

Advanced Commissioner Governance Training

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Governance Reality Check:

- Most boards struggle not with knowledge but with discipline
- Common issue: drifting between governance and operations
- Key question: are we governing at the right altitude?
- What bad habits may have been formed over the years?



High - Performing Board vs. Average Board:

High - Performing Board

- Focuses on outcomes, not activities
- Uses data to ask better questions
- Holds ED accountability through structure

Average Board

- Reacts to issues
- Focuses on details instead of trends
- Relies on opinions over data



Where Experienced Boards Get Stuck:

- Overconfidence in “how we’ve always done it”
- Informal communication replacing structure
- Blurred lines with long - tenured EDs
- Lack of evolving oversight practices



Board - ED Relationship at an Advanced Level:

- Moves from transactional to strategic partnership
- Focus shifts from updates to insights
- Requires discipline, not just trust



The Tension that Must Exist:

- Healthy tension = accountability + support
- Too much support = lack of accountability
- Too much pressure = breakdown in trust



Advanced Expectation Setting with the ED:

- Are expectations documented or assumed?
- Are success metrics clearly defined?
- Is there a strategic plan guiding the organization?
- Are there formal reviews in place for the ED?
- Does the ED know what “great” looks like?



Communication Breakdown at the Advanced Level:

- Side conversations with staff
- “Quick questions” that bypass structure
- Board members operating independently



Discipline in Communication:

- Every interaction should reinforce structure
- If it bypasses the ED it weakens the system
- Consistency matters more than intent



Governance Maturity Model:

- Level 1: Reactive (Issue Driven)
- Level 2: Structure (clear roles, basic reporting)
- Level 3: Data - Driven (uses dashboards & scorecards)
- Level 4: Strategic (forward - looking, risk - aware, aligned)

Where is your board operating today?



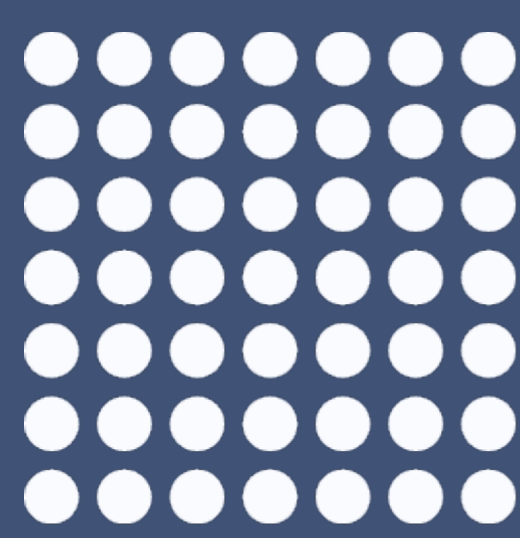
Leadership Assessments:

- CliftonStrengths
- Kolbe
- DISC

How to Use:

- Improve board - ED communication
- Understand decision - making styles
- Reduce conflict and misinterpretation
- Build stronger teams





Performance Management

Strong Relationships Require Structured

Accountability



Why ED Evaluations Matter:

- Align expectations
- Reinforce accountability
- Support development
- Protect the organization



A Strong Review Process Protects:

- The organization
- The Board
- The Executive Director



Where ED Reviews Break Down:

- No formal review process at all
- Reviews tied only to compensation
- Goals that are vague or outdated
- Boards evaluating operations instead of outcomes
- Feedback delivered inconsistently —or only when something goes wrong



Common Evaluation Mistakes:

- Vague feedback
- Infrequent reviews
- Overly subjective assessments
- Lack of follow - up



Components of an Effective Evaluation:

- Clear goals
- Measurable outcomes
- Regular check - ins
- Documented feedback



What a Good Review Process Accomplishes:

- Clarify expectations
- Reinforce strategic priorities
- Create accountability without micromanagement
- Support professional growth
- Strengthen Board – Executive trust



Who Owns What in the Review Process:

Board Responsibilities

- Set expectations and success measures
- Evaluate performance against agreed - upon goals
- Provide feedback and direction
- Maintain consistency year over year

Executive Director Responsibilities

- Participate in goal - setting
- Provide self - assessment and context
- Track progress and outcomes
- Use feedback for development



Performance Review Support the ED:

Regular reviews:

- Provide clarity on expectations
- Reduce uncertainty and second - guessing
- Strengthen trust with the Board
- Reinforce alignment with priorities

For Executive Directors:

- Reviews are a leadership support tool
- Silence often feels like disapproval or risk
- Feedback —positive and constructive —builds confidence and focus

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Dated Reviews vs. Modern Reviews:

Dated Reviews

- Once a year
- Backward - looking only
- Vague ratings
- Limited dialogue

Modern Reviews

- Ongoing feedback
- Clear goals tied to strategy
- Balanced metrics and leadership behaviors
- Development - focused
- Documented



How Often Reviews Should Occur:

Best practices:

- Annual formal performance review
- Mid - year check - in on goals
- Ongoing informal communication (no surprises)

Key principle: The annual review should confirm what is already known —not introduce surprises.



