

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF SOMEONE RUNNING FOR THE BOARD – ARE YOU READY?

Good for you! It is a heady place to be and one that many members aspire to reach. Here is a synopsis of what is expected:

The over-arching role of the Board is governance of Sweet Adelines International. The Board, using research assistance from committees, task forces, and staff, makes appropriate policy decisions after open and honest discussion bearing the needs of the organization as a whole in mind. The role of our employed staff is to bring to reality the decisions of the IBOD. While the decisions of the IBOD inform the scope of the work of the employees, the CEO is responsible to ensure completion of all strategic initiatives.

There are often misconceptions around governance versus management. While Regional Management Teams are charged with managing the affairs of the regions, the IBOD does not manage what happens at the corporate, regional or chapter level. The IBOD is the governing body that sets the strategic plan for the organization based on the mission and vision statements. The strategic plan is a living document that drives the decisions of the IBOD to move the organization forward. It is regularly revised as needed.

There are many desirable characteristics of the “ideal” Board member (see attached), but the ability to ensure that all members in all areas of the organization are taken into consideration when making decisions is the most important one. There can be no agendas to favor one region or educational program. Nominees are expected to have a varied level of administrative experience within the organization, and/ or outside it, and be able to articulate why the organization exists. Because Sweet Adelines International strives to be a visionary organization, each Board member must be willing to adapt to changing ideas, technology, and circumstances. In addition, regular open communication among Board members leads to decision-making in the best interests of the organization.

Board members are charged with the fiduciary responsibility of creating and implementing a multi-million-dollar budget that allows the music to go forth unimpeded, and fulfils the ultimate mission of the organization. While it is not required or expected that Board members have a financial background, they must have the ability to read, process and understand financial information.

Decisions made by the Board are made after the give-and-take of information and opinions. Board members should have some knowledge of group dynamics and group decision-making in order to contribute positively to discussions without dominating the process. The Board meets three times a year, mostly in-person, however any regular or special meeting of the Board may be conducted by tele/video conference. Many decisions take place via email and it is essential that a Board member be able to contribute in a timely fashion to these discussions.

Corporate officers, also known as the Executive Committee, are all elected or appointed members of the Board. They are assisted by salaried employees in performing the duties that cannot be accomplished by volunteers away from the office. The International President is assisted by the Chief Executive Officer, the International Secretary by Corporate Services, and the International Treasurer by the Chief Financial Officer. Although duties are delegated to salaried employees, the Board holds its officers responsible for the full range of duties and elects officers capable of filling the defined jobs.

During their term, Board members are expected to make a personal financial contribution to Sweet Adelines International to nurture the culture of philanthropy and to demonstrate to members and funders that 100% of SA Board members are so strongly committed to the organization that they make a contribution to the organization. Contributions of any amount from individual board members:

- Declare publicly that each board member is personally invested in the financial health and future of Sweet Adelines International
- Position the board as a credible ambassador of philanthropy to potential individual donors
- Help foster a culture of philanthropy among other organizational leaders and staff
- Fulfill the requirements of many foundations and corporate donors who will not make a gift to organizations that do not have 100% board giving

Being elected or appointed to the IBOD by your peers is a privilege and an honor, and one that should not be taken lightly. You are a representative of the entire organization and as such, must be cognizant of keeping the global perspective in mind. The Sweet Adelines International Board of Directors mentorship program enable new board members to integrate quickly and effectively and helps current board members further develop board service skills.

If you have any questions or would like more information, contact the Board Resource Advisory Committee by sending an email to exec@sweetadelines.com.