

APPLICATION PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

For the Open Position
on the Bismarck Parks and
Recreation District Board of
Park Commissioners



NATIONAL GOLD MEDAL WINNER
**BISMARCK PARKS AND
RECREATION DISTRICT**
Est. 1927



**Application Process and Procedures
for the Open Position on the
Park District of the City of Bismarck's Board of Park Commissioners**

Overview

The Board of Park Commissioners of the Park District of the city of Bismarck, North Dakota, is a five-member board, elected to a four-year staggered term by the citizens that reside within the city of Bismarck. Due to Commissioner Wayne Munson's resignation, there is one vacant position.

The successful applicant will fill this position on the Board of Park Commissioners until the next general election in June 2024. The successful applicant will be seated on the Park Board at the January 19, 2023 meeting.

The role of the Board of Park Commissioners is to develop and set operational and fiscal policy and direction for the overall operation of the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD), to develop short and long range plans, determine courses of action through annual budget development, identify and address issues of importance to public parks and recreation, oversee and review the development, execution and performance of operations of facilities and programs in the best interest of the resident of BPRD and the consumers.

Eligibility

Members of the Board of Park Commissioners must be 18 years of age and live within the boundaries of BPRD which are the city limits of Bismarck, for any period of time.

Compensation

\$100 bi-weekly and use of BPRD programs and facilities.

Position Overview

The Board of Park Commissioners typically meets on the third Thursday of each month at 5:15 pm. There are occasional special meetings called by the Board. Additionally, commissioners attend management meetings three times per year, budget meetings, and portfolio meetings with user groups.

The attached document outlines the management teams for BPRD. The vacant position will serve as one of the commissioners on the Operations Division and may also hold additional committee assignments.

The job description is also included in this packet of information.

Application Process

Interested individuals who are qualified to serve are asked to submit a cover letter stating interest in serving, a resume, and a completed Board of Park Commissioners questionnaire in a sealed envelope to:

Michael Gilbertson, President
Board of Park Commissioners
Bismarck Parks and Recreation District
400 East Front Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58504

Applications must be received by 12:00 p.m. central time on December 14, 2022. The current members of the Board of Park Commissioners will review and rank all applications. The final candidates will be interviewed by the four Park Board Commissioners at a special Park Board meeting the week of January 9, 2023. The Board will plan to select the final applicant following the interviews, and this commissioner will be seated at the January 19, 2023, Park Board meeting.



Board of Park Commissioner Candidate Questionnaire

Eligibility

- Are you at least 18 years of age? ___ Yes ___ No
- Do you reside within the boundaries of the Park District (city limits of Bismarck)? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, you are eligible. Please submit a cover letter, resume, and provide responses to the following questions **in the space provided.**

In your opinion, what is the role of a park commissioner?

Why are you interested in the position of park commissioner?

What experience would you bring to the Board in terms of serving on any policy setting boards?

What do you think are three issues the Park District will face in the next two years and how should the Park Board prepare for each of them?

What do you think are three strengths of BPRD?

What are three opportunities for BPRD?

Are you or your family now, or have you been, involved in BPRD programs or facility users? If yes, explain.

Signature_____

Date_____

Park District Management Teams

Updated June 2022

Management Team Objectives

The purpose of Management Teams is to provide Commissioners and Park District staff a method to communicate, review, and evaluate plans, projects, facilities, and programming relating to budgets, personnel, technology, and capital improvements.

- Management teams will meet a minimum of three times per year.
- Meeting agendas and minutes will be provided to all Commissioners and appropriate Park District staff.
- The management teams also serve as a means to assign topics, issues and opportunities that come before the District for discussion, research, and recommendations.

Common Management Responsibilities to All Teams

- Budget and finance
- Risk management
- Human resources
- Planning
- Program development and management
- Community relations
- Marketing
- Technology
- Association and user group relationships
- Facility management
- Contract and agreement development and management
- Project development – capital improvements
- Annual reports
- Leases and easements

Proposed Management Teams

- Administration
- Operations
- Facilities and Programs

Administration Management Team

Board assignment: Board of Park Commissioners President

Management Team: Executive Director Klipfel, Kathy Feist, Dana Schaar Jahner, Julie Fornshell, David Mayer, and Mike Wald

Others may be invited as needed.

