Community Foundation

of

Greater South Wood County

Community Nomination Process

Document Summary

This paper documents the process followed by the Community Foundation of Greater South Wood County in an effort to be more inclusive in its recruitment and nomination process for governance. This process, known as Community Nomination Process, evolved through several stages, beginning with awareness and culminating in candidate selection and implementation. This paper outlines:

- Historical perspective
- Number of candidates
- Vetting process
- Two-phase interview process
- Outcomes to date:
    - Candidates selected for board positions
    - Candidates selected for committee positions
    - Retrospective view/lessons learned
- Thoughts going forward

Historical Perspective

Give some history of how CF board members were selected prior to the CNP:

In the Community Foundation's early days and into the early 2000s, board members were selected in what some would consider the traditional method – the "Good Ole Boys" network, through a Nominating Committee. Tried to have representation from various community entities, including the Wisconsin Rapids School District, United Way, etc.

Essentially, this was a method based on who you knew and what they could bring to the Foundation in terms of power or money. This highly political method hobbled the Foundation's work and created an air of board elitism. In 200X, To give some historical perspective on how board members were selected prior to of the Prior to implementing the Community Nominations Process,

1993 – The initial board of directors for the South Wood County Community Foundation (name change to Community Foundation of South Wood County in 1997) was comprised of: Mary Virginia Brazeau, Jon P. Barsanti (Virginia's accountant) and William T. Rieser (Virginia's attorney). CFSWC was incorporated in November of 1993.

1994 – The charter board of directors was comprised of nine individuals appointed as follows in July of 1994. - The charter board members drew straws to stagger initial terms of service, each received an initial one, two or three year term as noted in parentheses beside their names.

The founding board appointed four individuals:
Edith Nash (1)
Susan Feith Mead (3), Vice-President
Donald Krohn (1)
Dr. Mel Schneeberg (2), Assistant Secretary
The Nominating Committee appointed five individuals:

Include history of Governance Committee, which is detailed in 2003/2004 Strategic Plan ...

The Charter Board appointed a "Recording Secretary" to the board in August, 1994 – upon suggestion of Mr. Barsanti and Mr. Rieser. The intention was to involve attorneys in the deliberations of the CFSWC board and heighten awareness of the organization amongst this professional group.

In March of 1996, the Nominating Committee recommends and the board approves that "no potential candidates will be approached by the Nominating Committee prior to the board voting on the slate of individuals presented".

June, 1999 – Board approves change in nominating process for CFSWC. Eliminates Nominating Committee composed of individuals appointed by area entities, coinciding with the end of the

first committee's five-year terms. The board changes bylaws to reflect a Nominating Committee comprised of at least three CFSWC board members and including community representatives, as determined by the board of directors.

The reasons for this change were numerous, however primarily due to the fact that some organizations/constituencies were represented as appointing entities to the exclusion of others, i.e. city of Wisconsin Rapids and not any other city/village. The board also recognized that they, in fact, knew the needs of the board in terms of potential candidates and could act upon that more directly through this new process.

January, 2003 - CFSWC Board of Directors establishes Governance Committee. This Committee will replace the Nominating Committee and assume the duties of that Committee.

Why was the CNP implemented at CF?

Following a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis done in 2002, coupled with community focus groups, Attempting to be more inclusive and diverse. Subsequent members elected to the board were candidates who fit profile holes, including education and media relations. But were still pulling names from staff and board members.

> "This led us to do research in the world of other nonprofit and profit boards, as well as asking questions at the National Community Foundations. What we found was very little ... amazing! Most boards were and are still nominating from the same old network, electing elite people from the community – those with money and connections. Through our research, we found one community in Ireland that had proceeded with community nominations. This was the start of our own Community Nominations Process."

At the 1995 Board Retreat, Bruce Lesley, BoardSource, Inc. facilitator, provided an overview of "Governance as Leadership" and the concept of generative thinking as it will apply to this board retreat. It is expected that this will take approximately 90 minutes.

After the introduction to generative thinking, the retreat will focus on the items/area identified by the Retreat Committee -as outlined below.

