

CSDA Key Learning Summaries by Director – previously published in board packet 1/10/24

Username	Please share your top THREE-to-FIVE learnings from "Setting a Foundation for Good Governance" you'd like to see the board consider for adoption by our district.	Please share your top THREE-to-FIVE learnings from "Board's Role in Human Resources" you'd like to see the board consider for adoption by our district.	Please share your top THREE-to-FIVE learnings from "Charting the Course" you'd like to see the board consider for adoption by our district.	Please share your top THREE-to-FIVE learnings from "Get the Word Out" you'd like to see the board consider for adoption by our district.	Please share your top THREE-to-FIVE learnings from "Show Me the Money" you'd like to see the board consider for adoption by our district.	Please share any other learnings from the Special District Leadership Academy Conference you'd like to see the board consider for adoption by our district.	Please share any other thoughts you may have regarding the leadership academy for possible group discussion.
hill@rhfd.org	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refine FC evaluation process, consider finding and outside vendor to replace counsel+B2:B13 role 2. Consider forming a Citizen's Advisory Committee 3. Consider tasking staff to implement a regular series of community surveys, perhaps on a quarterly basis 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider adopting the FC evaluation suggestions presented in pages 326-331 of the leadership academy handbook 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IMPORTANT – Establish a clear direction for the district to allow for more effective planning and decision making. Perhaps something like, "Deliver a financially sustainable fire service in the next X years, aligning costs with reasonable revenues, garnering public support for the same, and maintaining service levels acceptable to the communities served 2. Consider hiring Martin Rauch as facilitator for our decision-making process 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider forming an ad hoc or citizen committee to guide staff in development of an engagement plan, including a recommended budget, scope of work, assigned responsibilities, and staffing through consultants or in-house staff 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider appending the glossary of financial terms beginning at page 239 of the handbook to our board handbook for use by all directors and staff 2. Do we have and/or need an investment policy and some sort of annual review process? 3. Do we have clearly stated appropriations limits? 4. Have we reviewed our auditor's peer review report in last three years? 5. How many months reserves does policy dictate and how does deficit spending impact this? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I think we should formalize the requirement for new board directors to attend a leadership academy within one year of their election and consider some sort of requirement for ALL directors to attend on some regular basis – every four years? 2. I believe our fire chief should attend a leadership academy on some regular basis, perhaps beginning with newly elected directors after the November 2024 election? 	<p>Fabulous, can't believe we haven't been doing this for decades!</p>
browman@rhfd.org	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board Orientation "pre-election, qualities and skills of a director, Brown Act, ethics requirement, meet-and-greet with staff, tour stations, meet firefighters. Directors to attend CSDA leadership academy. 2. Board Responsibility "read & understand board packet and ask questions if needed. Understand governance, unity of purpose, carry out mission. 3. On-boarding process prior to election for Director candidates, after elected/appointed process for Directors and Meas O Committee members 4. Change of general counsel, labor negotiators every 5 years to get new blood, better ideas, greater interest in District needs. 5. Not use General Counsel for labor expertise, with Chief evaluation but a HR professional. Benefit from their expertise, it'll be faster and less expensive. 6. Help with informational exchange between Board and staff for research/policy etc. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defining roles as one size does not fit all. Roles and responsibility depend on context including size of the organization. Directors in setting policy for effective communication should ensure staff understanding of the policy. 2. Audit ad hoc meets with auditor (management attends introduction) to discuss audit process and any concerns. At the conclusion of the audit, or if the auditor has any questions, Board ad hoc meets with the auditor to receive an oral/draft report and discuss concerns. To obtain more objective feedback from auditors and general counsel, best practice is to rotate out every 5-to-7 years. 3. Chief's evaluation "Hire HR specialist to work with Board on Chief's eval, utilizing their expertise will produce results at less cost and sooner. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Align our mission with the strategic plan and communicate our long and short term plans annually. Board needs to be a voice for the entire community and to the community 3. Board needs to do its homework to be able to fully participate; action only takes place with a majority vote 4. Effective planning and the SP; need an oversight plan, process for staff reporting and Board oversight. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Let the public know how we are meeting their needs. 2. Use social media, posting agenda one week in advance in public places (Rodeo Senior Center, Library, RMAC, Voices of Rodeo, Hercules City Hall, Rec Center, Senior Center, Library). Review website monthly to ensure currency and effective communication. 3. Advocacy: local, county, federal 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure budget aligns with the strategic plan. Annual orientation early in the fiscal year for directors including review of key budget factors. Provide a checklist to the Board of what will be reviewed quarterly and annually to ensure budget is on track. Review budget quarterly and take any necessary actions to deliver mission objectives within budget. 2. Review of policy regarding disposition of District assets. Generally this requires Board approval. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pursue and obtain external funding to support budget, enhance financial stability, and provide for non-recurring needs.

