

## Nominating Committee – A Presentation

### LWVNY Regional Training 2022- Laura Bierman

**Introduction:** The two big things I see people everywhere **doing** wrong is not seeing this as a **very important opportunity** to grow and strengthen the League - to build relationships for now and for the future - and also not seeing it as **an ON-GOING process that the current board should also help support**. The board doesn't control the Nominating Committee but it should support it by watching for and developing through small jobs or committee work possible new board members. We fumble along as boards, feeling too pressed for time to bother to do the work of including newer people because we don't want to spend the time to "train" them in the task at hand.

### Questions for the Facilitator

**Opening Question:** Why do wise leaders recognize that the Nominating Committee is the most important committee in their organization?

***Note for Facilitator:** See if people can talk themselves into a better understanding of the topic. It's pretty obvious when one takes the time to think about it.*

### Additional Questions:

- How does the Nom Com relate to membership development?
- Who should be asked to serve on a NomCom?
- How long should anyone serve (which gets at the idea of orgs getting in a rut, just reappointing people mindlessly, etc)
- How independent should the NomCom be? (Legally it reports only to the membership NOT the board. What are the problems of too little or too much independence?)
- Why is it important that the NomCom work year-round?
- Should the non-board NomCom members attend at least one board meeting during the year?

### Steps In The Process

#### 1. Establish the Goals

Each year, the Nominating Committee defines the context for its work. The committee reviews the organization's mission, current year's goals and objectives, and [management](#) resources. New initiatives and challenges might require skills not currently found among board members.

The Nominating Committee also reviews the job description of the Board of directors to ensure its continued relevance. If a job description does not exist, the committee drafts it and presents it to the Board for acceptance. The job description summarizes the governance functions of the Board as a whole (e.g., develop policy, hire the executive, director, hold property, etc.) and also notes expectations of the Board members (e.g., regular attendance at board meetings, serve on at least one committee give an annual contribution, etc.).

## **2. Identify League's needs**

Based on the organization's current goals, the Nominating Committee identifies the skills and representation necessary within board membership to achieve the goals and fulfill the mission. Some of these skills are general to any board and may include financial management, advocacy, membership, PR, etc.

In addition to skills, it is important that the Nominating Committee determine what kind of representation is necessary. Skills and representation which contribute to fundraising success are vital.

For incumbents, performance criteria should also be listed. These criteria might include attending board meetings, giving contributions, helping fund raise, etc.

## **3. Evaluate incumbents**

It is useful to prepare a grid for evaluation purposes (see appendix for a sample). Skills, representation and performance criteria can be listed vertically on the left and the incumbent names are noted across the top. A check is made under the name of each incumbent if she/he possesses the specific skill, represents a particular community, and meets performance criteria. The resulting empty spaces on the grid show what is missing within the Board of directors. These gaps are reviewed and then serve as the guide for the committee to identify candidates for nomination.

Sometimes the evaluation of incumbents shows problems. These performance problems must be addressed by the Nominating Committee. If the incumbent's term is expiring, the committee may choose not to "re-nominate" the individual. If the individual's term is continuing, a committee member meets with the incumbent to discuss performance.

This dialogue encourages the incumbent to express why she/he has not been sufficiently active on behalf of the organization. There is opportunity to reinforce the job description of the Board and clarify expectations. The Nominating Committee member must communicate the organization's need for renewed commitment by the individual director.

As a result of this discussion, an inactive board member may find new ways to help the organization. Sometimes this dialogue affords the individual trustee the opportunity to gracefully resign from the Board.

#### **4. Finding Leaders**

Only after steps 1-3 have been successfully completed does the Nominating Committee begin to name individuals for consideration. Suggested names are tested against the list of needs generated by the evaluation grid. Individuals who do not meet these priority needs, or who have skills already fairly represented among board incumbents, are not considered until needs are met.

For less established Leagues, it may be difficult to generate a list of qualified candidates. Instead, the committee first identifies community people who might make recommendations. Nominating committee members meet with these community people in order to discuss the League, the Board job description and the priority needs. The community resources are asked to suggest possible candidates. From these referrals, the Nominating Committee develops its list.

As candidates are listed, the committee brainstorms a specific role(s) for each individual. For example, there might be two individuals on the list who fulfill a skill gap that's been identified for fund-raising purposes, or to enhance the League's marketing and visibility, or have expertise in technology use.