Management Team Responsibilities:

Finance and budget	Planning
Human resources	Legal
Community relations	Audit
Marketing	Intergovernmental relations
Legislation	
Park District manuals (Human Resources, Accounting, Risk Management, Comprehensive Plan, Administration Manual)	

Facility Management, Development and Maintenance – Administrative Office

Board President Responsibilities: Bismarck Recreation Council, Bismarck Community Bowl Authority

Staff Liaisons: City of Bismarck Pension Committee and Health Insurance Committee

Operations Management Team

Board assignment: Two Park Board Commissioners

Management Team: Executive Director Klipfel, David Mayer, Tony Schmitt, and Riley Merkel

Others may be invited as needed.

Management Team Responsibilities

Parks	Open space
Greenways	Land dedication and acquisition
Forestry	Natural areas
Interpretative and historical areas	Outdoor complexes and courts
Athletic fields	Parking lots
Trails (paved, off-road)	Walt Neuens Horse Arena
Playgrounds	McDowell Dam
General Sibley Park	Eagles Park
Hoge Island	River front
Archery complex	Outdoor arenas
Boat ramps	Municipal Country Club
Skating rinks	Burleigh County Parks (selected parks)
Disc golf	Missouri Valley Complex
Nishu Bowmen Archery Complex	Community Gardens

Commissioner Appointments: Forestry Advisory Board, Sleepy Hollow Liaison Committee

Staff Liaisons: Burleigh County Water Resource Board and Burleigh County Park Board

Facilities and Programs Management Team

Board assignment: Two Park Board Commissioners

Management Team: Executive Director Klipfel, Mike Wald, Tim Doppler, RaNae Jochim, Dylan Thiem, and Ryan Geerdes

Others may be invited as needed.

Management Team Responsibilities

Youth and adult programming	Open Gym
Special populations programming	July Celebration
Flurry Fest	Cultural events and organization
Halloween Party	Dakota West Arts Council
Wellness programs (group and individual)	Go! Bismarck Mandan
Indoor and outdoor swimming programs	Riverwood Golf Course
World War Memorial Building	Tom O'Leary Golf Course
Fore Seasons Center	Pebble Creek Golf Course
VFW Sports Center	Playground in a Box
Capital Ice Complex	FL High Prairie Arts & Science Complex
Hillside Aquatic Complex	Capital Racquet and Fitness Center
Elks Aquatic Center	BSC Aquatic and Wellness Center
Wachter Aquatic Center	

Commissioner Appointments: BSC Aquatic and Wellness Center Advisory Committee

Chapter One

The Four Basics of Board Service

Outcomes:

- Understanding what true commitment to the organization involves;
- Learning why teamwork is essential to an effective Board;
- Understanding the importance of Board members learning their job;
- Learning why the Board needs the code of ethics.

1. Commitment

It can be said that Board members of any organization believe in the mission and purpose of the organization. However, many Board members do not completely understand what true commitment to the organization involves.

Commitment is more than attending regular Board meetings. It's also more than the desire to advance a certain agenda, no matter how worthwhile.

Commissioners may have a personal reason for serving the organization, but rationale for serving on the Board needs to be much more inclusive. It should be motivated by the desire to see the organization grow and develop for the good of all it serves.

True Board commitment means unselfishly giving time, experience and skills to advance the organization's mission and goals. It also means supporting the Board team, even when one member disagrees with a majority decision.

2. Teamwork

Most Board members are leaders in their communities. When outstanding community leaders serve on a board, there is the potential for greatness. Bringing diverse personalities together on a Board, though, raises some questions about the nature of Board service.

How is an effective Board created with many strong personalities? The answer is that each Board member must understand that the Board is not a collection of individuals, but a team. As a member, the main objective should be to fit comfortably into this framework.

Board members can help the team by always showing respect and courtesy to other each other. Members can "agree to disagree" without letting emotions damage the sense of Board teamwork. Even when Board members don't see eye-to-eye, mutual respect illustrates that the job of fulfilling the organization's mission and vision is more important than personal feelings.

Only the Board team makes decisions. The only authority Board members exercise is through the decisions made as a Board. An individual member should not act alone. For example, a Board member has no authority to send the administration on a fact-finding

mission to answer personal questions. Board members can make suggestions, but they must bring them to the full Board for discussion. Then if the full Board wants to act on them, it can.

The key to any smoothly functioning Board team is the realization by its members that they must put aside their personal interests and work as a group. There are a variety of strategies that can be used to help strengthen this sense of teamwork on the Board. One idea is to have outside experts such as consultants or past Park Board members speak to the Board on various topics, including teambuilding. The Board can benefit from these meetings by letting members bring difficult issues out in the open. At the same time, they can get the Board members listening to one another's point of view, which can lead to the Board's solving some uncomfortable problems.

