# February 24, 2021 Board Governing Training

 5:30pm ET

 >> Just briefly,

I want to just remind people that when you're on the

council, you're actually on, you're fulfilling two

roles. You're on the board of directors of the

501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and a governor

appointee for the SILC council. The 501(c)(3)

corporation has the ability to do all things addition

to what the goals of the SILC are under federal

regulations.

 The nonprofit organization is also the employer of

record for Steve and Tracy. And the budget function

come up for nonprofits. And we haven't really tapped

into the nonprofit component much of our organization.

(dog barking) and my hope is that we do more of that.

Because I think it gives us some flexibility and where

we are in AHEAD. We asked Joel to join us and say what

does governance mean as a board of director.

 Being on the council and the board of directors

work hand in hand and you'll see a lot of overlap. Our

ex officio members are not board of director members

but they're valuable to us.

 I'd like to go around and introduce yourself to

Joel. Maybe tell him a little bit about how long

you've been on the council and your reason for being on

the council and what you do, do you want to share your

job? That's great, too.

 I'm going to go down the list which means, Bill,

you're first.

 >> Joel, Mr. Cooper, can you hear me? I'm Bill

Addison and work for MRS. I see you at least monthly

and soon we'll see each other more here I'm sure.

 >> Thank you. Mark? I know you know Joel.

 Will you just go ahead and introduce yourself so

we're all on the same page.

 >> I said I'm from MRS. I've known Joel a long

time. I have heard several people tell me that Joel's

training on board members and responsibilities is very

good. So Joel, the expectation is real high right now

for you. Okay.

 >> Mark Pierce, I know you know Joel, just quickly

say who you are?

 >> I'm Mark Pierce, as a matter of fact, I think

the SILC should also know me also. Executive director

of the disability network -- area. I'm the liaison for

the SILC and the network relaying information and

things that goes on with the CILs.

 I also have placed the bar up pretty high for

Joel. He is an excellent facilitator. And I'm just

looking forward to refreshers on how board governance

should be ran. But he does a great thing.

 I could be nice enough to pass it if you would

like me do that?

 >> Pass what?

 >> I can pass it over to Stephanie.

 >> Oh, sure. We can do that.

 I like that.

 >> Hi, my name is Stephanie and I'm currently the

executive director of the -- America which is an

education based organization working to develop

advocates and I recently just was selected as an

ambassador for the Michigan disability rights coalition

working to help them with facilitating youth

engagement. That is something that I'm taking on.

 And I will pass its over to Jan.

 >> Thank you, Stephanie. I'm Jan, I am a

retired -- chapter director and currently I work with

the ARC Michigan and the DD council and Wayne State

University on a variety of public policy related

objectives. I'm also the mom of a young person with

autism and he is anxiously awaiting for his apartment

to be ready so he is move into his own place.

 I will pass it onto Mindy.

 >> Gosh, Joel, it's nice to see you. My name is

Mindy Kulasa and I have had the pleasure of serving on

your board for going on, gosh, 3 and a half, 4 years.

 I currently serve as treasurer of the SILC. And I

substitute teach in my part time. I'm working with

kids who have disabilities. Who identify as having

disabilities. Those are my favorite classrooms to

substitute teach in.

 So thank you for joining us, sir.

 >> You're welcome.

 >> How about Will, you're the last picture I see

on my screen.

 >> Oh, boy. All right. Hi, I'm Will. I am the

vice chair of the SILC, still learning what that really

means and what that looks like. It's my second year on

the SILC and it's been an amazing experience. I'm a

social worker, I work in Oakland county for an

organization called [indiscernible] and I -- as an

adult with disabilities in Oakland county. So

disability services and what would I do -- I am an

adult with disabilities but also have little kids with

disabilities.

 So kind of what that means to be on the SILC is

I'm really passionate for creating space for parents

who, creating space for parents who have disabilities.

I really feel like all my resources focus on the

individuals and not the parents.

 So that's where I'd like to start an organization

that focuses on providing care for parents of kids with

disabilities because it's a very big need.

 >> Thank you, Will. Let's see, Janet Timbs?

 >> Hi, everyone, I'm Janet Timbs with the office

of special education. I'm the liaison from the

Michigan department of ed. I work in performance

reporting. We do all the data collection, the

monitoring, and reporting to the federal government.

 I'm glad to be here tonight.

 >> Thank you Janet, did I miss anybody?

 >> Yes, Jamia.

 >> I'm so sorry.

 >> My name is Jamia Davis and I serve as secretary

on the SILC. This is my, my first year of serving.

I'm an attorney at Children and Truth and my focus area

is estate planning and special needs planning.

 I'm very passionate about helping other people, in

particular persons with disabilities and I myself have

a disability so I'm really passionate about advocating

and just getting resources to people.

 >> Thank you. I'm going to turn it over -- did I

miss somebody.

 >> This is Vendella.

 >> I'm the executive director of the Michigan

Disabilities Council. On this particular board, I serve

as the representative for the department of health and

human services. Thank you.

 >> Thank you everybody for coming.

 So this meeting, a little different than our

normal business meetings. Very informal. You can

direct your questions and stuff to Joel and he can

field that. I don't have to call on you or anything

like that. This is not a -- there are no decisions

being made. There are no motions being made. This is

really just a training.

 At the end we will save some time for public

comments just in case I don't see any guests right now

but we'll check again at the end and offer that.

 I don't know that Joel remembers me, but I knew of

Joel years and years ago when I was the director of

advocacy for Michigan protection and advocacy. He was

one of our go-to people when he had advocacy things, we

would call Joel for help. He is someone we've known of

for years.

 I got the pleasure of talking with you one on one

recently as part of the SILC chair, getting to know the

CILs and very impressed with what you do and taking the

time to help us move forward as a SILC council.

 With that I'm going to turn it over to you to

introduce yourself and start the train.

 >> Good evening. Thank you Yvonne. I wish to

extend my appreciation to the committee and Steve

Locke, thank you Jamia and Will. And Steve. What a

nice opportunity for me to address the statewide

independent living council.

 Over my 20 years I've has the pleasure of

interacting with the council members in a variety of

ways, most through public comment but I have been asked

to present as well as different council meetings on

various topics.

 Tonight, as part of a new format for you, with an

education theme, I really complement you on making that

wonderful change. This is a great opportunity. I feel

like I've been chosen to lead this off as you're very

first education presentation.

 I feel honored that in regard.

 It also feels like, with having my colleague Bill

Addison here, that a continuation of our virtual audit

he is conducting on our CIL at this time. I hope to

say good things because maybe I will get an extra

blues.

 >> It's all part of the audit.

 >> Bill knows me well enough as well as Steve and

Mindy. I like to share tidbits of information before I

get into the real theme for tonight.

