after the board/committee discussion.

Communication Strategy (if applicable)

Tips for Effective Minute-Taking

Leverage the agenda as a template

Using the agenda can help ensure that no important topics are missed. It can also save time when discussion topics are already written up!

Include the right types of information

Generally, your meeting minutes should always include the following:

- The type of meeting
- The date, time, and location of the meeting
- A list of attendees
- A list of any motions, seconds, and whether the motion passed
- Key decisions and rationale

Exclude irrelevant information

Meeting minutes aren't meant to transcribe everything that's said during the meeting. Here are some items which should be excluded from the minutes:

- How individuals voted
- Members' opinions
- Summaries of documents or presentations
- Off-the-record conversations

Source: [Why Nonprofit Board Meeting Minutes Matter (& 4 Helpful Hints), Banner, J. 2021](#).

Practical Steps to Decolonize Non-Profit Board Governance

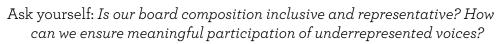## 1. Conduct a board assessment and self-reflection

Reflect on your board's current practices, policies, and decision-making processes. Consider how they may reflect colonial legacies or perpetuate inequities.

Ask yourself: *How do our current practices align with decolonizing principles? Are there any areas where we can improve?*

2. Evaluate board composition and diversity

Assess the representation and diversity within your board. Consider the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and marginalized communities.

Ask yourself: *Is our board composition inclusive and representative? How can we ensure meaningful participation of underrepresented voices?*

3. Assess decision-making processes and power dynamics

Examine your board's decision-making processes and power dynamics. Identify any hierarchies or exclusionary practices that may exist.

Ask yourself: *Are our decision-making processes inclusive and participatory? How can we distribute power more equitably?*

4. Engage in meaningful community partnerships

Seek partnerships with Indigenous and marginalized communities to inform your board's work, strategies, and policies.

Ask yourself: *How can we establish authentic and reciprocal relationships with communities? How can we learn from and center their expertise?*

5. Build relationships with Indigenous and marginalized communities

Actively engage with Indigenous and marginalized communities beyond partnerships. Foster relationships based on trust, respect, and collaboration.

Ask yourself: *How can we build genuine connections with communities? How can we demonstrate our commitment to decolonization through our actions?*

6. Involve community members in decision-making and planning

Incorporate community members' perspectives and experiences in board decision-making and strategic planning processes.

Ask yourself: *How can we create opportunities for community members to actively participate in decision-making? How can we value and respect their contributions?*

7. Implement inclusive policies and practices

Review and revise your board's policies, practices, and procedures to ensure inclusivity and address any barriers or biases.

Ask yourself: *Are our policies inclusive and accessible? How can we remove barriers and ensure equitable opportunities for all?*

8. Establish equity-focused recruitment and onboarding processes

Develop recruitment and onboarding processes that prioritize equity and actively seek diverse perspectives and experiences.

Ask yourself: *How can we attract and retain board members from Indigenous and marginalized communities? How can we ensure their successful integration into our board?*

9. Incorporate anti-oppressive frameworks into governance policies

Integrate anti-oppressive frameworks into your board's governance policies, ensuring they guide decision-making and promote equity.

Ask yourself: *How can we embed anti-oppressive principles into our governance policies? How can we challenge and dismantle oppressive structures?*

Governance Self-Assessment Tool

This governance self-assessment tool is an interactive way to identify real and perceived strengths, gaps, and improvement opportunities for your organization's board. It is intended for non-profit board directors and senior staff. The goal is for the results to generate conversation and reflection, and to help identify areas for future development.

Questions: In thinking about your organization's board, please provide your personal assessment, or opinion, on the status for each of the following.

	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Unsure or N/A
1. There are job descriptions for board members and executive officers, including the board chair / president.				
2. The Executive Director/CEO's performance is assessed annually by means of a formal process approved by the board.				
3. There is a code of conduct policy which applies to board members.				
4. There is a conflict of interest policy which applies to board members.				
5. We reflect upon, regularly discuss, and understand the risks of actual and perceived conflict of interest.				
6. There are fixed term limits for board members with staggered terms to ensure our board's deliberate and gradual renewal.				
7. Attendance is monitored and acceptable, and achieving quorum of board members is the norm, both at the board level, and at (sub)committees.				
8. Board members come to meetings prepared, having read the materials, and every board member is active in discussion.				

	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Unsure or N/A
9. Board members have a shared and equal understanding of the organization's mission, vision, values, and its overall purpose.				
10. We have board-level approved policies outlining our financial, human resource and other common-place practices.				
11. We review the board-level approved policies in an ongoing way through annual board or committee work plans.				
12. The board uses the approval of the annual budget, and the overall organizational performance related to it, as its main financial planning and financial management tool.				
13. We have the appropriate committee in place to oversee finances, audit, and risk.				
14. We have the appropriate committee in place to oversee and review the use of by-laws and policies, and board succession.				
15. The board leads the work involved in new board member recruitment, nomination, and orientation.				
16. The board has formally evaluated its own performance within the last year and has acted on the findings.				
17. The board understands the differences between its governance role, and that of the Executive Director/CEO's operational role.				
18. The Executive Director and board members view the accomplishment of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) goals and objectives as an important part of their management and oversight responsibilities.				

19. The organization has a succession plan for its Executive Director/CEO, and the board reviews it annually.				
20. The board has a process for holding regular in-camera meetings both with, and without management.				
21. The board monitors the organization's performance against its long-term strategic plan, mission, and vision.				
22. The board has a developed reporting process (e.g., scorecard or dashboard) for monitoring organizational performance.				
23. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is embedded in the organization's values, mission, culture, and processes, and it is integral to organizational growth and success.				
24. There is a skills matrix, or other tool, used to identify professional backgrounds, experience, skills and diversity at the board table, leverage knowledge, and focus board recruitment efforts to fill known gaps.				
25. The organization consistently prioritizes the diversity of cultures, lived experiences, perspectives, and thought to strengthen and improve service delivery.				
26. The board manages its risk exposure through a formal risk management plan that includes appropriate insurance reviews and business continuity planning.				
27. The board monitors changes in applicable legislation.				

Self-Assessment (Optional)

	Strong	Adequate	Weak	Unsure or N/A
1. I am familiar with what is in our organization's by-laws and governing policies.				
2. I adhere to the confidentiality policy of the board.				
3. I understand my role and responsibilities as a board member.				
4. I fully understand and support our strategic plan.				
5. I believe that board and committee meetings facilitate focus and progress on our strategic plan.				
6. I demonstrate interest and involvement in the board's work.				

Comments: How can our board become even more effective? What do we do well now? What could be better? How can we make these positive changes?