3. *Willingness to Learn the Job*

Each Board experience is unique. Every Board team has its distinctive style and culture, along with its own goals and methods of achieving them. This manual outlines the basics of Board service, clarifies the role and the responsibilities of a Board member and explains why some areas are best left to the Executive Director.

To totally commit to the organization, each Board member must learn the specifics of how the Board operates. The best source for this information is the Executive Director, the Board President, and veteran Board members. Commissioners should always feel free to ask them how to do their job better. Board members can educate themselves by reading and keeping up on the issues that affect the organization's field. Being aware of the developments or trends that could have an impact on the organization is part of the Board member's job. Effective Board service doesn't come without an effort on the part of each Board member. Learning how to perform the role in the best professional manner possible is well worth the effort.

4. *Ethics*

No matter whom the Board ultimately answers to, it must be accountable to itself for its conduct – and Board ethics begin with each individual member. Board members must work hard to maintain public trust. In practical terms, this means that Board ethics must go beyond the simple letter of the law to its spirit. The code of ethics as outlined in the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District's Human Resource Policy and Procedure Handbook is as follows:

CODE OF ETHICS

Employees of the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District, in addition to their job description, voluntarily accept the guidelines of the following code of ethics:

As an employee of the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District, I pledge to:

1. Listen carefully to my co-workers and supervisor(s).
2. Respect the opinion of fellow employees, supervisors and managers, and not criticize their decisions, in or out of the work place.

3. Respect and support the decisions of my supervisor, manager, and ultimately, the Board of Park Commissioners.
4. Keep well informed about developments relevant to my position.
5. Participate in meetings and actions of my Division and of the Park District when I am asked to do so.
6. Bring to the attention of my supervisor any issues I believe will have an adverse effect on those we serve.
7. Attempt to interpret the needs of those we serve, and interpret the actions of those we serve.
8. Refer complaints to the proper level on the chain of command.
9. Consider myself a representative of the organization and do my best to ensure that it is well maintained, financially secure, growing and always operating in the best interests of those we serve.
10. Always work to learn how to do my job better.
11. Declare conflicts of interest between my personal life and my position on the staff.

Chapter Two

The Four Key Responsibilities of the Board Member

Outcomes:

- Learn what the Board member's policy making role is.
- Learn why hiring the administrator is a Board responsibility.
- Understand the importance of long-range planning
- Define the Board's role in monitoring progress on long-range plans.
- Explain why Board members must be advocates for their organization.

The role as a Board member is usually defined as "policy maker." A policy is a direction or course of action that the Board has decided it wants the organization to take.

The Board's job is to set policies that outline how the organization will operate so that it can meet its mission. The Executive Director and other staff members work within the confines of this outline by carrying out policies the Board approves. The Board then monitors, interprets and evaluates how the Executive Director does this.

Many Boards consider the process they follow when drafting a new policy ensures its success. It can avoid approving a policy on impulse, having it fail and then having to start all over again. As a policy-maker, Commissioners will be asked to oversee the following four key areas of responsibility.

#1. Hiring the Executive Director

The Board hires an Executive Director to manage the organization's day-to-day operation. In designating this authority to one individual, the Board doesn't give up its governance role, it enhances it by bringing a competent professional to the Board team. By hiring and supporting an Executive Director who can give full attention to the job, the Board is showing that they take the governance role seriously. Ideally, the Board will hire an Executive Director infrequently. The relationship between the Board and administrator is so critical that Boards should give the administrator a vote of confidence every year.

The time for performance evaluation can be an opportunity for the Board to reconfirm its decision to hire the Executive Director. This not only reinforces the sense of teamwork, it builds the mutual trust between Board and Executive Director that is essential to working together effectively.

#2. Planning for the Future

By giving the Executive Director the authority to manage the organization, the Board frees itself to plan for the future. Long-range planning is one of the most important areas of trust for the Board. Given the constantly changing demographic, political and economic picture, long range planning is critical so the organization can anticipate and be ready for whatever the future brings. Boards are expected to be visionary for their organization. Once a strategic plan has been created, the Board should revisit it annually.

This plan outlines that Board's vision of the future, and that vision may change as the organization's internal resources and external circumstances change.

To carry out the long-range plan, the Executive Director should develop a short-range plan (typically a one-to two-year plan). The Board will need to monitor the progress on the long-range plan. The short-term operational planning is the Executive Director's responsibility.

It is best to set aside time outside of a Board meeting to develop the strategic plan. It may help to bring a consultant to facilitate this, or the Executive Director can facilitate the planning process.

After the internal and external factors that can affect the organization have been identified, the next stage in the planning process is to come up with a workable plan.