 I'm happy to announce T just announced by a group

called peer wow. Kalamazoo, Michigan is our head

quarters for independent living, they were chosen as

the No. 1 city in the United States of America to live

because it has the lowest cost of living. So

congratulations, Kalamazoo, Michigan, quite an honor.

 If you're interested in the link to the story, I

will be more than happy to share it with you

afterwards. There is my tidbit of today but it's right

in our backyard. So it's hard to resist.

 This is an interesting opportunity. I'm going to

share a little about me because it's important to know

where I come from in regards to the last 49 years. My

disability rights movement started in 1972. I was the

very first community inclusion coordinator for the

Easter Seals Society of Ingham County in 1972.

 That was only 18 years before the ADA, just to put

it in perspective. So inclusion wasn't even a thought

and the barriers were enormous. What a great challenge

for me to leap into the disability rights movement.

 I guess I must have done something right because

the city of lancing hard about it and they wanted to

duplicate the program.

 I had a chance to work there and do additional

services there as I was going through school at

Michigan State. So great opportunity.

 However, my real passion, I have to say started in

a community mental health agency. And I was a program

director there for 25 years. I spent most of my time

closing things down. So not to be negative, but I

closed things down and opened up new avenues for people

with disabilities to be part of their community.

 I spent most of my 25 years closing the state

institution and providing alternative housing

arrangements for many, many people. I ran a program

that was several million dollars, nearly 300 people

employed. And that just started many other things in a

domino effect of my advocacy to start closing other

things, including maybe the first work activity center

for people with developmental disabilities in the state

of Michigan that I closed in 1994.

 Think about that, 1994. I asked my board of

directors in 1990 if I could close it and they said,

no, that is not happening, Joel. Not going to do that

now.

 So I worked hard in the next 4 years and made it a

reality. And other opportunities then opened up,

really, in massive ways for employment.

 I started the first supportive independent living

arrangement as part of other alternatives including

people owning their own home. Wonderful relationship

with farmer's home administration.

 And it just goes on and on and I'm only saying

these things so you know where I'm grounded in regards

to, that I've been around.

 But finally, I was always an advocate and I'm so

happy, I think it was Jan that mentioned her connection

to ART and advocacy. Believe it or not, I was the

president of our local ARC for five years. Because

they were almost ready to abandon that. And I said,

no, we're not going that. I stepped in and volunteered

until other people could come to be the leaders of

that.

 But in 2001, I had the great opportunity to really

see the reality of my involvement with the center for

independent living.

 I tried to originate one in northern Michigan but

that was way back in the mid 90s, there was no funding,

it was not a reality at that time.

 Here we are. Believe it or not, it's 20 years

later that I've been with disability network southwest

Michigan and I just want to say, it's been just a great

opportunity to work with so many great partners, both

local, regional as well as in our state departments

across the state of Michigan.

 As many of you know, we use the tag line, it was

the first one to come up with it, we're the first stop

for people with disabilities and their families in

southwest Michigan. That tag line caught on. We use

it in our annual report.

 The other thing I want to note, we are

experiencing, this year, and celebrating our 40th

anniversary. So I go back and think about the history

of our organization. If you go on our website, you can

learn about the article that was in our most recent

newsletter that took you back to 40 years ago.

 And then brought you up to where we are today.

 Very excited about the happenings that will happen

this year, remotely, of course, just like this evening.

And Steve knows me well enough as well as Mark, that I

would love to be with you in person because that's the

kind of presenter that I prefer to be. But we'll do

our best that we can here in this remote arrangement.

 I know Mindy knows me all too well in having our

relationship over the last 3 and a half, almost 4 years

where I like to interact with people in ways where we

can be in close proximity.

 It's my belief, I'm going to talk about board

governance and give lots of examples. I'm going to

really, the theme tonight is promising practices for

excellence in nonprofits and I'm going to share my

screen, thank you, Tracy for allowing that to happen.

 I know that I won't be able to see everyone now

but I think, Yvonne, thanks for saying, just yell out.

Stop me from talking if there is a question. And I'll

try to make sure, and maybe Yvonne, if you notice

somebody with their hand up or they put their hand up

on the thing, you'll call my attention to it.

 >> I'll also keep an eye on the chat, too. If

anybody wants to put a question in the chat, I'll read

it to Joel so that he can follow up on it, too.

 >> Thanks, I appreciate that, Yvonne.

 I'm going to talk about some promising practices

for excellence in nonprofit governance. I want to tell

you a little bit about why that is important to me.

 It's my belief and realization through personal

board member experience. I have been part of seven

different nonprofits. I really believe the real

strength of any nonprofits, including CILs is based

upon the strength of its board of governance. When it

achieves the description that I'll use, excellence in

board governance.

 My board and Mindy know that I make reference to

them all the time with the word "excellence" because

they're pursuing it all the time. We have made so many

wonderful changes over the last 20 years.

 I would say it's safe to say that an organization,

when you reach that mature level of excellence, you

have a structure in place that will endure all the

challenges and be around for a long time to ensure the

mission is carried out and that the vision is realized.

 In fact, we're going to talk a little bit about

that in just a minute.

 I'm going to refer to promising practices as a

strategy or a policy that shows potential for

demonstrating positive outcomes for developing into

best practices.

 I'm not professing that everything I'm saying is a

best practice because we're still proving it. Even at

disabilities network southwest Michigan.

 I know that many of the examples I'm going to

share have high expectations for engagement at an

extensive level. Engagement, that means time together.

That is something I think Yvonne is starting in her

leadership to see value in.

 Time together with council members. The more time

you have, you'll be reaching things you would have

never expected before.

 So some leaders I know of nonprofits that I've

talked to and both, even agency leadership say it's

just not feasible. That level of engagement is not

achievable.

 I have a hypothetical that I think more engagement

provides for more assurances of greater transparency of

all aspects of nonprofits organizations.

 This is based on my 40 years of being in

nonprofits and most of them I've been the board

treasurer. I've been a founding member of a community

cancer support group called friend together. They

celebrated their 20th anniversary three years ago.

 I have been board treasurer of a Multicounty

Public Transit Authority. I've been the board

treasurer of a state chapter of disability association.

 Yvonne, were we just invaded or something?

 >> Yes, we were. And I just kicked him out.

 >> Okay.

 We have two others in a waiting room and I'm going

to remove them as well.

 >> I've been a board member of our regional senior

services of southwest Michigan. Currently still part

of their organization as an HR committee member. I'm

currently the board treasurer of Michigan coalition

rights. And I served on the Michigan board of

directors 18 of my 20 years.

 And then, of course, these experiences that I've

had over 20 years with network of southwest Michigan.

 What I learned over that much time in the

different roles, it requires a board member to be

vibrant and a courageous leader. I'm talking fully

engaged and liveliness and courageous.

