

MAXIMIZING GOVERNANCE

THE CURRENT

GOVERNANCE LANDSCAPE

OCTOBER 14, 2020

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This webinar will frame organizational governance from an intersectional lens and highlight the current structural challenges faced by organizations. There will be a specific focus on a systemic analysis of governance, and focus on COVID-19, anti-Black racism, and Gender.

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Who am I? Bill Sinclair, CEO of The Neighbourhood Group

- Large non-profit, charity in Toronto
- Integration of three historic organizations: Central Neighbourhood House, St. Stephen's Community House, and Neighbourhood Link
- Focus on direct services – childcare centres, youth centres, settlement services, employment services, supportive housing, homecare for seniors, and more.

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Non-profits facing incredible challenges now. Many non-profits have closed their doors, some may never reopen, some will declare bankruptcy.

Three sets of challenges:

- **Previous challenges**
- **COVID challenges**
- **Challenges to our Missions**

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Some Previous Challenges:

- **Old legal/policy frameworks.** “Charity Law”. “Corporations Law”
Old ways of meeting/structuring organizations, old definitions of public good and advocacy, old definitions of generating revenue.
- **Community needs exceeding resources.** Challenges with fundraising, competition for government grants, unequal power dynamics with government. Often leading to volunteer burnout and frustration.

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COVID Challenges:

- **Dislocation** – locations closing, opening, closing. Working from home. Insufficient and unreliable IT. Relationships between people strained/isolated. Loss of older volunteers. Pivoting services.
- **Governance Practices** – Strangeness of using new platforms for Board meetings. Shift of Board agenda to Crisis mode. Old tools (strategic plans, financial reports, cash flows, committee terms of reference) not all helpful in new environment.

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Challenges to our Mission:

- **High community needs** – highest rates of unemployment, homelessness, hunger, and mental health crisis in many years. Questioning/over-riding all previous priorities for the organization.
- **Demands for Racial Justice** – increased organizational and community demands for addressing anti-Black racism, Truth & Reconciliation in our governance, our staffing, our services and our advocacy.

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One organization/Board's experience:

- Adjusting to meetings and AGM on new platforms.
- Moving from crisis mode to strategic planning with shorter plans and goals. Opening new supportive housing this winter.
- Engaging in Equity Audit of organization and new commitments
- Engaging in major IT upgrade for organization
- Partnering with networks to reduce isolation (example today with OCASI and ONN)

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We recognize that these are very tough times for non-profits, for their communities, staff and Boards.

Upcoming webinars in the series will touch on many of these topics, and there will be **Learning Exchange Sessions** following each webinar to share tips and resources.