

Executive Director Succession Plan

Approved August 10, 2016.

<u>Table of Contents</u>	Page
1. Rationale and Context	1
2. Plan Implementation and Initial Tasks	1
3. Communications	3
4. Interim Executive Director	4
5. Search Process	4
6. Temporary Absence	6
7. Approval of Succession Plan	6

1. Rationale and Context

The Executive Director of Methow Recycles, a nonprofit organization, is central to the organization's success. Therefore, insuring that the functions of this position are well understood and shared among staff and volunteer leaders is important for safeguarding the organization against an unplanned or unexpected change that would make it impossible for the leader to perform those functions.

This kind of risk management is equally helpful in facilitating a smooth leadership transition when it is predictable and planned. This document incorporates elements of both an Emergency Succession Plan and a Planned Succession Plan for Methow Recycles and reflects its commitment to sustaining a healthy functioning organization. An unplanned absence is one that arises unexpectedly; in contrast to a planned leave when advance notice may be given. The purpose of this plan is to insure that the organization's leadership has adequate information and a strategy to effectively manage Methow Recycles in the event the Executive Director is unable to fulfill his/her duties.

The Board of Directors (Board) has a clear and unambiguous responsibility to ensure that strong, competent management is running the agency. Good management is a key to success. Regulators and the courts insist that the Board fulfill this responsibility. Although succession planning is a management function, it is an undertaking in which the Board must take a direct interest to ensure that the proper steps are taken during the transition.

2. Plan Implementation and Initial Tasks

The Board authorizes the Board President to implement the terms of this Succession Plan in the event of a planned or unplanned permanent absence. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to inform the Board of a departure, and to plan accordingly.

As soon as feasible, following the notification of a permanent absence, the Board President shall notify the Board of the departure and convene an Executive

Committee meeting to affirm the procedures prescribed in this plan, or to modify them if needed.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Timeline *</u>
Schedule Executive Committee Meeting or Conference Call to begin implementation of Succession Plan	Board President	Within 24 hours of Executive Director's notice of departure
Notify key staff about Executive Director's departure	Board President**	Within 24 hours of Executive Director's notice of departure
<p>Email to staff and Board explaining events and anticipated actions.</p> <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former Executive Director is no longer responsible for Methow Recycles • Reason for departure (if it can be shared) • Response that employees/Board Members are allowed to give to others • Person or persons authorized to provide information to media, donors, state agencies and others • Projected process and timeline for formerly replacing Executive Director 	Board President**	Within first week of Executive Director's notice of departure
<p>Notification to donors and other key partners (see Communications section for additional information):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal phone calls from Board Members to donors contributing over \$250 in last 12 months and key community partners (foundation, corporate and government funders) • Letters signed by the Board President to all other donors in database 	Board President**	Within first week of Executive Director's notice of departure
Notification to All Volunteers	Board President** and	Within first week of Executive Director's notice of departure

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that communication to volunteers is clear, transparent, and thoughtful 	Operations Manager	
Maintain all bookkeeping, accounting and payroll processes.	Board Treasurer	Ongoing as soon as Executive Director leaves
Monitor and respond to Executive Director's email account.	Board President**	Ongoing as soon as Executive Director leaves
Review Executive Director's memberships and meeting schedule to determine any key meetings that need to be covered	Board President**	Within first week of Executive Director's notice of departure
Establish Search Committee (see Search Process section for additional information)	Board President** and Executive Committee.	Within first week of Executive Director's notice of departure

* The Timeline is based on an emergency or sudden departure of the Executive Director. In the instance of a planned succession, the timeline could be modified at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

** While the Board President is assigned as the lead for certain tasks in the table above, the asterisk means that he/she can delegate the task to another Board or staff member(s). In addition, if the Executive Director's departure is a planned one and ample notice is given, the Executive Director can assist with the above activities in any way the Board President approves.

3. Communications

When an Executive Director leaves, either in a planned or unplanned transition, it is important for funders, volunteers, and other key stakeholders to maintain their confidence in the organization. Communication about the departure is a critical step in this process. Below are some important points to remember:

- All communication (emails, notices on the website, letters, in-person meetings, etc.) about the Executive Director's departure should be as **clear, consistent and transparent** as possible.
- If appropriate, the more information that can be given about the reasons for the departure, the better. Incorrect stories will be created when there is a lack of **specific information**.
- **Focus on the positive** (the remaining strong staff, the dedicated board and volunteers, the stability of the organization, and the community support that are all still in place).
- **Be open to feedback.** Let people know they can contact the Board President or another appointed representative if they have advice to give about the search process, qualities they would like to see in the next Executive Director, etc. This helps instill community buy-in into the process.

- **Articulate the transition plan.** Let people know that a Succession Plan is in place and a Search Committee has been formed. Reassure people that there is a process and give a sense of the anticipated timeline.
- Once the new Executive Director has been hired, send out an **announcement** introducing him/her and ideally hold an **event** where he/she can be introduced to the community.