 The ability to face difficulty and uncertainty

without being over come of the fare factor of the

chosen course of action.

 And challenges sometimes as a volunteer in a

nonprofit can be scary. You just never know. It's

courageous work and I admire our council members who

are here this evening for their volunteer time to be

appointed by governor --

 Engaged and vibrate and courageous leaders exist,

the -- is evident in all practices.

 When the board does not know specifics about how

an organization is operated or there is no transparency

on a regular basis about financial status, I know Bill

Addison appreciates that, that's a critical piece about

financial status or service delivery outcome. The

organization can find itself out of touch and cannot

function in all of the proper and ethical manners it's

required to.

 In my role as the CEO, I have said to many, I'm

not the organization. No. Do I get to represent our

vision and our voice and all my activities? Of course

I do.

 The role of the CEO is to keep the board of

directors informed with the greatest amount of

integrity and transparency of all operations, services,

and future planning to ensure the mission is fulfilled.

 So when this necessary engagement between CEO and

board members is lacking or sporadic or disconnected,

it's setting the organization up for a potential

failure.

 Which in some cases may take a long time to

uncover and even more challenging, long time to recover

when the unpredictable occurs and unfortunate things

can happen where a nonprofit actually fails.

 And I've been knowledgeable of those examples that

exist with other nonprofits.

 So, I'm going to talk a little bit, let's go into

this next slide. Now, let's talk about this question.

What makes a nonprofit board of directors strong and

sustainable in their board governance leadership.

 The first thing I want to point out is related to

the mission.

 The mission should be the primary focus of all

board business.

 And it comes in a variety of ways of how board

governance becomes engaged in the mission. It may

include program development input. It's certainly on

setting financial priorities. It's certainly related

to financial sustainability and healthiness for the

future.

 And it involves in our organization, strategic

thinking to be embraced in how we make decisions. I

want to be able to share with you tonight how that

works in our organization as a promising practice using

strategic thinking.

 Let's look at our mission and you'll get an idea

here if the screen is up. You'll notice the mission

statement that states disabilities network southwest

Michigan educates and empowers people with disabilities

to create change in their own lives and advocate for

social change to create inclusive communities.

 I just want to pause for a minute. We created

this very intentional new mission, almost 13, 14 years

ago.

 It was when I had a board of directors that really

wanted to be change agents in all the right ways of

taking board governance to the highest level possible.

Incredible dedication.

 And they wanted to have a mission that really

resonated on behalf of community members with

disabilities and we spent enormous time to make sure

that it was no more than 13 words.

 And so the challenge there, that's a premise that

we use. It will not be more than 13 words. And we

work both board and staff, I can't tell you how many

hours we spent on these two statements. But that is

part of the ownership of board, right. It starts

there. They can be the buy in of how important it is

to be focused on mission.

 With great intentionality by our board to work,

the word Smithing in small groups and we brought back

the wisdom from small groups into the larger group.

And again, constant word Smithing. No different on the

vision.

 And the vision, of course is our dream. It's the

top of our mountain that we want to see in southwest

Michigan. It acts as a catalyst for change.

Communities include and empower and support all persons

with disabilities.

 That's the dream we're working on and I know that

we're, we have many examples that I could tell you

about that we're getting so close of realizing that

change in communities.

 And I'm not here tonight to talk about those as

much as I would love to. I might hint on a few of

them. There is a possibility. Mindy knows me well

enough that you can't have me this much time without

bragging about some of our services.

 Tonight, is an emphasis on the excellence in board

governance.

 Mission, vision, very important. Has to be all

inclusive all of those that are buying into it.

 It cannot exclude others.

 Let's move to this concept of setting board member

expectations high. I have several bullet points here

or several things on the current slide that I want to

talk about. Critical roles of board governance. So

we'll get into each of these a little bit. I won't go

into great detail but enough to give you a sense of how

important each of these items are.

 When I say, setting expectations high, I'm talking

about preparing board members to know how to be a board

member. I mean not everybody comes into this job

knowing that, oh, yeah, a board member, that is

nothing. What? You want me to show up four times a

year for an hour? That's cool. I can do that.

 No, that is not setting high expectations.

Training is such an important part. Board member

orientation. We go through extensive roles.

Orientation now is between 6 to 8 hours and we don't do

it in a whole day. That is too much information.

 We spread it out. In fact, this year with new

board members we're doing it in one-hour increments.

Zoom meetings are exhausting, right. A one-hour Zoom

meeting is about all that we can do. I think it's been

quite positive.

 We also, when available, we want outside expert

opinion. Over the years, Kalamazoo has been able to

provide that with training of board governance from a

different perspective. Not listening to our own board

members or the CEO, in this case.

 But hearing it also from another entity that was

trained in providing board member training. That

entity, we've been able to do that up until the last

couple years. It's not available now to do that.

 We're still searching and we'll circle back on

that.

 Another key thing is mentoring. And Mindy will

share with you -- not tonight -- but she will share

with you that is one important thing she experienced

herself and now she is mentoring our two new board

members. I think she is dedicating at least an hour a

week on a variety of topics of great interest to them

and an opportunity to ask questions.

 The high expectations then of learning about the

operations, hearing from different staff, when they

want to know about a program, they need to ask my

program director or program manager.

 Not the CEO. Okay. So they need to know who

those people are. And so that's who, that's who is

presenting the information when it's time to present on

service delivery models of services we provide.

 The expectation here is board members need to rise

to the occasion. We're setting a high bar. That is

what needs to happen.

 And maybe people will realize that it's too much,

right. They might not stay. But that's okay. That

has happened in the past as well.

 But a commitment and a level of dedication is

where the great governance occurs. Board members need

to come prepared, they need to rise to the occasion.

They work diligently as a group.

 And this is the one that I think is most important

to me, because they need to expect to be intellectually

tasked by complex and consequential questions. Think

about it. This is not an easy job.

 Be prepared for tough questions. Be prepared to

handle complex situations.

 Again, the CEO's role is to prepare them so they

can have the great interaction that is required in

those board governance meetings.

 The duty of loyalty is simply stated. Your

interest of nonprofit organization come ahead of your

personal and professional interests.

 Avoid activities that represent a conflict of

interest. And have a conflict-of-interest board policy

that is reviewed and signed off on annually. I'll show

you that example if there is time.

 Again, it's all around conflict of interest. It's

something that you need to review on a more frequent

basis. Because conflicts can arise. If a board member

is going to be on your board for several years, then

conflicts could arise. Let's be very open and

transparent in that regard.

 The duty of obedience, again, maybe interesting

choice of words, but again, obey internal policies and

bylaws and external laws.

 And I'm going to show you examples of some pretty

nontraditional things that our board of governance, our

board of directors did with bylaws and board

administration policies.

 I want to show you a contrast of that, of these

two different sets of important policies and bylaws.

