



CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

An effective board member:

- Is dedicated to helping others and being modest in the light of his/her responsibilities as a board member.
- Approaches his/her responsibilities in the spirit of a trustee on behalf of contributors, their intended beneficiaries, and the public-at-large.
- Stands up for his/her convictions, even at the cost of misunderstanding.
- Backs up other board members and staff, rising to their defense when they are unjustly criticized or attacked.
- Treats staff as a partner, while maintaining overall supervision and control.
- Avoids being overawed by others on the board, whether they be executive staff; tycoons of business, labor, or society; professionals in social work, education, medicine, etc.
- Welcomes information and the best available advice, but reserves the right to arrive at decisions on the basis of his/her own judgment.
- Respects the right of other board members and of staff to disagree with him/her and to have a fair hearing of their points of view.
- Accepts as routine that decisions must be made by majority vote and will at times go against him/her.
- Criticizes, when necessary, in a constructive way, and if possible by suggesting an alternative course.
- Recognizes that his/her time and energy are limited and that over-commitment may prove self-defeating.
- Endeavors to keep disagreements and controversies impersonal, and to promote unity.
- Maintains loyalty to his/her agency, within a higher loyalty to the welfare of the community and humanity as a whole.

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