

## *IN The Public Trust*

# Management or Governance?

(Or whose job is this?)

It's easy to say that the board governs by setting policy and the director manages by implementing board policy. But it's not nearly so easy to apply that theory to all the situations that come before the team. Place a B beside those issues below that you think should be decided by the board (policy/governance decisions). Place a D beside those issues you think should be decided by the director (management decisions).



- \_\_\_ 1) Set a staff dress code
- \_\_\_ 2) Discipline an employee for sexual harassment of another employee
- \_\_\_ 3) Declare the building a tobacco-free workplace
- \_\_\_ 4) Create a citizen advisory committee
- \_\_\_ 5) Establish the process for evaluating staff
- \_\_\_ 6) Fire a business manager
- \_\_\_ 7) Do a needs assessment
- \_\_\_ 8) Cut a program to meet a revenue shortfall
- \_\_\_ 9) Invest a \$50,000 bequest
- \_\_\_ 10) Hire an architect for a construction project
- \_\_\_ 11) Hire a negotiator for salary talks with staff
- \_\_\_ 12) Set the hours of operation for the library
- \_\_\_ 13) Hire an attorney to evaluate the board's bylaws and policies
- \_\_\_ 14) Determine the kind of services offered by the library
- \_\_\_ 15) Establish a priority list for all maintenance projects
- \_\_\_ 16) Purchase a new computer bookkeeping program for the library
- \_\_\_ 17) Determine which telephone service to use
- \_\_\_ 18) Create the process for evaluating the director
- \_\_\_ 19) Plan this year's legislative lobbying strategies
- \_\_\_ 20) Establish an alcohol/drug use policy for staff
- \_\_\_ 21) Plan the annual budget for the library
- \_\_\_ 22) Expand service area for the library
- \_\_\_ 23) Write the mission statement for the library
- \_\_\_ 24) Decide the long-range goals for the library

## ***To the Instructor***

It's very unlikely that everyone will agree on all of the items. The point of this exercise is to "smoke out" areas of disagreement and put them on the table for discussion. Even more important, this exercise should set the pattern for board members to always discuss the tough issues rather than ignoring them and hoping they'll go away.

There are no "correct answers" to the items in this exercise, so there is no answer key. The objective of this exercise is to:

- 1) illustrate some basic differences between management and governance.
- 2) demonstrate how the roles of the director and the board are often overlapping.

Some examples:

- \* Item 1 asks who would set a staff dress code. Board members should understand that the director manages staff, so the director would set all personnel policies including one on dress codes. However the board should be sure that the director has an adequate set of personnel policies in place and that personnel policies have been examined by an attorney.
- \* Item 9 asks who is responsible for investments. The board should have a policy on investments and the director or another staff member makes the actual investment within the guidelines set by the board.
- \* Item 14 asks who would determine the kinds of services offered by the library. Final decision for this belongs to the board, but the board would likely act on the recommendations of the director.
- \* Item 15 asks who would establish a priority list for maintenance projects. The director and staff know where the maintenance is most needed and would make the list. When the board approves the annual budget, the board would discuss major expenditures for maintenance and allocate that in the budget.
- \* Item 21 asks who will plan the annual budget. The director develops a budget and asks for board approval.
- \* Item 24 asks who will decide the long-range goals for the library. The board, director and staff should all be involved in developing the goals, but final approval of the library goals is the responsibility of the board alone.

List other potential conflict issues that might come before board teams. Discuss board/director responsibility for those issues. Remember, very few of these issues will be black or white. Most will involve both board members and director.