#### **5. Conduct personal interview**

Once the Nominating Committee has generated a list of candidates who fulfill the priority needs, these individuals are personally interviewed. The interview is conducted by one or two members of the Nominating Committee. If the committee is responsible for nominating officers, personal interviews must be conducted with these candidates, too. The personal interview is critical to the success of this nominations process. The process assumes that no individual is confirmed as a candidate for nomination until after the interview results are reviewed by the Nominating Committee.

During the interview, League's representatives and the candidate determine if the match would be mutually beneficial. Perhaps a scheduling conflict would prohibit the individual from attending any board meetings.

If it is apparent that the individual cannot meet the organization's articulated needs or is not interested, the interview can conclude by mutual agreement. If appropriate, keep the individual on your mailing list and cultivate him/her for some future involvement.

While the Nominating Committee may, initially, be uncomfortable interviewing people for volunteer positions, this reluctance can be overcome with training. A nominating committee interview is set up on the following premise:

"Our League is seeking qualified individuals for \_future positions as committee and board members. We are interviewing a number of people and believe that you may

have the skills we seek. We would like to meet with you to determine if you might be interested in our organization at some point in the future, and to determine if there is a good match between your skills and interests and our needs.”

Before any interviews are conducted, the committee reviews the key points to cover. Specifically: League history, mission and program; financing and current goals; job description of the Board of directors; role of board and management; performance expectations of board members; the nominations process itself and the skill/representation gaps which the Nominating Committee seeks to fill this year; and specific skill that you would expect this individual to use on the League's behalf.

## **6. Confirm the slate**

After the interviews are conducted, the Nominating Committee reconvenes and reviews the results. Not all individuals will be appropriate for board membership. Those individuals who are recommended for nomination are contacted and confirmed. Those individuals who are not recommended for nomination are contacted and asked if they would like to work on a committee or particular project during the coming year.

The Nominating Committee works for the members – not the current board or president. Some still think that the current board “approves” the candidates when the Nominating Committee, as a courtesy out of respect for the sitting board, informs the Board of the slate prior to Convention (annual meeting) but does not seek any approval. Only members approve the slate.

## **7. Recommend committee chairs and members to the president**

Through its deliberations, the Nominating Committee has acquired substantial information about the skills and interests of incumbent board members and nominees. The committee assists the president by recommending possible committee chairs and members.

## **8. Develop the annual orientation for the incoming board**

Annually, following the election, the Board of directors should participate in an orientation. Both newly-elected and incumbent trustees attend. Leadership staff is also invited. The Nominating Committee, in conjunction with the new president and the chief executive, outlines the orientation. A good orientation sets the tone for the year's activities. Key elements include a discussion of board and staff roles and League's purpose and programs.

## **9. Finding Candidates**

The nominations process is an ongoing effort of leadership. Throughout the year, volunteers and staff [monitor](#) the community, identifying influential individuals and good workers. Ongoing cultivation builds relationships with these individuals, bringing them closer to your League. Then, when the Nominating Committee begins to prepare the election slate, the League's networks and contacts will be adequate to meet its needs.

An effective nominations process is fundamental to the health of the League. Yet, sometimes leadership is reluctant to pursue this process fully. Concern is expressed about giving job descriptions and performance expectations to volunteers; volunteers are afraid to ask that other volunteers step down; and people worry about interviewing individuals and then choosing not to nominate them for board membership.

Nonetheless, all this can be done graciously and professionally without alienation. It has worked in other Leagues and it can work in yours.

By describing the process and its value to the health of the League, no one can, in good conscience, reject the premise. By carrying out the process carefully, on an annual basis, its effectiveness will become apparent. The Board of directors will become stronger. Volunteers will be more effective and hence feel more successful. The organization will have the resources necessary to face the challenges of each new year.

**NOMINATING.** The nominating committee should be appointed to make nominations throughout the year for officers, board members, and committee members as the local league board and membership direct. Care should be taken that members of this committee be chosen with due regard to their discernment, seasoned judgment, and knowledge of the membership of the league. Nominating committee members should confer with those they nominate before they propose their names to the annual meeting for appointment. Any member of the league has the right to suggest changes in the nominations. A member of the nominating committee shall not be eligible for reappointment after service of three years except after an interval of one year.