- ***Write outcomes, ends and results directly tied to the mission statement.*** To best serve the community, make sure the outcomes reflect the mission. For example, one outcome may be to expand services to a new geographical area in the next five years.
- ***Accomplish outcomes with specific strategies.*** Outcomes will not be magically met. Strategies must be in place to see that outcomes come about. To reach the expansion outcome listed above, for example, the strategy may call for developing a highly qualified staff member to support expanded services.
- ***Support the Executive Director's efforts to implement the Board's strategies.*** The "how-to's" of implementation are the responsibility of the Executive Director. It is the Board's job is to give the Executive Director the resources necessary to carry out the job.

Once outcomes, ends, and results are set and strategies are determined, the Board's role shifts from "planner" to "evaluator." The Executive Director will develop action steps for implementing the plan, complete with dates and deadlines.

#3. Monitoring

Since a strategic plan is the organization's blueprint for the future, the Board must make sure that progress is being made on goals and that the Board's actions reflect the direction that has been set. The Executive Director implements the strategic plan, but the Board monitors how the goals are met. The simplest way to monitor this is through the Executive Director's various reports to the Board. The reports should inform the Board about progress on the plan's goals and include deadlines met, problems encountered and successes achieved.

#4. Being an Advocate for the Organization

As a leader who serves on a Board, Commissioners are in a unique position to be the organization's advocate in the community. Being an advocate can take several forms. For instance, Commissioners may lobby lawmakers and funding sources, communicate the organization's goals to the community or perform public relations functions. It's a

role that requires skill and the ability to communicate the organization's position. As someone with ties to the community, Commissioners can also be a conduit between the community and the Executive Director. For example, Board members will occasionally hear what others are saying about the organization. This information should be relayed to the Executive Director because it can be helpful in planning or budgeting.

Chapter Three

Meetings are the Business of the Board

Outcomes:

- Learn how to prepare for Board meetings and stick to the agenda
- Explain why the Board should never meet without the Executive Director
- Learn how to make committees more effective and productive.

Short, efficient meetings are essential when it comes to accomplishing Board business. As a Board member, there are several steps to take to keep meetings short, focused and productive. The first rule of meetings is preparation. Before the Board meets, there are two items that should be completed to prepare for the meeting:

1. ***Study the agenda and supporting materials.*** Several days before the meeting, the Executive Director will prepare an agenda packet. This will include the agenda as well as background materials on the items and issues for discussion or action at the meeting. The Board packet may contain the following items:

- A cover letter or summary that highlights key information;
- A structured agenda that includes items for discussion or action;
- The minutes of the previous meeting, for approval or changes;
- Reference materials on agenda items that include charts, graphs and specific notes.

Allow plenty of time to review this information so well-informed decisions can be made.

2. ***Call the Executive Director if there are questions.*** If the agenda information is unclear or confusing, please contact the Executive Director. She/he will be happy to answer them, and grateful that Board members took the time to prepare for the meeting.

Efficient Board meetings should be run according to parliamentary procedure. Proper parliamentary procedure, however, is no guarantee Board members won't discuss items that are not on the agenda. The following strategies can help keep discussion focused on the business of meeting:

- ***Consent Agenda Items.*** Items of a routine and frequently repetitive nature are included in the consent agenda. A consent agenda can be approved with one motion or an item or items can be removed for additional discussion and separate action.
- ***Request to Appear Policy.*** The Board of Park Commissioners, effective August 1, 2006, requires that members of the public wishing to appear before the Board make arrangements in advance so that such appearances are scheduled on the agenda, the topic for discussion is stated and clarified, and background materials are prepared for the Board in order to be fully versed on the subject matter. This procedure was established to afford the Board the ability to respond in an appropriate manner.
- ***Move that non-agenda items be added to the next meeting's agenda.*** Unless an issue is urgent, there's no harm in putting it aside until the next meeting. If someone brings up a non-agenda issue, make a note of it, then move that it be tabled until a

later meeting. There are three benefits to doing this: It acknowledges the issue's importance, doesn't disrupt the current agenda and gives members time to prepare for discussion on the new item.

