

## **Board Member Recruitment and Orientation for the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association:**

### **1. Establishing qualifications:**

#### **a) "Must have" criteria**

- \* Passion for biodynamic agriculture
- \* Positive can do attitude with common sense
- \* Involved and connected to existing biodynamic initiatives
- \* Willingness to commit time for board meetings, committee meetings, retreats, conferences
- \* Team player- works well in a group and is willing to set aside ego for the greater good
- \* Thoughtful in considering issues, a good listener
- \* Someone who is interested in leading and governing rather than helping out management on a volunteer basis, no micro managers
- \* Someone who is not already over committed
- \* Honest and ability to take criticism

#### **b) "Wouldn't it be nice" criteria**

Here we can select from a number of factors that combined make up a diversified board. Here we strongly consider regional representation. We also consider qualities like the number of man and woman on the board, the cultural heritage, the age, and the profession and experience of prospective board members that have a direct relevance on the Association. And yes, we ask the question if they are able to make a significant financial contribution. Becoming a board member is having the ability to make a contribution to the biodynamic movement in general; with your time, your energy, your insights, .....and with your money.

#### **c) "Never in a million years" criteria**

Some people might be very accomplished biodynamic farmers but they should never volunteer to serve on a board as their strong will or ego can have a strangling effect on process.

- \* A big ego, domineering and quarrelsome
- \* Inability to sign a conflict of interest statement
- \* A poor sense for ethics and process

### **2. Board member job description:**

- 1) To identify and uphold purpose for which the Association exists. What is its mission? What does it commit itself to be and do?
- 2) To provide a plan by which the stated mission becomes operational: from an annual work plan to a long range plan, including measurable goals and budget
- 3) Modify or create the executive's job description as needed based on approved annual and long range plans
- 4) Support the executive and review performance on an annual basis
- 5) To safeguard the Association's assets and future liability of the organization and to ensure the availability of resources needed to implement the approved plan
- 6) Help manage resources effectively
- 7) Determine and monitor the organization's programs and services

- 8) Enhance the organization's public image
- 9) Create a board of director's job description and review on an annual basis
- 10) Assess its own performance on an annual basis
- 11) To provide accountability to the membership
- 12) Is aware of the following documents:
  - Legal charters/article of incorporation
  - The by-laws
  - The minute book
  - The board approved policies
  - Any organizational chart
  - Strategic plan
  - Annual plan and operating budget
- 13) Attend and participate in board meetings - regular meetings, and annual planning sessions - to effectively meet above objectives
- 14) Attend and participate in committee meetings
- 15) Participate in conferences, both as a representative and to provide support
- 16) Prepare in advance for meetings to make educated decisions, through review of materials including budgets
- 17) Disclose any conflict of interest
- 18) Represents the membership to the BDA, but also represents the BDA to the members acting as an ambassador for the BDA
- 19) Always acts with prudence and ethics, adhering to the values and policies of the BDA, and putting the best interests of the Association before your own
- 20) Continually educate yourself on those issues related to the mission of the BDA, and guide the association's progress in obtaining results for the community we serve.
- 21) RESIGN IF YOU CANNOT PERFORM THESE DUTIES

### **3. Application and nominating process:**

The Association welcomes new applications and nominations particularly from the Southeast, Northwest, Mid-Atlantic, and the Rocky mountain regions of the US as well as from Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia as these areas are currently not represented. Remember think of people that fit the above listed characteristics. Applicants need to fill out an application form, and will be invited to a board meeting whereby a formal interview is conducted. Prospective board members are invited to one of our semi annual board retreats and are voted in by consensus of all current board members.

### **4. Preparing the new board member to serve effectively:**

There are three components to this process:

- \* Board members are all asked to sign a "board letter of commitment" and a "conflict of interest statement".
- \* The new board members is handed a board manual
- \* The new board member will be mentored by a current board member through the orientation period.

