

## **RESPONSIBILITIES AS A MEMBER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE BROADWAY BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Serving as a member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Broadway is not only an honor, but also a responsibility – a responsibility to be the best member of the board one can be. This responsibility entails a commitment in time that offers no monetary reward. For those with the dedication to serve, a job well done is its own reward.

Much of the time and effort which a board member spends on behalf of the board, the community and the Theatre requires understanding the Theatre and the role it has in the mid-Michigan area. Since the Theatre and community are dynamic and ever changing, board members are asked and expected to understand and analyze issues and information which impact this change.

One of a board member's most difficult challenges is to make decisions on the best way to meet the identified needs of the Theatre with insufficient dollars. In order to do this, the board must set priorities and, at times, say no to some very important requests. Again, in order to make the right decisions, a board member needs to have access to the right information and to invest the time to analyze it to the best of one's ability.

Each board member has one's own unique personal background and experiences to offer to this process. The diversity of the board can be one of its greatest strengths, as together members can share and consider a variety of viewpoints and perspectives. Each board member is obliged, therefore, to offer one's opinion and speak on behalf of what one believes.

If the board member makes the time to build a strong foundation of understanding regarding the Theater, if one uses all available information to make informed decisions on behalf of the Theatre and the community, if one speaks out and makes oneself heard when one has something to contribute, and if one has the ability to be part of a team effort, then that person will be the best board member one can be.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS OF THE BROADWAY BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

As individuals take satisfaction in knowing that they are fulfilling their responsibilities as a board member, they must be mindful of the fact that they are part of a team. In order to have a successful board, members must work together, encourage one another, and continue to strive for excellence. Effective boards are comprised of successful board members but they also have other important characteristics in common. To be successful, the board and its members should:

- Have a clear understanding of its own nature and purpose
- Set objectives against which it regularly measures its progress
- Have identified to whom it is accountable and regularly communicate with such persons
- Work primarily through small groups such as committees and task forces, which are assigned concrete, specific projects for completion with a reasonably short time
- Never meet for the sake of meeting
- Regard recruiting and retaining effective board members as a year-round activity of prime importance
- Use the secretary's minutes and the treasurer's reports as action aids, not as oral history
- Have members who value time – that is, they do not waste other people's time and do not want their own time wasted

What a Board and Its Individual Members Should Do:

- Inspire and lead
- Recognize the importance of good rapport between board members
- Set priorities
- Establish and maintain a working relationship with other agencies and organizations
- Encourage experimentation
- Establish a means of recruiting and recommending new members
- Research efforts to improve programs / productions
- Organize for optimum production
- Recognize the efforts and contributions of all board members and communicate with seemingly disinterested members
- Maintain a level of objectivity regarding comments, complaints and suggestions by listening, administrative referral and total board consideration
- Be aware of the voting position of a board member on items that might be for personal gain

What a Board and Its Individual Members Should Not Do:

- Permit itself to make exaggerated and misleading claims
- Allow dollar signs to crowd out efforts of competence and usefulness
- Allow rigid loyalties to the board, irrespective of needs and welfare of the Theatre and the community as a whole
- Allow needed changes to be hampered due to apparently insurmountable difficulties
- Hold unpublished board meetings
- Take advantage of one's position for personal benefit (e.g., admission to events; use of telephone and theatre equipment / property; consume concession items)

**STATEMENT OF ETHICS  
FOR MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS OF THE BROADWAY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board and Its Individual Members Will:

- Listen carefully to board members and the constituents which they serve
- Respect the opinions of fellow board members
- Respect and support the majority decisions of the board
- Recognize that all authority is vested in the board when it meets in legal session and not with individual members
- Keep well informed of developments that are relevant to issues that might come before the board
- Participate actively in board meetings and actions
- Call to the attention of the board any issues that the member believes could have an adverse effect on the Theatre or its constituents
- Refer community concerns to the board
- Recognize that the board members' responsibility is to ensure that the Theatre is managed well
- Represent all the members of the community and not a particular geographic area or special interest group
- Consider oneself a "trustee" of the Theatre and do one's best to ensure that the Theatre is well maintained, financially secure, growing, and always operating in the best interests of the community
- Work continually to learn more about one's responsibilities and how to serve better

The Board and Its Individual Members Will Not:

- Be critical, in or outside of the board meeting, of fellow board members or their opinions
- Use the Theatre or any aspect of it for one's personal advantage or benefit or the personal advantage or benefit of friends or relatives
- Discuss the confidential proceedings of the board outside the board meeting
- Promise prior to a board meeting how one will vote on any issue in the meeting
- Interfere with the duties of any other board member or person associated with the Theatre
- Undermine the authority of any other board member or person associated with the Theatre

# **EXPECTATIONS FOR MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS OF THE BROADWAY BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

## **Working as a Team**

Board members should understand that a board of directors must work as a team in order to function effectively. The board needs to function in a fashion which allows each member to participate in debate and discussion regarding policy and other agenda items; however, once a decision has been made individual board members must support the collective decision of the board.