4. Interim Executive Director

By assigning the tasks in Section 2 to Board Members and staff members (or to the Executive Director in the case of a planned transition that includes notice), an Interim Executive Director should not need to be hired. Not hiring an Interim Executive Director will save Methow Recycles money and help the organization avoid going through an additional transition period. In the event that the Search Committee, with the support of the Board, determines that this is a necessary hire, there are local firms that can help. *(note: Cory Sbarbaro at Turnpoint Consulting - www.turnpointconsulting.com, cory@turnpointconsulting.com, 206-992-5123 - serves as an Interim Executive Director and has a list of other local consultants who do this work. Additional referrals can be found through 501 Commons at www.501commons.org).*

5. Search Process

Search Committee: The President and Executive Committee will be charged with establishing a Search Committee to select the new Executive Director. Non-Board Members, as well as Board Members, will be eligible to serve on this committee. It is recommended that the committee be composed of 5-7 members. The Search Committee will work with the full Board to determine the decision making process and the role of the committee versus the role of the full Board in the search process.

- **Search Firm:** The goal will be for the Search Committee to manage the search without the help of a search firm. Ideally, someone with human resources or recruitment experience could serve as a volunteer on the Search Committee. In the case of a planned transition, the outgoing Executive Director may also be willing to support the Search Process prior to the interview and selection process (in terms of helping advertise the position, getting resumes to Search Committee members, etc.)

If it seems that additional help may be needed during the search process, the Search Committee, pending budget approval from the Board, has the option of hiring a consultant to support the process. Gil Sparks and Lynn Burton are Wenatchee area HR Specialists who may be called upon for assistance. *Additional referrals can be found through 501 Commons at www.501commons.org) and from Beth Stipe at the Community Foundation of North Central WA.*

- **Strategies for Search:**
 - **Circulate through contacts:** The Executive Director job announcement and job description can be forwarded via email to Methow Recycles' key

contacts. Board Members and staff members should forward the announcement/job description to their networks (and encourage those contacts to forward the information to any qualified candidates). Other key contacts and partners should also electronically receive the job announcement/description. The Community Foundation of N. Central WA maintains a listserv for the purposes of sharing information within our regional non-profit community. Email may be sent to ncwnonprofits@googlegroups.com to help spread announcements.

- **Cultivate referrals from current Executive Director:** The current Executive Director may have ideas about strong candidates and may refer those ideas to the Search Committee. Search Committee members may choose to meet with those candidates to assess their interest and qualifications.
- **Advertise:** There are many places where nonprofit organizations typically post job openings. Some have a cost associated with them; others are free. Some have more of a local reach; while some are more national in scope. The Search Committee can determine the best outreach strategy although, since finding a local candidate with a passion for the neighborhood is a priority, local search methods may be best to consider first.

Local:

- ✓ Methow Recycles' website & Facebook page
- ✓ Community Foundation of North Central Washington
- ✓ Washington State Recycling Association
- ✓ Puget Sound Business Journal: www.bizjournals.com
- ✓ Northwest Development Officers Association: www.ndoa.org
- ✓ Philanthropy Northwest: www.philanthropynw.org
- ✓ Puget Sound Grantwriters Association: www.grantwriters.org
- ✓ University of Washington Nonprofit Management Certification list
(Cory Sbarbaro at cory@turnpointconsulting.com and Peter Drury at drury.peter@gmail.com are contacts for this distribution list)

National:

- ✓ The Bridgespan Group: www.bridgespan.org
- ✓ CommonGood Careers: www.cgcareers.org
- ✓ Idealist: www.idealists.org
- ✓ LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com
- ✓ The NonProfit Times: www.thenonprofittimes.com

- **Transition Committee:** The Executive Committee will nominate members to be part of a Transition Committee to be in place for the first 3-4 months after the new Executive Director is hired. This could be a continuation of the Search Committee's work or the Executive Committee could determine a new configuration of members. The intent behind the Transition Committee is to

help orient the new leader, act as a supportive sounding board, and work with him/her to set mutually agreed upon goals for his/her first few months.

- **Additional Transition Considerations:** If possible, it can be helpful to the transition process if the incoming Executive Director has the endorsement of the outgoing Executive Director. For example, if timing permits, perhaps a joint event could be held to both celebrate the outgoing Executive Director's accomplishments and welcome the new Executive Director.

6. Temporary Absence

Any temporary absence of the Executive Director (when it is expected that he/she will return to the position once the events precipitating the absence are resolved) will need to take into account the specific circumstances of the time. For example, the volunteer support, staffing structure and potential temporary staffing options at the time of a temporary absence will determine the optimal plan for short-term coverage. In case of a temporary absence, the Executive Committee will work with the Executive Director (if possible) and the Operations Manager to propose a temporary staffing plan to the Board.

7. Approval of Succession Plan

This Succession Plan will be approved by the Executive Committee and forwarded to the full Board for its vote and approval. This plan should be reviewed every three years.

- This plan shall be signed by the Board President and the Executive Director.
- Important Organizational Information attached to this plan:
 - Job description for the Executive Director
 - An Information and Contact Inventory (*Succession Planning notebook located in current Executive Director's office*)
 - "Major Donors" and agency contact list
 - Business contacts (buyers, major vendors, etc.)
 - Annual development plan
 - Project worksheets
 - Outline of Routine admin tasks
 - Payroll & quarterly taxes
 - Invoicing and Receiving Payments
 - Banking
 - Annual tasks
 - Building the budget for easy reporting
 - 990 prep
 - W2/W3 & 1099 prep
 - File purging per retention policy
 - A current list of the Board Members (current roster maintained on policy webpages).
 - Employee Handbook (current version maintained on policy webpages).

- Maintenance of record:
 - Copies of this Succession Plan, along with the corresponding documentation, shall be maintained by the Board President, the Executive Director and on Methow Recycles' Board Policy webpage.

Signatures of Approval

Board President

Date

Executive Director

Date