 You have to know those. You have to have training

on them. You have to have them as a resource and

reference. Even during meetings, they need to be

available because a question could come up and that is

your resource to guide the board.

 Duty of confidentiality. I think this goes

without saying, I know that the SILC council certainly

has to keep many of their things that they do,

especially if it's in executive sessions, confidential.

Internal proceedings need to be kept confidential.

Unless there is some required law that needs to make

them transparent.

 Especially, in executive sessions.

 And providing a united front in conversations

outside of the meetings. Many times this is where

board governance runs astray. And board members think

they now, being on the board, they can speak on behalf

of the board while in the community.

 I think that's where there's sometimes a gray area

of making sure that we're respecting duty of

confidentiality.

 That's a good topic for board members to talk

about openly. They need to know what's their role in

the community. Okay. I'm going to make reference to

different examples of roles of board members in the

community. But this one, as a board member, you have

to be, I think very sensitive in regards to speaking on

behalf of the board or the agency.

 Protection against liabilities. This is one that

I think is important. It's one that I know Bill

expects us to have in our contract requirements.

 With insurances. So liability can arise when the

duty of care and the loyalty of obedience are breached.

The board needs protections and they need protections

against these liabilities including prudent and careful

oversight. Director and office liability insurance.

Personal liability related to the professional

liability of our employees.

 I recommend these should be reviewed periodically

by the board. The board should know these policies

exist.

 In fact, right now, I can tell you, Mindy and I

having, along with our board members a discussion on

insuring that as we move to some ad hoc committees,

does our policy protect volunteers coming to serve on

an ad hoc as part of a CEO search committee.

 Sometimes it's necessary to make sure your policy

gets viewed and reviewed with a legal opinion. So that

is a process that we're going through right now.

 But reviewed and understood by the board of

directors is very important.

 Duties and roles of the board.

 Well, duties explain how the board behaves when

fulfilling roles and responsibilities. And roles and

responsibilities is really what the board does. I'm

going to show you some of our examples as well a little

later.

 I mentioned earlier about strategic thinking and

it comes into play here nicely, I think, as part of

talking with all of you.

 This is really a decision making process that we

came up with over 12 years ago. And it was a very

nontraditional way of looking into the future. And the

future is tomorrow, right. It's right there in front

of us. It's not five years from now. This is not a

strategic plan of thinking, what is five years from

now. No. This is being active and reactive

immediately, now.

 So the definition of what we have come up with as

the guidance is designed to facilitate intentional

discussion about furthering the agency's mission and

vision. Use the criteria listed below to initiate a

discussion when disability network is presented with a

new idea, a relationship, a program, a new direction, a

new service and a new opportunity.

 All these things happen. Sometimes they are

planned to happen at a later time. But we want to be

able to be ready and responsive now.

 So I can tell you that the development of the

guide continues. We have made so many wonderful

changes with the guide as it has, I guess developed

over these past 12 years.

 We still have a strategic thinking work group made

up of both board and staff who rotate around on a

couple year rotation. And again, this is about how do

we respond to what is potentially possible for us. The

board has used it. You will see evidence that

strategic thinking is part of our agenda. I'll show

you an example of our board meeting agendas.

 You'll see it where Mindy actually in her role

introduces strategic thinking at the start of the

meeting. And then it concludes under comments and

concerns to make sure if we needed to use it. Did we

use it. How did we use it and what was the value that

it provided.

 You're going to see right now examples of, you

know what, excuse me for a minute. My radio just came

on for a reason. I don't know why.

 Must be set on a timer. I apologize for that.

 What we've done here not to get into great detail

because this can be an in-service training. We

dedicated a significant amount of time over the 12

years to really fine tune it to the point of what is

our most important priorities. We have to be able to

have at least one priority, must be met in order to

proceed to the deal breakers. Okay.

 So if we got a new proposition, a new opportunity,

a new service, it has to fit one of those three areas

of most important priorities.

 If it doesn't, it's not about us. Okay. We're

moving on. The board has made decisions around that in

itself on several opportunities that have been

presented to us that were actually related to

generating revenue. Thousands of dollars in revenue.

And yet, we could get past the deal breakers.

 So we said no.

 But we were grounded in our values, in our

beliefs. That is what made it right for us. Okay.

Many times we know nonprofits go out like, doing

something that might be referred to as mission drift.

Right. Mission wandering.

 Well, this keeps us from doing that because this

is our criteria for making decisions.

 You'll see the deal breakers, they're in no order

of importance. But must be able to say, yes to all.

To all of them in order to proceed. And there's four

different examples. Again, these have been provided to

you in advance so you do have this to refer back to at

a later time. Rather than for me to go through each of

the deal breakers here.

 I think, you know, again, does it align with the

independent living philosophy. There is a strong

statement. Then we question our own selves about, what

is the independent living philosophy. We get to have

great dialogue around that with staff and board.

 And these others in no order of importance, No. 3

is of course important to address. Because there may

be things that we might want to pursue and we answered

yes to the deal breakers but now we got this other set

of questions that may be complex in nature that may

have to have additional work. Right.

 We have to do additional research to really know.

Or we might say, we can obtain a yes to these answers

but it will require additional things to be in place.

 I want you to know that this is a standing agenda

item at all staff meetings, all team meetings. It's

present. For those that are able to look at me right

now, this is my home office. But I'm pointing at,

right behind me on the wall, is the strategic thinking.

It's wherever I am.

 Now, because it needs to be right there. Right at

our forefront on everything that we're talking and

discussing.

 The reason I'm bringing strategic thinking up,

this is another example of how board governance reaches

the level of excellence. Right. They have a great

guide that helps them to handle complex things that I

mentioned earlier. That can be an intellectually

stressful, too.

 All right.

 Keep your questions coming, anything in the chat,

Yvonne?

 >> Joel, this is Mark.

 >> Hi, Mark.

 >> I was trying to put something in the chat but

for some reason I can't put it in.

 Anyway. I did want -- one of my questions was, so

when you post the thinking strategy, is this something

said before the actual board meeting? Like you read

the mission statement and then you go through the

process of thinking if we're voting on things, these

are some of the things that you should look at? How do

you -- I know you're the board, we all can understand

studying something in the strategic thinking model of

our process, but how do you keep this in front of the

board at all times as far as discussion?

 >> That's a great question. I mentioned that at

the very beginning, when the meeting is called to order

and we do role call to determine quorum, the next thing

that happens after that, right now, Mindy has the

assignment, she makes reference to, remember, folks,

strategic thinking is our guide to help us throughout

our meeting.

 And bring it to our attention if you have a

question or we need to make reference to it. It's

always with our meeting. It's one of those things that

is always available that we can bring up in our Zoom

meeting, if somebody needed to make reference to any

one-over these. Particularly if we're making some

really urgent decisions.