Foundations of an Effective Review:

What Must Be in Place Before You Evaluate

- Clear job description
- Agreed - upon goals
- Shared understanding of success
- Documented priorities for the year
- Defined leadership expectations.



Structuring the Review Tool:

What a Review Framework Typically Includes

- Goal progress summary
- Leadership competencies
- Board relationship & communication
- Strategic alignment
- Professional development
- Overall performance assessment



Self - Assessment:

Benefits:

- Encourages reflection and ownership
- Provides context for outcomes
- Highlights accomplishments that may be invisible
- Surfaces development needs proactively

Tip: Self - assessment should be reviewed before Board discussion.



Gathering Board Input:

Options:

- Individual Board member evaluations compiled by Chair
- Committee - led review process
- Facilitated process with neutral support

Best practices:

- Use consistent criteria
- Avoid informal side conversations
- Keep feedback focused on performance —not personalities



The Review Conversation:

Effective review conversations are:

- Respectful and professional
- Grounded in agreed - upon goals
- Balanced (strengths and opportunities)
- Forward - looking, not just backward - looking



Linking Reviews to Compensation:

Consider:

- Separating performance discussion from compensation discussion
- Clearly defining how pay decisions are made
- Avoiding “automatic raises” disconnected from performance

Key point: Compensation should be informed by performance —but not be the only focus.



Development, Not Just Evaluation:

Strong review processes:

- Identify leadership development needs
- Support training, coaching, or peer engagement
- Align growth goals with future organizational needs



Documentation & Transparency:

Why Written Records Matter

- Protects the Board and Executive Director
- Ensures consistency year over year
- Helps onboard new Board members
- Creates continuity during leadership transitions



How to Give Effective Feedback:

When providing feedback to the Executive Director:

- Anchor feedback to agreed - upon goals
- Reference the strategic plan, annual priorities, or performance metrics
- Be specific and factual
- Use examples, not general impressions
- Balance strengths and improvement areas
- Acknowledge what is working before addressing what needs to change
- Focus on behaviors and outcomes
- Avoid assumptions about intent or personality
- Be forward - looking
- Discuss expectations and next steps —not just past performance



What Effective Feedback Sounds Like

Instead of:

- “Communication needs improvement.”

Try:

- “We’ve noticed the Board receives reports later than expected, which limits our ability to prepare. Going forward, we’d like materials at least one week in advance.”

Instead of:

- “You’re doing a great job.”

Try:

- “Your leadership during the RAD conversion strengthened Board confidence and kept the organization on track.”



The Importance of Constructive Criticism

Effective reviews include:

- Clear recognition of strengths
- Honest discussion of improvement areas
- Specific examples —not general impressions
- Expectations for change or growth

Avoid:

- Overly vague praise
- Avoiding difficult conversations
- “Everything is fine” reviews year after year



Legal & Risk Implications of Avoiding Honest Reviews:

When Boards fail to document concerns:

- Performance issues appear “sudden” later
- Terminations become harder to defend
- Claims of unfair treatment or retaliation increase
- The Board’s credibility is weakened

Best protection:

- Consistent, documented feedback
- Clear expectations communicated early
- Progressive discussion —not surprise decisions
- Strong reviews protect both the organization and the Board.



Sample Review Timeline:

A Simple Annual Cycle

- Q1: Confirm goals and priorities
- Mid - Year: Progress check - in
- Year - End:
- Self - assessment
- Board evaluation
- Review meeting
- Goal setting for next year



Different Types of Performance Reviews:

1. Traditional Goal - Based Review
 - Annual goals agreed upon with the Board
 - Progress measured against outcomes and priorities
2. Balanced Scorecard Review
 - Goal based, incentive pay review, and evaluates performance based on agreed upon goals.
3. Competency - Based Review
 - Focuses on leadership, communication, decision making, and culture
4. Hybrid Models
 - Combines goals, leadership competencies, and organizational health

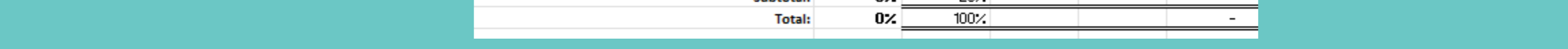
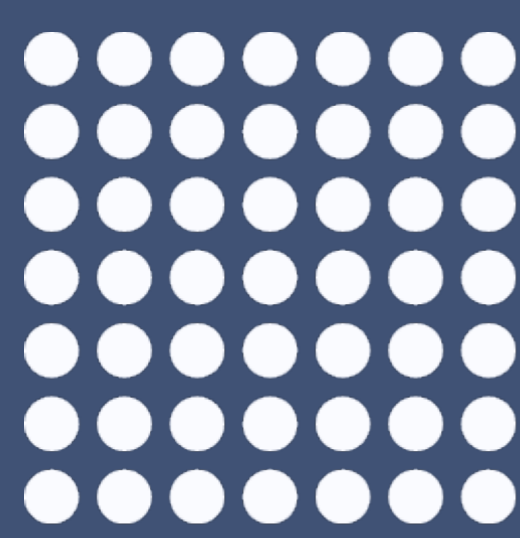