- ***Don't discuss day-to-day management issues.*** Re-prioritize what is to be focused on. The Board should concentrate on policy-related issues.
- ***Be conscious of time during meetings.*** A simple way to remind the Board of this is to have your Executive Director add time constraints to each agenda item. Here's an example: Accept financial report, 4:15 – 4:20 p.m. Timelines set limits for a meeting so Board members can plan their activities before and after it. If an item requires more time for discussion, the remainder of the agenda can be adjusted.
- ***Cut off irrelevant discussion.*** This may sound harsh, but if someone goes off on a tangent or just isn't giving information the Board needs, redirect the conversation. The Board President may write the core issue of each discussion in a notebook kept in front of her/him. When Board members stray from the main idea, the President may diplomatically explain the issue that is on the table.
- ***Insist that questions wait until the speaker stops talking.*** When a Commissioner asks others to clarify a point during a presentation, then the presenter may start speaking about irrelevant issues. It's best to wait until the presentation is over before asking for clarification.

No one benefits from a closed session

ND Century Code dictates the situations in which a Board can meet in executive session, and these situations are limited. If a Board wishes to meet in executive session, make sure that legal counsel is aware of the situation and that they deem it appropriate. The correct steps must be taken to meet in executive session.

Boards that meet in “executive session” without their Executive Director make a big mistake! The Executive Director is the lifeline to the organization. As a key player on the Board team, she/he knows the “ins and outs” of the organization and should always be included in the decision-making process. Closed sessions without the Executive Director damage this sense of teamwork. Once this happens, communication suffers, and ultimately, the organization suffers along with it. To be effective, the Board team must work and stand together, which means that everything must be kept out in the open.

Committees can be productive

When managed properly, Board committees can be great time-savers. Committees can complete valuable legwork in researching issues and making recommendations to the full Board. Boards typically rely on two types of committees: standing committees are on-going in nature (Forestry Advisory Board) or as needed committees which are established for a single purpose (for example the Matching Grant Review Committee).

The full Board can contribute to the success of its committees by following these simple guidelines:

- ***Define a clear purpose for the committee and stay focused on it.*** Forming a committee without a need to do so or straying from its stated purpose will only frustrate its members. When committees are established, develop clear goals and objectives so that its members know exactly what the issue is that needs to be resolved. Goals and objectives should also have timeframes. These will give the committee a specific life span, after which it should be dissolved. On the other hand, a standing committee should have a written “job description” stating its goals.
- ***Meet only when there’s work to be done.***
- ***Include committee reports in the Board agenda packet.*** Unless a final recommendation is being made to the Board, provide a summary to be provided to the Commissioners.
- ***Evaluate the committee’s performance.*** This can be completed each year for standing committees or at the last meeting of a specific committee’s work. The results of this evaluation will help Commissioners learn how to improve as a committee member, as well as determine the usefulness of the committee itself.
- ***Dissolve committees when they’re no longer needed.*** To weed out unnecessary committees, the Board may want to try a “clean slate” exercise. This involves disbanding all committees, preparing a list of functions a committee can handle more efficiently than the full Board, and then reestablishing only those committees for which the need still exists.

It’s important to remember that the full Board should not undermine the committee’s efforts by revisiting how the committee arrived at its recommendation. The misuse of a committee like this only defeats the committee’s purpose, while it creates unnecessary work for the Board.

Also note that ND Century Code’s section on open meetings also pertains to committee meetings where more than one commissioner is present. There are rules to be posted regarding how to notice such meetings. It is important to work with the Executive Director in these situations.

Chapter Four

Is it Policy or Management?

Outcomes:

- Explain the difference between making policy and implementation.
- Learn how to stay within the Board member's role during meetings.
- Learn who does what in an emergency.
- Understand the Board's relationship to staff.

Knowing the difference between policy and management will enhance the Board's working relationship with the Executive Director because Commissioners will be less likely to intrude on each other's roles. Basically, policy decisions are those that affect the organization as a whole, while management decisions affect individual programs, services or people. If faced with an issue and wondering if it's a policy decision, ask the following questions:

- Will this decision help determine procedures, activities, programs or services that affect the organization as a whole?
- Do laws or regulatory agencies require this decision?
- Is this an issue that the Executive Director has asked for help on?

A "yes" answer to any of the above questions means it's a policy-making decision, and it involves the Board members. Conversely, when a Commissioner suspects the issue may be a management decision, ask these questions:

- Does this issue affect an individual employee?
- Does it relate to the efficiency and quality of services provided by a specific department or program?
- Does it relate to an administrative area that is operational in nature or affect specific parts of, rather than the entire organization?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, it's a management decision that the Executive Director should make.

Board members should review policies and ordinances. An ordinance is a local law or regulation of a permanent nature which is more formal than a bylaw, policy or a resolution. An ordinance requires a specific protocol of 1st and 2nd readings, a recorded vote, and possibly publication and introductory clauses. These protocols are so important that ordinances are not enforceable if they are not followed. (see NDCC 40-11)

The Board establishes policy when it makes a decision affecting the entire organization. Policies are also the Executive Director's guidelines for managing the organization.