 And the decisions were of high importance. Then

we summarize it at the very end because sometimes we

want to make sure, hey, did anybody actually think

through about a strategic thinking item but didn't

verbally state it? We get a summary if, in fact, it

did.

 Remember we've been working on this for years.

It's almost like, for those of us that have been around

that long and Mindy will say, we have this pretty well

memorized. It's part of who we are. It's so a part of

how we value and believe in things. It's part of our

values and beliefs as well.

 Thanks for the question.

 >> Thank you, Joel.

 >> Yvonne --

 >> The chat room was not working, Joel. The chat

room wasn't working and now it is.

 Will, your question, can we get a hard copy of

this? I think we have one. I think it's included in

your materials, right?

 >> Yes, it's on slide 5 of the PowerPoint that you

had in advance of the meeting.

 >> Thank you for the chat questions.

 >> I did mention beliefs and values that are part

of the strategic thinking. If you look through those

you can see many examples of what we value.

 I wanted to be more open about beliefs and values

and another example of board governance, a role they

can have. We develop collectively and collaboratively

with board members and staff our action steps of

beliefs and values. The board was engaged in

identifying the beliefs and values statements.

 And then the staff began putting some action steps

to those to make them real in variety of ways.

 No. 1, we believe that youth and developing --

youth and developing the next generation of leaders.

That is an important thing that we want to hold up high

and we should be doing some very specific activities

around that.

 In our action steps, I won't go into all the

details of the things that we were doing, but again,

every one of these has several action steps that we're

working on in the past couple years.

 This year, I just talked at our management team

meeting this week, in fact, that we will be reviewing

these this summer in an all-staff meeting. And we'll

dedicate the whole half day to this. And getting ready

to note what changes need to be made for the action

steps to be implemented in October.

 Okay.

 So again, whether these values and beliefs will

change, they may, they may change a little bit. But I

don't think this one on youth/developing the next

generation of leaders. Because we have high regard for

that.

 Another belief is community engagement and

partnerships. Here we're talking about building

relationships with community agencies that focus on

diversity issues. Other disability related

organizations. LBGTQ plus, the POC agencies that can

be done in participating in events hosted by other

agencies, for example, booths and community

presentations.

 We have a specific action plan as to how we're

going to make that action step a reality and bring our

belief that this is important to a level that makes our

organization known, right, by others.

 Again, we're working hard all the time on

diversity and inclusion and of course, I could talk a

little bit about those services. But Yvonne, I'll stay

on board governance.

 The reason I'm bringing this up again is that

boards get to have input on this, see. Input on what

we believe and value.

 Staff development, we've been doing cross

training -- development -- we don't want to work in

silos in our organization.

 So very important that we take time out. Somebody

that does benefits planning actually knows what

somebody else is doing by supporting somebody in

another service area. It could be spending a day with

an INR specialist, you know.

 Cross training, cross observation, the value here

is we believe staff development is important and needs

to continue to be enhanced.

 We're strong advocates of motivational

interviewing. I know that, Mark knows that. We just

completed a training that I have an MI trainer that is

nationally certified.

 We're very adamant about making sure that other

CILs can receive this valuable training.

 We are about innovation. Innovation comes in all

kinds of different ways. We decided that we needed to

have Jan come with us and this is all about employment

accommodations. Okay. We were providing an in service

for the whole region. We did it as a webinar.

 The innovation there is looking at making sure

that people, business owners and employers with learn

about making accommodations for people with

disabilities.

 Agency culture and identity. Making sure that

people know who we are and what we do and that there's

no myth about it. So many times, and Mindy will relate

to this as well as a board member, so many times people

say, why are you such a mystery to us? This is like a

treasure. Nobody knows about you.

 You know, I know I've heard that way too many

times over 20 years. Well, guess what, there's a

reality about that. We do need to work hard on making

sure that our identity is known in all the right ways

and that we are, our service delivery is broad. That

it covers a breadth of supports across all

disabilities.

 And amazing on the different things that we can do

to support people.

 That's the core of CIL, right there. Yes, we'll

support you. We'll figure out a way to do the best we

can to support your effort to get to the top of your

mountain.

 Full access is a theme, access for all. This is a

theme, we beat the loud drum on all the time.

 We announce it every ADA celebration in all the

right ways, access for all. But it's a great value

that has all kinds of action steps we can promote. And

the board gets to be part of that. They can come in

with their ideas and be part of it.

 And diversity and inclusion, we have an ad hoc

committee that has worked extensively on enhancing

diversity and inclusion within our organization but

within working with other organizations as well.

 To make sure they understand that disability is

diversity. And that we need them to relate to us just

as we're relating to their diversity in a variety of

different ways.

 I wanted to bring in a little bit about beliefs

and values just to make sure you understand that board

engagement comes in all kind of different and unique

ways and they should be engaged. They will be engaged

in our new beliefs and values this summer. Mindy

doesn't know that yet because I haven't said anything

about et.

 I'm looking forward to our board engagement on

reviewing this and updating it and moving forward.

 Let's see what the next slide has. One of my

favorite topics to talk about on board governance,

resource development. Resource development is usually

the same related to fundraising. Many people, maybe

not knowing that resource development for us is

resources in a variety of ways.

 Actually volunteerism is a resource. Our

volunteers are part of our resource development

program.

 But tonight, I'm going to say, that resource

development is about the board's role on enhancing

financial resources.

 They have many different ways to do that. We have

an expectation that board members are to participate in

fundraising activities and participate at 100 percent

in all of our annual campaigns. 100 percent

participation.

 We have to be able to make sure that if we're

asking donors to give to our annual campaign, we need

to be bold enough to say, all of our board members have

donated to the campaign or the ramp up program or

whatever the fundraising activity that we have.

 Know how to speak about the agency case statement

and can provide that adequate elevator speech. We

train our board members on this. Three minute elevator

speech. Because you just never know when somebody sees

that you got an emblem that says disabilities network

on a piece of clothing or a T-shirt, what an

opportunity to use that 3 minutes to talk about what

you are, what you do and how that engagement might end

up in a donor relation.

 Board members are advocates for the organization

and its mission. They have many different roles to

perform in that.

 I wanted to kind of just give you a little bit

more about resource development. It's such an

important part of our organization. We have a

developing, our resource development with a very

intentional acts over the last 12 years.

 I want to stop here and I'm going to share with

you another example of how the board gets actively

engaged. Let's see if I can find it real quick.

 I'm going to show you, okay. Let's see if this

one comes up. If I can find it.

 Sharing multiple screens is always tricky, right.

 I know it.

 >> You're doing okay, Joel.

 >> Are you seeing these financial reports? Are

you seeing a financial report?

 >> Yes.

