Policy Governance® Brief Description

Policy Governance® is a model that describes the responsibilities and function of a Board of Trustees. It defines the work of the Board as 'governance;' and makes the distinction between governance and management.

It begins with a simple premise:

The job of the board is to see to it that, on behalf of whomever the board perceives to be the ownership, the organization achieves what it should and avoids situations and conduct that are unacceptable.

Most literature advises boards to govern by developing policies. Policy Governance® describes specific policy categories. All that the board has to say is contained within those categories. This suite of policies ensures that the organization achieves what it should, is accountable for results, and acts toward the staff and the public in an acceptable manner. Also, the board enacts policies that require it to perform its duties in a disciplined manner.

John Carver developed the model to help address the following questions:

How can a group of peers be a responsible owner-representative, exercising authority over activities they will never completely see, toward goals they cannot fully measure, through jobs and disciplines they will never master themselves?

How can they fulfill their accountability while not, at the same time, infringing unnecessarily on the creativity and prerogatives of management?

How can they do so when within themselves they disagree, there is a limited time for the task, and there is an unending stream of organizational details demanding inspection?

The following page illustrates how traditional boards and Policy Governance boards differ.

Comparison of Traditional Board and Policy Governance Board

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**TRADITIONAL**

Reach the target but do so by standing here and shooting through this window. We’ll evaluate you on whether you stood where we told you and shot through the right window.

e.g. “use this curriculum to teach kids” or “buy this piece of equipment.”

Financial practices that would put the org in jeopardy

## E=ENDS… the *WHAT*

**What** do we want to have happen in our communities as a result of Peacemaker Resources’ efforts?

POLICY GOVERNANCE

Board determines ends based on input from owners. Director is responsible to hit target shooting from anywhere as long as he/she doesn’t use the means that the board said were not allowed. Board monitors if target is being hit and if unacceptable means are being avoided.

No written staff evaluation

 The **Means**

the *HOW*

that staff may *not* use

For Example: Are our efforts successful in having people learn and use social emotional skills? And while we are attempting to achieve this are we avoiding conditions that are unsafe, unethical or imprudent?