Discussion Items

The Retreat Committee felt that the concept of Governance would be the most important area to explore during this retreat. Within the context of Governance, the following specific topics were identified for discussion/action:

1. What kind of board do we want to be?
2. CFSWC Nomination Process

Goals & Outcomes

The Retreat Committee felt it was important to identify specific goals and desired outcomes associated with this retreat.

Goals:
1. Each member should be able to define their role within the board
2. The board will articulate a shared vision of desired board culture
3. Discussion of Nomination Process occurs

Desired Outcomes:
1. Each member feels that retreat was valuable and resulted in a stronger board
2. Board members & CEO have a greater understanding of generative thinking and how it can be applied to future discussions
3. Board Meetings reflect and support desired board culture
4. Criteria for nomination/selection of new board members reflects desired board culture
5. CEO has clear direction on supporting desired board culture

Include information about what research and models were evaluated to inform the process.

Governance Committee Description

Draft 2
January 31, 2003

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Governance Committee is responsible for ongoing review and recommendations to enhance the quality, future viability of the Board of Directors. Meeting at least twice annually, the work of the committee includes but is not limited to the following responsibilities:

Board of Directors Composition:
1. Leads in assessing the current and anticipated needs related to Board composition, determining the knowledge, attributes, skills, abilities, influence and access to resources the Board will need to accomplish the organization's mission.
2. Develops a current profile of Board membership and profile as it should evolve over time.
3. At the request of the Board, formally identifies potential Board member candidates and explores their interests and availability for Board service.
4. Nominates individuals to be elected as members of the Board of Directors.

Board Member Familiarity of the Community Foundation:
• Designs and oversees a process of Board orientation, including gathering information prior to election as a Board member and information needed during the early stage of Board service.

- Designs and implements an ongoing program of Board member awareness of the Foundation's activities and "best practices" in Foundation governance.

Board Effectiveness:
- Regularly reviews the Board's practices regarding member participation, conflict of interest, confidentiality, etc., and suggests enhancements as needed.

Board Leadership
- Guide succession planning, taking steps to recruit and prepare others for future Board leadership.
- Consistent with governing by-laws, nominate Board members for election as Board officers.

Governing Documents
- Annually review the organization's by-laws, identifying possible or necessary changes and/or revisions.
- Annually assess the organization's by-law compliance and report to the Community Foundation Board of Directors and its constituents.
- Other related duties as assigned by the Board of Directors.

Purpose
To strengthen governance in Community Foundation of South Wood County's service area—southern Wood County and the Town of Rome in northern Adams County.

People to involve
1. Nonprofit and public boards of directors
2. Community Fund committees in Pittsville, Port Edwards, Nekoosa, Rome, Rudolph, Vesper, and Wisconsin Rapids area
3. Elected officials serving on boards
4. School boards

Length of program
Three two-day classes per year for two years—12 days total

Topics to cover

1. Board of Directors 101
2. Trends in governance
3. Strategic thinking
4. Governance as leadership
5. Skill-building
6. Conflict resolution
7. Communication

8. Possible website development, like boardnetUSA, to match volunteers to board vacancies
9. Train the trainers—prepare local trainers to take over the program

Consultants:
Katherine Tyler Scott of Trustee Leadership Development
Sandra Hughes of BoardSource

What thoughts went into outlining the process?
We wanted to be fair and inclusive, looking for a younger candidate. There were concerns raised that if too many candidates were presented, how would only one be chosen. There was the possibility that those not selected would react in a negative way. Who and how many people would this letter be sent to? All of these concerns were raised at the 2005 board retreat, with a facilitator.

Wanted to be fair and inclusive, both in the selection process and in building a better board.

What steps were taken to implement the process?

Announcement made at 2006 Annual Meeting.

The CF provided information on the Website. Kelly wrote a newspaper column in December 2006, informing public about the process and soliciting nominations from the community at large.

What have been the results from implementing the CNP?

Board members participated in every interview. Were able to create meaningful opportunities for engagement.

Implementing the Process
Community Nominations Selection Process & Timeline

January 2007
- Notify the four candidates not aware of nomination to verify their interest.

February – March 2007
- Governance Committee develop "short list" of potential board candidates based on criteria and expertise.
- Contact all nominees to set up a "tour" of the Foundation and brief overview of CFSWC.