 >> The reason I'm bringing this example up is I

want you to know that board members need to know,

there's got to be great transparency in regards to what

are we going in our resource development. Here already

in our first three months, we're at 78 percent of goal.

 Wow. Yes. I know. Mindy is going, yeah.

 Well, guess what folks, we were very successful on

a grant that came in pretty early.

 So you can see restricted grants, $150,000.

 That does, that is not typical. Here's the reason

I'm showing you this chart, boards need to know and be

informed monthly about the status of where we're

fundraising, our donor relations.

 Very important. You can see all the different

examples. Of course, this chart doesn't show any of

our endowment income. But it will at the next time the

board sees this report. They will see it, a January

report and they will see our endowment came in, was

notified of receiving that.

 And again, endowments are very important part of

board governance. They need to be strong advocates for

knowing that we have to have these endowments.

 Our endowment right now, what came in in January

is $36,364. That's an important piece of our resource

development. Just think what we get to do with that as

part of that endowment and we have four of them at our

local community foundation.

 All right. Enough on that.

 There are three reports that our resource

development director provides the board. A narrative

report that gives an update related to on going

activities. We have a grant matrix report so that the

board knows where did we ask, where are we writing

grants to? How much did we ask for? And the date that

it was approved.

 And then it gets charted on this financial report.

I'm just bringing up an example of the importance of a

role that a board has in regards to resource

development.

 Part of resource development in our organization

is also related to publications, marketing, board

members need to know, what's your printed material?

What are you doing on Facebook? What is your other

social media? What is your website? Do you do a

website analysis? Our board and I work hard on

investing in the SEO analysis of our website. So we

know right now how many hits that we get and where

they're coming from in our region.

 Very important from a standpoint of our

connections to people.

 And why are they hitting on us? What are they

looking for? How much that helps us. And the board

knowing that we're doing that and then we give them an

annual report once a year so they can understand what

we're doing in our world of publication relations as

well as in marketing.

 That's just a little tiny tidbit. I can't show

you all these reports, there are just too many. I'm

hitting some of the important things that the board

sees. And why it's so important.

 This is part of engagement, right. If they know

that we're -- when people bring up disability in

southwest Michigan, guess what, our page is No. 1.

It's on the front page. It took us a while to get that

but we've had work done to make sure we could be. We

would be easy to find.

 I have dedicated data that shows we have increased

our INRs as a result of that over the last five, six

years.

 We also do a data report related to a five-year

trend. That would be another report that the board

gets to see.

 Again, I'm bringing up these examples so that you

know the level of engagement and the knowledge that

board members are receiving throughout the course of a

year.

 When they see our trend of services in all these

different categories of what services, the demographics

related to who we're serving, all of that is so

important for the bigger picture for board members to

understand.

 And they get to have ownership of being able to

really represent disability network and the mission

that we're all about.

 All right. Let's move onto another one.

 Oh, boy. This is Bill Addison's favorite. It's

also one of my favorites. This is titled financial

oversight. If I haven't talked about it, not knowing

that Bill was going to join us, he would have been

disappointed in me.

 So here, this is the greatest transparency, it's

one of -- the most important roles and responsibilities

of a board of directors. And they must know the

financial status of the organization at any given time.

 Great transparency at the highest level. Monthly

financials are prepared for both the finance committee

and the board and presented and presented and reviewed

by the board treasurer and then, of course, I get to

support our board treasurer in those presentations.

 At each monthly board meeting.

 Now, I'm going to talk about board meetings in a

few minutes in regard to it. These are presented at

the board of directors meeting. I'm going to contrast

that with a board work session meeting.

 This is the more official where we have a consent

agenda and I'll show you that in a minute.

 These are the fourth Monday of every month.

 Yes, think of the learning curve. Board members

have to understand statement of activities of budget

versus actual. They have to understand the line items.

There are 30 of them. That is complex. It's hard to

understand. We have to take time to make sure that

they are all knowing and they have a chance to ask

questions.

 They have to know the statement of financial

position as well. Finance committee and board budget

and mid year budget. We always do a mid year budget

around March or April. We did it earlier this year

because of some changes that came up in our core

funding.

 They needed contract amendments. We had to make

that change quicker.

 >> Joel, I have a question. You're saying no

matter what, mid year you have the board relook at the

budget and make adjustments to it and then approve a

new, or an edited budget mid year?

 >> Yes. So there's an amended budgets. We review

every March and April first is a new mid year budget.

Because things change in the year and we need to keep

up with those changes.

 >> Joel? Joel, this is Mindy.

 Would you please comment on the relationship

between financial oversight and fiduciary duty?

 >> If I'm understanding your question, the

fiduciary duty that Mindy is making reference to, of

course, is the fact that we have obligations to make

sure that we are following in all the right ways, the

appropriate general accounting principles.

 If that's, Mindy, if that is what you're

referring? Yes. So when Mr. Addison becomes the

auditor, he is going to make sure that we're following

the federal regulations on how we are providing

financial oversight.

 Of course, the documentation that has to become up

everything for a final statement.

 So the fiduciary duty there is compliance. And

the financial over-site is related, I have to go

back -- related to the board understanding the status

of where we are at any given time.

 Now, the opportunity to, for the board to

understand that through audits, both the annual audit

provided by a CPA accounting firm, gives the board a

great opportunity to ask all kinds of questions around

compliance issues.

 Including, of course, I think it's, yes, it's in

this slide here where I make reference to the annual

financial audit as part of the presentation. Part of

the compliance, of course, is the board needs to

acknowledge that they have reviewed 990IRS return.

That's another fiduciary duty.

 These are very important. These happen every

January as part of the board of directors meeting. But

the board governance oversight is the opportunity to

spend that hour and a half with an auditor and going

through our financial statement year end in great

detail.

 In great interactions between board and auditor.

 So, again, this is very important area of board

governance. It's probably, I know I said it many

times, there is so many important things but this one

probably is in the top three, okay.

 It's way up there and I know Bill Addison agrees

with me on that one. He gave me the thumbs up, by the

way.

 >> Joel?

 >> Do you want to add anything more to that

comment?

 >> Joel, I just, just to be cognizant of time, we

have about 20 minutes left. I just wanted you to know

that. You can talk for hours about this but I just

want you to know.

 >> I do want to get through all of these things.

All right. This one here, the next slide is on program

oversight. Hey, by the way, one more thing, because I

know, this has almost entertaining value. And Mindy

would be disappointed if I didn't share this.

 Mindy was our board treasurer and I'm very happy

to know that she is your council treasurer as well.

 But for many years to help our board members read

financial statements, our finance director and I came

up with a coding system. It's a color coding system.

Using different marks. So with every revenue line item

and every expense line item, if everything is in order

at that time in the fiscal year, according to the

percent we should be hitting. It gets a wonderful

green check mark. Good to go, looking good.