**The board manual includes:**

- \* Current board of director list with addresses phone numbers, phone and emails. Phone numbers and emails of the association including where Chuck can be reached at all times.
- \* By-laws of the BDA
- \* Mission statement of the BDA
- \* Listing of programs and description
- \* Board member job description
- \* Organizational chart
- \* Board policies broken down by category
- \* Brief overview of Association's purpose and history
- \* Annual board calendar
- \* Annual report
- \* Annual budget
- \* Strategic Plan
- \* Certified audit
- \* Minutes of the last 12 monthly board meetings

**5. Board Self Assessment Form:**

**1. Activities:**

	Yes	No	Unc.	Notes
The board understands that its accountability includes financial responsibilities accounting and control, and social/ethical decisions				
Good printed materials about the Association are available in an attractive and up to date format, and the Association receives positive media attention				
The board represents the Association to the public and members, gives reports and listens to public's and member's needs and concerns				
The board approves selection of the Association's attorney				

**2. Relation to Executive Director:**

	Yes	No	Unc.	Notes
The board selects a ED and delegates to him full responsibility for all duties except those reserved by the board				
The board establishes an annual performance plan for the CEO and monitors and evaluates annually				
Has created a succession plan for the ED				
The board recognizes the importance of the ED's physical, mental, spiritual and social health and commissions the board chairperson to address these matters specifically and sensitively with the ED				

**3. Approves Mission, Policies, Goals and Plans:**

	Yes	No	Unc.	Notes
The mission, purpose and value of the association are clearly defined and approved by the board				

The board consistently focuses its attention and time on mission fulfillment, goal achievement, and values rather than on operations and procedures				
The board hold itself responsible for the strategic and long term plans for the Association and gives time each year to address, update and monitor those plans				
General operating policies, employee handbooks, and job description are in writing, are easily accessible and regularly updated				
The Association meets all laws, regulations (local, state, national, international), above and beyond the bare minimum required, including quality and safety				

**4. Monitors Financial Structure and Activity:**

Yes No Unc. Notes

The board approves all changes in capital structure				
The board approves an income and expense budget				
The board approves and monitors all long and short term borrowing				
Insurance coverage for board, staff, facilities and programs is monitored regularly				
The board authorizes an annual independent financial audit and reviews the report with the auditor				
The board authorizes all bank signatures				
The board oversees all fund-raising activities				
The board establishes financial procedures which are completely and accurately followed, including billing, accounts management, accounting, taxes etc.				

**5. Monitors, Reviews and Appraises Management :**

Yes No Unc. Notes

The board approves the operational organizational relationships				
The board reviews and approves compensation for key staff and a compensation plan for all staff, including pension plans				

**6. Monitors Performance of Management :**

Yes No Unc. Notes

The board receives and monitors –at least quarterly- financial and operations reports				
The board reviews and critiques deficiencies in performances and assists in remedies				

**7. Responsible for Management of the Board:**

Yes No Unc. Notes

The board operates with a clear and current set of by-laws with which all board members are familiar				
Roles and responsibilities of board and committees are well defined and understood, with descriptions for each				
New board members receive orientation in all aspects of the board's work				
The board creates committees of the board, defines their functions, and dissolves them as appropriate				
The board has an executive committee to handle matters which may come up between meetings. (Its authority needs to be specified in the by-laws)				
Training for board work is a regular part of its annual plan				
A procedure for appraisal of the board and individual member's performance is done regularly				

### 8. Board Meetings:

	Yes	No	Unc.	Notes
All members actively participate in each meeting of the board and committees to which they are assigned				
The board has an effective procedure for decision making which it follows; all appropriate persons are involved in the process. Board meetings are effective				
The board has executive sessions (without staff) regularly.				
The board receives regular reports from both the chair and the CEO				
Board and committee minutes are circulated to members soon after each meeting				
There is a clear separation of board functions and responsibility from management functions and responsibility				
Major proposals are thoroughly processed before they are presented and are available in written form				