A resolution is more of an informal statement or administrative "opinion" which is accomplished through a motion but without the formal resolution protocol. Resolutions are frequently used to honor an individual or an event.

- ***Periodically define the Board's role.*** When new Board members undergo orientation, the entire Board should revisit its role and responsibilities. This review is a good refresher course on the difference between policy-making and day-to-day management.
- ***Declare management issues off limits for Board discussion.*** The Board President should review each meeting agenda before the Board meets. If something appears to be a management issue, the President should check into it. Perhaps the item shouldn't be on the agenda, or maybe the Executive Director just wanted to update the Board on it. Either way, the President gives careful consideration to whether the item should be discussed at all.
- ***Steer Board discussions away from day-to-day issues.*** Don't let a policy discussion become management oriented. If an issue being discussed crosses into management's role, direct the discussion back to the policy only.
- ***Separate the "how" from the "whats".*** When an issue is on the table, determine if the issue is a 'what.' If it is, the Board is doing its job. On the other hand, if the Board is discussing 'how', its doing the Executive Director's job.

Who handles emergencies?

The Executive Director manages in a crisis and it's the Board's job to support her/his efforts. For example, if a staff member is arrested at the organization, the Executive Director will handle the situation, basing her/his actions on policies the Board had previously approved. If the policies are legally sound, there should be no cause for Board concern.

There is, however, an exception to this. The Board may be liable for both the cause and the outcome of some situations. The most obvious example is the Board's responsibility for the financial health of the organization.

If the organization suddenly faces a huge loss of funds, the Board will be asked to make some tough budget decisions, and even raise money if necessary. If the organization finds itself in a crisis – no matter what kind – follow these three steps:

1. ***Keep informed from the right source – the Executive Director.*** When a serious problem occurs at the organization, the community may demand that the Board do something. A newspaper may even publish an editorial pressuring the Board to get involved.

When the public or the media ask questions, Board members will want to be accurate about efforts being taken to correct the problem. To do this, members will need to keep open the lines of communication to the Executive Director, the individual in charge of managing the situation.

2. ***Operate as a Board, not as individuals.*** In an emergency, Board members should give the Board's response to the situation, not their personal assessment of it. Widely

different accounts of the problem can leave the public thinking that the Board has no idea what's going on. Designate one person to speak to the public about the situation. The logical choice is the Executive Director.

3. ***Support the Executive Director.*** During a crisis, Board Members should clear all questions with the Executive Director then get behind her/his efforts to resolve the situation.

What is the Board's relationship to staff?

For the Board/Executive Director team to be effective, Board members must understand their proper relationship with staff. Following two simple rules of thumb make this process simple: 1) All communication between staff and the Board should be channeled through the Executive Director and 2) Boards do not manage staff, administrators do.

The question of a Board member's relationship to staff may be difficult from time to time. It is important for Board members to be alert to the potential problems. To avoid this type of situation, follow these basic "do's" and "don'ts" for individual Board members in their relationship with staff.

- Don't direct staff to perform work.
- Don't make commitments to staff. Only the full Board can do that.
- Do volunteer to help your organization, just like any other volunteer.
- Do go through the per channel – the Executive Director – when volunteering to help staff.
- Do show concern for the wellbeing of staff.
- Do remind staff members, if the contact a Commissioner directly, that they should follow the chain of command when they have a problem, and that they should not take their problems directly to Board members.

How should you handle staff grievances?

Personnel management is the Executive Director's job as outlined in the Human Resource Policy and Procedure Handbook. Staff does not have a right to appeal a grievance to the Board. The final decision rests with the Executive Director. Effective Board members respect the chain of command. For example, if they want to arrange a meeting directly with the people the organization serves, they contact the Executive Director, who will make arrangements through supervisors and direct line staff.

Who Does What

The following chart lists examples of who is responsible for activities and decisions that typically take place in an organization. It is an exercise the Board should work through with its Executive Director to answer the question, “Is it policy or is it management?” This is not an inclusive list.