 If it's a concern and we're a little outside of

that percentage for that time of the year, and it's

something to pay attention to, it gets a yellow

exclamation point.

 Of course, obviously, if it's way out of whack and

that revenue stream or that expense line item is not in

line, we use a red, big red X. It draws attention

right away.

 A board member could look at a financial statement

and immediately throughout the pages, the 6, 7 pages

can zero in on some critical things that are coded in

yellow and red. We will have an explanation by each of

those as to what's going on. There's a little

narrative that helps explain why that is the way that

it is.

 Very helpful information to be able to interpret

complex financial statements.

 I didn't want to miss saying that because I know,

understanding that, I know Bill would say, yeah, there

needs to be more training on understanding financial

statements for board governance.

 Onto program oversight. The thing here, I

mentioned board training and orientation, it doesn't

stop at the very beginning of a new board member. It

goes on. Things change. Every board meeting, if our

agenda can allow it, we provide an education

presentation by one of our staff related to a service

or a program.

 So they have an opportunity to really understand

in detail that program. Now they're getting that as

part of orientation, but they will get it continuous

because a board member might be on the board for up to

8 years, they can be.

 We have two-year terms with up to four terms.

 In this example, we also include a community

partner each year to do a presentation as well. Great

education, that's the program oversight. Their

knowledgeable about the services that we provide.

 If they're not knowledgeable, then they can't be a

very good advocate in the community when they're

talking to others about what it is that we do.

 That is a great, that is part of our means of

marketing, right. Is making sure that board members

have the right where with all of being able to talk

with all the right language about who we are and what

we do.

 Legal oversight. This is where important things

with bylaws come into play. Board policies. We have a

process where we attempt to review every two years our

bylaws and board policies. It's part of the board

administration policies.

 Our HR committee reviews every employment policy

every two years. Whatever minor edits or changes goes

to the board so the board governance knows these

policies from their standpoint of legal oversight are

being reviewed. They get to see those in the consent

agenda. And they get to see those in the board packet

and they can ask questions and pull it out of the

consent agenda as well.

 There was a mention of the over-site of the 999IRS

are in place.

 Yvonne, maybe it's best for me to circle back. I

wouldn't mind doing the bylaws and administration.

Let's see if we have time because the clock is ticking

quickly.

 That is what would have happened next. Effective

board meetings. Frequent engagement insures positive

relates.

 I know many of you would say, Joel, that is just,

how would you recruit anybody that would meet 22 times,

two hours every time? Well, guess what? We recruit

people every year to be on the board.

 It's a huge commitment. That means that maybe not

everyone would be able to meet that requirement. Our

board of directors meets 22 times. You think they're

pretty engaged at that level? Do they know about what

we do and who we are? Oh yeah. Yeah. They are full

of information.

 And every meeting goes right to the max of two

hours. We start on time and we end on time. That's

the good news there.

 But we do 12 board work sessions the second Monday

of every month, 5 to 7. It's a two hours of a

different kind of flavor of board governance that is so

different than the other 10 board of directors meetings

that occur every month on the fourth Monday with the

exception of July and December.

 We use a consent agenda in regards to how board

takes actions on approval of meeting minutes.

Committee meetings, financials, as well as, of course,

any policies that are being presented to the board for

approval.

 We do a -- we have an attendance policy as part of

our -- I'm going to get into that in the next slide as

well -- but it's very important. Dedication, yes,

people from time to time, yeah, they can't attend. But

we want to make sure that we have good attendance, I

will say this, we have tremendous attendance records by

our board members unless they're just out of town or if

they're experiencing an illness.

 Here is another thing that is always, I think,

very important. You have to allow time for members to

express comment or describe a concern at the end of the

meeting.

 I know many times we run right up to that and we

do it too quickly, but just remember that that's a good

opportunity for great engagement between one another.

On things that they're thinking about but they didn't

have a chance to say it out loud. Give them the time

to say it out loud.

 Okay. We do a board and CEO fiscal year calendar.

A calendar is an important thing, if you don't have a

calendar as to what needs to happen when in the course

of every 12 months, you will miss things.

 There is many timelines on things that have to

happen at a certain time. And the calendar is made

every year at the very beginning of the fiscal year and

it's part of every board packet.

 So we know, the board knows what's this calendar

for the next board meeting. What is coming up that

they know will be worked on as part of the time line.

 An example would be that every May, the board

calendar says, complete the CEO performance evaluation.

 So the process starts. And then it concludes in

June. There is a time line related to a meeting that

involves the leadership with the CEO to review the

evaluation and talk about compensation and moving

forward.

 But again, without that on the calendar, it will

never -- it could get missed. But these are critical

things and there are several items over the course of

the year and we can show that example.

 Let's get into the last few minutes that we have,

board member responsibilities and board member

participant agreement. These are all inherent in our

bylaws and board administration policies.

 I would love to have time to show you, our board

evaluates their own performance. Think about that.

This is something that we implemented, wow, I can't

remember how many years ago. It was part of the whole

change that we were going through when we looked at

board member leadership succession planning.

 We made lots of changes in bylaws as well as the

board administration policies. The board evaluates the

board structure. What is it looks like? Let's do a

review every two years. They do a performance

evaluation of the board's performance and then they

evaluate individually themselves.

 So there are three different evaluations. And I

know that that's coming up on our board calendar here

within the next couple months for that to happen.

 Okay, that's the contact. So let me quickly find

something else to bring up in the last five minutes

here. I think I'll be able to click on it quickly.

 >> While you're pulling that up, consent agenda is

something that I hope we can work towards as a council

and as a board. It really frees up time to talk about

strategic thinking, dialogue more.

 It's something that the executive committee will

talk about as we plan our agendas and we'll make sure

we talk more about that, what does that mean and how do

you pull something out of a consent agenda.

 >> Good. I think you will learn to appreciate the

time efficiencies that that provides for the board to

handle all the other important matters.

 This is our board administration policies. And

here, this is the table of contents but I'm just going

to go to 201 here. I want to show you an example and I

know the small print you won't be able to read it.

 We do a board member responsibility and board

member participant agreement. Okay.

 On this page right here, on the right, that you're

looking at, a model board member understanding that a

member of the board of disability of Southwest

Michigan. They are legal and ethical responsibilities

to make sure the organization applies best practices in

pursuit of its mission and acts responsibly as a

steward of the organization's mission.

 These are the things that a board member is

agreeing to.

 I'll just pick a few. Actively participates as

both donor and gift solicitor in all the fund

development activities including the annual campaign

and the holiday field.

 I talked about the importance of that one.

 The chain of command policy No. 208 in all

communications and relationships with staff members.

 There's a chain of command policy that board

members need to know about.