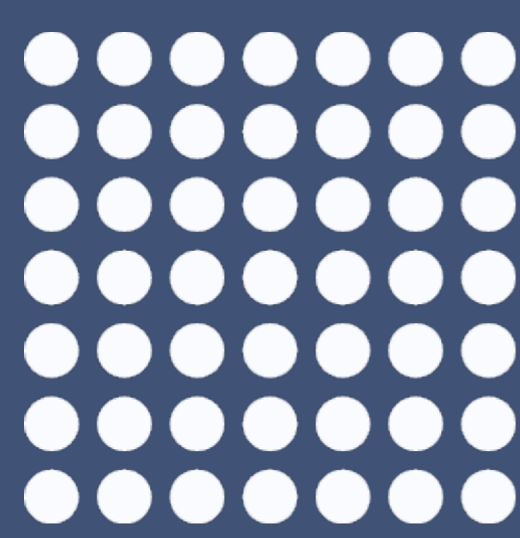
Using a Balanced Scorecard for the ED:

- Performance tool that ties performance to incentive pay
- Align with strategic plan
- Track measurable goals tied to strategic priorities
- Provide objective evaluation criteria
- Ensure board oversight is anchored in the plan not preferences



A	B	C	D	E	F
BALANCED SCORECARD - Executive Director				Base Pay	\$140,000.00
Year-to-Date - 2026				Increase Pay	\$ 7,000.00
Objectives	Percent Complete to date	Percentage Points Possible	Values Possible	Values to Date	Incentive Earned to Date
Quarter 1 - January - March					
Ensure all policies/procedures are set up for the Apartments	0.00%	5%	1	0.00	-
Set up software with Emphasys and have all employees trained	0.00%	5%	2	0.00	-
Update annual Strategic Plan	0.00%	5%	1	0.00	-
Monitor LIHTC partnerships and State submissions in preparation for annual reports	0.00%	5%	1	0.00	-
Review department productivity and financials to ensure adherence to budget and compliance	0.00%	5%	3	0.00	-
Subtotal:	0%	25%			-
Quarter 2 - April - June					
Have Townhomes ready for move in by May 30th	0.00%	5%	1	0.00	-
budget	0.00%	5%	100	0.00	-
Review department productivity and financials to ensure adherence to budget and compliance	0.00%	5%	3	0.00	-
Stay up-to-date on funding resolution and identify additional funding streams to supplement	0.00%	5%	2	0.00	-
No material weaknesses on audit	0.00%	5%	1	0.00	-
Subtotal:	0%	25%			-
Quarter 3 - July - September					
Review department productivity and financials to ensure adherence to budget and compliance	0.00%	5%	3	0.00	-
Implementation of board scorecard	0.00%	5%	1	0.00	-
Federal and State advocacy for Affordable Housing	0.00%	5%	2	0.00	-
Complete agency financial budget for 2027	0.00%	5%	1	0.00	-
Completion of organizational assessment and implementation of changes	0.00%	5%	2	0.00	-
Subtotal:	0%	25%			-
Quarter 4 - October - December					
Review department productivity and financials to ensure adherence to budget and compliance	0.00%	5%	3	0.00	-
Coordinate and implement board retreat	0.00%	5%	2	0.00	-
Assess effectiveness of BSC program and set goals for next year	0.00%	5%	2	0.00	-
Ensure all employee evaluations are complete	0.00%	5%	1	0.00	-
Have a presence in the community (Community relations/mayor city council/attend community functions)	0.00%	5%	3	0.00	-
Subtotal:	0%	25%			-
Total:	0%	100%			-





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Subtotal:	0%	25%			-

Examples of Scorecard Categories:

- Financial metrics
- Operational metrics
- Compliance metrics
- Resident metrics
- Strategic initiatives
- Time based goals (quarters)



Using a 360 Review for Broader Insight:

A Board may choose to:

- Conduct a company - wide 360 review
- Gather input from:
 - Senior leadership
 - Direct reports
 - Cross - functional staff

Benefits:

- Identifies blind spots
- Provides insight into culture and leadership impact
- Complements —but does not replace —the Board's evaluation

Important: Consider using a facilitator to conduct the 360 review.



