ACTIVATING YOUR BOARD IN A CRISIS
MAY 5, 2020
COVID-19 CRISIS  ➔  SOCIAL CRISIS

PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS
- Fear
- Isolation
- Limited Access to Supports
- Stress
- Disability
- Death
- Government Disruption

ECONOMIC CRISIS
- Anxiety
- Unemployment
- Business Disruption
- Financial Stress
- Bankruptcy
- Government Reallocation
- Philanthropic Pressure

Global
Unprecedented
Ever-changing
Risks unknown
Stressors
Trauma

Complicates/Interrupts Service Delivery
Creates Extraordinary Service Demand
Increasing Need for Funds
Funding Sources At Risk

SOCIAL CRISIS
COVID-19 CRISIS ➞ SOCIAL CRISIS

PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS
- Fear
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Global Opportunities
Innovation
Collaboration
Empathy
Resilience

ECONOMIC CRISIS
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SOCIAL CRISIS
Essential Elements of a High-Performance Board

- Clear Roles and Responsibilities
- Effective Communication
- Trust
- Integrity

High Performance Board
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN A CRISIS

Shared Focus: Purpose and Viability

Staff/Management

Health & Safety
Immediate Needs & Obstacles
Day to Day operations

Resource Allocation

The Board

Oversight & Monitoring
Risk Management

External

Volunteers
Survivors/ Clients
Partners
Donors

Shared Approach: Tentative, Experimental and Iterative

Fundraising
Strategy
Community

Planning
Advocacy
Relationship Building
Stewardship
BOARDS ENGAGEMENT

**Micro-Management**

- Unclear roles and responsibilities
- Lack of trust
- Lack of clarity on priorities and goals
- Lack of generative thinking
- Misaligned committee structure
- Lack of staff

**Effectively Engaged**

- Clarity on roles and responsibilities
- Clarity on priorities and goals
- Accountability
- Active and aligned committee structure
- Strong strategic and generative discussions

**Lack of Engagement**

- Unclear roles and responsibilities
- Managing their own professional or personal crisis
- Lack of clarity about expectations
- Lack of generative thinking
- Committees Inactive
- Lack of inclusiveness

*Where is your board on this continuum?*
COVID-19 CRISIS – STRUCTURE

A typical approach in a stable environment

Staff
- Support board at all levels
- Raise issues, provide data and reports

Board Chair & CEO
- Raise issues
- Set Agenda
- Prioritize actions

Committee Leaders
- Work through issues
- Bring recommendation to board

Board
- Discuss and act on committee recommendations
- Raise issues and push out to committee or staff
COVID-19 CRISIS – STRUCTURE

How does it really work?
COVID-19 CRISIS – PROBLEM-SOLVING

Agile Approach

1. Establish goals, priorities and values
2. Understand the situation
3. Develop options
4. Predict outcomes for each option
5. Choose the best course of action
6. Execute

Engage your board and staff in this process

COVID-19 CRISIS – TIME FRAME

THREE PHASES FOR BOARD ENGAGEMENT

1. Current In The Crisis
2. Transition To a Reimagined, Restructured Operating Environment
Three Modes of Governance

**Oversight**
*Board as fiduciaries*
What do we know? What do we need to know? How do we close the gaps between the two?

**Foresight**
*Board as strategists*
Conduct postmortems when things go wrong and pre-mortems to develop best-case scenarios and what can be done to ensure better outcomes.

**Insight**
*Board as generative thinkers*
Decide what to decide; how do we want to think about the issues we’re facing?

Source: “Governance As Leadership: Reframing the Work of Non-Profit Boards”, Richard P. Chait, William P. Ryan, and Barbara E. Taylor, 2004
WHO LEADS? WHO FOLLOWS?

CEO/ED
To preserve the organization’s mission and values while ensuring that they can continue to serve their community for the long-term.

BOARD
To support the CEO/ED effectively and efficiently while maintaining their governance role.

"Servant leadership is all about making the goals clear and then rolling your sleeves up and doing whatever it takes to help people win. In that situation, they don't work for you; you work for them." -Ken Blanchard
SUMMARY

Frame the crisis and your situation

Know your board’s capacity to engage

Engage your board in all three modes

Build a constructive partnership

Stay safe and healthy – this is a marathon
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