Area	Board/Policy	Executive Director/Management
Federal and state laws	Comply	Comply
Strategic plan	Approves	Recommends and provides input
Day-to-day operations	No role	Works with appropriate staff within the Park District’s policies, procedures, and best practices
Budget	Approves	Develops and recommends
Capital purchases	Approves	Prepares requests
Park District policies and ordinances	Approves	Recommends
Cleaning and maintenance	No role (oversight only)	Work with appropriate staff
Fees	Approves	Develops fee schedules
Billing, credit and collections	Adopts policy	Proposes policy and implements
Personnel policies	Adopts	Recommends, administers staff
Salaries	Approved as part of the annual budget	Approves salaries with recommendation from staff
Hiring of staff	Hire Executive Director; No role with other employees	Oversees hiring of all staff with appropriate managers and directors
Staff supervision	Supervise Executive Director only	All employees with assistance of managers and directors
Firing of staff	No role	Makes all decisions
Staff evaluation	Evaluates only Executive Director	Works with appropriate staff to evaluate other employees

Chapter Five

Finances

Outcomes:

- Describe the Board's three responsibilities in finances
- Explain how Board members can reach a comfort level with finances
- Learn how not to monitor finances
- Understand why Board members must raise money for their organizations

Boards set broad financial policy such as identifying where they want to go with the organization's budget. The Executive Director is responsible for spending money to achieve results. When it comes to finances, the Board has three major responsibilities:

1. ***Setting the organization's financial direction.*** The Board is responsible for establishing goals and approving a budget that makes it possible for the Executive Director and the organization's staff to reach those goals.
2. ***Delegating implementation of the financial policies to the Executive Director.*** The Board defines the organization's mission and purpose, shares it with the Executive Director, funds it and then allows the Executive Director to make decisions within that framework.
3. ***Monitoring financial outcomes.*** The third financial responsibility of a Commissioner is to measure the results of the Executive Director's spending. Board members want to know if spending is being done wisely, if there are financial problems they don't know about or if there's enough money to pay the bills.

The Board can help the Executive Director implement the Board's financial policies by following these three guidelines:

- Respect the Executive Director's authority to make spending decisions. She/he should be able to spend money for the day-to-day operation of the organization without prior Board approval or interference.
- Honor the duty of fiduciary responsibility. Boards have a sacred trust, often referred to as a "fiduciary duty" to the finances of the organization which means that its members have a duty to be knowledgeable of, capable of understanding, and acting upon the financial information they receive.
- Deal with the organization's accounting department through the Executive Director. These employees work for the Executive Director, not directly for the Board. From time to time, the Executive Director may ask the Finance Director to provide detailed financial information at Board meetings. If Board members are concerned about something in these presentations, always address the Executive Director. She/he will decide if a response is necessary from the business staff.

To do a more effective job of monitoring outcomes, ask the Executive Director for “bottom-line” explanations of these basic financial questions:

- Is the organization on target with planned expenses and revenues?
- Is the organization financially solvent (money in reserve to pay expenses)?
- Will the organization have income to meet future expenses?

The answers will help assess how the money budgeted is being spent and how authorized programs are being administered. *Note: Sometimes government regulations specify how the Board is to manage finances. Be sure to comply with these regulations.*

Monitoring the organization’s finances would seem to be the most complex area of a Commissioner’s responsibility. However, it doesn’t have to be overwhelming because the Board role doesn’t require being a financial expert. Each Board member should reach a “comfort level” in how to interpret the financial picture of the organization. Reaching this level doesn’t mean an understanding of everything about the budget. All the Board member needs to know is that the Executive Director is managing finances properly.

The budget is the Board’s financial plan for the organization and as such deserves each Board member’s time. The Executive Director and staff will prepare the budget, and then present it to the Board for approval. Once the Board reviews the budget and decides that it is a sound financial plan for the upcoming year, the rest should be left to the Executive Director. She/he will provide the Board with regular financial reports. Board members should regard these as indicators of how well the budget is being followed. If Board members don’t understand something, ask the Executive Director for clarification.

The final step in monitoring the organization’s financial status is an annual audit by an independent auditor. This individual should be recommended by the Executive Director and hired by the Board. Audits are a required procedure for most organizations, but they are much more than just a legal mandate. They are the Board’s primary protection against financial misconduct or misconduct.

When the annual audit is over, the Board can expect to see a detailed report which can be acted upon at a Board meeting. As a follow-up to the audit, Board members should seek reassurance that finances are well-managed and that any weaknesses are being corrected.

Ineffective ways to monitor finances

- Don’t review a list of bills at Board meetings. In most instances, the Board doesn’t even have to see the bills. Once you’ve approved the budget, the Executive Director makes purchasing decisions. Don’t second guess her/him. If the Board is legally required to review the bills, it should be completed prior to a Board meeting. If there are questions, then the Executive Director should be contacted. Reviewing bills at a Board meeting wastes time and distracts from the real job of monitoring the organization’s overall financial health.