The Role of Salary Studies in ED Reviews:

Best Practice

- Conduct a salary study annually or every other year

Compare:

- Agency size and complexity
- Regional market
- Scope of responsibility
- Why this matters:
 - Protects the Board from compensation bias
 - Supports retention and succession planning
 - Keeps compensation aligned with the market

—not

emotions or tenure



Performance Reviews After Leadership

Transitions:

Evaluating a New Executive Director

- Best practices after a transition:
- Establish clear goals within the first 60 –90 days

Conduct a structured review at:

- 6 months
- 12 months

Focus on:

- Stabilization
- Communication
- Culture
- Early wins and challenges

This protects both the new ED and the Board during a critical period.



Key Takeaways:

- What to Remember
- Executive Director reviews are a governance responsibility
- Clarity and consistency matter more than perfection
- Reviews should strengthen —not strain —the Board - Executive relationship
- The best reviews support accountability and development



Data



What Commissioners Should be Reviewing:

- Financial reports
- Occupancy & leasing metrics
- Maintenance performance (work order turnaround, unit turnaround)
- Compliance and risk indicators
- Progress against strategic goals



Financial Reports:

- Budget vs. actual
- Cash flow
- Reserves
- Key variances



Operational Dashboards:

- Unit turns
- Work order completion
- Vacancy rates
- Time to lease
- Uncollected rent



Compliance and Risk Indicators:

- Audit findings
- HUD compliance metrics
- Inspection results



Other Metrics to Review:

- Number graduated from FSS
- Number enrolled in FSS
- Number of referrals made
- Social media followers

What else are you tracking?



Avoiding Data Overload:

- Pick approx. 6 items to monitor monthly
- Focus on trends not just numbers
- Identify key indicators
- Set your baseline goal and adjust
- Ask strategic questions



Building Effective Scorecards:

- Start with the Strategic Plan: what are we trying to achieve
- Narrow down to 5 - 10 key metrics that drive performance
- Prioritize data that is
 - Consistently available
 - Easy to understand
 - Actionable

Identify ownership: who is responsible for each?



Building Effective Scorecards:

Category	Measurable	Goal	Current	Owner
Financial	Cash on Hand (Months)	≥ 3.0	2.6	CFO
Financial	Rent Collection Rate	$\geq 98\%$	96%	CFO
Operations	Occupancy Rate	$\geq 97\%$	94%	Deputy Director
Operations	Unit Turn Time (Days)	≤ 20	28	Maintenance Director
Compliance	Open Audit Findings	0	2	CFO
People	Staff Turnover Rate	$\leq 15\%$	18%	HR



Using Data without Overcomplicating:

- Simple scorecards outperform complex reports
- If it's not reviewed regularly, it shouldn't be tracked
- Data should lead to action



Using Data for Oversight:

- Are we meeting strategic plan goals?
- Where are risks emerging?
- What needs board attention?
- What is off track and why?



Red Flags:

- Repeated missed targets
- Lack of reporting clarity
- Frequent surprises
- Not receiving timely board packets and financials



Key Takeaways:

- Data should serve the strategic plan – not replace it
- Fewer, meaningful metrics outperform large reports
- Trends matter more than a single data point
- Every metric should have clear ownership and accountability



Overinvolvement



Signs of Overinvolvement:

- Getting into day - to - day decisions
- Direct staff interaction
- Reworking operational plans



Why Overinvolvement is Risky:

- Increase liability
- Undermines the ED
- Confuses staff
- Slows decision making



Staying at the Right Level:

- Ask strategic questions
- Focus on outcomes
- Hold the ED accountable – not staff



Practical Boundaries:

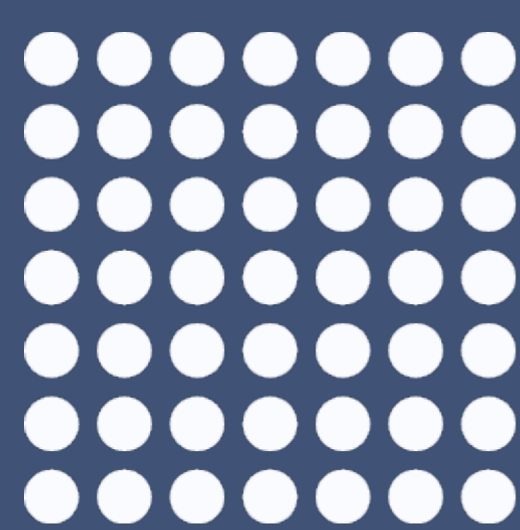
- No direct staff direction
- No operational problem solving
- Use structured communication channels



Key Takeaways:

- Your role is to govern outcomes not manage processes
- The board holds the ED accountable not the staff
- Crossing into operations weakens the entire leadership structure
- Consistency in boundaries matter more than intent
- Strong boards ask questions – they do not give direction to staff





Questions?





THANKS!

Do you have any questions?
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