QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE JOINING A BOARD

Joining a nonprofit board can be a tremendously rewarding and enriching experience. As with any new relationship, finding the right match can be a key determining factor in the success of the interaction. Knowing what your own hopes are for the experience is a good way to start and will allow you to ask the right questions and think through whether a particular board seat is right for you at this time.

The following is a checklist of some of the questions you can ask yourself and the prospective organization to guide you as you assess whether a particular board role is right for you.

MISSION/INTEREST:

✓ Does the mission align with my interests?
✓ Can I serve as a strong ambassador for this organization?
✓ Are the issues addressed by the organization a concern that I share in my community?
✓ Do I have a personal connection to the issues addressed by the organization?

PERSONAL GOALS:

✓ Will this role help me get better connected to others in my community?
✓ Will this role help me make more contacts for my business?
✓ Will this role provide me with an opportunity to work as part of a team with a committed group of people to solve problems?

TIME/COMMITMENT EXPECTATIONS:

✓ Are meetings held at a time that works for my schedule?
✓ What time-commitment should I plan for preparing for a board meeting?
✓ In addition to board meeting attendance, is sitting on an active committee an expectation? What is the time commitment?

FUNDRAISING EXPECTATIONS

✓ Is each board member expected to make a personal contribution? If so, is there a set amount?
✓ Is each board member expected to play a role in fundraising? Is so, what is it?
ORGANIZATIONAL EXPECTATIONS:

✓ Does the organization seem to be on sound financial footing?
✓ Are financials and audit results regularly shared with board members?
✓ Are sufficient internal controls in place? If so, what are they?
✓ Does the Board have Directors and Officers Liability Insurance?
✓ Does the organization have a strategic plan? Does it seem to be effectively planning for the future?
✓ Does the organization have a good reputation in the community?

CULTURE:

✓ Does the board seem well-organized and prepared for meetings?
✓ Does the board work together well as a group?
✓ Are materials sent in advance allowing board members to prepare adequately?
✓ Does the Executive Director seem like a capable individual that I can fully support?
✓ Do staff members seem competent and effective in their jobs?
✓ Do the other board members seem welcoming and interested in working together as a team?

Given the answers to all of these questions, what does my gut say about joining this board?