

Child Care Center in Norwich
November 6, 2017
5:30-7:00 pm at the Center

Present: Executive Director Allison Colburn; Board Members, Jane LeMasurier, Julia Rabig, Lily Trajman, Marisa Donovan

Absent: Hannah Caldwell

Tuck Interns: Mark Emmanuel, Cassandra Farnow

Minutes: Lily motions, Julia Seconds, motion approved.

Director's Report: Allison presents Director's Report.

Touch a Truck: Next time, add note to poster to remind parents that kids may get dirty; bubbles and music again; consensus that this was a great event.

Health insurance: Do staff and center share the 8% increase or does the center absorb it?

Executive committee favors center taking on the cost. We have budgeted for a 10% increase, so we can afford it. This also helps keep compensation competitive. Jane asks wider board for opinions on this.

General agreement with this position.

We have been cost sharing every year; taking on a year's increase would not mean that center can always absorb rising cost; Allison suggests that Board write a letter to notify staff of increase and that Center will be covering it. Marisa suggests letter acknowledge that Center may not always be able to absorb increases.

Fall Appeal: It's more personalized and has direct ask. Board members must match outer envelope with the correct appeals when writing their messages.

Jane has put up Google doc for members to sign up; she'll send out link and then when letters are printed, board members can pick them up.

We discuss whether or not to do personal notes since they're already more individualized asks; LizAnn points out that personal message are effective and what donors look for, so we decide to go ahead with it.

Marisa suggests signing them to have personalized message from center; then we each write personal message.

Jane will coordinate getting them to Board members to pick up and to Tuck interns.

Board Training with LizAnn Peyton:

What do Board members want to get out of this?

- The following answers are given: fundraising schedule, recruiting board members and creating sustainable board culture, sustainability of all board components.
- LizAnn notes that the issues CCCN faces with building and sustaining a larger board are common: people are busy and there are many nonprofits in the area that need board members.

Roles Boards have to play:

- Looking ahead: What do we need to be ready for, or do better?
- Are we on the right track?
- How are things going now?
- What do we need to do thrive, stay safe?

How do we distinguish governance from other activities?

- LizAnn notes that if it's an activity done by staff at another, larger institution, it's not governance. But in a small organization you have wear multiple hats, help out with mechanics of fundraising, strategizing, and accounting for big picture. [Provides handout on the different hats board members must wear.]
- Fiduciary, strategic, ambassador, fundraiser, volunteer/pair of hands
- Parent, consumer
- Advice and expertise
- Safe place and support

The following questions were discussed:

What do we need to do in advance to help with board transitioning and eventual transition in mgmt?

What are the center's goals and budget?

Where can we use extra hands for task groups or events, people who volunteer time and expertise, but don't necessarily serve on board.)

LizAnn suggests we put thought into Board recruitment every meeting; are there other ways to do the work; use Google Docs, ad hoc groups that come together for specific purposes, not the same long-term commitment

Talk to other boards of similar size, what are they doing?

Boards rely on executive director, but also need to have executive director educate board on what could go wrong, so board knows, can pass this knowledge on and also be aware when there are transitions between directors.

Looking ahead: Economy, changes in aftercare programs, birthrates—all these could impact future.

Discussion of having another retreat now that we have a strategic plan we're beginning to implement.

LizAnn: In "succession planning" the best thing a Board can do is give the new mgmt. the best possible organization to inherit and that means a strong board.

What are all the ways that could make it attractive to be on the board?

Sometimes boards don't catch up with technology--can people participate by Skype for example?

Challenge to get people on board b/c early childcare is sometimes taken for granted.

Maybe looking to grandparents, retired and semi-retired.

Jane also suggests that getting our image and voice out there in strategic ways will also be good for recruiting board members.

Cassandra says that she's put thought into composition of boards, which comes up in her classes; CCCN's board seems to be balanced across functions; but it comes down to time allocation, how to make sure that nothing is neglected.

Marisa notes that we have enough to do to perhaps consider longer meetings, but we also need to be aware of time and what members can commit.

Cassandra suggests making an urgent/important grid, since important nonurgent are things that are often overlooked.

Learning: How would we know if things weren't going well?

What do Board members need to know?

- How to pass on continuity of board knowledge
- How can we institutionalize as much as possible (childcare ratios, licensing, deadlines for taxes, etc)
- Checklists—what are the things we can write down and make accessible.
- Help board members know how to read financial forms?

- How to make people feel comfortable asking questions and don't think they're the only one who doesn't know.
- Orientation—this is an ongoing process. It's good to have cycles of the year; budget, fundraising, etc. At every point, explain how it works to new members.
- What legally belongs in board minutes—any time you make a decision where someone would want to know how a decision was made that way.
 - Enough detail to track thinking about a subject. Board minutes do not have to be available to public. There should be record of major expenditures, hiring or termination, or you can go into executive session, then come out of executive session to ratify any decisions and put them in records.
 - Other ways to communicate with staff so they know how things are developing.
- Boards do not have to follow Roberts Rules of Order

Distinguishing roles:

- Have to keep roles separate—have different interests as a board member and parent
- Need to go through channels instead of going straight to Allison—hard to avoid those conversations in a place where we see each other, know each other; also raising kids is an emotional process
- Jane makes distinction that to talk with someone individually as a board member doesn't mean you represent the board.
- Important for board to collectively communicate with staff and for them to know that the board is listening to their concerns and ideas
- This board also will have more turnover since it's comprised largely of parents.
- How do you think about longevity, and always think about recruitment and board