An important element in being able to work effectively as a team is a clear understanding and delineation of the respective roles and responsibilities of board members. A mutual respect and active support for each other also is a critical component of an effective team relationship.

## **Special Interests**

It is normal for a person elected to the board to have a particular area or interest. It is often because of this special interest that one becomes interested in being a board member. It is important to remember, however, that once elected to the board one needs to take care to represent all interests and constituencies of the Theatre and community. There are three very important reasons why it is necessary for board members to be objective:

1. It is impossible for all special interest groups to be represented on the board at any given point in time because of the board's relatively limited size. The board, however, is responsible to the community for the programs, productions and services and, therefore, all interests must be considered in board decision making.
2. The programs, productions and services belong to the whole community. A broad perspective, therefore, is required in order to represent the entire community and make the best decisions.
3. Special interests often come from subjective experiences and vice versa. Optimal board functioning requires all members to have the ability and commitment to make an objective assessment of information and objective decisions based on that information.

Board members need to take a broad rather than a narrow view of their responsibilities and discipline themselves to approach all board decisions objectively.

## Leadership

Of great importance in achieving a successful and effective board is the quality of leadership demonstrated by each board member. Leadership sets a course, maintains that direction, and avoids obstacles that could have a negative impact on board performance or the Theatre.

### Modern Definition of Leadership

- Builds and maintains the group
- Gets the job done
- Helps the group feel comfortable and at ease
- Works cooperatively toward these objectives

### Skills of Leadership

The effective leader demonstrates the following personal behavior:

- Is sensitive to feelings of the group
- Identifies oneself with the needs of the group
- Listens attentively
- Refrains from criticizing or ridiculing members' suggestions
- Helps each member feel important and needed
- Does not argue

The effective leader demonstrates the following communication skills:

- Makes sure that everyone understands not only what is needed but why
- Makes good communication between members a routine occurrence

The effective leader recognizes through one's commitment to equality that:

- Everyone is important
- Leadership is to be shared and is not a monopoly
- A leader grows when leadership functions are dispersed

The effective leader organizationally helps the group:

- Develop long-range and short-range objectives
- Break big problems into small ones
- Share opportunities and responsibilities
- Plan, act, follow up, and evaluate

## **BOARD MEETINGS FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE BROADWAY**

All formal action of the board takes place through the structure of board meetings. They are the vehicle used by the board for effecting change. The time spent in meetings can be used more efficiently and more effectively if board members have a basic understanding of the principles of parliamentary procedure.

### **Parliamentary Procedure**

Parliamentary procedure is a codified collection of rules and ethics for working together in groups. It is a tool for individuals working together for a common purpose. It also is a vehicle for translating ideas into effective group action. The purpose of parliamentary procedure is as follows:

Principle: To facilitate the transaction of business and promote cooperation and harmony.

Practice: To assure that the simplest and most direct procedure for accomplishing a purpose is observed: (a) Motions have a definite order of precedence, each motion having a fixed rank for its introduction and consideration; (b) Only one motion may be considered at a time.

Principle: To insure all members have equal rights, privileges, obligations.

Practice: Every member has an equal right or privilege to propose motions, speak, ask questions, nominate, be a candidate for office, vote, or any other right or privilege of a member. Every member also has equal obligations.

Principle: To determine the will of the majority and see that it is carried out.

Practice: The fundamental concept of democracy is that the ultimate authority of an organization is vested in a majority of its members.

Principle: To protect the rights of the minority.

Practice: In democratic organizations, the right to present proposals, to be heard, and to oppose are valued rights of all members. The members who are in the minority on a question are entitled to the same consideration and respect as members who are in the majority.

Principle: To provide for full and free discussion of every proposition presented for discussion.

Practice: Each member of the assembly has the right to express one's point of view without interruption or interference, provided that individuals remain within the rules.

Principle: To enable every member to know the meaning of each question before the assembly and what its effect will be.

Practice: A member always has the right to request information on any motion, procedural or otherwise, that is not understood so that each individual may vote intelligently.

Principle: To guarantee that all meetings are characterized by fairness and by good faith.

Practice: Trickery, overemphasis on minor technicalities, dilatory tactics, indulgence in personalities and railroading threaten the spirit and practice of fairness and good faith. The effectiveness and often the existence of an organization are destroyed if its officers and members condone unfairness.

Whether a board chooses to use the standard structure and guidelines for meetings found in Robert's Rules of Order or a less formal structure, meetings must follow a predictable format in order to save time and do its work.