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AGENDA ITEM 3

davidson@rhfd.org	<p>a.Three Legged Stool: Staff; Community; Board Relations.</p> <p>b.Unity does not mean uniformity.</p> <p>c.Unity of Purposes: Governing bodies work most effectively when they have a rational and purposeful framework to focus and guide their work.</p> <p>d.Institutionalized Effective Governance in Writing.</p>	<p>a.Role of staff is to carry out the board's plan and manager's direction to achieve goals</p> <p>b.Indicator of HR problems: Gaps in employee evaluations</p> <p>c.Indicator of HR problems: Lack of checks and balances.</p> <p>d.All members should have the same information about decisions to be made.</p> <p>e.Does your HR Budget offer additional employee job training ; mandatory and voluntary; educ. programs; workshops; conferences</p>	<p>a.Strategic plans are about policy direction and are squarely in the board' domain.</p> <p>b.The board should be an energized advocate for its own strategic plan.</p> <p>c.Become financially strong</p> <p>d.Obtain public support for a key project</p>	<p>a.Districts are obligated to close the gap between the agency and constituents through engagement</p> <p>b.Leadership in the community is about recognizing when something needs to change. Then developing a board consensus to do something about it.</p> <p>c.Engage in your community as a member of your board</p> <p>d.Model formal polite conduct and equanimity</p>	<p>a. Key Financial Reports: Expense Balance; Investments; Capital; Reserve; Budget-to-Actuals (Multi-year); Payables and Receivables;</p> <p>b.Specific areas of staff concerns</p> <p>c.Relate fiscal activities at the mission of the district The budget determines which programs and services the district will strive to accomplish and the budget allows the district to set strategic priorities each year.</p>	<p>a.The CSDA conference was a good opportunity for the board to meet in a neutral 3rd party location in order to learn about RFPD as a CSDA.</p> <p>b.The CSDA conference was a good opportunity for the board to meet get to know each other in a more individual, person-to-person way.</p> <p>c.Therefore, the CSDA conference should be a regular institution for board members.</p> <p>d.Therefore, the CSDA conference should be a regularly attended by the RHFD's chief administrative officer</p>	<p>Consider how the RHFD can use the CSDA in an ongoing manner and also in ways not yet experienced at our first conference.</p>
doss@rhfd.org	<p>1 - Building Better Board Relationships - particularly better community outreach, and understanding our roll and district staffs role.</p> <p>2 - Being able to speak as one voice</p> <p>3 - Understanding the Strategic Plan is part of the Budget process</p> <p>4 - (For me personally) to be an effective Director, doing more "Dialogue & Deliberation", and less "Debating" for the good of the board and our constituents .</p>	<p>1 - The CEO/Fire Chief leads the Fire Department in the best way they see fit without Fire Board interference.(The fire board has already set the direction and tone)</p> <p>2 - the CEO/Fire Chief hires, fires, trains, contracts for the good of the organizations. (The board must be get in the loop and receive the answers to the "Why"?)</p> <p>3 - Any Board member that needs assistance with services from staff must go thru the Fire Chief.</p> <p>4. Do not micro-manage</p> <p>5. Understand the policies and procedures, do not interfere, but ask questions (why and why not.</p>	<p>1 - Accept and evaluate information provided b y staff as a group</p> <p>2 - Annual Workshop/retreat for strategic planning</p> <p>3 - Link goals and objectives, develop priorities (doing a good job at this with staffs direct input) with timelines.</p> <p>4 - On-going reality checks</p>	<p>1 - Communicate better in getting the Fire Districts information out - in one voice</p> <p>2 - Develop a more robust engagement plan</p> <p>3 - Advocacy for the district, as long as we are all speaking the same language</p>	<p>1 - When onboarding new board members, provide a Special District budget workshop. On-going budget training for District members (Law and rule changes).</p> <p>2 - Appropriation limits? and how this affects our district? forecasting the amount of revenue lost due to age exemptions/loss-gain of home values/loss-gain business tax.</p> <p>3 - Understanding our Red-Flag indicators</p>	<p>Good Communication, Understanding "all" decisions are made based on "all" of the board members input. The board does not run the Fire Department nor it's staff, one single board member does not make any decisions independently.</p>	<p>We are scratching the surface on a great deal of the items I mentioned. I believe in my heart we all want what is best, and we all have something positive to provide. Dialogue and deliberation will get us far if community and organization is placed before self.</p>
mikel@rhfd.org	<p>Focusing on the unity of purpose</p> <p>Ensuring all board members have a clear understanding of the district and its mission</p> <p>All items brought to board for discussion should be aligned with Strategic Plan</p> <p>Making sure board members who respectfully disagree engage in effective dialogue to reach understanding.</p>	<p>Avoidance of Micro-Management. The Subject Matter Expert is the General Manager. We need to be sure we are allowing the GM to direct the 'how' while the board focuses on the 'what'.</p> <p>Develop Communication Plan</p> <p>Confirm HR policies</p> <p>Revise current evaluation criteria</p>	<p>Create a mission statement for the board</p> <p>Utilize outside facilitator for major decision making</p>	<p>Creating a social media policy</p> <p>Designate a spokesperson</p>	<p>I think we achieved this this year with Chief Ramirez's help but communicating the budget to the public clearly in a way that is understood by most.</p>	<p>Nothing more than was listed above. I firmly believe that our communication with each other and the public will serve us all in reaching our common goal.</p>	

Regular community surveys; more community outreach	Review and revise fire chief evaluation process	Establish clear board direction for the district aligned with strategic plan and policies	Establish comprehensive communications policy	Establish regular budget review process to identify red flags, ensure alignment with strategic plan and community understanding	Make CSDA SDLA conference requirement for all board directors, chief, and administrative officer
Better board orientation, relationships, and understanding of mission, processes and methods, including deliberative process	Examine roles and responsibilities between board and staff; ensure understanding to avoid micromanagement	Use outside moderator for major decision making	Speak with one voice on matters of board consensus; appoint spokesperson	Review and establish appropriations limits	
Consensus Learnings					
Compilation	A focus on board unity of purpose	Ensure community awareness		Ensure board understanding of budget process	
	New board member on-boarding process				
	General counsel tenure; use in labor and HR issues				
	Better strategic plan understanding and alignment among board members				