April – May 2007
- Governance Committee members and other interested board members interview selected board candidates.
- Set up opportunities for candidates to attend CFSWC-sponsored events, i.e. CPI meetings, Susan Berresford dinner, etc.
- Determine committee opportunities for nominees not selected as board candidates.

June 2007
- Identify prime board candidate.
- Approve new board member at June board meeting.
- Notify other candidates; offer committee positions.

August 2007
- Announce new board member at Annual Meeting.

Community Nominations Process - Second Interview

Kelly Lucas from the CF and board members Deb Hickey, Fred Siemers, Guadalupe Ancel and Helen Jungwirth met with six prospective board candidates for second interviews on May 30, 2007. Interviewees included: Dan S., Mark A., Craig L., Ann S., Jennifer H. and Dave S.

During the interview process, candidates were again asked about their availability and interest in serving on the board. This interview also assessed several other important areas: their values, vision for the community, thoughts on social justice and equity, and past board experience. The interview included the following questions:

- What motivates you as a volunteer?
- What expectations do you have from management on whose boards you serve?
- What personal aspirations will be enhanced by service on our board?
- What areas of CFSWC work reflect your personal interests or passion?
- What are you reading?
- Name a great leader and identify why you feel he or she is – what attributes make them great?

Vision:
- A thriving community that works well for everyone – what does that mean to you?

Social Justice/Equity:
- Diversity – where have you experienced diversity, tell us about the experience
- Equity
- Courage to change the status quo
- Addressing root causes not just symptoms – what does this mean to you?

Board Experiences:
- Positive board experience – what made it so?
- Negative board experience – what made it so?

Check in again regarding time commitment & availability.

Through this phase of the process, interviewers determined that each candidate would bring value to the Community Foundation in some capacity.

Outcomes to date

"It was an opportunity to 'sell' the Community Foundation to 20 motivated and excited people who are now more informed about the organization and will hopefully spread the word."

Based on the interviews, the selection committee made the following recommendations:

Dan S: Invited to participate on Technology Committee in 2007. This committee is now working to review the foundation's technology needs and opportunities.

Mark A: Invited to be part of CFGSWC Real Estate Supporting Organization, created in 2007.

Craig L: Invited to join Professional Advisors Committee in 2007. Consider as board member for 2008.

Ann S: Invited to join Board of Directors for 2007-2008 year. Also serves on CFGSWC Grants Committee.

Jennifer H: Accepted invitation to participate on Grants Committee in 2007.

Dave S: Currently a member of CFGSCW Grants Committee; will continue participating. Accepted invitation to join WR Public School Endowment board in 2007.

Key learnings

Include notes from interviews:
Prospective candidates provided candid responses when asked about their impression of the CF, its impression in the community and area of opportunity for the organization.

Comments included:

- "Misconception still out in community that the Community Foundation is power and one of power position.
- "This nominating process is proactive. It's amazing that you are doing something like this. This process has demonstrated that qualified people are out there and willing to serve."
- "The Community Foundation is perceived by some as a closed society and not known enough."
- The Community Foundation is somewhat mystical. How do you reach out to involve more people and get the word out?"
- This is a great process. It's critical that the Community Foundation make the board inclusive because you are working for the community."
- "Being nominated has made me think about what you (CF) really are and mean – even more so than the YMCA and hospital, as their money decisions go directly to those organizations."

Need to provide a meaningful opportunity for engagement, whether it's by selection to the board, or by service on a committee or project.

Be up front with the potential "barriers" to involvement – inform participants about expectations of involvement and the time commitment required. This led to people being very forthright about their availability. In the case of on interviewee, who did not have time to participate on the board or committees agreed to serve as a resource for process improvement of our online scholarship program.

This process allowed us to go outside of our organization within our community. We helped make connections outside our borders, or comfort zone.

We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the community for doing this. Other local NPOs look to the CF as a governance resource. This process prompted deeper thinking throughout the greater NPO community about governance.

Next time we will remove the mystery of the Foundation and make the process more transparent. This is an opportunity to teach the community about governance along the way. Also, communicate that the person selected is the best person for the organization at the time.

Developed a profile chart. It's about relationships – enhancing or creating new relationships with individuals who were interviewed. It's about trust, integrity and transparency. It took courage to do it.