- Don't delegate the Board's responsibility for the organization's financial integrity to a finance committee. The finance committee's role is to help the Board understand the financial picture – not do the job of the full Board.

Board of Park Commissioners Job Description

Major Function: Preserve, protect and increase the value of constituent/stakeholder investment in the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District in a timely and professional manner.

Board Duties and Responsibilities:

- Comply with all local, state and federal regulations as they apply to Bismarck Parks and Recreation District.
- Elect leadership
- Set vision, mission, and core values, and use them to form policy, goals, and planning strategy
- Hire the Executive Director
- Receive and execute portfolio and committee responsibilities as assigned by the Board
- Visit with and represent constituent/stakeholder
- Attend meetings and be prepared before meeting
- Review and establish policy
- Review, understand and evaluate financial information
- Set overall direction and approve all plans and goals for the Park District
- Participate in preparation and approval of budget
- Evaluate District's performance, and specifically that of the Executive Director
- Represent the Park District

Board Relationships:

- Hire the Executive Director and manage that position
- Communicate with each other and constituent/stakeholder
- Communicate with staff through the Executive Director

Board Authority:

- Vote on all issues before the Board
- Right to be informed and participate appropriately
- Commit financial resources of the Park District
- Execute all duties and responsibilities of the elected office of Park Commissioner
- Authority to hire, evaluate and terminate the Executive Director

Board qualifications:

- Must reside within the boundaries of the District
- Must be 18 years of age

Park Board President's Job Description

Major Function: Provide for all aspects of leadership of the Board of Park Commissioners in order to preserve, protect and increase the value of constituents/stakeholders' investment in BPRD in a timely and professional manner

Board Duties and Responsibilities:

- Comply with all local, state and federal regulations as they apply to the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District
- Set the schedule and develop the agenda, in consultation with the Executive Director, for all regularly scheduled Board meetings and work with the Executive Director to provide timely notification of the Board of Commissioners of all meetings and activities related to their functions as Board members.
- Appoint all standing and as needed committees and chairpersons and provide for their instruction and training.
- Represent BPRD at public functions.
- Sign legal documents at the direction of the Board or as necessary to the activities of BPRD.
- Interpret the policies, procedures and intents of the Board when called upon to do so.
- See to it that Board member training is conducted
- Serve as an Ex-Officio member of all standing and other committees of the Board
- Serve as the chief spokesperson of the Board of Park Commissioners with representatives of the public and news media.
- Meet regularly with the Executive Director of the Park District to receive information and impart directives of the Board.
- Initiate and conduct an annual performance review of the Executive Director by a method agreed to by the Board

Relationships:

- Convenes and conducts all meetings of the Board of Park Commissioners
- Supervises the Executive Director and meet regularly with that individual or their designee
- Communicates with constituents/stakeholders, and the public as needed
- Communicates with staff through the Executive director

Authority:

- Vote on all issues before the Board
- Right to be informed and participate appropriately
- Commit financial resources of the Park District at the direction of the Board
- Hire, evaluate and terminate the Executive Director at the direction of the Board
- Speak on behalf of the Board
- Sign legal documents such as contracts at the direction of and on behalf of the Board

Qualifications:

- Must be a Park Board Commissioner

Park Board Vice President's Job Description

Major Function: In the absence or incapacitation of the President, to provide for all aspects of leadership of the Board of Directors in order to preserve, protect and increase the value of constituent/stakeholder investment in BPRD in a timely and professional manner.

Board Duties and Responsibilities:

In the absence of the President:

- Comply with all local, state and federal regulations as they apply to the Park District
- Set the schedule and develop the agenda, in consultation with the Executive Director, for all regularly scheduled Board meetings and work with the Executive Director to provide timely notification of the Board of Commissioners of all meetings and activities related to their functions as Board members.
- Appoint all standing and other committee chairpersons and provide for their instruction and training.
- Represent BPRD at public functions.
- Sign legal documents at the direction of the Board or as necessary to the activities of BPRD.
- Interpret the policies, procedures and intents of the Board when called upon to do so.
- Serve as the chief spokesperson of the Board of Commissioners with representatives of the public and news media.
- Perform all other duties that may be assigned by either the Board or the President

Authority:

- Vote on all issues before the Board
- Right to be informed and participate appropriately
- Commit financial resources of the Park District at the direction of the Board
- Hire, evaluate and terminate the Executive Director at the direction of the Board
- Speak on behalf of the Board
- Sign legal documents such as contracts at the direction of and on behalf of the Board

Qualifications:

- Must be a Park Board Commissioner