 Anyway, the board members sign this. It's

originally file and the board member receives the

signed copy. It's important to frequently review these

policies with the board. That is why I say, we try to

review these every two years on an on going basis.

 Again, you have these. I included this in the

packet that I sent to Tracy and Steve. And so you can

look at any of these and again, follow up questions

with me.

 >> Let me just quickly, I want to -- you're going

to notice there is a lot of information in the board

administration policies. We did that on purpose. We

took so much out of our bylaws that didn't need to be

there because it's really a policy that needs to be

adhered to. So we trimmed down our bylaws majorly.

 This will be the last thing, Yvonne that I'll

show. I want to show the contrast here.

 I think I got this process down pretty good here.

 You're going to notice on these 11 pages of

bylaws, and I'll go through them. There is the

articles. And you're going to see, wow, hey, there is

not much there, is there?

 Less is better with bylaws. We took a lot of that

information that really didn't need to be there and we

put it into board administration policy where the

process to change it is much quicker and faster.

 So opposed to a bylaw change. So you're going to

see, of course, we have all the things related to

article 4, the board of directors.

 It makes reference, we have a section and then it

makes reference to if it's board member

responsibilities and the participant agreement that I

just showed you, it says reference board administration

No. 201, board member responsibilities and

participation agreement. There is reference to the

administration policies.

 You can see how thin these are. Reference to our

board administration policies.

 That is it right there. Slim and trim. Okay.

 Let's go back here and then we're going to

conclude, I think pretty much on the last page.

 Okay. I think we're there. Are you seeing the

PowerPoint or not quite? Now you are, okay.

 All right. Folks, that concludes. I know there

is so much more to talk about. I could have gone into

greater detail on any one of these themes as more in

depth examples of board governance. But I think you

have a good flavor of the nuances that we have been

practicing over the last 20 years that I've been part

of this organization.

 And in my perspective as the CEO, board governance

is very, very important to me. It helps my job in

making sure our organization is seen with tremendous

credibility. Highest integrity. And I know that to be

true.

 I know that our partners know that to be true,

too.

 So do our donors. When you have a donor come to

you and say, Joel, your mission and what you're doing

in our community is so valuable, I need to have you ask

for more money. Oh, more money: My response is I can

do that. I can ask for more money.

 We've had those kinds of relationships but I know

in my heart it's because of strong board governance.

And our board member relationships that they have in

the community. Yvonne, that concludes, I'll take my

questions if we have time.

 >> I just want to say thank you for being so

generous with your knowledge and with all the handouts.

That will not be lost on us and it's something that we

will look at and look at ways to implement.

 I'm also grateful that we have Mindy to help us

with that given she is on your board too.

 Since we have a lot of people here who work for

nonprofits, you actually consult if somebody wanted to

reach out to you. Do you do consulting for other

nonprofits for board governance or no.

 >> No. I'm very open to supporting others. I

mean I mentor, as Mark mentioned, I mentor a lot of our

CIL executive directors if they're interested. I don't

force them to talk to me. But I always offer it.

 And we do, I find it interesting that board

governance is one of the challenges that new executive

directors have in their role.

 So I'm very happy to talk to them about that role

between CEO and board governance and the changes that I

know, I hear from new directors saying, I'd like to do

more with our board governance, how do I do that? And

Mark knows, it's a challenge, right.

 >> It is a challenge. Although Joel does a great

job of explaining it with 20 years of experience. More

than that. But at the same time, I think he gave you a

good outline of some of the challenges the CIO

directors have, the executive directors and CEOs have

out there across the state.

 So I appreciate everything he shared. I almost

wish it was a two-part thing where we could spend a

little more time. Maybe we can invite him back at a --

to talk about this a little more in depth.

 >> What I would suggest is we do a working session

if we wanted to take on some of these and prioritize

them and if Joel is willing to come in and help us

navigate that.

 There was another question in the chat from Will.

He asks how does someone go about starting a nonprofit.

He loves that you're very clear with your expectations

of the board and they know what is expected of them.

The question is how would you go about starting a

nonprofit?

 >> The best way is to find an entity in your local

community that supports nonprofits. And if that

community isn't there, Kalamazoo has what is called one

place, it's connected with the library. It's a

tremendous resource for nonprofits and they do

nonprofit training. They would take you through

because that's their consulting. That is why they're

there and they receive funding to do this work at no

cost to help nonprofits become brand new in different

ways. But again, it all starts with the filing of the

application to be a 501(c)(3). You can't do anything

unless you have that. And that means you're recruiting

board members. You can't have a 501(c)(3) without

board members.

 >> The question was not how to start a nonprofit

but how do you start the board? I just joined a

nonprofit last year and it's a pretty -- organization.

A handful of people.

 One of the things that I got from the presentation

is you lined out what your goal is. I think sometimes,

sometimes that's not fully set out.

 So I think if people don't know what they're

supposed to do and they don't do it, there is really no

accountability. I really like how you set that

precedence of this is what you need to do. I think

people don't realize sometimes what the commitment

costs.

 >> Yes. Right. I will say, Will, the truth of it

is that development of a board has an evolution to it.

 Not every nonprofit board can immediately be

mature. It's not going to happen. It has an

evolution. And that initial phase is very immature.

But you're always working and knowing where you want to

get to do that level of maturity. They have written

books about the different phases of nonprofits. And if

you read the phase of maturity, I know disability

network southwest Michigan is at that level.

 You have to stay at that level because you can

fall back, too. It happens with changes in board

leadership, too. You can fall back. So to Will's

point, it's an evolution that happens over, I'd say

many years. And you know, I can't, I won't speak to

the evolution of disability network because it would

take me 20 more minutes. A minute for every year that

I've been with them.

 >> Are there any other questions before we sign

off? Joel, thank you so much. I took tons of notes

and I'm sure others are buzzing with ideas.

 >> Yes, Yvonne, this is Joel, just so you know,

I'm very willing to take phone calls or send me

e-mails. I mean I'm such an advocate for nonprofit

board governance. I just know that when it's not at a

level that it should be, you can almost say, you're at

a risk. You're at high risk.

 High risk in my mind means you're close to what

could be failure.

 A nonprofit is the board. It is not the CEO. I

should have said that before. I think I said it maybe

in a different way.

 But many boards think differently that the

nonprofit is the COO. It is not the CEO. It's the

board of directors. Period. When that doesn't exist

in a strong way of sustainability with all these

different pieces that need to be part of it, there's a

high risk of failure that can happen.

 Anyway. Thanks so much, everyone.

 >> Thank you.

 >> My pleasure.

 >> Thank you. People in the chat are saying thank

you, thank you. Really appreciate it and I'm sure we

will be in touch since you offered.

 >> Yes; right.

 >> All right. Thank you so much. Have a good

night everybody.

 >> Be safe. Take care.

 >> Bye, thank you.